

Leader Dogs for the Blind Puppy Raiser Manual

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Introduction

Welcome to the Leader Dogs for the Blind puppy raising program. As a puppy raiser, you are providing an invaluable service to Leader Dog. Your efforts directly affect our ability to provide high quality, well-trained dogs to approximately 200 clients who attend our Guide Dog Training program annually. Raising a puppy demands a huge commitment of time, effort and love on your part. Leader Dog is dedicated to making this experience a rewarding and memorable adventure.

Leader Dogs for the Blind is a nonprofit organization located in Rochester Hills, Michigan. Founded in 1939 by three Detroit-area Lions Club members, we have become one of the largest guide dog training facilities in the world. Our Canine Development Center can house up to 350 dogs and our Polk Residence facility can house up to 24 clients at a time. Over 15,000 clients have graduated with their guide dogs since our founding.

The puppy you will raise belongs to Leader Dogs for the Blind. All puppies are from Leader Dog's breeding colony or donated from select private breeders of Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers and German shepherds. The adult dogs in our breeding colony are housed in volunteer host homes. The puppy will be your special responsibility to love and socialize as you provide the foundation for its future as a guide dog. Your goal is to raise a happy, confident, trusting, well-behaved dog who excels in skills necessary to meet the In-For-Training Standards that you will be asked to focus on over the year with the puppy. As you enjoy the puppy's companionship, you will be exposing him to a wide variety of social situations, building his resilience and adaptability, and training him to develop the skills he will need to be a successful Leader Dog. Our guide dog mobility instructors depend upon this dog's ability to trust and bond to train the dog to successfully work with someone who is blind or visually impaired.

The coming year is a time for growth at *both* ends of the leash. Puppy raisers expand their own skills, become better dog trainers, model kind, responsible dog handling in public, and act as ambassadors for Leader Dog. Social interaction and training are important components of raising a confident, well-socialized dog.

You have made a promise of time, love and commitment in providing a foster home for a Future Leader Dog. In turn, we are committed to supporting your efforts. This manual is just one way to provide information and guidance to help you make the puppy's training and socialization enjoyable and successful. It can assist you with preparing for the puppy's arrival, basic obedience training, prevention of common puppy behavior problems, taking the puppy with you in public places and preparing for the puppy's return to Leader Dog.

Your area puppy counselor is another important source of help and advice. Puppy counselors are available during regular monthly meetings and at other times when needs arise. Puppy counselors are experienced puppy raisers who are ready and willing to troubleshoot, problem-solve and enjoy this puppy with you. In addition, you can reach Leader Dogs for the Blind at any time at the numbers listed on the following page.

Good luck, have fun and THANK YOU! You play a key role of assisting us in accomplishing our mission to empower people who are blind or visually impaired with lifelong skills for safe and independent daily travel.



Puppy Raiser Contract

When you pick up the puppy, you will sign a contract which includes some important commitments that you make to help assure the puppy's health and well-being. These include:

- **Health:** Leader Dog provides a mandatory vaccination schedule. Vaccinations, any health problems and veterinary visits should be reported to Leader Dog.
- **Safety:** The puppy must be on leash or in an enclosed area whenever outside. It must not be left outside unattended. A crate should be used to keep the puppy safe when it must be left alone in the home.
- **Socialization and Training:** You will receive a weekly “puppy timeline” email with training and socialization expectations until the puppy is 16 weeks old. Periodic email notices containing questionnaires will be sent to you to complete and submit online. You are required to meet with a puppy counselor on a monthly basis. This will require time and travel on your part. If there are no counselors in your area, you will be assigned to an independent puppy counselor who you will contact on a monthly basis through email, phone calls, Skype, FaceTime or video. You are also expected to follow the guidelines provided within this manual and the online In-For-Training Standards and video.
- **Our Leader Dog puppies are precious to us. In cases when a puppy raiser cannot meet these minimum requirements, the puppy may be removed from the volunteer home to protect its health and safety.**

Here is a copy of the puppy raiser contract:

