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Meet the Amazing Women Doing Double-Duty as Veterinary Students & Mothers

Becoming a DVM is hard enough on your own, but conquering veterinary school with children in tow is something else entirely. We're in awe of these amazing moms who are chasing their dreams and raising families at the same time. Read on to learn more about these seven incredible students who've mastered the art of juggling motherhood and their careers.



Name: Emily Yeckley

School: Ohio State, Class of 2023

Children: Son, 11 months

Why she chose veterinary school: "I've always loved science and discovering how/why things work the way they do (as well as helping animals and people). My mom loves to tell the story of how once when I was in middle school, our yard flooded and I found a drowned rat. To her horror, she found me dissecting it on her kitchen table. So commenced probably my first lecture on zoonotic diseases. After that, she made a point to order me more dissection kits to avoid scenarios like that again. It's been working towards veterinary school ever since, and I'm so blessed to be where I am today."



Name: Irina Perdew

School: North Carolina State, Class of 2021

Children: Anastasia, 6, and Eva, 4

How her girls have affected her schooling: "My girls gave me that second wind when I most needed it. There were days when I thought I didn't have the strength to go any further. We had difficulties finding a good nanny, and the girls' dad did not live in our state until late into my fourth year. Therefore, I had to juggle it all: the girls, the house, school, and life. Yet at the same time, having the girls is what gave me the strength to keep going. I knew I was not just doing this for myself. I'm doing it for them!"



Name: Jasmine Worthy

School: University of Arizona, Class of 2023

Children: Alexander, 2.5 years

Why she chose veterinary school: "My background is in marine biology and after an internship working with sea turtles, I knew I wanted to work with marine animals, but I wasn't sure in what capacity. I ended up becoming a licensed veterinary tech because all the jobs I wanted in zoos and aquariums required a licensed technician. After a long discussion with friends and my husband, I decided to take a chance and apply to veterinary school. Ever since, it's been the first time I've felt like I'm where I'm supposed to be."



Name: Morgan Garrow

School: University of Illinois, Class of 2024

Children: Sebastian, 1.5 years

How her son influenced her veterinary school decision: "One morning in May of 2019, I found out I was pregnant. That same afternoon, I received the call that I had been accepted to veterinary school. It was an intensely stressful and emotional time. I felt like my options were limited and that I might have to put off my goals for some time. How in the world was I going to start veterinary school and become a mom all at once? Ultimately, I was able to work out a deferral for a year, which gave me time to really transition into motherhood. I went into my first year of veterinary school as a new mom of a beautiful, 8-month-old baby."



Name: Morgan Ostwinkle Jones

School: Midwestern University, Class of 2022

Children: Denver, 3, and Sloane, 1

How the arrival of her children affected her schooling: "My second arrived in the middle of first quarter of second year – notoriously terrible timing. I had the option to take one year of maternity leave or take no time off. I elected to continue school without a break. I went back to class one week after delivery (which is not something I would recommend), and I kept all of my officer roles, continued to do dairy research, and got through all of my courses through pregnancy and post-partum. It was hard physically, mentally and other ways, but I'm proud of my little family for getting through it."



Name: Ashley

School: University of Georgia, Class of 2024

Children: Lucas, 20 months

The impact her son has had on her professional life: "My son reminds me to be present in the moment. It's sometimes difficult to set aside my to-do list or the occasional sense that I'm missing out on some veterinary school or home life, but if I don't focus on what I'm doing in the moment, I miss out on what's in front of me. So when I'm at school, I focus on learning and building friendships with classmates. When I get home and see my son smiling and waving at the door, I know it's time to put school aside and be present to my family. Some days I'm better at this than others, but Lucas motivates me to try my best."



Name: Jessica Herrig

School: St. George's University, Class of 2023

Children: Audrina, 11, Skylar, 7, and Maevry, 11 months

Who's supported her during veterinary school: "In celebration of Mother’s Day, my mom will get the first mention. She's been there supporting my goals and dreams from day one. She's always seen my potential even when I couldn't. She spent countless nights with Skylar as I built up veterinary hours for my applications, and now she spends her evenings rocking Maevry so I can get a shower. It would take a book to list all the things she has done for me and the girls."

What's one lesson you've learned from your experience as a student and a mom that you'd like to pass on to your child/children when they're older?

Ashley: "There's a quote in the Winnie the Pooh book that my husband and I read to Lucas before bed some nights. It states: 'Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.' It's served as a reminder for me of how capable I am when I feel overwhelmed or when I try to balance the student-mom life. I hope Lucas will take this quote to heart and grow up to know he's capable of achieving anything he sets his mind to, no matter how daunting the task and no matter what stands in his way."

Morgan G.: "The most eye-opening part of this whole experience for me is that I never would have thought I would have been able to accomplish what I have while pulling double duty as both a mom and veterinary student. So, no matter the obstacles and the setbacks, keep pushing for your dream and do not give up. Can you tell I use to work for Disney? It sounds cheesy but it's true!"

Jasmine: "I'd like him to know that he is the reason I decided to take a chance on myself. I wanted to show him that, no matter where you are in life, you can achieve your goals and you never know unless you take a chance. No matter where you are in life, you can always reach your goals. Don’t worry if your journey isn’t like everyone else’s. Your journey is unique to you and never doubt yourself.”

Emily: "It's never a waste to invest your time in your family. It was frustrating to take breaks from studying when (my son) was extra fussy and needed my attention more, but I realized the more time I spent with him, the more independent and confident he became. I would try to spend 2 hours vaguely paying attention to my son while trying to read/listen to a lecture, and it drove me crazy because I wasn’t being efficient at either. The same with my husband. He would ask to have meals together, and sometimes it would be frustrating because I just wanted to eat a pop-tart and go back to my work! But when I chose to protect time with him, whether it be meal times or an hour or two before bed, our relationship was strengthened. Every moment you fully give to your family enriches the life you share with them, which always gives back. Quality over quantity every time! I can always look up information, but I can never compensate for poorly spent time with them."

Irina: "Certainly, I would prefer for my girls to have an easier path and to get school done before starting a family. It is simply much easier to do veterinary school when you only have to worry about yourself. But if they end up having to restart their degree

multiple times to where it continues into their 30s, then all I can say is – do not procrastinate with your studying, and don't forget to live life!"

Jessica: "Being a mom and student isn't for the faint of heart. It takes a lot of grit and determination. But with motherhood comes a new superpower: the kind of superpower that allows you to just get things done, no matter what. If I could pass one thing on to my girls, it would be to follow your dreams and don't let anything or anybody get in your way. There will be obstacles, but there don't have to be sacrifices."

Morgan O. J.: "The number one lesson I would tell my children (and anyone else) is that there will be times that people tell you things can't be done or that it'll be too hard to do the things you want to do. To that, I say that's not true. It can be done if it matters to you. Additionally, avoiding something because it's hard isn't a good way to get through this life. It was hard having children in veterinary school, but it was also the most joyous and rewarding experience of my life. I wouldn't change a thing."

To follow our students (moms and otherwise!) on their incredible journeys through veterinary school, **follow us on Instagram**. *To learn more about the AVMA Trust's offerings for students and DVMs, visit* **AVMA PLIT** *and* **AVMA LIFE**.

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