

Choosing a Small Pet That Is Right For You

Finding the perfect small pet for you and your family can feel like a daunting task. With so many adorable options out there, how do you know which one is the best fit? Don't worry—we're here to help you navigate through the choices so everyone, including your future furry friend, can be happy!

Gerbils as Pets

Gerbils are a real delight to watch! These little burrowers spend hours digging and exploring, which can be utterly captivating. However, they're quite quick and agile, making them a bit tricky for young children to hold without the risk of squeezing too hard. So, if you're hoping for a pet that your little ones can cuddle, you might want to



look at other small animals instead.

Hamsters as Pets

Hamsters are fun and lively pets, but there's a catch—they're nocturnal! This means they might be snuggled up and snoozing during the day when your kids are eager to play. When night falls, though, they spring to life, which can be a bit disappointing for children who want an active pet during the day. Plus, if a hamster is startled from its

sleep, it might bite, so it's essential to handle them gently.



Also, keep in mind that there are different types of hamsters. Dwarf hamsters are social and can live happily in pairs or small groups, while Syrian hamsters prefer to live alone.

Mice as Pets

Mice are the natural adventurers of the small pet world! They're incredibly fun to watch as they scurry through tunnels and climb ropes. Generally friendly and rarely biting, they're still quite small and quick, which can make it challenging for young kids to hold them properly. When picking one up, it's best to gently grasp the base of their tail and slide your hand under their body for support.



Rats as Pets

Rats are social butterflies! They thrive on interaction and can make excellent pets for both adults and children. However, they do get lonely and depressed without enough attention. Rats require a more spacious cage compared to other small pets and love

having multiple levels to explore, so forget about keeping them in aquariums—they



need a proper setup!

Guinea Pigs as Pets

Guinea pigs can be wonderful companions! They have a unique personality and a variety of vocalisations that express their feelings, making them a joy to get to know. They need more than just a hutch at the bottom of the garden; they require shelter from harsh weather and a safe area to graze. It's crucial to house them with another guinea pig, as they thrive on companionship. Gentle by nature, they can be a fantastic first pet for kids, but be sure to supervise their interactions.

Also, consider their lifespan, which can be around seven years. Will your kids still be interested in caring for them that long? Many pets end up in shelters when children's priorities shift.



Chinchillas as Pets

Chinchillas can be intelligent and entertaining companions if cared for properly. With the right handling, they can learn fun tricks and become great pets! However, they

have a long lifespan of about 15 years, so think ahead—will your kids still be around to care for them in the long run?

These nocturnal creatures need a spacious cage and a dust bath for their well-being, which can create a bit of a mess. They should live with a companion too, either a neutered male and female or same-sex littermates who have been together since birth. Offering them plenty of exercise time outside of their cage will keep them happy



and healthy!

Rabbits as Pets

Many people believe that rabbits make excellent pets for children, but there's more to consider before bringing one home. Rabbits are prey animals, so they're naturally skittish and ready to bolt at the first sign of danger. If kept only in a hutch, they won't feel secure, and when kids try to lift them, rabbits might scratch, kick, or bite to escape. This can lead to disappointment if kids expect snuggly cuddle sessions.

To foster a more positive relationship, a wooden playhouse with an attached run is ideal. This way, children can sit quietly and let the rabbits come to them on their own terms, helping them feel more secure. This setup also allows for fun interaction, even during inclement weather.

It's crucial to house rabbits with companions of their own kind. While some people think rabbits and guinea pigs can live together, this is not advisable; they speak different "languages," and rabbits can inadvertently injure guinea pigs.

Rabbits typically live between six and eight years, so think carefully about the long-term commitment before bringing one into your home.



A Final Note

Regardless of which small animal you choose for your family, always ensure you're sourcing from reputable breeders. Take the time to understand the pet's needs and be clear on the commitment you're making. Proper care and attention will lead to a happy and healthy life for your new furry friend!