I (name), hereby agree to accept complete and full responsibility for the puppy named above, to raise until approximately one year of age. I acknowledge that the puppy will at all times remain the property of Leader Dogs for the Blind. I will notify Leader Dogs for the Blind immediately in the case of loss, theft, or death of the puppy. If, for any reason, I am unable to care for or socialize the puppy as agreed, I will notify the organization. I understand that if I do not take proper care of the puppy as detailed in the Puppy Raising Manual, Leader Dog shall have the right to remove the puppy from my care. I understand the UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES am I to allow the puppy to run off leash unless it is in a secure fenced in enclosure, and that the puppy must wear its official Leader Dog Puppy Tag at all times. I further agree to assume all responsibility for any damage to my person or estate caused by said puppy while in my care and agree to hold harmless Leader Dogs for the Blind from any and all claims that may accrue to me or my family as a result of injury to persons or property while the puppy is under my care. Upon completion of raising this puppy, Leader Dogs for the Blind will place this puppy in a use compatible with the organization's purpose.



**Leader Dogs for the Blind
1039 S. Rochester Rd
Rochester Hills, Michigan 48307**

Main Office	248-651-9011
Toll free (use for emergencies)	888-777-5332
Puppy Development Supervisor Puppy counselor and puppy raising concerns	248-650-7114 or ext. 1114
Puppy Development Coordinator Puppy placement, puppy raising concerns	248-218-6422 or ext. 2075
Puppy Development Assistant Coordinator Administrative concerns, questionnaires, puppy returns	248-650-7108 or ext. 1154
Coordinator of Prison Puppies Matters regarding puppies being raised in correctional facilities	248-218-6686 or ext. 2086
Manager of Canine Development Program questions	248-650-7113
Canine Development Center Lobby	248-650-7115
Veterinary Clinic Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	248-218-6308 ext. 1118
Puppy Raiser Advisory Committee The “voice” of the puppy raiser and addresses concerns.	<u>PuppyAdvisory@LeaderDog.Org</u>

PLEASE NOTE: The *emergency* phone number is *our toll free number!*

Veterinary Emergency after 4:30 p.m.

888-777-5332

In case of emergency (possible threat to puppy's life) after 4:30 p.m.:

- Call 888-777-5332 or direct line 248-218-6308
- Press 6 – The prompt for raisers and breeding stock hosts is toward the end for the vet clinic so they will have to be patient
- Press 1 – voicemail
- Press 2 – veterinary emergency to connect to on-call veterinarian
- This will contact our on-call veterinarian immediately.
- If you get voicemail, leave a message and the on-call veterinarian will call you back.
- If your puppy's life is in immediate danger, contact your closest emergency veterinary service.

Your Emergency Veterinary Phone _____

Puppy Raiser Contract

SECTION 1: Preparing for a Puppy

Preparing for a Future Leader Dog



After your puppy raiser application has been approved, you will likely have a wait of several months before a puppy is available for you. Although the wait may seem long, you can use the time to get ready to do a great job with the puppy.

Learning Resources for Puppy Raisers

Leader Dog has a website section specifically to provide information, updates, instructional materials and other resources to puppy raisers. This material is located at www.leaderdog.org/puppyraisers/. Below is a summary of learning and support materials available through Leader Dog on our website.

Instructional Videos. This series of short videos covers topics of interest to puppy raisers. They are a great information source for raisers throughout their year of puppy raising.

Puppy Raiser Manual. This is the document you are reading. It contains a wealth of information that will help you to be an effective puppy raiser. This chapter focuses on the steps you need to take to prepare yourself, your home and your community for the puppy's arrival. Following chapters cover basic information about caring for the puppy, keeping him healthy, obedience training, problem-solving and taking him out in public.

In-For-Training Standards. Leader Dog has identified specific skills and behaviors that each puppy should be able to achieve by about 10-12 months of age. These standards focus on skills that give the puppy optimal chance to succeed at Leader Dog. In addition, the In-For-Training (IFT) Standards are specific and helpful goals for the puppy raiser. You have online access to the IFT Standards and IFT instructional videos.

Puppy Tales. This bi-monthly newsletter is a treasure trove of Leader Dog news and updates, training tips and information about Leader Dog events and activities. Current and archived issues of Puppy Tales are available.

Puppy Timeline You will receive, via email, a timeline that starts one week prior to picking up a puppy. This timeline continues until the puppy is 16 weeks of age. Each weekly email provides age appropriate information for teaching the puppy obedience skills and behaviors, as well as suggestions for puppy management and appropriate socialization activities.

