



Whether your child is headed off to college or enrolling in Kindergarten, Back-to-School season is a time of transition for the whole family - and that includes your pet! Your pet has grown used to spending more time with you this summer and abruptly changing their routine can mean sudden surprises for pet owners.

“Many issues can suddenly develop when pets are forced to find a way to entertain themselves,” said Nancy Hill, Regional Director of SCRAPS. “That can include excessive barking, chewing, growling and not using the litter box.

Here are a few tips to make the transition easier:

1. The best strategy is to avoid an abrupt change in schedule. In the weeks before school, gradually introduce your pet to short periods of separation.
2. Give your dog or cat a treat every time you leave the house to help them develop positive feelings about being alone.
3. Make sure your pet has their favorite toy or bedding before you leave.
4. Scolding or punishing your dog or cat for bad behavior could make it worse, so be patient.
5. Try to keep the schedule the same. Take your dog out at the same time in the morning/night and feed your pet at the same time each day.

6. Have your kids do something fun with the dog or cat every day.
7. Walk your dog in the morning so they are tired when you leave.
8. Depending on the dog, confinement can help. Many dogs feel safe in their crates. If they have been using one, keep using it.
9. Teach your dog a new trick! SCRAPS has free training classes every first and third Saturday of each month. It’s a great way to bond with your dog, get him exercise and deal with some of the issues you’ve been experiencing.
10. If the problems persist, schedule a visit to your vet to make sure there isn’t a physical issue.

