



Puppy Curriculum

This curriculum is provided to professionals and pet owners as a step-by-step guide to successful, positive reinforcement training for puppies and dogs.

For a full manual including exercises and education in body language, marker training and more, see the full [*IAABC Dog Trainer's Handbook*](#). Please contact your IAABC Accredited or Certified professional if you need assistance with training and behavior for your pet.

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PUPPY KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

Puppy training early and often is important for a number of reasons. It builds awareness of owner relevance and guidance for a pup, it teaches early manners and behaviors that make life with and for that puppy a lot easier, and it starts the process of creating a life-long student who loves learning.

Following is an **open enrollment** model of a puppy class. In a traditional class, you would have a set number of skills to work on over a six-week period and would introduce those skills in small increments, building on each skill each week.

In an open enrollment class, the total number of skills and concepts are the same as the traditional class, except all the parts of each skill are taught in a single unit (class).

In a traditional puppy class you might introduce a lure to sit and signal to sit in Week 1. Week 2 you would remove the lure, Week 3 you might begin to anchor the cued sit, etc. At the end of six weeks, you would have mastered the sit with a cue and perhaps introduced a sit/stay.

In open enrollment, however, all the steps for cuing the sit and anchoring the sit position are addressed in one unit.

In a puppy kindergarten class the focus is broader than a basic manners class because of the short window of opportunity for exposure to new things, dogs, people – in other words the primary socialization period. The function of the puppy class is problem prevention, managed exposure, and safe socialization, as well as introduction to basic skills and development of the connection between the student and the puppy. Given the short period we have to cover all the stuff we need to cover, the open enrollment concept has become the standard in the industry.

The AKC Star Puppy skills are included in this curriculum, offering owners a chance to gain their first ribbon, and instructors a nice opportunity for continued engagement from clients.

The students in an open enrollment class don't need to be working on the same skill at the same time, and that makes it a great model for remote training classes, as well as in-person classes.

This curriculum has been modified to shift to remote training for individuals or groups.

In all training, when stuck or struggling and when wondering where to go next in your training, the most important tenet is this: **What do you want the dog TO do?**

"Don't jump, don't bite, don't bark" must be replaced with a behavior you want the dog to do: Sit, come, down, go to your mat.

If you find yourself saying, "Don't do that!" to your dog, realize this is a training problem, not a problem dog.

And as always, your IAABC Accredited trainer or Certified Behavior Consultant is available in person or via remote consult to help.

OPEN ENROLLMENT PUPPY KINDERGARTEN

Note: Due to social distancing, we've eliminated puppy-to-puppy and puppy-to-new person socialization skills. These are important, however, and your IAABC Accredited or Certified instructor can offer ways to introduce your pup as much as possible to new things in her life in a safe and enriching manner.

UNIT 1: Greetings

Theme: Puppy meeting people

Skills:

- [Puppy Zen](#)
- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- [Sit](#)
- Develop people as a cue to sit

Socialization: Ways to greet the puppy and for the puppy to greet people

- [Greetings & Exploration](#)

Puppy Play: Using their nose

- [Find It Game](#)

Remote Training:

- If you have other people in the household, have them act as "strangers" by having them dress up in funny costumes, hats and umbrellas, clown shoes, a tutu, and a face mask. Be sure not to make things too weird for your puppy – you can easily scare him by overdoing it. ***This is not a test!*** It's simply a way to introduce him to things that are different. If you're socially distancing but have neighbors or friends you could meet outside at a distance, use them as your new people.
- If no one is available at all, speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or Certified Behavior Consultant about how to work around challenges.

UNIT 2: Guests

Theme: How to handle your puppy with visitors

Skills:

- [Puppy Zen](#)
- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- [Down](#)

Socialization: Household noises

- How to help acclimate our pups to vacuums, etc.

Puppy Play:

- [Follow Game](#)

Remote Training:

- If you have other people in the household, If you have other people in the household, have them “come over” by going outside and ringing the bell before entering. Greet them as you would a visitor.
- If no one is available at all, speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or Certified Behavior Consultant about how to work around challenges.



UNIT 3: Kitchen

Theme: Cooking & eating with your pup

Skills:

- [Puppy Zen](#)
- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- “Come” using the [Get It Game](#)

Puppy Play:

- Tug

Remote Training: Tether in place

- Tether your pup using a leash (you can place the leash on a door handle and close the door), put a mat or bed down so the pup can relax on the mat and give the puppy a high value item to chew on while you are preparing your meal.
- When you sit down to eat, you can use the pup’s dinner to reinforce him for relaxing on the mat. Randomly drop portions of their meal on the mat while you eat your meal.
- If necessary, speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or certified behavior consultant about how to work around challenges.

