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Are toy australian shepherds good family dogs

When you think of small dogs, do you think of tiny, fragile pocket pets that wouldn't last a day in your chaotic household? Images of celebrities like Paris Hilton and Britney Spears toting tiny tail-waggers have made small dogs de rigueur, but very few pups enjoy living in a purse or being carried around all day. Most small breeds are just regular dogs in compact bodies, and, being that they tend to be adaptable to most living situations and to play well with children, they make excellent family pets.Before you adopt a small dog, consider your lifestyle and what you hope a new addition will bring to your household. Do you want a dog that will comfort your child and be content to just be close to you? Or do you want the sporting qualities of a big dog in a small package? Also consider the age of your child and whether you have other pets in the home already. If you have children under the age of five, many experts recommend waiting until a small dog is at least 6 to 10 months old before bringing him home, as small dogs tend to be really tiny as puppies and could be injured easily [source: Palika].In this article, you'll learn about five popular small-breed picks for families and what makes these tiny dogs top dogs.This small but sprightly breed might look like a miniature Doberman pinscher with his black and brown coat, cropped ears and docked tail, but don't let his looks fool you. This canine isn't directly related to the Doberman, but instead counts the dachshund, Italian greyhound and German pinscher as its ancestors. Originally bred to hunt vermin, this dog may prefer killing squeaky toys now, but he'll still alert you to any strangers or unwelcome animals lurking nearby.Standing an average of 10 to12 inches (25 to 30 centimeters) tall at the shoulder, the Min Pin is called the "King of Toys" because of its sheer excitement for all playthings. This dog absolutely lives to play and enjoys time with children. Because of their size, Min Pins are great for apartment life -- regular games of fetch and trick-teaching sessions will provide the right amount of exercise for this breed. According to the American Kennel Club (AKC), the miniature pinscher is happiest when treated like a regular-sized pooch; while he might adore squeaky toys, don't expect him to enjoy dress up [source: AKC].Terriers are known for their high energy, and the Norfolk is no exception. If you love terrier breeds but want a small one, the Norfolk might be the perfect option because he's one of the smallest of the group. According to the AKC, Norfolk terriers grow to be about 9 to 10 inches (22 to 25 centimeters) tall at the shoulder and only weigh around 11 pounds (4.9 kilograms) as an adult, with females often being even smaller than males [source: AKC]. Although this terrier is tiny, his energy and love of people is super-sized.Norfolks are native to England, where they were originally kept to hunt rats on farms. Although they remain favored farmhands, most Norfolks enjoy an easy-going life with a family and adapt well to most types of homes. Members of this breed will be loyal to their entire brood, not showing preference for one family member over another, and will generally accept other animals and strangers with ease. The Norfolk terrier is also very affectionate and will be happy just hanging around with his family.Originating in China, this breed's name translates to "lion," which is apt for a critter created to provide companionship and act as a watchdog for royals during the Ming dynasty. Today, this silky-haired canine continues to rule as one of the most popular breeds in the U.S., and while he's more dog than lion these days, he still retains those qualities that made him so prized thousands of years ago [source: AKC].According to the American Shih Tzu Club, members of this breed love being social and enjoy traveling, too. He has a sweet disposition, but might bark or growl if he feels threatened. Weighing around 9 to 16 pounds (4 to 7 kilograms), the shih tzu is most recognizable for its long locks, but don't let the high-maintenance hairdo scare you. With small children and hectic schedules, many shih tzu owners keep their dogs' coats in a simple, close-cropped puppy cut, which makes upkeep easier. This breed requires little exercise and will make a friendly companion canine for most families.If there is one word to describe the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, it might be "adaptable." Averaging 12 to 13 inches (30 to 33 centimeters) in height to the shoulder and around 13 to 18 pounds (5.8 to 8 kilograms) when fully grown, the Cav is an excellent option for families with children or other animals because of its easy-going demeanor. This small breed got its name from King Charles II of England, who had a penchant for the elegant pooch. Since its reign as royal pup, the Cav has been a top choice for many families, has excelled in the dog show ring and made its mark in popular culture as Charlotte York's dog on the cable television series "Sex and the City."Although Cavs are alert and might bark at strangers approaching the door, they're more apt to lick an intruder than attempt to take a bite out of him. According to the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club of America, this breed enjoys being around family and playing with children, and tends to