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ENG 100

Assignment #3: I-Search Paper

12/11/14

It’s more beneficial to have pets with baby.

**Section 1:** I chose this topic for several reasons. First, I had a pet when I was young and I had her for pretty long time, until we put her down by euthanasia. When I grew up with my pet, I felt many benefits of having pets from childhood to adult. I had her about 16 years, I adapted her when I was really young because I am only child in my family and my mom and dad were both worked every day, therefore they didn’t want me to stay home lonely. And actually that helped me a lot. When I talked with my friends who are also only kid but grew up without pets. They said they felt lonely when they were in home, alone. After I got a white Maltese for my first pet, I start to get interest in animals and that led me to think of being a veterinarian. My dog taught me the preciousness of other living organism, how to approach to the animals, how to talk with them, and even gave me more choice for the future job. Second, this topic is actually a big discussion issue in my country because we don’t have a good and stable concept of pet as a “member or part of family.” It’s changed a lot these days, because people start to have time and money to raise pets and that lead to know more about pets. But still many people think that pets bring germs and disease from their fur and behavior as rolling on the ground. Therefore they think if they have their baby, especially newborn infants, with dogs and cats then that can lead to fur allergy or some kinds of other disease to baby. And that make them to abandon their pets that they had, and it’s actually one of the reason of raising percentage of abandoned pets on the street in South Korea. Third, I read articles and researches that prove when family with baby have pets, it bring good beneficial effects to the baby and the whole family. Therefore, I wanted to argue and provide information to people who think it’s not really healthy and brings more negative effect than beneficial effect to have pets with baby. For this research paper, I will find the informations through the websites that’s trustworthy or by the experts, gather the evidences from the articles, and add my experiences to persuade people to not throw their pets away and have misunderstanding about having pets with babies.

**Section 2:** I went to the New York Times website to find the articles that’s related with my topic. I searched with “baby and pets” and I found the article named “Can Fido and Whiskers Enrich Children’s Lives?” by Perri Klass, M.D. It was published at April 9, 2012. She’s a pediatrician and I thought that provides the credibility of the author as expert. In this article, she says that dogs and cats gives many beneficial effect to kids. Second article’s name is “The benefits of Pets,” by Bill Strickland. It’s copyright at 2008, and there was no specific written date. I found this article from Parents Magazine website. And last article’s name is “How pets benefit child development.” And the subtitle is “The pet program.” I found this article at website named “SheKnows.” It’s written at September 28, 2007 by the “Sheknows media.” They didn’t wrote specific author for this article. When I try to find articles, I went to the popular websites as “New York Times” and “The Washington Post.” I found one article in “New York Times” but I couldn’t find any good article at “The Washington Post.” Because even though they have many good articles about pets if the article doesn’t relate with my topic, then it is useless for me. Therefore I google searched “baby and pets” to see what articles they have. And I look for the website or author does have credibility or not. When I think the article contains good informations and evidences that prove the authors opinion, then I choose the article, print out and read. During the reading, I find the thesis statement and important information that I need for my research paper. Then I underlined them or mark star next to the paragraph if the whole paragraph is important. After I’m done with reading and marking the article, I open the Microsoft word and start to write what informations are contained in each articles. Simply, I reorganize and summarize the article by my own strategy. And I start to write my opinion and provide good evidences from experts.

**Section 3:** My topic is “Is it actually unhealthy for babies, when you have pets in house with them?” I think when we have baby with pets, it’s actually healthier and we get other positive effect, too. My first question is “Does pet occur allergy to the baby?” The reason why I chose this question is, because this question is a big discussion issue in Korea. Also this is one of the reason of raising percentage of abandoned pets. Many people think that pets are one of the source of germs and it will affect their children. However, Dennis Ownby, MD, a pediatrician and head of the allergy and immunology department of the Medical College of Georgia, found out that having many pets actually decreases a child’s risk of developing certain allergies. He tracked a group of 474 babies from birth to age 7. Through his research the children who were with two or more dogs or cats were less than half as likely to develop common allergies as kids who had no pets in the home (Parents magazine). Therefore the belief that people had as “babies with pets are dangerous because of the germs and allergy developing” is actually false.