UNIT 4: Grooming

Theme: Toes & ears, coated/non-coated husbandry

Body handling: One body part each day

Skills:

- [Puppy Zen](#)
- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- [Teaching Touch](#)

Socialization: Grooming tools & noises

- Clippers, grinders, blow dryers

Puppy Play:

- [Tug and The Off Switch Game](#)

UNIT 5: The Vet

Theme: Creating positive veterinary visits

Skills:

- [Puppy Zen](#)
- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- [Down/Settle](#)
- [Eye Contact](#)

Puppy Play:

- [Teaching Touch](#)

Remote Training: Tether in place

- Work on [settle or down](#) in different areas of the home, on the porch, deck, etc. so the pup learns how to settle when the world is more interesting than inside the home. Practice around household activities.
- If you have children in the household, practice around children playing.
- If no one is available, speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or certified behavior consultant about how to work around challenges.

UNIT 6: The Walk

Theme: Management, teaching & options

What management tools, leash, etc. will you use for walking an active, sniffing, running, bouncing pup? Use only non-aversive tools such as no-pull harnesses.

Skills:

- [Prompted and Unprompted Attention](#)
- [Name Game](#)
- [Loose Leash Walking](#)
- [Stop & Go Game](#)
- [Stealing & Object Exchanges](#)

Puppy Play:

- [Follow Game](#)

Remote Training:

- Start your skills training and follow games in the home. Once your pup is keeping the leash loose, move to your balcony, porch, and yard.
- If necessary, speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or certified behavior consultant about how to work around challenges.

Reinforcers (commonly referred to as “rewards”) aren’t just food, though food is by far the easiest to use if that’s what your dog likes.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| ■ Hot Dogs | ■ Kongs® | ■ A leaf |
| ■ Meatballs | ■ Squeak toys | ■ A paper plate |
| ■ Bacon | ■ Balls | ■ Anything that your dog finds interesting in the moment. |
| ■ Cheese | ■ Frisbees | |
| ■ Smoked Fish | ■ Playing tug | |
| ■ Liverwurst | ■ Running | |
| ■ Diced Chicken | ■ Swimming | |
| ■ Freeze-dried Liver | ■ Petting & Scratching | |
| ■ Other locally available treats | ■ Playing hide & seek with their human | |

USING MARKERS

What is a Marker? The use of a marker makes training easier for you, as it tells your dog the exact moment when he has done the right thing. A marker is a sound of your choice, e.g. the word “good.” A clicker is a marker, too.

You “mark” (say “good” or press your clicker) immediately when your dog demonstrates the movement or behavior you are looking for. Immediately after that, you will give a treat or provide another reinforcer. Your dog will learn that the sound of the marker promises good things, and you will be able to communicate what exact behavior he is getting “paid” for.

PRACTICE:

Charge the marker of choice (clicker/"good"/"yes" or other "magic words" or sounds). Mark and give a treat. Repeat this 6-10 times, rapidly. If you are using a word, be consistent with what word you choose. A marker is not the same as verbal praise, where you may choose from a variety of positive affirmations.

LIFE WITH PUPPY

Puppy-proof your home Puppies get into everything... EVERYTHING! There is no difference in safety between preparing for a puppy and a toddler. Get down on your knees and look at your home from your puppy's perspective. Look for wires, electrical outlets, rugs with fringe, hanging pot holders and dish rags that smell like food. Everything should be off the floor (put away your shoes) and closed up.

Set up a Puppy Space Don't allow your puppy the run of the house until he has been house trained. Start him in one room that can be enclosed by a door or gate, that you can be in with him. The room should have a crate (if crate training), chew toys and water bowl. If you don't have a room you can gate off, try getting an x-pen, or somehow gating of an area in an open floor plan room. That way your pup can have the freedom to walk around and you can watch him, and be set up to succeed when you can't by limiting the space he has to roam and find trouble or have an accident.

PUPPY CHEWING

All babies gnaw and chew to work through the discomfort of teething, but puppies especially need to chew. Dogs learn literally a world of information through their mouths and noses, and so chewing is a manner of exploration and physical health and energy expression as well as a way to get those new teeth out.

Make sure your puppy has age-appropriate things to chew. Pet stores are filled with options, but also ask your veterinarian or IAABC accredited or certified trainer for their suggestions.

Don't confuse your dog. Unless you want your dog chewing on all shoes, don't give them an old shoe to chew on, or sock, or household object. There is no way for them to know the difference between a "legal" and "illegal" object in that case.

A very young puppy who's teething may well love a wet, frozen washcloth to chew on. If you do that, be sure to supervise and hold the washcloth, or at least sit next to your puppy as he chews. Take it away as soon as he's done with it.

If your puppy chews something of yours you've left where he can get it, scold yourself and remember that puppies can only chew things we give them access to.