Want to know more? A recommended reading list is included in Appendix A of this manual. You can find more information about raising and training dogs, at your local library or bookstore.

Before the puppy arrives, you should attend a meeting held by your area puppy counselor. Your puppy counselor can help you prepare for the puppy and you can get to know the other raisers in the group. They may soon become some of your best friends! By taking this important step you will be preparing for the time commitment required for meeting your puppy counselor on a monthly basis.

Puppy Proofing Your Home

Bringing a puppy into your home is much like bringing in a toddler, so “puppy proofing” is essential. Puppies are curious and active and will test their surroundings by tasting; chewing; climbing on,

under or in; and exploring everything. In a puppy's mind, the world is a smorgasbord of toys where anything within reach is fair game for chewing. To puppy proof your home:

- Pick up or secure trashcans, hampers, books, magazines and breakables.
- Put household cleaners, poisons, pesticides and medications behind secure cabinet doors or out of reach.
- Run electrical cords through conduit or attach them to baseboards.
- Rid the house and garden of toxic plants and poisons (see Section 3 on Puppy Health).
- Keep cigarettes and ashtrays out of reach.
- Dispose of bones and keep trash out of reach.
- Close bathroom doors or toilet lids especially when cleaners or deodorants are used in the toilet bowl.
- Keep screens or windows shut especially in upper story rooms.
- Keep holiday ornaments out of reach—shiny glass bulbs and tinsel are attractive and dangerous.
- Keep scented candles out of reach. They may smell and taste good, but they can cause intestinal distress and make the puppy very sick.
- Keep sugar free peanut butter, gum or other products sweetened with xylitol, which is poisonous to dogs, out of reach.
- Keep medicines, both human and canine, out of reach.

Equipment and Supplies

Food and Water Bowls: We recommend stainless steel bowls that are durable and can be thoroughly cleansed. Plastic bowls tend to get chewed, which makes them harder to clean.

Food: Leader Dog puppies require a quality puppy food. The puppy will be accustomed to Pro Plan FOCUS Puppy chicken and rice formula. You will want to have this food on hand when the puppy arrives. You can expect the puppy to eat 40 lbs. or more of puppy food before switching to adult food. If you plan to feed the puppy a different brand of food, please use chicken as the main protein source, and choose a premium food. More detailed information on feeding and foods is found in Section 2.

Leashes and Collars: The Future Leader Dog will be wearing a buckle collar with its puppy tag attached when you pick it up. You will need to switch the ID tag to the larger buckle collar when the puppy is big enough to wear it. (Note: the ID tag should never be attached to the martingale collar). You will receive a long-lasting leather leash, which is easy on the hands. and two martingale collars to be used during the raising process. See Section 2 for more information on collars and leashes.

Crates and Gates: We recommend a portable plastic molded or metal wire crate that will last the entire time you are raising puppies. It should be able to fit an adult dog. A good size is typically 24–26" wide, 36–38" deep and 32–34" tall. Wire crates fold down and travel in less space, provide more ventilation and allow the puppy to see things going on around him. Plastic crates are lighter weight, provide more privacy and puppies are not likely to pull or push things through the side openings. Each has its benefits and drawbacks, so choose the one that best fits your lifestyle. Your crate is an essential tool for safe puppy raising and an important investment.

Baby gates help keep the puppy safely confined and assist with house training. You may want to buy, make or borrow several.



Appropriate Toys: With so many toys on the market today, how do you decide which are safe and which could prove to be fatal? Leader Dog has specific guidelines for toys that have proven safe for our puppies over the years. What follows is a list of approved toys:

- **KONG** brand rubber toys (no ropes). A food-stuffed KONG is acceptable for a puppy on occasion (smear a little peanut butter inside the rim or use kibble to plug the small end then fill about ½ or ¾ of the way with kibble before adding water to soak or freeze. Use part of the puppy’s normal food for the day when stuffing a KONG; treats *should not* be in addition to the puppy’s normal food intake). Visit www.kongcompany.com/recipes/ for additional ideas for stuffing a KONG.

The KONG Wobbler food dispensing toy may also be used with supervision for feeding a puppy.

