

Pet Sitting & Pet Care

"A Growing Business Opportunity"

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Do you love pets? Are there pets in your neighborhood? If so, there might be a business waiting for you to start! According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association, this year people will spend more than double the \$17 billion (yes BILLION) spent in 1994. Of that money \$2.4 billion will be spent on services other than veterinarian care. So this tells us that people spend money on their pets and pet care is a big part.

Is Pet Sitting Right For Me? Is there a market?

If you like pets then you are off to a good start. Decide what sort of services you would like to offer. Many will start out offering pet sitting and dog walking and later start offering more complicated services. First, become confident with the basics. Then move into the other services.

You might love pets but if there is not a *market* (See the Biz4Kids Book for definition) then you won't have a business. For example, if all the pets in your market or neighborhood have owners that stay at home and take care of them then you will only have business when they are on vacation. There might already be other businesses offering this service. If you have competition, offer something to set yourself apart from others.

What Kind of Pets Need Sitting and Pet Care?

Most people think of dogs and cats but also consider people who have indoor birds, fish, hamsters and other pets that need exercise and food. There could be pets in your market that are always indoors and you may not know that the owner needs help and would be willing to pay you for that help. Of course you must consider if you would like working with those pets.

How Much to Charge?

This is such a tricky question because people will want to know how much it will cost them for you to pet sit for them. What will your rates be? Keep it simple and have an answer ready to give when they ask. For example, you could say that all your sitting is for an hour at a time and you charge \$8 an hour for each pet. Some people may have more than one dog or they may have a dog and a cat. In some markets that might be expensive and other markets that might be very cheap. Ask your parent or an adult what they think.

What's Next?

There's a lot of work left to do before you start the business. As we talk about in the Biz4Kids Neighborhood Business Kit, you must first do your research and plan. Then prepare the fliers and business cards and start telling people about your new business. Make sure that you ask a parent or another adult to help. Their help is very important. You must also have fun and enjoy yourself! Good Luck!

* NOTE: *Check with your county or state business office to see if you need license to operate a pet care business.*

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