If you have small children it's very hard for anyone, canine or human, to know the difference between a dog toy and a kid toy. Do your best to keep the item separated, and your pup in a gated or crated area so that he's not chewing on your child's toys, and vice versa! *Never leave young children and dogs of any age unattended even for a second.*

Puppy Skills & Games The following section contains a group of basic skills to teach all puppies, and dogs, for that matter.



PUPPY SKILLS & GAMES



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Puppy Zen

(First few steps of a dynamite *Leave It* cue)

To play the name game:

1. Place a cookie in your closed hand and lower the hand to the dog's nose level.
2. Wait until your dog stops trying to steal the cookie. As soon as he backs off, mark and treat.
3. Once the dog is reliably backing away from the closed hand, wait until he backs off and then open your hand.
4. If he tries to steal the cookie, simply close your hand. When he backs off, open again. When he stays back away from the exposed cookie, mark and treat.

Note: If you have a strong dog with killer nails and your hands are getting torn up, try using gardening gloves until the backing away behavior is reliable.

Take it on the road: Now we will generalize the behavior.

1. Place the cookie on your knee. Use your hand to cover if they try to steal it. When they stay off the exposed cookie, mark and treat.
2. Once the dog is staying off the cookie placed in a number of places, wait a few seconds before you mark. When your dog looks at you say "Leave It" then treat.

TIP:

Don't set your dog up to fail! Many of us wait for the dog to back away, instead of noticing that the dog didn't go for the cookie in the first place. You're reinforcing "not taking the cookie," not the action of backing away from it. A dog who doesn't even approach that cookie is a super star!

Keep it fun!

Prompted Attention: Back Up & Focus

Start this exercise at home and with your dog on-leash. Have a few (4-15) treats in your hand (or a toy if your dog loves toys) and start practicing this with a very low level of distraction – only enough to be of mild interest. Try putting a potato on a chair, or moving a houseplant onto the floor where nothing usually sits, far enough away that your dog can't reach it.

1. When your dog looks at the distraction, call her name (once, not over and over again). As she looks at you, back up a few steps while feeding out your treats one at a time or playing with a toy. Tell her she's great and smile. Keep moving backwards, or turn and move away from the object while interacting with your dog. Hold your treats above your waist so you don't train the dog to look at your hands rather than your face.
2. Your voice is an important tool in training attention. Talk to your dog, praising and chatting with her as she moves toward you. This ongoing doling out of several treats (never just one treat for attention exercises), one after another, will help build the duration of attention.
3. Don't always give the same number of treats. Sometimes give four, sometimes ten, sometimes six and so on. Keep it interesting.
4. As the dog gets used to this game, try it with more interesting objects like a bowl of food, toys, other interesting and non-scary things. Also, practice moving toward the object without allowing the leash to get tight – call your dog back to focus on you without her practicing a tight leash scenario.



Unprompted Attention: Back Up & Focus

When you start this exercise, every time your dog looks at you without you having asked him to, smile and treat him with 4-15 treats, one after another, building the ability of the dog to look at you for several seconds.

1. You want to give several treats in succession to build the duration of attention.
2. If your dog looks away, wait for the next time he looks at you, don't try to lure him back to looking at you.
3. Make sure this isn't just about the treats, but is also about connecting with your dog by talking, smiling, playing etc. Sometimes give smiles, "hoorays!", clapping, a chance to sniff or run or play with a toy or chase a ball – use "real life" rewards for attention too.
4. As your dog learns the habit of unprompted attention, the treats can become far less frequent, and the reward of shared communication and other things the dog likes take their place.

Get It Game – Recall Training

The "Get It Game" can be used to teach a great recall. This is as easy and comfortable as dog training can get. You can do it while watching TV, cooking dinner, reading – anytime. It's the foundation for a good, solid recall.

1. Toss a treat so that your dog can see where it goes. Tell her to "get it!"
2. Once she's gotten the treat, say "Fluffy, come!" in a nice, friendly tone, and hold ONE treat out in your hand for her to see.
3. When she gets to you, give her the treat while you hook a finger from the other hand through her collar. Then throw another treat and tell her to "get it!". Your dog will quickly learn to come back to your side.

If your dog doesn't come when you say her name, don't repeat the cue. Walk up to her, stick the treat under her nose and lure her back to where you started. Give her the treat when you get back to your starting point. If she didn't follow that treat, you either need higher value treats, to go back to a shorter distance or play "[The Name Game](#)" first! Practice this several times a day in several locations. You can do this outside with your dog on-leash or long line, or in a fenced yard off-leash.

Sit

Why do we tend to teach our dog to sit? Because it is easy! Plus, it is incompatible with so many other unwanted behaviors, like jumping, running and pulling on the leash. If he's sitting, he can't be doing those other things.

STEP 1:

1. Put a yummy treat right to your pup's nose. Bring the treat back and over her forehead.
2. As her head moves up, her rear should move toward the floor. The instant she sits, mark and feed the dog while she's still sitting.
3. Tell her she's great, release her or ask her to stand up and move a little bit with you so she's no longer sitting, and repeat 5-7 times.