- **Nylabone** brand toys, appropriate to the size of the dog. All Nylabone packaging shows a weight range for each product, along with a photo of a dog. Look for packaging that shows larger breeds such as a retriever. You may provide smaller sized products for young puppies, but make sure they are removed from the puppy’s toys as the puppy grows. Products listed as *dental* chews are not appropriate for puppies over 6 months of age. When purchasing a Nylabone toy, look for the “Durachew” labeling, which reads “non-edible for powerful chewers.” Do not purchase Nylabone toys that are edible, have edible parts, come apart, or are flexible.
- Whole elk antlers, never the “split” type. Leader Dog veterinarians have approved elk antlers for Future Leader Dogs only. They are not approved for Leader Dogs matched with a client.
- The Tux and Hurley toys from **West Paw Design’s** Zogoflex line of toys. The Topl treat dispensing toy may be used with supervision only.
- The wishbone shaped bone from **Benebone**, purchased in a size suitable to the weight of the puppy.



Unacceptable Toys: *Never* buy toys that have bells or pieces that can be chewed off and swallowed. This includes Nylabone products with removable pieces and KONG products with fabric or ropes. Other toys that are unacceptable are: rubber toys with squeakers, rope toys (the strings can become tangled in the intestines and cause irreparable damage), soft plush or stuffed fabric toys, rawhide bones and real bones. Rawhide bones can become impacted in a puppy’s digestive tract and real bones can splinter and stick in a puppy’s throat. Socks, old shoes, towels or gloves should not be used for toys because they confuse the puppy about what he can chew on and possibly encourage destructive behaviors later in life. Should you have a question on whether or not a particular toy is suitable for a Future Leader Dog, please contact your puppy counselor or the puppy development department at Leader Dog.

Preparing your Community for a Leader Dog Puppy

You will want to take the puppy out with you in public to provide him with a variety of social experiences. Before getting the puppy, visit some local businesses to explain the Leader Dog puppy

raising program and to get permission for the puppy to accompany you into the business. Future Leader Dogs *do not* have the same public access rights provided to working Leader Dogs, so always ask first! You may also want to find a local veterinarian who may provide services at a reduced rate. A letter is included in your puppy packet to use for veterinarians when discussing possible reduced or free veterinary visits for a Future Leader Dog. If you live close to Leader Dog, you can bring the puppy to our veterinary team for its health care needs. If you are likely to need a boarding kennel in the coming year, take time to find a good one now.

Dog Licenses and Identification

Check with your local government regarding the need for a dog license. A license may or may not be required for the puppy. In some places a license for a guide dog or future guide dog may be free of charge.

Please get a personal ID tag for the puppy that includes your name, phone and/or address. Although the puppy should NEVER run loose, a tag is a good idea for the rare emergency when the puppy gets away, such as a car accident or broken leash.

Naming a Future Leader Dog

We prefer that the dog is named a two-syllable word that starts with a hard consonant such as Casey, Trudy, Buddy or Kelly. One syllable names like Jake, Scamp, Ruff and Mack are also suitable. Do not choose a name that sound like a command or commonly used word (i.e. “Kit” sounds like “sit,” and “Ray” sounds like “stay.” Dogs can hear very well but are not great at differentiating between similar sounds). Names that are long or difficult to say can make it difficult for our instructors or visually impaired clients, who repeat the dog’s name many times a day. Keep in mind that we do not know whom this puppy may go to in the future, so common human names (i.e., Pete or Jacob) may cause conflict if the dog is matched with a client with the same name. Leader Dog reserves the right to request a name change should we feel the name is unsuitable for any reason.

Puppy Pick-Up at Leader Dog

Leader Dog will contact you when an available puppy is 1–3 weeks of age to confirm that you are prepared to take on this year-long responsibility. An appointment will be scheduled for you to pick up the puppy.

A leash, collars and toys will be provided for you when you pick up the puppy. Bring a small crate so the puppy can travel safely home unless you have a passenger along who can monitor the puppy on the vehicle floor. If you are traveling far distance, bring a bowl for water or food.



