

THE HAPPY DOG DAYCARE CHECKLIST

10 things every dog parent should look for before choosing a daycare

A practical guide to help you ask the right questions, observe carefully and choose a daycare that suits your dog.

Why this checklist matters

Dogs cannot explain every part of their day, so it helps to look beyond cute photos and busy playrooms. A thoughtful daycare should consider safety, rest, individual needs, positive handling and your dog's comfort. Use this checklist as a conversation aid—not as a guarantee of quality.

The 10-point checklist

For each item, tick Yes, Not sure or No based on what you can observe or verify.

What to look for	Why it matters	Yes	Not sure	No
Safety & supervision	Staff supervise dogs appropriately, explain emergency procedures and manage introductions carefully.	☐	☐	☐
Individual needs	The team asks about your dog's personality, preferences, health and care requirements.	☐	☐	☐
Rest & quiet time	Dogs have opportunities to rest away from constant activity and stimulation.	☐	☐	☐
Positive socialisation	Interactions are suitable and managed; dogs are not forced to play or mingle.	☐	☐	☐
Body language & wellbeing	Staff notice stress signals and respond calmly when a dog needs space or support.	☐	☐	☐

What to look for	Why it matters	Yes	Not sure	No
Caregiver relationship	Dogs are treated kindly and staff build trust through patient, positive handling.	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness & health	The environment is maintained and hygiene, illness and water routines are explained.	☐	☐	☐
Purposeful activities	The day includes suitable play, sniffing, enrichment or calm learning—not only nonstop activity.	☐	☐	☐
Owner communication	The provider explains how updates, incidents and changes in behaviour are shared.	☐	☐	☐
Your dog's overall response	Your dog appears comfortable overall and has time to recover after daycare.	☐	☐	☐

Score your checklist

Yes = 2 points • Not sure = 1 point • No = 0 points. Total: _____ / 20

- 16–20: Promising signs. Confirm anything still unclear and check the fit for your dog.
- 10–15: Ask follow-up questions and verify the areas where you are unsure.
- 0–9: There may be significant gaps. Take concerns seriously and consider other options.

A score is only a guide. One serious safety or welfare concern can matter more than a high total.

Transport arrangements

If daycare transport is offered, use this section to confirm the arrangements before booking.

What to look for	Why it matters	Yes	Not sure	No
Pickup and drop-off	Confirm the agreed locations and times, including what happens if either is delayed.	☐	☐	☐
Handover	Know who collects your dog, who receives them and how authorized people are confirmed.	☐	☐	☐
Secure travel	Ask how your dog is safely secured and whether the setup suits their size and needs.	☐	☐	☐
Vehicle comfort	Check how ventilation, temperature, water and your dog's comfort are managed.	☐	☐	☐
Journey details	Ask about expected travel time and how you will be told about a longer-than-usual trip.	☐	☐	☐
Dogs travelling together	If dogs share a vehicle, ask how space, compatibility and separation are managed.	☐	☐	☐
Updates and delays	Confirm when you will receive pickup and arrival updates and whom to contact if plans change.	☐	☐	☐
Emergency plan	Ask what staff do if a dog becomes unwell, is injured or there is a vehicle delay.	☐	☐	☐

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Observe your dog for 7 days

If your dog attends a trial or starts daycare, note their comfort, energy, appetite, sleep and behaviour after each visit. Changes can have many causes; discuss persistent or worrying changes with the daycare team and, when appropriate, your veterinarian.

Day	What I noticed	Follow-up / questions
Day 1	_____	_____
Day 2	_____	_____
Day 3	_____	_____
Day 4	_____	_____
Day 5	_____	_____
Day 6	_____	_____
Day 7	_____	_____

Five questions to ask before choosing

1. What does a typical day look like, including rest and quiet time?
2. How do you introduce dogs and respond if one feels overwhelmed?
3. What handling and training approach do staff use?
4. How will you share updates or communicate incidents?
5. What happens if my dog becomes unwell, injured or needs individual care?

The Le Bliss approach

At Le Bliss Paws & Friends, we value positive, reward-based experiences, thoughtful enrichment and fear-free relationships. Every dog deserves care that considers their comfort, behaviour, activity and individual needs.