bond easily with new people [source: CKCSC]. Cavaliers also do well with other dogs and even cats. They are energetic, but will adapt to most households from small apartments to large farms. This breed does need some exercise -- at least one walk per day -- but the laid-back Cav will be happy curling up for a nap with you, too.The distinguished-looking miniature schnauzer can appear quite serious with his salt-and-pepper coat, pronounced eyebrows and voluminous beard, but this wiry terrier is a lively pet that's considered extremely intelligent and easy to train, making him an excellent choice for most families.Standing about 12 to 14 inches (30 to 35 centimeters) at the shoulder, this handsome dog originated in Germany. Classically employed on farms to keep vermin away from crops, he's naturally loyal and protective of those he loves. This breed will alert you with lots of barking when someone comes to your door, but that's about as far as his guard dog tendencies go -- he's typically cheerful and happy to make new friends. The AKC says miniature schnauzers adapt well to most living spaces, including small apartments, so long as they get regular exercise and a daily dose of playtime.How Dog Parks Workflow Dogs Workflow to Care for a DogHow to Choose a DogAmerican Kennel Club, "Cavalier King Charles Spaniel," (August 7, 2011) Kennel Club, "Miniature Pinscher," (August 7, 2011) Kennel Club, "Miniature Schnauzer," (August 7, 2011) Kennel Club, "Norfolk Terrier," (August 7, 2011) Kennel Club, "Shih tzu," (August 7, 2011) Norfolk Terrier Association, (August 5, 2011) Shih Tzu Club, (August 5, 2011) King Charles Spaniel Club, (August 5, 2011) Pinscher Club of America, (August 7, 2011) Liz, "The Howell Book of Dogs: The Definitive Reference to 300 Breeds and Varieties" Wiley Publishing, 2007. Just because a breed of dog is categorized as "toy" doesn't mean it wants to be treated like a toy by your rambunctious 3-year-old. That's why, if you're in the market for a toy breed and you have children, it's a good idea to research the temperament of these lightweight pooches. Which breed of dog will remain patient while little Isabella dresses it in her baby doll's clothes? If Aiden wraps his arms around this breed of dog, will it lick him or will it nip him? Or worse -- because it's so small -- will it break?Generally, the Maltese is described as fearless, vigorous and a little tougher than it looks. It stands just between 5 and 8 inches (12.7 and 20.3 centimeters) tall and weighs between 4 and 7 pounds (1.8 and 3.1 kilograms) [source: Palika]. Maltese are very social and playful. A true-to-the-breed Maltese will bask in being the center of attention, and as an added plus, this type of dog loves to be snuggled and held. Like many tiny dogs, the Maltese is notoriously difficult to houstrain, and it's a companion dog, meaning it prefers to be with its owner rather than left alone for long periods. The Maltese requires a grooming regimen; its long white locks should be brushed daily, or else they'll become matted. It doesn't need tons of vigorous exercise -- a daily walk and some playtime will suffice [source: Palika].When making a decision about whether a Maltese will make a good member of your family, you should first consider the age of your children and their levels of rambunctiousness. Often, breeders simply won't sell a Maltese puppy to a family with small children because the puppies are so tiny and fragile that a small child who plays too rough could accidentally harm the animal [source: Palika]. On the other hand, while the Maltese may be physically delicate, it possesses a patient temperament [source: Yamazaki]. Because of this gentleness (it's considered the gentlest of the smallest dogs), along with its playful nature and its fluffy-white-lapdog persona, it's often described as a good family dog and a good companion for children, particularly older children who know how to handle it carefully [source: Marthastewart.com].Another of the Maltese's family-friendly traits is that it's typically safe for allergy sufferers. Although many people assume they're allergic to dog hair or fur, it's often the dander produced by the dog that's the problem. Dander is sort of like dandruff -- dry skin that flakes off, becomes airborne, and is an allergen. No dog is completely allergen-free (or hypollergenic), but some breeds definitely cause less sneezing and watery eyes for those who suffer from allergies. The Maltese produces a smaller amount of dander than most other breeds of dogs, which means fewer allergens in the air. To reduce the amount of dander further, brush the Maltese's long white mane on a daily basis.For more on dogs breeds and other perplexing pet questions, visit the links on the next page. Home Topics Pets DogsEvery editorial product is independently selected, though we may be compensated or receive an affiliate commission if you buy something through our links. Ratings and prices are accurate and items are in stock as of time of publication. 1 / 13South_agency/Getty ImagesDogs love to play, so it makes sense that their owners tend to collect dog toys. According to a survey by online financial marketplace LendEDU, of the \$158 your average dog owner shells out per month on their furry friend, 13 percent (or approximately \$20) goes toward toys.Every dollar spent can feel like a gamble. Will your dog like it? And is it really safe for your dog? Read on for six toy categories you would do well to skip, plus six alternatives that are worth the expense. 