

Pets in the Home Classroom

A new survey of 2000 parents across the UK and US found that children are seeing a multitude of social, emotional and core skill development benefits from spending more time with their pets while learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic¹.



Impact of pets at home



52% of children are spending more time with their pets than before the pandemic

Children are spending more time with their pet across a range of activities



55%

playing with them



49%

talking to them



39%

reading to them

40% of children spend more than 2 hours a day with their pet

Benefits of increased interaction

9 in 10 parents say that having a pet at home has physical, social and core skill developmental benefits for their child.



Emotional Benefits

- Nearly 87% believe that having a pet improves their children's overall mood.
- The majority of parents believe their pet helps their child feel less lonely (83%) and less stressed (76%) during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 in 4 (78%) say pet interaction in school is important to reduce anxiety.



Social Benefits

- 3 in 4 parents believe pet interaction helps children bond with their peers (75%) and their teachers (73%) while in the virtual classroom.
- 3 in 4 parents believe interaction with pets boosts their child's self-confidence (76%) and increases social skills (74%).



Physical Benefits

- Pets also provide children with physical benefits during the virtual school day, especially by giving them something fun to focus on during breaks (84%).
- A large majority of parents (81%) believe pet interaction encourages more exercise and activity among their children and pets.
- 8 in 10 parents said interaction with pets provides their child with a daily routine (82%) and teaches patience (81%) and responsibility (85%).

Top marks! Pets as a potential study aid



56%

of parents report having a pet helped improve their child's academic performance



72%

of parents say their child is more motivated with a pet around

These benefits can go both ways

Parents believe pets are benefitting from this additional time with children as well.



87%

9 in 10 parents believe their pets enjoy spending more time with their child.

Over 3 in 4 (77%) parents believe their pet is calmer now they spend more time with their child, increasing to 84% in the U.S.

77%



Future of pet interaction in schools

As pandemic restrictions ease, 80% of parents believe pet interaction should be used in schools where appropriate even as students begin to transition back to traditional classrooms.



4 in 5 (79%) parents with pets say that pet programmes in school are beneficial to the students, increasing to 85% in the US



This remains consistent for children of all ages, with parents recognising the many benefits that pet interaction brings



3 in 4 parents believe there should be more investment into bringing pet interaction programmes into the classroom

80% of parents believe pet interaction should be used in schools

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About the Survey
This research was conducted by Edelman Data & Intelligence, a global, multidisciplinary research, analytics and data consultancy, between 19 Feb and 1 March 2021 with 2,000 respondents across the UK and USA. All respondents owned at least one cat or dog and had at least one child aged 5-17 years old in full time education and taking part in virtual schooling because of the pandemic.

References
1. Market Research Survey - Impact of pets in the home classroom, n=2000. Conducted by Edelman Data and Intelligence (DXI) February 2021