Animal Therapy Program

R.E.A.D

READING EDUCATION ASSISTANCE DOGS®
What is R.E.A.D.?

R.E.A.D. is an international literacy program developed in 1999 by Intermountain Therapy Animals of Salt Lake City, Utah. The program focuses on improving children’s reading and communication skills through the use of trained, appropriate therapy dogs as reading mentors.

The local R.E.A.D. program named Tallahassee READs! is sponsored by the Tallahassee Memorial Animal Therapy Program. These teams have found that creating a safe, nonjudgmental learning environment has made reading more fun and exciting for the children of the Big Bend area!

Student Participation

The R.E.A.D. program is designed to give reluctant readers in grades 1-8 an opportunity to practice reading aloud to a therapy dog. Our R.E.A.D. teams commit to making weekly visits with their students throughout the school year. Studies have shown that students who participate in this program not only improve their reading and writing skills but also improve their attendance record – no one wants to miss a day of reading to our dogs!

Benefits

Our therapy dogs are ideal reading companions. Some of the benefits of reading aloud to a therapy dog are:

• reading to a dog is not intimidating
• the dogs listen attentively
• the dogs do not interrupt or make fun of the student
• the dogs do not judge or criticize
• the students are relaxed; their blood pressure is lowered
• increased self confidence
• increased self esteem