

# PAWS FOR KIDS

## Animal Assisted Interventions for DCF Children



### Target Population

- *DCF involved children;*
- *Ages 3-18;*
- *In Foster Care/Relative or Kinship Care (priority given to recent removal or struggling and at risk of foster home removal), or;*
- *Placed at Solnit North or South;*
- *Does not have a history of aggression towards people or animals;*
- *Any disclosed history of aggression towards animals must undergo an assessment (Husky paid) to determine if the child can safely be around animals;*
- *Children must be willing and have an interest in participating in the AAI program;*
- *Children must be in a foster or relative/kin home where the caretaker is willing to be involved in the program (some flexibility to this with SW involvement)*
- *Transportation must be provided by the foster parent or DCF social worker.*

### Service Components

- *8 – one hour sessions in a community location*
- *The dog and handler are present at each session (along with foster parent/DCF social worker);*
- *After safety/respect rules are taught, the child will be allowed physical contact with the animal at each session;*
- *Each session will incorporate an educational component to build skills and confidence. (Safety, body language, care, welfare, training, animals in nature, breeds);*
- *Each session will incorporate empathy building (care activities: grooming, walking, feeding, etc.) to enhance the child's empathy for animals.*
- *The handler will be documenting observations of each session to measure the child's emotional reactions, empathy demonstrated, and skills learned. Documentation of each session will be emailed each week to the DCF social worker.*
- *Each AAI handler will be supervised by a clinician/MSW AAI provider with extensive years in the AAI field.*

Contact Diane Rosell at [diane.rosell@ct.gov](mailto:diane.rosell@ct.gov) for more information