

# How to evaluate a French Bulldog breeder

Price is the last thing that should drive this decision. A French Bulldog can live 10–14 years and cost thousands in veterinary care over that time. *The questions you ask before you buy matter far more than the number on the invoice.* This guide helps you tell the difference between a responsible breeder and someone who treats dogs like inventory.

## THE PRICE TRAP

When buyers lead with “how much?” it usually signals they haven't yet thought about what they're actually getting. A responsible Frenchie breeder invests heavily in health testing, quality nutrition, veterinary care, and proper whelping — often including planned C-sections. A puppy priced significantly below the market average is rarely a deal. It's a warning sign.

## 1 Health documentation

### Can I see a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian?

This confirms the puppy has been examined, is free of parasites, and is up to date on vaccines before leaving the breeder. Reputable breeders provide this without hesitation.

### Do you have DNA health testing results for the parents?

French Bulldogs can carry genes for degenerative myelopathy, hereditary cataracts, hyperuricosuria, and other conditions. Responsible breeders test and share these results openly. Ask for the actual report, not just a verbal “they're clear.”

### Are the puppies DNA tested individually?

Parent testing tells you probability — puppy testing tells you certainty. Some breeders go the extra step of testing each puppy, which allows buyers to know exactly what they're bringing home.

### What vaccinations have the puppies received, and what's the schedule going forward?

A good breeder hands you a written record and walks you through the booster schedule. Gaps in early vaccination can leave puppies vulnerable to parvovirus and distemper.

### **Have the puppies been dewormed and checked for parasites?**

A standard part of responsible early care. Should be documented in the health record.

## **2 The dam (mom)**

### **How many litters has the mother had, and how old is she?**

The AKC recommends no more than 4–5 litters in a dam’s lifetime. A female bred too young (under 2 years), too frequently, or too many times is a sign of a puppy mill or commercially motivated breeder. Her body is not a production line.

### **Can I meet the mother in person — or on video if distance is an issue?**

Temperament is partially heritable. A calm, well-socialized mom usually produces calm, well-socialized puppies. A breeder who refuses this request is hiding something. Even a live video call is reasonable if you’re purchasing from out of state.

### **Was this a planned litter? Was the whelping supervised?**

French Bulldogs almost always require C-sections due to the breed’s head-to-pelvis ratio. A breeder who “let nature take its course” or wasn’t present at birth may not understand the breed well enough to be breeding it.

## **3 The environment**

### **Can I visit your home or facility to see where the puppies are raised?**

Puppies raised in a clean, stimulating home environment — around normal household sounds, handled daily, exposed to different surfaces and people — are significantly better socialized than those in kennels or pens. The first 8 weeks shape a dog’s nervous system profoundly.

### **Where do the puppies sleep? Are they raised indoors with the family?**

Frenchies are companion dogs. A puppy raised in a garage, barn, or outdoor kennel has missed critical early exposure to the environment it will live in. This creates unnecessary anxiety in the new home.

#### **How are the puppies being socialized before they go home?**

Ask specifically. Early neurological stimulation (ENS), exposure to different people, surfaces, sounds, and gentle handling by children — these details matter. Vague answers like “they’re well loved” aren’t enough.

### **4 Breed knowledge & health awareness**

#### **What health issues are you aware of in this breed, and what have you done to address them?**

A knowledgeable breeder will talk openly about brachycephalic anatomy, spinal risks (IVDD), skin fold care, heat sensitivity, and eye conditions — and explain what they’ve done in their breeding program to minimize these risks. Evasiveness here is a serious red flag.

#### **How is the breathing on your dogs? Do they snore heavily or show signs of respiratory distress?**

Not all Frenchies are equally brachycephalic. Dogs with less extreme facial structure breathe better, overheat less easily, and often have fewer surgical interventions in their lifetime. Ask to see or hear the parents breathe — at rest and after mild activity.

#### **What do you feed the puppies, and what do you recommend going forward?**

Quality breeders think carefully about nutrition. Frenchies can be prone to food sensitivities, flatulence, and skin issues — diet plays a real role. A breeder who says “whatever’s cheapest” is not thinking about long-term health.

### **5 The contract & after-sale support**

#### **Do you provide a written health guarantee, and what does it cover?**

A responsible breeder stands behind their puppies. Look for at minimum a 1–2 year genetic health guarantee. Understand the terms — some require veterinary confirmation within a certain window, and some exclude certain conditions.

### **If I'm ever unable to keep the dog, will you take them back?**

Reputable breeders almost universally include a return clause. They do not want their dogs ending up in rescue. A breeder who says “once they leave they're your problem” does not have the dog's welfare as a priority.

### **Will you be available for questions after I bring the puppy home?**

The best breeders become a lifelong resource. They want to hear from you. A breeder who disappears after payment has revealed exactly how much they care about the dog versus the transaction.

#### **RED FLAGS — WALK AWAY IF...**

- They won't let you visit or meet the mother on video
- No health testing documentation on the parents
- Puppies available under 8 weeks of age
- Multiple breeds available simultaneously (“designer puppy” operation)
- Payment required before you've seen anything
- They can't name the puppy's veterinarian
- Pressure tactics: “someone else is interested, decide today”
- No written contract or health guarantee
- The price is dramatically lower than the market average
- They can't tell you how many litters the dam has had

## **Your pre-purchase checklist**

■ Vet health certificate in hand

■ Parent DNA test results reviewed

■ Met or video-called the mother

■ Visited home or facility

■ Vaccine & deworming record provided

■ Dam's litter history confirmed

■ Written contract with health guarantee

■ Return/rehome policy in writing

■ Breeder answered health questions openly

■ Breeder offers ongoing support

#### A NOTE ON OUR DOGS

Our French Bulldogs are bred with structural health in mind. Their faces are not severely pushed in — they breathe quietly, rarely snore, and tolerate Florida heat better than more extreme examples of the breed. We're happy to answer every question on this list. If you'd like to verify that for yourself, we'd love to show you.

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*“A good breeder will always have more questions for you than you have for them. They’re not just selling a puppy — they’re choosing a family.”*