

Great Dane Breeder Evaluation Checklist

Your Guide to Choosing the Right Breeder for Your Family

How to Use This Checklist:

- Use this checklist to evaluate each potential breeder
- Fill out one checklist per breeder you're considering
- Compare total scores to help guide your decision
- Remember: The highest score isn't automatically the best choice for YOUR family

This checklist is specifically designed for evaluating Great Dane breeders. Other breeds have different requirements.

Breeder/Kennel Name: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Essential Requirements

Health Testing

- ☐ **Cardiac clearance** for both parents
- ☐ **Hip evaluation** (OFA preferred) for both parents
- ☐ **Thyroid testing** for both parents
- ☐ **Eye clearance** for both parents
- ☐ **Can provide documentation** or reasonable explanation for any missing clearances

Basic Breeding Standards

- ☐ **Allows you to visit** and meet the dogs
 - ☐ **Written contract** with health guarantee
 - ☐ **Lifetime support** and return policy
 - ☐ **Good reputation** in Great Dane community
 - ☐ **Asks questions** about your family and experience
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Quality Indicators (Should Have Most)

Breeding Program Excellence

- ☐ Active in breed community (dog shows, breed clubs, events)
- ☐ Can clearly explain their breeding philosophy
- ☐ Explains why they chose this specific pairing
- ☐ Can discuss pedigrees and both parents knowledgeably
- ☐ Has mentors or co-breeding relationships
- ☐ Multiple years of experience with Great Danes
- ☐ Limited number of breeds (preferably only Great Danes)
- ☐ Limited litters (1-3 litters per year)

Communication & Support

- ☐ Professional website with breeding philosophy
- ☐ Responds professionally within reasonable time
- ☐ Clear health testing information posted
- ☐ References from other families available
- ☐ Explains their puppy selection process clearly
- ☐ Provides clear information about costs and contracts

Puppy Care Standards

- ☐ Detailed socialization program including ENS (Early Neurological Stimulation)
- ☐ Helps match puppies to families based on temperament and goals
- ☐ Provides ongoing care guidance and puppy package
- ☐ Clean, safe facilities during visit
- ☐ Healthy, well-socialized adult dogs
- ☐ Can meet puppies and dam (plus discuss sire knowledgeably if unavailable)

Your Specific Goals

- ☐ Breeder has experience with your goals (showing/dog sports/therapy work, etc.)
- ☐ Can provide guidance for your interests

Note: Great Danes are not suitable for mobility service work or as heavy running companions due to joint concerns.

Bonus Excellence Markers

- ☐ Multiple generations of their own breeding
 - ☐ Participates in breed health studies or research
 - ☐ Recognition from breed organizations
 - ☐ Success in various venues (conformation, performance, therapy)
 - ☐ Mentors other breeders
 - ☐ Continuing education (seminars, research, learning)
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Red Flags

- ☐ Always has puppies available
 - ☐ Won't allow facility visits
 - ☐ Can't provide health clearances
 - ☐ No health guarantee or return policy
 - ☐ Doesn't ask questions about your family
 - ☐ Pressure tactics or "limited time" offers
 - ☐ Sells to pet stores or puppy brokers
 - ☐ Breeds multiple breeds extensively
 - ☐ Poor reputation in breed community
 - ☐ Focus on "rare" colors or "Euro lines" over standard/health/temperament
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Your Evaluation

Essential Requirements Met?

- ☐ **YES** - All essential requirements satisfied
- ☐ **NO** - Missing: _____

Suggested Overall Assessment:

Quality Indicators Assessment: Total Quality Indicators Met: _____ out of 22

- ☐ **Tier 1:** Meets all essentials + 20-22 quality indicators
 - ☐ **Tier 2:** Meets all essentials + 18-19 quality indicators
 - ☐ **Tier 3:** Missing essential requirements or under 17 quality indicators
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Your Decision

- ☐ **Move forward** with this breeder
- ☐ **Request more information** about: _____
- ☐ **Continue searching**

Why this breeder feels right (or wrong) for our family:

Key Questions to Ask This Breeder:

*Based on "The Family's Guide to Choosing a Great Dane Breeder" by 7Sisters Farm
For the complete guide: mayfieldjones.com (Last Update August 2025)*

7SISTERS