Note: There is no saying "sit" yet – the "sit" cue comes later!

If your dog walks backwards, sit on a chair (lower your body posture) or try next to a corner that keeps the dog from walking backwards. If he jumps, lower your hand with the treat in it.

STEP 2:

1. Lure your pup with your hand in the same position, but with no food in your hand.
2. When she sits, mark and treat. The treats should be in your treat bag, other hand, or pocket
3. Tell her she's great, ask her to move a little bit with you so she's no longer sitting, and repeat 5-7 times.

Note: In step 2 there is still no saying "sit" yet – the "sit" cue comes later!

STEP 3:

1. Say, "sit" just before you move your hand.

She will predict that when you say "sit," the known hand gesture will follow. Therefore, "sit" means, "do that thing that gets me a cookie after she moves her hand like that."

2. When she sits, mark and treat.
3. Tell her she's great, ask her to move a little bit with you so she's no longer sitting, and repeat.

4. Throughout the following repetitions, you can "fade" the hand signal by making it as small a gesture as possible, and then eliminating it after she understands. You've now got sit on a verbal cue!

Keep in mind, always say "sit" then give the hand signal.

You can practice both verbal and hand signals, but don't say "sit" at the same time that you signal your hand. Practice just verbal or just hand signals several times throughout the day and in many different locations.

Use "sit" before letting your dog out, before feeding her, before throwing a toy! This way she learns that "sit" means good things will follow and she will learn sit can be a way to ask for permission.

Follow

1. Have a handful of treats and let the puppy see that you do.
2. Start walking backward a few steps, and mark and treat the pup for moving with you.
3. Turn and start to walk forward, and if the puppy follows, mark and treat when she is beside you.
4. Walk around marking and reinforcing the pup for moving with you.

TIPS:

- Remember that the dog will most likely end up where you treat her, so be aware of where you feed.
- Treating at your side will set you up for lovely loose leash walking in the future.
- Watch for luring! Hold your hand next to your body, marking the pup for moving with you and drop your hand to pup nose level to reinforce.

Keep it fun!

Down

Getting a dog to lie down when and where you want him to and for the time you want him to remain in that position is very useful. It is the foundation for all stationary and calm behaviors, like settle and go to your mat.

STEP 1:

1. It might be easiest to start when your dog is sitting. But you can also start training with your dog standing in front of you. Get your dog's attention with a yummy treat kept between your fingers, almost touching his nose. Your dog should follow this treat with interest.
2. Move your hand swiftly toward the ground close to his chest until it touches the ground between the dog's front paws. He will probably follow the treat with the nose and lower the elbows to the floor, as this position is more comfortable for him. If he doesn't, try using a higher value treat.
3. If your dog is sitting and his head moves toward the floor his elbows will follow. Mark when his elbows touch the ground. If your dog is standing initially, you'll mark when his elbows and butt are on the ground.
4. When you mark, be generous and give several treats in a row, not all at once, to celebrate this achievement. Release him by throwing a treat or invite him to stand up. Repeat 3-4 times.

Note: There is no cue for "down" at this stage of training.

If your dog walks instead of lying down, keep the treat closer to his nose and chest or try to lure him under a low chair or through your lowered leg, so he learns to lower the elbows and hind end. You may need to hold the treats in your hand while he licks your hand. Then, he'll probably get bored and lie down to lick, and you will surprise him by opening your hand and giving him the treats.

STEP 2:

1. Lure your pup with your hand in the same position, but with no food in your hand.
2. When he goes down, mark and treat. The treats should be in your treat bag, other hand, or pocket, but be able to "jump" into your dog's mouth fast while he's lying down.

3. Tell him he's great, ask him to stand up again, or roll a treat for him to follow. Repeat a few times.

Note: There's still no "down" cue at this stage.

STEP 3:

1. Once he's consistently following the hand gesture, say, "down" just before you move your hand. This will predict, for him, that when you say "down", the known hand gesture will follow. Therefore, "down" means, "do that thing that gets me a cookie after she moves her hand like that."
2. When he does go down, mark and treat. Give him a treat that will take him some time to chew or several tasty treats in a row. Then invite him to stand up. Repeat 2-4 times.
3. Throughout the following repetitions, you can "fade" the hand signal by making it as small a gesture as possible, and then eliminating it after he understands. This way, you'll get a verbal "down" cue very quickly!

Keep in mind to always say "down" and then give the hand signal.

You can practice both verbal and hand signals, but don't say "down" at the same time that you signal your hand. Practice just verbal or just hand signals several times throughout the day and in many different locations.