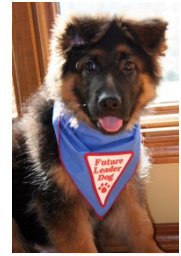
At Leader Dog you will read and sign a puppy raiser contract and checklist. A team member will discuss health records, vaccination dates and answer any questions. Finally, you will meet the new puppy! This is a good time to have a camera ready!

Leader Dog Puppy ID Tag

Each Future Leader Dog will have his own numbered identification tag which needs to be attached to his buckle collar at all times. Leader Dog uses this numbered tag to track a puppy’s growth and health history from birth throughout his lifetime.

Future Leader Dog Bandanna and Jacket

You will be supplied with a Future Leader Dog bandanna and jacket. The puppy should always wear his bandanna *or* jacket at all times in public. Along with the Leader Dog ID tag, this helps identify him as a Future Leader Dog and clarifies his presence in stores or other public places. The puppy's jacket and ID tag do not give or guarantee any access rights. However, they clearly identify him as being an official part of the Leader Dog program, making it possible for you to request storeowners to allow you and the puppy to enter. The storeowners are asked to only let puppies in that are wearing either their bandanna or jacket and their ID tag. The puppy should not wear any other bandannas, costumes or other items that are not Leader Dog issue in public.



As the puppy raiser, you may have the puppy's name sewn onto the jacket or bandanna if you so choose. You may not alter the bandanna or jacket in any other way (patches, buttons or any other type of written information).

Bringing a Puppy Home

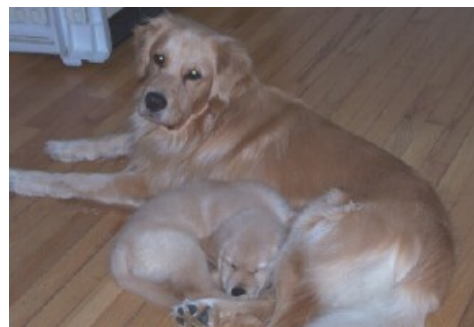
Allow plenty of time to let the puppy “park” (relieve itself) before leaving Leader Dog. On your way home, have a safe place for the puppy to travel. A small crate is necessary unless you have passengers to hold the leash while the puppy rides on the floor. Please never drive a car with the puppy on your lap.

When you arrive home, take the puppy to his designated “park” area (see House Training in Section 2). Give the cue to “park.” Once he parks, give immediate praise, letting the puppy know he has done well. You are now ready to take the puppy into your home and slowly introduce him to his new surroundings. Limit the puppy to just one or two rooms at first. Allowing the puppy too much freedom in the house greatly increases the likelihood of “accidents.”

Introduce the puppy to all the things in the room. When he finds something inappropriate, distract him with an upbeat tone of voice (“puppy, puppy, puppy!”), provide an appropriate toy and then reward the puppy with a piece of kibble and praise. Remember that this new puppy is like a two-year-old child—he will investigate everything and has a very short attention span. Temporarily put up or remove anything that could be dangerous to him. Trying to prevent inappropriate behavior is much easier than trying to correct problem behavior once it has become a habit.

Slowly introduce the puppy to each room in the house over the next few days or weeks. Remember to distract him from inappropriate activity, and *reward and praise for good behavior*. Never leave the puppy loose and unattended for at least the first month or two.

If you have other animals in your home, introduce them to the new puppy one at a time in a controlled setting. Keep the puppy in his crate or behind a gate while you introduce your pets. Once the excitement has settled down and you have an idea how they will react, let each animal individually greet the puppy. Don't expect your pets to immediately adore the puppy like you do; it will take time for them to adjust. Your current dog or cat may need to “tell the puppy his place” in the household a few times before life settles down and they can be trusted alone together.



SECTION 2: Puppy Raising Basics

This section covers the basics of feeding, crating and housetraining the puppy. It also provides suggestions and recommendations for purchasing and properly using collars, leashes, fences and other dog related equipment.

Feeding

Maintaining a Healthy Weight is Important

Puppies that are kept fit and trim as they grow have the best possible chance of becoming sound, healthy adults. Puppies that are overfed may grow too fast or become overweight, causing unnecessary stress to their growing joints. Lameness and joint problems can reduce the puppy's chances of becoming a working Leader Dog. These important feeding guidelines will help you raise a healthy puppy.

