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## Use care in deciding if a pet is right as gift

Continued from Preceding Page

child promised to do if only he got his puppy. A parent often gets stuck with the work.

Decide on the purpose of the pet. Whether you want a pet for companionship, show or therapy also are important considerations in making a choice.

A child can learn just as much about the responsibility of caring for another living thing with a gerbil or a turtle as he can with a big dog. But a dog will provide its owner with a great deal of love and affection — a factor that's important for those who live alone or are withdrawn or unhappy.

Maintain a consistent life-style for the pet. Once you've chosen a pet, maintain a normal schedule for it even though the family is on a holiday schedule. You want to avoid a sudden, drastic change when work and school resume.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS** tend to last. Have a puppy experience quiet, rest and play periods or it may be Christmas crazy year-round. Don't



force a puppy onto visitors or guests if it doesn't approach them on its own. You don't want the dog resenting or fearing people.

Finally, consider future holiday plans. If you can't or don't want to take your pet with you on vacations, plan alternatives for its care and keeping while you are away. Whether it's a kennel or a friend's home for a dog, or a cat, or a neighbor to look in on the fish once a day, these are plans you should think about before you own a pet.

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