

## Emotional Support / Service Animals Helpful Links & Resources

Many Nephrotic Syndrome patients benefit from owning an emotional support or service animal, yet knowing how to start that process or determining whether your child is eligible can be confusing and often challenging. While we don't endorse any of these resources or approaches in particular, we offer the following resources and links to consider and assess in determining whether this may be right for your child.

There are three general categories of working animals:

1. **Therapy Animals**
  2. **Emotional Support Animals**
  3. **Service Animals (Dogs)**
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### Therapy Animals

Therapy Animals are not owned by a patient but by others. They are extensively trained and certified to be brought into public places to provide comfort to those in need.

Many communities offer Therapy Dog programs that can be hired for use allowing the Therapy Dog(s) time and space to provide emotional comfort. These dogs can be seen in various schools, camps, hospitals, and assisted care settings.

Additional Therapy Dog information:

**Therapy Dogs for Visits to Facilities:** [www.therapydogs.com/](http://www.therapydogs.com/)

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### Emotional Support Animals (ESA)

Emotional Support Animals are probably the most common category of support animals. They do not typically require specific training beyond what is expected from proper pet behavior in a home. Their primary purpose is to offer a calming presence that can provide patients with comfort and reduce anxiety.

While accommodations for those who have an ESA are less extensive than those within the Service Animal category, there are several protected benefits related to having an ESA. For example, families may be eligible for special accommodations to allow an ESA if they are renting a home or apartment which does not typically allow pets. There may even be accommodation for students attending school / living in student housing.

To have an ESA, you must have a written note from your licensed physician or therapist (on their letterhead) stating the benefit of an ESA. Typically, the document is good for one year from the date stated and will need to be available for your landlord or place of business. It is important to look into your state's laws before proceeding with an ESA.

**For patients attending college:** Students may have legal rights that provide for an ESA to live in a dorm room; however, they do not necessarily have allowances to take their ESA on the entire campus. Patients may be restricted to specific dorms or rooms (such as individual rooms only). Each college has its own process for obtaining permission to have an ESA and related accommodations. Please contact your college's administrative office for more information and specific guidance.

*Note: As of 2023, Emotional Support Dogs are no longer allowed to fly for free.*

Additional ESA information:

**Legal rights according to the American Disability Act:**

[www.ada.gov/topics/service-animals/](http://www.ada.gov/topics/service-animals/)

**Sample Letter to Provide to Housing Provider:**

[www.disabilityrightsc.org/publications/fact-sheet-rights-to-assistance-animals-in-housing](http://www.disabilityrightsc.org/publications/fact-sheet-rights-to-assistance-animals-in-housing)

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## Service Dogs

Service Dogs are the highest level of support animal with the most extensive accommodations. They are usually highly trained and are considered "medical equipment." These animals can accompany their handlers nearly anywhere.

There are two types of Service Dogs: Physical and Psychiatric.

A Physical Service Dog assists people with a physical disability by performing a specific task (i.e., opening a door, turning on the lights, pulling a wheelchair, etc.).

A Psychiatric Service Dog assists people with mental illnesses such as PTSD, social phobias, anxiety, etc.

**For patients attending college:** There are laws protecting the rights of students to have a Service Dog on campus and live with the patient in a dorm room.

Additional Service Dog information:

**Service Animals:** [adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/basics](http://adata.org/service-animal-resource-hub/basics)

**Service Dogs:** [canine.org/service-dogs/is-a-dog-right-for-you/](http://canine.org/service-dogs/is-a-dog-right-for-you/) AND [www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/service-dog-training-101/](http://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/service-dog-training-101/)

**Service Dog (Flying with):**

[upgradedpoints.com/travel/airlines/ultimate-guide-to-service-dogs-on-planes/](http://upgradedpoints.com/travel/airlines/ultimate-guide-to-service-dogs-on-planes/)

**Service Dog (Training):** [www.certapet.com/how-to-train-a-psychiatric-service-dog/](http://www.certapet.com/how-to-train-a-psychiatric-service-dog/)  
AND [www.servicedogtutor.com/](http://www.servicedogtutor.com/)