- **Feed only good quality puppy food.** The puppy has been eating Pro Plan FOCUS Puppy chicken and rice formula. It is the regular kibble (not shredded). Table scraps and supplements should not be fed to the puppy; they greatly increase caloric intake and can cause puppies to become picky about what they will eat. Puppy food provides a high level of energy to use for growth.
- **Do not feed them premium foods and special diets** like fish, venison, rabbit or other novel proteins. These foods should be reserved for veterinary prescribed diets and only fed with the Leader Dog veterinarian's approval. Leader Dog approved protein sources are chicken, turkey, lamb or beef.
- **Switch to an adult dog food between 4 and 5 months of age.** A complete and balanced adult dog food has all the nutrition the growing puppy needs. Our preferred adult dog food is Pro Plan SPORT All Life Stages Active 26/16 Formula for everyday exercise.
- **Feed the puppy only at scheduled feeding times. Do not free feed.** If the puppy does not finish her measured meal within 10–15 minutes, put the meal away. Feed her the normal amount at her next scheduled meal. Free feeding promotes picky eating and over eating.
- **Kibble used as treats** should be limited to protein sources of chicken, turkey, lamb or beef.



Feeding Schedules and Amounts

When you get the puppy home, she will be eating 3/4 cup of food three times daily. You will need to increase this as the puppy grows. On average, puppies will gain 6–10 pounds per month, tapering down as the puppy reaches 35–45 pounds. Always use an ACCURATE measuring utensil when measuring the puppy's meals. It is important to know exactly how much the puppy is eating so adjustments can be made as needed.



The chart below is a *general guide* to the number of meals and amount of food a puppy should get as it grows. The puppy will need to be fed according to its individual needs.

Puppy Growth and Feeding Guide			
Age	Weight Range	Meals per day	Meal Size (Cups)
6–8 weeks	8–12 pounds	3	$\frac{3}{4}$
8–12 weeks	12–20 pounds	3	$\frac{3}{4}$ –1
12–16 weeks	20–28 pounds	3	1–1 $\frac{1}{4}$
16–20 weeks	26–36 pounds	2	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ –2
	<i>Switch to adult dog food at 4–5 months of age and to two feedings per day</i>		
6–9 months	Varies	2	Daily total about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups, according to the puppy's needs.
9+ months	Varies	2	Daily total about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ –4 cups, according to the puppy's needs.

Evaluating the Puppy's Weight

The puppy will likely go through growth spurts. She may get pudgy, then her legs will grow and she will look thin. These changes are normal and should be expected. *You should always try to keep the puppy's condition within the "normal" ranges described below.*

Note: German shepherd puppies typically look very thin throughout puppyhood. They often will require more food than the feeding guide indicates to keep at a correct weight.

Guide to Evaluating Your Puppy's Weight	
Body Condition	Description
Underweight	Ribs, backbone and hipbones may be visible and/or very easy to feel. Little or no body fat. Very obvious waist from above and the side.
Lower Normal	With your thumb on her backbone you can easily feel the ribs. A waistline is obvious from above as well as from the side. When she stretches you can see a few ribs pushing against the tight skin.
<i>Keep the puppy's weight within the "lower normal" to "upper normal" range.</i>	
Upper Normal	With your thumb on her backbone you can feel the ribs, although there is a layer of fat over them. A slight waistline can be seen from above and from the side. When she stretches you can easily feel the ribs under the tight skin.
Overweight	With your thumb on her backbone, it is difficult to feel the ribs through the fat layer. There is little or no waistline from above or the side.

Overweight puppies put stress on their joints, increasing chances of lameness and permanent damage. Because large dogs are predisposed to a variety of joint diseases, it is very important to keep the puppy within the normal weight range. On the other hand, a significantly underweight puppy is unthrifty looking and is not getting the necessary nutrients to grow strong healthy bones. Monthly weighing can help you keep the puppy healthy. You can also review the Nestlé Purina Body Condition System chart for an ideal weight score. It can be found online at http://purinaveterinarydiets.com/resources/Files/dog_chart.pdf. Your goal should be a body condition score of 4–5.

Mealtime Manners

The puppy has already started to learn mealtime manners including sitting before eating. Please continue this from the first day she comes home with you. This exercise in puppy self-control will carry over to the rest of your relationship. Your goal will be to have the puppy sit quietly while you prepare her meal, and wait until you say “okay” before eating.

