



# How To Convince Your Parents You Can... Care For A Pet Wolfdog



Tammy Gagne



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### A Robbie Reader/How to Convince Your Parents You Can...

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**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** The facts on which this story is based have been thoroughly researched. Documentation of such research is listed on page 30. While every possible effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the publisher will not assume liability for damages caused by inaccuracies in the data, and makes no warranty on the accuracy of the information contained herein.

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Words in **bold** type can be found in the glossary.



## Chapter One

# 1



## PLEASE, CAN I HAVE A WOLFDOG?

Imagine that today is Take Your Pet to School Day. Your best friend Jake has brought his guinea pig. Your neighbor Hannah has her hamster. Both animals are cute but not very exciting. Then you spot your mother arriving with a leash in her hand. “What is it?” all the kids ask. It’s not a cat. It’s not even an ordinary dog. Your pet is a wolfdog.

The only thing standing between you and this thrilling picture is one little word: *yes*. If you are planning to ask your parents for a wolfdog, learn all you can about this special animal. To win your parents’ permission, you must convince them that you can care for a wolfdog.

As its name suggests, a wolfdog is part wolf and part dog. The offspring of two different animal breeds is called a **hybrid** (HI-brid). Wolfdogs are sometimes called wolf hybrids. Dogs that are used for breeding wolf hybrids include Siberian huskies and Alaskan



A malamute, which looks a lot like a wolf, is a better choice than a wolfdog for a family with kids. Sometimes children tease dogs. If teased, a wolfdog will be quicker to bite than a malamute.

malamutes. These dogs look a lot like wolves. You cannot tell the difference between full-blooded wolves and wolfdogs just by looking at them.

All dog breeds are related to wolves. People have lived alongside dogs and wolves for many thousands of years. A dog's bones were once found in the 14,000-year-old grave of a human in Germany. This man and dog were likely hunting partners.

Many early Native American groups admired wolves. They believed the wolf was a noble creature. Respect of the wolf is still a large part of most Native American cultures.

Wolves possess many amazing traits. They are intelligent, brave, and enormously loyal. They are also



social creatures. They live in packs and work together to do everything from hunting to raising cubs. Many of these traits, which are passed on to hybrids, make wolfdogs extremely interesting animals.

Unfortunately, people's views of wolves have changed a lot in the last few hundred years. Many now see wolves as a danger to people. The truth is that most wolves would rather avoid a fight with a person than start one. Very few healthy wolves have attacked humans.

Fairy tales have also hurt the way we look at this animal. Thanks to stories like *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Little Pigs*, many people think of wolves as being big and bad. When some people think of wolves, they picture animals that attack livestock.

Other stories about wolves are more positive. The book *White Fang* tells the story of a wolfdog born in the wild. Even though he faces many challenges, this wolfdog learns to live a tame life when he is rescued by a kind and patient man.



## fun FACTS

Check with your city, county, and state to make sure owning a wolfdog is legal where you live. Even in states that allow ownership, certain counties and cities may have laws against it.



The wolfdog in *White Fang* is also a sled dog. Many real-life wolfdogs work as sled dogs, too. Sled dogs work together to pull heavy sleds across great distances in snow. Some wolfdogs compete in a big yearly race in Alaska called the Iditarod.

Many people think wolf hybrids should not be bred. They worry that wolfdogs have too many wild traits to make safe pets. All animals are born with certain traits called **instincts**. One of a wolf's strongest instincts is to protect the pack's cubs. Critics worry that a pet wolfdog can hurt innocent people as it tries to protect the kids in the family.



Even though wolfdogs are part dog, they are still part wolf. Owners must always remember that these dogs are not as tame as regular dogs. Their wild instincts can come out at any moment.



Sled dogs pull a sled in Alaska the day before the Iditarod starts. Over the course of the race, they will cover 1,150 miles in 10 to 17 days.

Owning any dog is a huge responsibility, but owning a wolfdog is an even bigger one. Unlike other pets, a wolfdog is part wild. In the end, you may decide that a wolfdog is not the right pet for you. First, you must find out more about them.

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