

Buddy Dogs for Kids Placement Update



Name

Poppy



Poppy has settled perfectly into her role as a Autism Assistance Dog since being matched to eight year old Blake and his family.

Before Poppy arrived, Blake was a runner or bolter. He would become fixated about something and when the opportunity presented, take off without notice or fear – of anything! As he grew bigger and stronger, it was no longer possible to leave him in the care of his grandparents. The options for care and places the family could go became very limited.

A seemingly routine task like taking Blake to school become harder and harder. Blake developed more and more obsessive habits, and it could take ages to get him from the car park to the classroom. He would lie on asphalt in the car park to feel the rough stones, or run off to climb a tree, or pull

the sprinklers out of the school gardens. This was very stressful for Mum Vanessa and the school.

Dad Richard said “Since we’ve had Poppy Blake has become much easier in public. He loves holding Poppy’s handle to walk with her. It has also improved his communication and helped us better understand what he is seeking. Because Blake is attached to Poppy he can’t just run off, so he uses his language to tell us what he wants to do. This helps us redirect him towards appropriate actions, and reduce inappropriate actions (like pulling out the school sprinklers!).”

“Poppy has also become a celebrity at the school, which helps to improve understanding and awareness within the community. Blake’s favourite thing to do, outside of school, is going on the bus with Poppy, he is always asking on weekends and school holidays ‘go on bus ride with Poppy’.”

“Poppy is such a relaxed, beautifully natured dog. She has had a very positive impact on our overall family dynamic. She is a great source of calmness when stressful circumstances arise. She is a much loved member of the family who goes everywhere with us”.

“Blake enjoys playing hide and seek with Poppy around the house – and loves giving her a treat when she finds him. Poppy always comes into his room for story time each night, and after every few pages we have taught Blake to say ‘Poppy lap’, and Poppy puts her chin on Blake’s lap and he gives her a treat. It’s a great routine for calming things down before bed time. Blake also loves snuggling into Poppy when she is lying on her mat or the bean bag” Richard said.

Poppy, you are a very special dog and doing a great job!

Many thanks to Maria and Luke Goss and supporters of the Think Fragile X Foundation for your support of Poppy and the Buddy Dogs for Kids program. Many thanks to Coles for your sponsorship of Poppy and the training program.