Greetings & Exploration

- Allow the pup to make choices in greetings and exploring.
- They might want to stay back, approach, or take time to decide either way.
- Use food placement to help with good greeting choices – keeping your treat low and at nose level helps to keep paws on the floor rather than jumping.
- Limit jumping for over-the-top greeters by asking them to sit instead.
- Allow close-up and personal interactions and then call back for a treat and so that you limit the puppy's excitement or potential anxiety level.

Exposure to Novel Stimuli

The ability to not just tolerate, but easily accept different settings, objects and situations makes all the difference in a puppy's life, and in yours as well. Normally, going out on walks in the city and the country, to friends' houses, to school yards and parking lots and street fairs would all be recommended in easily-tolerated doses. While this isn't all possible, some of it certainly is, and some can be reproduced more or less.

- Go for walks with no agenda or deadline. Let the pup explore.
- Go to the opposite setting from where you normally live, either the city or the country. In regions that allow going outside, wearing masks and keeping distance from others still allows you to show your dog more of the world than your neighborhood.
- Make a mock flea market in your hallway or yard, or a friend's yard. Weirdness is good if it's not scary, so a lamp, chair, box with a ball in it, and a wind-up toy and fluttering mobile placed in an odd location are fantastic to explore.
- Hair dryer, vacuums, microwave beeps and other household sounds should be paired with lots of food if your puppy shows any hesitation around them. Simply scatter lots of small treats on the ground, or feed one after another until the sound stops. When the sound stops, the treats do, too.
- Create "strangers" out of family members by having them dress up in costumes, or with hats and parkas in the summer. Find ways to appear different, such as walking with a limp.

Be careful not to scare the puppy! If you see any hesitation at all and the pup doesn't immediately move forward to explore, take off the costume and quietly let her know all is OK.

- If possible, have neighbors walk toward you maintaining an appropriate distance, and ask your dog to sit when you stop moving forward.
- This is also a good exercise if your neighbor has a dog to practice with – keep an appropriate distance and have both dogs sit when you stop walking.



Find It

On the surface this couldn't be simpler: Toss a handful of tiny treats on the ground and encourage the puppy to 'find' the cookies.

- The key to this is to share in the excitement of finding those treats!
- "Oh my gosh!" "Here's one!" "Oh, look!" You should be interested in what your puppy is doing.
- The look on your puppy's face will tell you all you need to know – you get it!
- This works wonderfully with full-grown dogs, too, and has served to enhance many relationships between dog and owner.

Tug

1. Encourage the pup to grab a soft toy you're holding, and let the puppy pull back on it. Let go of and then encourage the pup to restart the game.
2. If the puppy's teeth nip your hand, or if the dog is getting too excited, stop the game, go do something else and start again when the puppy has calmed down.

Remember that puppy teeth shouldn't take the hard yanking and pulling that adult dogs might enjoy in this game.

3. If the puppy just can't let go, use a cookie to encourage the pup to release the tug and add the cue "give." or "drop it" or anything else you like. Then present the tug and add the cue 'tug'.

THE OFF SWITCH:

If the puppy is over-excited, or simply when teaching how to "turn off" the game, hold the toy away from the pup's reach and wait for the pup to sit. When the pup sits, mark the sit and use toy play as a reinforcer. This assumes you've taught your puppy that "sit" is the default behavior to do when in doubt.

Keep it fun!

Eye Contact

1. Have a handful of treats, and stand with your dog in front of you. Your hands should be at your side and you should try to look relaxed, not weirdly stiff!
2. Wait for eye contact. If your dog paws/nudges your hands, move them behind your back. Keep your eyes on your dog and wait silently. *It's extremely important that you not "hard stare" at your dog while doing this. Smile – this is something you're doing together, and you're behaving strangely!*
3. Be ready to mark and treat. Usually in a few seconds your dog will accidentally look at your face. As soon as they do, mark and treat.
4. Stand still and wait again. The next time your dog looks at you, mark and treat. Repeat for a minute or two every day for 2 weeks, then a few times a week for the rest of the dog's life. You don't need to name this behavior, just reinforce your dog looking at you for information and a "hello" as a natural part of their behavior for the rest of their life.

The Name Game

"The Name Game" teaches your dog attention and focus upon hearing his name. It couldn't be simpler, as long as you know what your dog loves.

To play the name game:

1. Just say your dog's name.
2. When your dog turns her head to look at you, give her a small, very yummy treat from your hand and let her know what a genius she is for having chosen to do that.
3. As she starts to look at you, smile, and give her a treat each time. She doesn't have to sit or continue looking at you.
4. Do this 5 to 10 times in a row, then smile and "release" her by telling her she's great. You're done!!

As your dog quickly learns that her name equals treats and attention, practice this in varying environments and with varying distractions: at home, at a bus stop, at a park etc., and at longer distances.

