



Stress



How pets can reduce stress and anxiety

We all know that stroking a pet feels nice, but did you know that it's scientifically proven to feel good?

Studies have shown that when we stroke or cuddle a pet that oxytocin (our happy hormone) is released in our bodies which has the direct effect of lowering our anxiety and reducing stress, alongside other feel good hormones - **serotonin and dopamine**.

This is great news for adopted children moving into a new home with a pet. Although moving to a forever home with a new family is really exciting for children,

especially if they have been waiting some time, it can also be a time of real stress too.

The fear of the unknown, wanting to be accepted and loved and fearful if it doesn't happen, being unsure of the rules and also the stress of leaving family members or a much loved foster carer can all add to feelings of anxiety extremes between highs and lows in mood.

If a new adoptive home has a pet, they can become a go to for a child when they are feeling overwhelmed. The act of sitting calmly and stroking a cat, dog or rabbit can help



the body to calm itself and provide a calm outlet for a child to feel less stress and more secure.

It's this that can lead to children forming attachments to pets more quickly than to adults.

Not all children have the capacity to sit calmly with a pet and supervision is always needed.

For all the benefits pets may provide, there are **things to consider** when adopting a child when you have pets or our considering a pet post adoption.

