

80% of rabbits surrendered to Rescue is because the rabbit was purchased for a child!

'The child will not look after it, the child has lost interest'

Young children can lose interest within a week of purchase, with older children it is often when they reach their teenage years and want to spend time pursuing hobbies and friends. Experience has shown that the attention span of the child with a rabbit is fleetingly short.

Your child may want a rabbit now, but will they still want the rabbit for the next 10 to 12 years? The answer in most cases is 'No', the novelty wears off and they want a cat or dog that is more interactive.

A family needs to consider what type of animal will best suit their lifestyle for the next 10 years. It is the parent's responsibility to teach their children about commitment to the welfare of the animal that will join their home as this animal is reliant on them for survival.



Rabbits can make fantastic house pets for the family and can live up to 12 years. Rabbits come with a long list of responsibilities and commitments that need to be considered.

Rabbit Reality Check

- Unlike cats and dogs, rabbits are prey animals.
- If a rabbit is afraid or nervous their instinct is a flight or fight (bite) response to protect themselves.
- They do not like to be picked up, which they associate with a predator getting them.
- They can scuffle and scratch to get away.
- They grow quickly and develop their temperaments by 3 to 6 months.
- They are not suited to families with children under 8 years old.
- The pet rabbit must always be protected from predator animals.
- They have sensitive health needs: for example, if the rabbit will not eat, it is an emergency, and will die quickly without vet intervention.
- They need a responsible adult as the primary carer to monitor their health and wellbeing.
- If you have dogs and young children, it is not a safe environment for a rabbit, as doors can be left open and the rabbit is at risk of predator attack.
- A rabbit should never be left outside unsupervised, there is a high risk of escape or being attacked and killed by predator animals.

Child Reality Check

- Children are not adults and do not have the maturity to be responsible for another living creature.
- If you would not trust your child to take care of a baby, you cannot trust your child to take care of a rabbit.
- Rabbits require careful handling and care and children do not always understand this, which is why it is important to consider your child's temperament before bringing a rabbit into your home.
- Children can sometimes be unpredictable and can create a chaotic and noisy environment that is ill suited for a rabbit to live in.
- While there are children out there who have amazing empathy and care for animals, there is still the underlying factor that children are not yet mature.
- The responsibility of owning and taking care of a rabbit or any other animal takes commitment from a responsible adult.
- If the rabbit is not monitored daily for health, it can die quickly, leaving a child traumatized.



Alternatives

Rabbits may be cute and fluffy, but they're not the same as a soft toy that can be put away when the child is finished playing with it.

So, if you're searching for a present for your child, why not consider a range of rabbit toys, such as interactive 'fur-real friends', 'little live pets' or the range of rabbit books or films. There are clothes with bunny motifs, bunny slippers, onesies and caps, or even a chocolate bunny or a big soft fluffy toy bunny. If you would like to find out more about rabbits as house pets, then you are welcome to visit a rabbit rescue with or without the family to be adequately informed.



Is a rabbit the right pet for your lifestyle?	
I can keep the rabbit inside as a house pet	I can afford vet care
The rabbit will be a family pet	As an adult, I will be the primary carer
I can control children under 8 years with the rabbit	I can monitor children and animals with the rabbit
I can separate our dog/cat from the rabbit	My children are not noisy around the rabbit
If you agree with all statements, you may be able to provide a loving home to a rescued rabbit!	