Touch or Target an Object

Touch is the beginning of a whole new world of tricks and control with your dog. When he has learned to touch an object (your hand, a plastic cover, a piece of paper, or a pencil) with his nose, it's easy to teach your dog to walk at your side, to call her away from an object, and to learn dozens of tricks like closing doors or ringing bells.

Touching your hand or an object is also known as "targeting." Here's how to teach this skill:

STEP 1:

1. Offer your empty hand in front of your dog's nose. Make sure you choose a hand signal different from what you use for sit, down, or stay. It could be your open hand, just two extended fingers, or your closed fist.
2. Your dog will likely look at or smell your hand. When she does, mark and give her a treat with your other hand. Repeat 3-5 times.

If she doesn't look at or sniff your hand, move your hand slightly toward her, in a circle, or in any friendly way that calls attention to it. Then mark and treat when she looks at or smells your hand.

STEP 2:

1. Repeat, but, now, mark when her nose actually touches your hand. When she has learned to touch your hand to get a treat, you are ready for the next step.

Remember that if your dog "won't do" something, it really means you haven't made what you want clear, or she's afraid, or there's another reason she won't. Ask yourself, why wouldn't she do something for a treat she loves?

STEP 3:

1. Hold your target hand 5 cm (2 inches) to one side of your dog's face, mark and treat when he touches it with his nose. Repeat.
2. When your dog clearly understands this trick, start switching sides (and hands) and the position of your hands. Mark and treat when the dog touches your hand with his nose. Keep it fun and variable for him. This is not a serious, silent game – it should be light and fun.

Loose Leash Walking: Stop & Go

The following contract with your dog says that you will be consistent and kind while training them to walk with a loose leash.

Rule 1: If your leash is attached to your dog's collar, pulling will never work.

Rule 2: If you don't have the time or patience to train, put a harness on your dog so you don't break Rule 1.

Harnesses with a front attachment ring are a good place to start to manage a dog who pulls. They reduce pulling while your dog can get a bit of exercise. Keep in mind, however, this does not replace training but can assist with teaching leash skills. Long lines are excellent for more physical exercise like running, but be sure to clip the line to the attachment ring on the dog's back between his shoulder blades instead of on his chest to reduce the risk of your dog injuring himself.

Training loose leash walking: always be sure to connect with your dog. You can't train your dog while you're talking on your cell phone or listening to music. You have to achieve a real connection with your dog – this is not just about treats. Therefore, you should begin training this skill in a calm environment without competing distractions that may impede your dog's ability to pay attention. If necessary, begin training in your home or yard.

1. Stand next to your dog. Then take one step forward.
2. If your dog moves with you, mark, smile and give him a treat. You can vary how frequently you give treats.
3. As long as your dog stays at your side, give him constant feedback. Mark and treat near your hip, knee or ankle, depending on the size of your dog. For a miniature dog or a puppy, you can use a kitchen spatula with cheese or baby food on it for them to lick off so you don't have to constantly bend over.

If your dog pulls, **stop moving**. Wait until your dog reconnects with you, when he does – maybe just a small sign like an ear slightly tipped back in your direction, turning his head, or ideally making eye contact, thank him and give several treats (between 5 and 10) one after another.

Your dog should move toward you to be rewarded if he is in front of you. Don't move toward your dog to give treats!

4. Next, you can decide if you will continue in the same direction, to one side or to the other, or back the way you came – you aren't trying to go very far this first training session. You are trying to create the habit of saying to your dog: "we aren't going anywhere if you are pulling on the leash."

Stop & Go: It takes two to have a tight leash. If your dog pulls on the leash, remain still (stop). Don't pull back, yank, jerk or tug on the leash. Your job is to keep your dog safe and guide him, don't be the other end in a game of tug of war. It is your dog's job to keep a loose leash. You will pay him with treats and permission to walk, sniff and explore (go) – always with a relaxed leash. You might discover that a good portion of the pulling comes from your end of the leash.

At first, practice this in a low-distraction environment. Increase the level of distractions gradually, praise and treat your dog generously when he performs well in difficult situations. Also, your dog has likely already learned to sit, this is a useful skill to practice with loose leash walking because it will give both you and your dog a break.

SOCIALIZING DURING SOCIAL DISTANCING

Socializing a puppy, meaning exposing her through gentle, gradual increments to the world around her, is extremely important, and difficult to do at a time of social distancing.

Appropriate greetings toward people and other dogs is also important to teach as early as possible – again, not so easy during times of relative isolation.



Stealing & Object Exchanges

Chasing a dog around to reclaim the stolen item creates more stealing rather than less.

Even if you're scolding or punishing the puppy, you're still giving him attention. *Speaking of which, never scold or punish a dog for stealing something. Remember that a puppy can only steal an object that a human has left within reach, so if you want to scold someone, scold yourself!*

1. Give your dog a bone or a toy he likes. Before he's really engaged with it, take the toy, give him a high-value treat, and give back the toy. *That's it! Avoid frowning like you're doing something hard or weird.*

You're conditioning a positive emotional response to removal of the object by doing this: person picking up my stuff means "good thing plus I get my stuff back!"