Also in South Korea, they didn’t have a stable concept for pets as “the member of family” until few years. One of the big reason is that elder people still think dogs are animal for house protection, not a pet. Why? Because elder people didn’t had much experience with pets in their childhood that lead them to think pet is just an animal, not a member of family. That belief was passed down through the generations and made their children, our parent generation, to think the pets are not equally important as family. And that lead to the reason why many people still think they can or should abandon pets when they have children. Another reason why people abandon their pets when they have their children is because they don’t know that pets can give positive effects to their children. One of the positive effect that pets can give to children is “united family.” In the study of Gail F. Melson, emerita professor of human development and family studies at Perdue, the animals can help families grow stronger and closer (Parents magazine). Because pets focus on activities that family can do together such as walking, grooming, and fetch. And when Dr. Melson asked “Is your pets are truly part of the family?” to family with pets, most of them answered as “Of course they are!”

And pets are also can be a good source of comfort for children. From my personal experience, when I was at home without my dog, I was bored and annoyed. Because I just kept watching television or Disney movies and waiting for my parents. However after I got a dog, I got excited when I’m coming home from school, even though my parents are not in home, and couldn’t wait to tell my stories to my dog. I hugged her and talk about my friends and school. Also I told her about my worries and troubles that I couldn’t tell others. Even though my dog can’t give answers or advices, this just made me to get my stress-free and feel much better and comfortable. She gave me the feeling that I have somebody to talk about anything without worry and she’ll listen without any judge. And Dr. Melson and Dr. Jalongo’s study shows what I felt from my experience is right. Dr. Melson asked a group of 5 years old pet owners what they did when they felt sad, angry, afraid or when they had a secrets to share. And more than 40 percent spontaneously mentioned turning to their pets (Parents magazine). Mary Renck Jalongo, Ph.D, education professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and author of The World of Children and Their Companion Animals. Dr. Jalongo said when the researchers monitored children’s stress levels when they read something in front of peer, an adult, and a dog. They found that kids were most relaxed around the animals, not in front of human (Parents magazine). I think this can be a good effect for the babies. Because when they are young, parents are always with them but when the baby grow up, their parents can’t always be with them. Therefore they can be with pets and feel comfortable and not worry or afraid.

If we get into the physical part, “pets provide an impetus for running and practicing motor skills,” says Sheryl Dickstein, Ph.D, Director of Humane Education for the ASPCA (Sheknows.com). Such as walking a dog or throwing ball to play fetch is to play with the dogs. However this can be a good way to start to learn exercise. This can lead the child to practice sports skills and enjoy the exercise itself at the same time. Also since so many children struggling with obesity, dog-walking is being investigated as a strategy to increase exercise in children (New York Times). Rebecca Johnson, director of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction at the University of the Missouri, said “this is highly motivating physical activity, when children walk with a dog.” These facts are support that pets are affect to the children’s physical part. They can help them to be healthier, learn and practice sports skills, and even help to treat the children with obesity.

In conclusion, the pets are not the source of germs and allergy, therefore it’s not dangerous and according to the study, they actually help to grow the immune system of baby. Therefore they can get better immune system and less allergy than other babies who raised without pets. Also the pets can be good source of comforts for the kids to be relax and stress-free. Pets can help the children to exercise and practice their physical skills. Through the exercise with pets, children can prevent obesity. When family get pets they can be more united, too. Because pets provide works that family can do together, such as walking, grooming, and playing fetch. Therefore I think raising baby with pet is actually healthy and it gives more positive effect that can affect to the children’s future.

**Section 4:** When I start this research paper, I thought it will be easy research because I like this topic and I used to think that I want to do research with this topic if I have a chance. And actually it wasn’t hard to find the articles that supports my bias. However, when I started my paper, it was really hard that I don’t even know where to start. I read the professor’s outline over and over to start the paper. To start my paper, first I looked through my articles to see what supports that I underlined and marked. When I read the supports, I summarize them on my notes, and if I find the supports that contain similar topics then I write down them together. Also I try to find the rhetorical analysis from each articles. After I’m done with write on my own notes, I start to follow the outline and write my topic, bias, opposing views, and supports. Throughout my research, I found there’s many positive effect of pets that I didn’t know. Also I found different misunderstandings that people have, about pets and baby, to write opposing views. I think my experience of having pets helped me to get motivate in this topic and made me more enthusiastic to write the paper. I felt that I get to know more about this topic through this research and realize that it is not easy to write a good research paper. My suggestion for the future research is “what kind of pet is good for the children and how each kinds can help the children when they grow up?”

References

Can Fido and Whiskers Enrich Children’s Lives? – Perri Klass, M.D. (2012)

The Benefits of Pets – Parents Magazine (2008)

How pets benefit child development – Sheknows.com (2007)