

# Dog: No Backyard Dogs



**Say no to backyard dogs. Dogs belong in the family home!**

## **What a Backyard Is Not For**

The backyard is NOT a living place for family dogs. People sometimes mistakenly believe that a dog will be “happier” with fresh air, grass, and more room to “run around.” We need to keep in mind that dogs are social animals and love human companionship. Keeping the dog mostly in the backyard is deemed social deprivation. Sadly, keeping a dog in the backyard starts a vicious cycle to an untrained dog. Dogs left in the backyard on their own do not learn how to become a well-behaved family member. They become deprived of attention and affection and when given attention can show exuberant behavior such as jumping, mouthing, and barking. In addition they will not become house-trained and are at higher risk for relinquishment to a shelter with all those unwanted behaviors.

## **What a Backyard Is For**

A backyard can provide outstanding mental and physical enrichment for dogs and their owners. A fenced backyard is a fantastic place for safe off-leash play, hide and seek, and even basic obedience training such as loose-leash walking. Spending time with your dog in the backyard is a great way to bond. Dogs form extremely strong social bonds, and one of the most important psychological needs is to be around the people they are bonded to.

Teaching your dog to be well behaved in the home will require some time and effort. It also means offering your dog appropriate toys, bedding, confinement space, collar, and leash. If you allow your dog free access to the yard during the day, make sure your fence is secure and your dog does not engage in nuisance or territorial behavior during your absence. Also, every dog should have a microchip and should wear an identification tag in case they get lost. Remember access to the backyard does not count as “exercise;” your dog will still require regular walks.

Therefore, only invite a dog into your home and life if you are prepared to share it with your new companion, small or large.

To help your dog to become a valued member of your family read our other handouts for house-training, enrichment training, alone training, and check our website for a list of behavior classes.