



**PET CERTIFICATION**  
**SUMMARY OF INITIAL EVALUATION ITEMS**  
**Cats**

The following 11 tests must be passed without overt display of inappropriate behavior. Inappropriate behaviors include but are not limited to: excessive growling, hissing, biting, clawing, efforts to flee from handler or evaluator, urination/defecation and/or excessive vocalization, and/or two or more of the following: raised fur, flattened ears, stiff-legged posture.

1. APPROACH VARIATION \_\_\_\_\_

Cat sits in handler's lap or is held in handler's arms while a person moves towards them in each of the following manners:

- Approaches quickly or at a fast pace
- Approaches with an unsteady gait
- Approaches from behind.

2. EXAMINATION/PETTING/HUGGING \_\_\_\_\_

Cat is touched in a variety of ways and from a variety of approaches by both the handler and the evaluator. This test will include being picked up and placed back down. Evaluator will hug the cat. Pet remains in handler's arms while evaluator approaches and performs the following:

- Vigorous petting
- Patting on top of head
- Tugging of fur/hair
- Gentle examination by hand of ears, eyes, mouth, tail and paws/feet

3. ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRACTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

Cat is presented with the following distractions to simulate occurrences possible in the therapy/visitation environment:

- Person wearing hat
- Dropped crutch
- Beeper
- Person yelling loudly

#### 4. INTRODUCTION TO ANOTHER ANIMAL \_\_\_\_\_

Cat and handler will walk towards a certified dog and handler (test team). The test dog must stay on the left side of the handler's body while the cat remains securely embraced by the handler. The pets shall not make contact with each other. Handlers will stop, exchange words for 15-30 seconds and continue forward. Cat and handler will then hold position while the test team approaches from the front, walks around, behind and then comes along side of the cat and handler keeping a distance of 3-4 feet. Test is failed if cat lunges out of handler's control in an attempt to flee or attack the other animal. One of the following must be selected:

- \_\_\_ Complete Tolerance:      Friendly, playful, calm or lack of response
- \_\_\_ Limited Tolerance:      Resolvable fear, some stress and/or restrained negative behavior that can be brought under the handler's control within 2-5 seconds and does not repeat
- \_\_\_ Zero Tolerance:      Irresolvable fear, stress, or negative behavior that cannot be brought under the control of the handler within 5 seconds, or that repeats

#### 5. MEDICAL ARTICLES \_\_\_\_\_

Cat will be presented with medical articles that he or she might encounter during a pet visit. These will include crutches and/or a walker and wheelchair. Evaluator or evaluator's assistant will use apparatus while approaching the cat. Handlers will be required to either place cat on a towel in evaluator's lap while evaluator sits in the wheelchair, or handler will hold animal in arms, close enough for evaluator to reach for petting.

#### 6. INTEREST IN INTERACTION \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator will approach and pet cat in handler's arms or animal will be placed in evaluator's lap/embrace. Cat must tolerate the interaction without attempts at withdrawals to include head turning, head ducking, motion to move away from evaluator's touch.

#### 7. COMFORT IN A CROWD \_\_\_\_\_

Cat will be in close proximity to at least three people or two people and one dog who will interact with each other in the presence of the pet, surrounding the pet at times.

#### 8. APPEARANCE \_\_\_\_\_

Cat must not have any of the following conditions:

- Long nails
- Dirty or mangy coat
- Signs of rashes or any other skin condition

#### 9. QUIET TIME \_\_\_\_\_

Cat will sit on handler's lap or be held in handler's embrace for a period of 3 minutes. During this time cat must be relatively quiet and calm. This test can be conducted during the period where the evaluator reviews information with the handler.

## 10. HANDLER CONTROL \_\_\_\_\_

Handler must show ability to control his/her cat by maintaining possession of the cat at all times and displaying constant awareness of where his/her cat is. The following are not permitted at any time during the evaluation:

- Cat jumps out of handler's embrace and handler does not gain immediate repossession
- Cat remains in handler's embrace but constantly struggles to get away
- Cat physically attacks another animal

## 11. TOLERANCE OF COLLAR & LEAD \_\_\_\_\_

All cats are required to be secured by a harness or collar and a 4-6 foot leash. Cat must show no signs of struggling to get out of the harness or collar.

If your dog or cat does not successfully pass the initial evaluation after three attempts, we require that you take a six-month break to obtain documented, professional training before being retested. [View our listed or recommended pet trainers.](#)