- Don't do this every time the dog has a toy or an object, but do it routinely enough so that it's not abnormal or under "special circumstances."
- Enhance the "trade game" by trading one object for another of slightly higher value. You can make the object in your hand of higher value by smearing on a little peanut butter, butter, cream cheese or foie gras. Hand him the "improved" object, let him work on it for a little while, then trade it for the one you've taken, which you've also "improved." In other words, as the yummy stuff is eaten from the one he's got, the new one will be more valuable.
- Have different people practice this exercise, and with various toys and objects. Keep bodies loose and approaches "normal." Try not to walk stiffly and directly frontally – approach as you would if you weren't worried! Keep your body loose, approach from different angles, and breathe!

SAFETY CHECK:

You may need to only allow your dog very, very short amounts of time with the yummy object, so don't put too much on. Some dogs will give up an object readily if they've only had it for a few seconds, but once they settle in with it become more possessive. Put just a dab on the object at first as you learn how long he's able to be with the object while still comfortably trading. *Note: this should be done with the toy at a distance and the dog tethered at first if you are normally unable to take the object from your dog safely. Simply seeing the object, perhaps five feet in front of him, is enough to start.*



BODY HANDLING



PUPPY BODY HANDLING

One thing we want to do while our puppies are small is teach them to enjoy being handled and touched all over. We don't just want them to tolerate being touched, we want them to love being touched as much as possible. Then when they're not enjoying the experience, say at the veterinarian's office, or when they've got something in their paw or muzzle, the unpleasantness will only be due to the circumstances, and not an added stressor for a dog already averse to being touched in those areas.

Perform these exercises without a leash, if possible. If a leash is required, always allow your puppy to move away from your touch, while practicing.

Consent is imperative for these exercises. If the dog is not consenting to be touched, you're instead sensitizing her to it, and making things worse.

There is a special order of operations for the following exercises. It is very important that you **reach for or touch the puppy first, then deliver the treat**. Avoid feeding your puppy the treat as you reach for him! This is extremely important. We want puppies to associate us reaching for or touching them with the opportunity to eat a treat.

Body Handling: Tail & Hindquarters

If we touch him and feed him at the same time, our puppy may not notice we are touching him, or he might stay to eat the treat even though he feels uncomfortable.

Practice this order of operations without your puppy, first. Use an object, like a book, and practice touching the book, then removing your hand, and extending your hand with the treat in it toward the book. This practice may feel foolish, but you will be glad for the practice when you work with your live, wiggly pup!

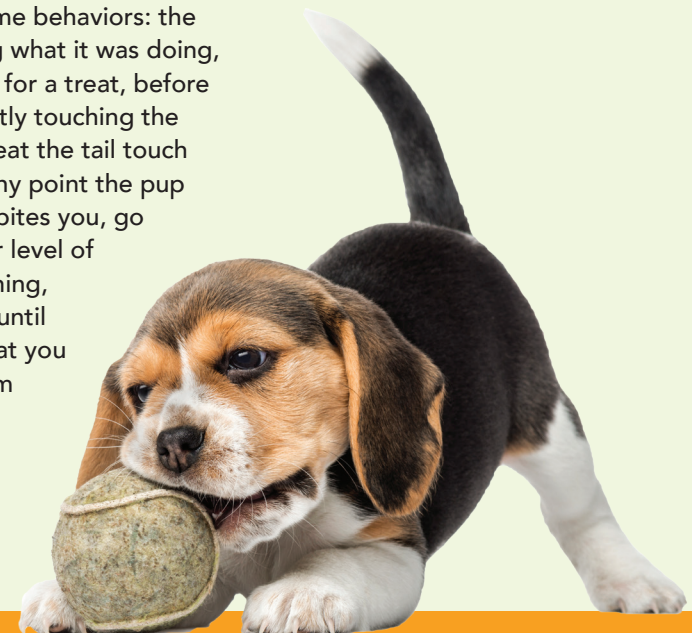
Remember to smile, or at least have a relaxed face and attitude. If you're frowning in concentration, your dog will wonder what is up that's so concerning. You can also chat with your puppy as you go along. This is a casual but important time you're spending with your dog, not a chore!

Don't put the treat you're going to give in the same hand you're touching your dog with. The dog will naturally turn her head and become a fluffy pretzel bending and twisting to see what that yummy thing is in your hand, making your job much harder and distracting the dog from noticing what's going on.

Note: If at any time during these exercises your puppy becomes upset, growls at you, or bites you hard enough to leave a mark, stop! **Do not proceed with additional exercises.** Contact your IAABC Accredited trainer or certified behavior consultant about how to work on these tasks with your pup.

