Guide dogs for kids: expectations of stakeholders

Jennifer Gravrok
Outline

- Benefits guide dogs provide adults
- Six main benefits adolescents are expected to receive
- Where organizations should go from here
Guide Dogs for Adults

• How do guide dogs assist?
• Physical challenges
  – Guide around objects
  – Stop at curbs
  – Walk in a straight line
Guide Dogs for Adults

- How do guide dogs assist?
- Social challenges
  - Companionship
  - People like dogs
  - Social catalyst
Guide Dogs for Adults

- How do guide dogs assist?
- Psychological challenges
  - Self-esteem
  - Control
  - Quality of Life
Thriving

Having the ability to grow and flourish

- Individual characteristics
  - Behavioural skills
  - Individual strengths
  - Emotional engagement

- Contextual factors
  - Community participation
  - Interdependent relationships
  - Resources
Service Dogs for Children

- Traditionally the majority of service dog organizations did not work with children
- Facilitated Service Dog
  - Parent has primary responsibility
Guide Dogs Victoria

- “Guide Dogs 101” camp
- Participants
  - 4 Adolescents
  - 5 Parents
  - 6 Camp Instructors
  - 3 other GDV staff
- Explore expectations and benefits adolescents are expected to receive with a guide dog.
Benefit 1: Mobility

1. Mobility

2. Safety

3. Confidence

• Increase physical mobility
  – Speed
  – Smooth

• Increase freedom of movement/travel
Benefit 2: Safety

1. Mobility
2. Safety
3. Confidence

- Actual safety
  - Hurt themselves less

- Perceived safety
  - Feel less vulnerable
Benefit 3: Confidence

- Confidence in mobility
- Self-confidence
Benefit 4: Independence

• Less reliance on others
• Motivation to be independent
Benefit 5: Companionship

- Strong relationship/bond
- Unconditional love
- Less lonely
Benefit 6: Social

- Family challenges
- Teacher-student relationship
- Peer interaction
- Positive interaction with strangers
How does this compare?

• Expected benefits align with reported:
  – challenges visually impaired adolescents face
  – benefits adult guide dog users experience

• Benefits contribute to thriving
  – Contextual factors: social, companionship
  – Individual characteristics: confidence, independence
Connections between benefits

- Mobility
- Independence
- Actual Safety
- Felt Safety
- Confidence
- Social Interactions
- Companionship
Connections between benefits

- Physical Benefits
  - Mobility
  - Independence
  - Actual Safety
  - Felt Safety
  - Confidence
  - Social Interactions
  - Companionship

Trained
Connections between benefits

- Physical Benefits
- Psychological Benefits
- Social Benefits

Untrained

Trained

Mobility
Independence
Actual Safety
Felt Safety
Confidence
Social Interactions
Companionship
Connections between benefits

- Mobility
- Independence
- Actual Safety
- Felt Safety
- Confidence
- Social Interactions
- Companion
Connections between benefits

- Companionship
- Social Interactions
- Confidence
- Felt Safety
- Actual Safety
- Independence
- Mobility

- Mobility
- Independence
- Actual Safety
- Felt Safety
- Confidence
- Social Interactions
- Companion
Connections between benefits

Diagram showing connections between benefits such as companionship, social interactions, confidence, felt safety, actual safety, independence, and mobility. The diagram illustrates the hierarchical nature of these benefits, with companionship at the top and mobility at the bottom. The connections are indicated by arrows, showing how each benefit is linked to the ones above and below it in the hierarchy.
Connections between benefits

Guide Dog

Support Dog

Companionship
Social Interactions
Confidence
Felt Safety
Actual Safety
Independence
Mobility

Mobility
Independence
Actual Safety
Felt Safety
Confidence
Social Interactions
Companion
Benefits

- Dog cared for by adult
- Adolescent develops better skills
- Increase education
- Manage expectations
- Provide benefits
  - Enable thriving
Considerations

- What happens to the support dog when they get a guide dog?
- Should support dogs have public access rights?
  - School access?
- Where do organizations draw the line between guide dog and support dog?
- Who is eligible for a support dog?
What does this mean?

- For guide dog organizations
  - No additional/different training for the dog
  - No changes to breeding
  - Ability to use failed and retired guide dogs

- For adolescents with vision impairment and their families
  - Increase early education
  - Increase family involvement
  - Provide support dog until able to have a guide dog
What Next?

- Reframe the conceptualization of guide dogs
- Provide adolescents failed guide dogs as support dogs
- Guide dog organizations should not deny adolescents a guide dog due to age
  - Assess on adult criteria and family support.
Thanks for your attention!

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j.gravrok@latrobe.edu.au