



A Compassionate Commitment to Quality Pet Care!

TEACHING DEFERENCE BEHAVIORS TO PREVENT DOMINANCE ISSUES

Teaching your puppy to look to you for guidance can help prevent many behavior problems. The main point to remember is that everyone in the household must be consistent in the training. Once a behavior problem, such as aggression, develops, it takes a lot of work to correct. **It is much easier to prevent a behavior problem than it is to treat one.** If you do not have the time or the desire to training your puppy or new pet, give our Training Center team a call. They will be able to provide the proper foundation for you to build on with your puppy or new pet. This foundation will prove invaluable in building a long-term relationship with your pet.

Please use the following tips to build the proper foundation for your puppy or new pet. Remember, our Training Center team is a phone call away.

1. **Use a “Nothing in Life is Free” approach:** your puppy must obey an easy command such as “sit” before receiving anything he wants. This means he must sit before being fed, sit to get a treat, sit to be petted, sit before getting his leash put on or taken off, and sit before going outside. Other situations where your dog should sit include grooming, having a tick removed or a wound checked, and before being invited onto furniture (if desired).
2. **Your puppy should be made to sit and stay before he can eat out of his food bowl.** He should not be allowed to eat until a release command (“OK”) is given. This helps prevent aggression around the food bowl. When your puppy has learned to sit and stay at the food bowl, practice taking away the food bowl and replacing it before allowing your pet to eat. Then practice giving the sit command in the middle of your pet’s eating, and have your puppy sit and stay until you give the release command.
3. **For puppies that are energetic and pushy,** it can be tiring to have to constantly monitor your dog. **It is better to avoid your dog** (ideally have him in a separate room) **when not actively working on the behavior modification.** Otherwise the puppy can wear you down until you are too tired to enforce appropriate behavior and then the puppy has won.
4. **Getting attention on demand is a subtle form of dominance behavior.** If your puppy comes up to you and nudges you for attention, make him sit before petting him. If your puppy is pushy about soliciting attention, tell him “That’s enough” and push him away or walk away without giving him attention so that he learns to leave you or your guests alone on command.
5. **Roll your puppy over onto his back** and give him verbal praise and a treat for being in a submissive posture. Do this at least twice daily.
6. Place a leash with a prong collar (these are very safe, but effective collars that get results in a far less brutal way than the typical choke collar. Choke collars often require aggressive corrections that can hurt the animal if not done properly) on your puppy and then **practice handling your puppy** (touch their ears, feet, tail, mouth). If he nips at your hands, use a quick, but light correction with the choke or prong collar. Give him praise for allowing you to open his mouth, rub his gums, pull on his tail, list his feet, etc. Call our Training Center team for question on proper prong collar use.
7. **Teach your puppy to get off of furniture on command** by giving the command “off” and throwing a treat to the floor. Our Training Center team recommends keep your dog on a long leash, 30-40 feet, to enable corrections for jumping onto furniture or onto people while indoors.