2 / 13Arnon Mungyodklang / EyeEm/Getty ImagesIt's a classic option, but not a super safe one: The American Kennel Club says tennis balls are bad for dogs.Dogs with strong jaws can easily break the tennis ball, and potentially choke on the rubber that breaks off. On top of that, the felt abrades a dog's teeth like sandpaper and can wear them down, leading to dental problems like exposed tooth pulp and difficulty chewing. Look for more durable dog toys instead. 3 / 13via amazon.comIt's just what you and your dog look for in a ball -- great for tossing and catching on land or water, with or without a ball-thrower.The West Paw Jive Ball's lop-sided shape gives it an unpredictable bounce that keeps dogs guessing. Best of all, it's extra durable and dog-safe. It's made from a proprietary blend of Food and Drug Administration-compliant, latex-free plastic that's dishwasher-safe, too.Shop Now 4 / 13Reto Fuerst / EyeEm/Getty ImagesChewing on real sticks is dangerous for dogs. Wood splinters easily when chewed and the shards can cut into the dog's mouth, causing bleeding or infection. And if your dog swallows those pieces, they can turn into intestinal blockages. 5 / 13via amazon.comEnter the Benebone Maplestick/Bacon Dog Chew Toy. Made with a super-tough nylon and real, natural maple wood, it's a safer, longer-lasting version of the real thing. The real maple-wood flavor keeps pups occupied for hours, and the Y-shaped ends make it easier to grab and hold."One of our dogs has a mouth like a steel trap and will demolish most chews in a few bites, but the Benebone will last!" says one Amazon reviewer.Shop Now 6 / 13GK Hart/Vicky Hart/Getty ImagesThe Humane Society recommends reading a toy's label to spot dangerous fillings, citing nutshells and polystyrene beads as two to avoid.Keep in mind, however, that even "safe" stuffings aren't truly digestible and can get stuck in a dog's teeth or throat. And sure, some dogs can safely pass polyester filling. But should it get stuck internally, it can stop the digestive process, leading to expensive surgery. If left untreated, complete intestinal blockages can result in death. Make your own stuffed toys for dogs so you know exactly what's inside. 7 / 13via amazon.comSkinny Peltz contain no stuffing so there's no concern or mess if your dog chews through the fabric. They're great for dogs of all sizes, whether they prefer fetching or snuggling it."My toy pooodle puppy loves these. They were recommended by the breeder because they have no stuffing she could choke on," says one Amazon reviewer. "She loves to play fetch and tug of war with them."Shop Now 8 / 13Jessica Peterson/Getty ImagesDogs are exponentially tougher on their toys than children, something the makers of kid toys don't account for. Not only are they often easy for dogs to dismantle, they contain stuffing, beads or plastic parts that can cut gums or cause blockages if ingested. 9 / 13via amazon.comThere's a reason veterinarians and trainers recommend the Kong Dog Toy. It provides physical and mental stimulation by encouraging healthy play and satisfying instinctual needs, especially for dogs determined to chew.Stuff the durable shell with any combo of kibble and dog-friendly foods, like peanut butter. Figuring out how to get at every last bit should keep your dog busy for hours, especially if you freeze it first. The Kong is easy to clean, too -- just pop it in the dishwasher.Shop Now 10 / 13Tetiana Garkusha/Getty ImagesMany dogs instinctively hunt and destroy the source of the squeaking in squeaky toys. That plastic squeaker floats around loosely in many inexpensive toys, creating a real choking hazard if your dog succeeds in its quest.Monitor your dog when playing with these toys. Stick with toys that tout a durable squeaker, or choose a more durable toy altogether. 11 / 13via amazon.comPlanet Dog Squeak Ball's patent-pending squeaker is securely molded into the center of the ball, designed to thwart even the most aggressive chewer. It's made in the U.S. out of a non-toxic and phthalate-free material that's been infused with a little peppermint oil.Shop Now 12 / 13Iulia Zavalishina/Getty ImagesIf your dog habitual destroys toys, they'll likely end up swallowing the fallout. And while dogs can pass most foreign objects, rope is different.If a long strand gets stuck in the stomach with the other half in the intestines, it can cinch the digestive system like a drawstring and cause life-threatening problems. Even if your dog only eats small pieces of rope at a time, the strands can slowly create an obstruction, like hairs collecting in a shower drain. 13 / 13via amazon.comAll but indestructible, GoughNuts are an excellent toy for any dog who loves to tug, especially big, aggressive chewers. Their figure-eight design allows you to grip one ring while your pup bites down on the other, keeping your hands safe from that powerful bite! It comes in a nine-inch and 11-inch sizes to fit all kinds of tuggers."I have a 70-pound pitbull and a 14.5 pound Italian Greyhound/MinPin. They both love this thing!" writes one Amazon reviewer. "They are both pretty big on chewing things in half and there isn't a single mark in this thing after a few months."Shop Now Originally Published: October 28, 2020 Complete DIY projects like a pro! Sign up for our newsletter!

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