Have 25-50 treats in a container next to where you'll be working with your pup.

1. Gently touch your puppy's back, then feed a treat. Did your puppy calmly accept the touch or did he or she whirl around to see what you were doing?
2. Next time, watch your puppy's face as you touch her back. Does your puppy keep her head still and glance at you, eager for a treat? Or does your puppy fling her head around, try to move away, or try to bite your hand? If your puppy puts his mouth on your hand, or snaps at your hand, stop. Go back to gently reaching for the puppy's back, and feeding a treat. Repeat the reach-treat exercise until your puppy looks at you for a treat, when you reach for him.
3. If your puppy is looking at you for the treat, you're at the right level of touch, and can repeat the back-touching and feeding exercise five more times.
4. When your puppy looks at you for a treat for five repetitions, change your light touch to the base of his tail, then feed. If your puppy puts his mouth on your hand, or snaps at your hand, stop. Go back to gently touching the puppy's back, and feeding a treat. Repeat the reach-treat exercise until your puppy looks at you for a treat, when you touch his back.
5. Watch for the same behaviors: the puppy continuing what it was doing, or looking at you for a treat, before moving onto gently touching the puppy's tail. Repeat the tail touch 5-10 times. If at any point the pup lunges at you or bites you, go back to the lower level of stimulation (reaching, light touch, etc.) until the puppy looks at you when you perform that action.



Body Handling: Ears

Have 25-50 treats in a container next to where you'll be working with your pup.

1. Gently touch your puppy's ear, then feed a treat. Did your puppy calmly accept the touch, or did she move away?
2. Next time, watch your puppy's face as you touch her ear. Does your puppy keep her head still and glance at you, eager for a treat? Or does your puppy fling her head around, or try to bite your hand? If so, stop. Reach for the puppy's ear, then feed a treat. Repeat 5-10 times, until your pup looks at your face for a treat when you reach for her ear.
3. If your puppy stays close to you and looks at you for the treat, you're at the right level of touch. Repeat 5-10 times, then switch to the other ear.
4. Look for the same signs when you touch the other ear. The puppy should continue what she was doing, or look at you for a treat. If at any point your puppy moves away, stiffens her body, snaps at you, or bites your hand, stop. Speak to your IAABC Accredited trainer or certified behavior consultant about how to proceed with this exercise.

Body Handling: Paws

Have 25-50 treats in a container next to where you'll be working with your pup.

1. Gently touch one of your puppy's paws, then feed a treat.
2. Next, watch your puppy's face as you touch a paw. Does your puppy glance at you, eager for a treat? If so, repeat 5-10 times. Notice: Where are your puppy's ears? Are his eyebrows relaxed or scrunched together? If your puppy stays with you and looks to you for the treat, you're at the right level of touch and can move to the next paw.
3. If your puppy pants or show the whites of his eyes, or tries to bite your hand, stop. Reach for the puppy's paw, then feed a treat. Repeat 5-10 times, until your pup looks at your face for a treat when you reach for his paw.

4. Repeat this exercise with all four paws. You may find that your puppy is more sensitive about being touched on his back paws. If so, alternate between touching your puppy's front paws, and feeding a treat, and then only reaching for the back paw, then feeding a treat. Once your puppy will watch you for a treat as you reach for a back paw, then you can try touching that paw again.

Body Handling: Mouth

Have 25-50 treats in a container next to where you'll be working with your pup.

1. Start by just lightly scratching your pup under the chin, then feeding a treat. If your puppy is excited, start instead by touching his chest, and feeding a treat. Then, take your hand away and put it under his chin, and feed a treat.
2. Next, gently lift your puppy's chin with two fingers, as if you are trying to get her to hold her head up, and feed a treat. If your puppy backs up, puts her mouth on your hand, or bites at your hand, stop. Go back to gently scratching under the puppy's chin and feeding a treat. Once your puppy eagerly reaches for the treat when you touch under her chin, repeat 5-10 times, then go to the next step.
3. Next, gently touch the tops of the puppy's nose and feed a treat. If your puppy tries to bite or mouth your hand, stop. Instead, reach for the pup's nose and feed a treat. Do this a few times until he is waiting with his mouth closed, for you to deliver a treat. Repeat 5-10 times.
4. Make a C with your hand and gently cup it over your puppy's muzzle, like you plan to hold it – but don't grab your puppy or squeeze his muzzle! Just lightly cup your hand over his muzzle and feed. Did your puppy calmly accept the touch, or did he or she move away? If your pup moved away, only reach for his muzzle next time, then feed.
5. Now for the fun part! Gently lift your puppy's lip on one side of his mouth and put a treat in his mouth! If your pup stays nearby, repeat 5-10 times. If your pup moves away, repeat the muzzle handling step until your pup is eagerly awaiting the treats, then try again.

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