- Hold the dish containing the puppy’s meal out of the puppy’s reach and wait for the puppy to sit.
- At first you can use the dish to lure the puppy into a sit. If you raise the dish over her head, the puppy will tend to sit so she can look up at the dish.
- When the puppy sits, start to place the dish down. If she gets up before you say “okay,” quickly pick up the dish. Again lower the dish to the floor, but if the puppy gets up, raise the dish again. At first, try to reward the puppy with her meal *immediately* upon sitting. The puppy will quickly realize that her meal only comes when sitting—a powerful incentive to sit.
- Once you can predict that the puppy is going to sit, add the verbal cue “sit” when presenting the food bowl.
- After the puppy has mastered “sit,” then ask the puppy to hold the sit for a few seconds before you say “okay.” This should *never* become a test to see how long the puppy can stay. Only ask for a few seconds then release the puppy to eat. Taking this exercise to excess can create possessiveness over the food dish.

Using Your Crate

The Benefits of Using a Crate

A crate is a place of safety and security to the puppy and will be an invaluable tool for you during the puppy's first year. It is a bed for overnight, naps and resting where the puppy can safely remain close to family activities. Using a crate greatly simplifies house training. The crate protects the puppy and your home from her curiosity when you are away or busy, and in your car while traveling. It is a home away from home when you are vacationing and a refuge when the puppy needs a break from too much activity. A puppy that has learned to accept and enjoy her crate will adjust more easily to kenneling while in training at Leader Dog.



Teaching the Puppy to Accept a Crate

You can help the puppy accept her crate as a good and happy place right from the start.

- Make the crate part of mealtime. Begin by feeding the puppy next to the crate and progress to feeding her in the crate with the door open. Then feed her in the crate with the door closed, making sure you can quickly let her out when finished. **Note:** Feeding in the crate can be temporary and may be discontinued after the puppy has accepted the crate. However, if you have other dogs in the home or visiting dogs, feeding in the crate is a safe place for the puppy.
- Gather the puppy's toys and put them in the crate so she will walk in and out to get them.
- Use the crate for naptime. Young puppies tire quickly and nap frequently. Place the tired puppy in her crate. When she wakes up, take her directly outside for "park" time. You can avoid accidents and greatly speed up house training by using the crate. **Note:** More about using your crate for house training is included later in this section.
- The puppy will be most content in your presence, so place the crate where she will be able to see and hear daily activities. At night, move the crate to someone's bedroom so you and the puppy will sleep easier.
- The crate should not be used as punishment; however, it can be used when the puppy (or you) needs a time out. Gently place the puppy in the crate, praising as she goes in. Leave the puppy with a toy until you have time and patience to deal with her energy. A KONG toy with a little peanut butter and kibble will keep your puppy happy and wear her out at the same time, so you take a much needed break!

As the puppy matures, she will need to learn to be content in the crate for more extended periods of time. Remember to notice a quiet, settled puppy and reinforce this behavior by quietly dropping small treats into the crate at intervals. If the puppy is fussing in the crate, wait for a quiet interval before interacting with her, giving treats or letting her out of the crate. Your weekly Puppy Timeline emails will guide you

through the process of teaching the pup to enter the crate on cue and to sit quietly before you release her from the crate.

As a general guide, you can estimate the number of hours the puppy can be crated by adding 1 to her age in months. For example, 3 months old +1 = 4 hours.

Expectations of Crate Behavior

Puppy under 4 months: Enters crate with help or with food reward. After a short time will settle quietly and should be accident-free in crate for the number of months old she is plus one (3 months old +1 = 4 hours). The puppy may require a reminder to sit prior to being let out of crate.

Puppy 4–8 months: Enters crate on verbal cue. The puppy settles calmly and quietly even if distractions are present. The puppy may require a toy to maintain quiet behavior. The puppy will hold a sit until the crate door is opened, but may require a reminder.

Puppy 9 months and older: The puppy willingly enters the crate on a verbal cue. The puppy settles despite distractions and does not require toys to maintain a calm demeanor. The puppy sits without being cued and waits while the crate door is opened.

Problem behaviors include vocalizing, increased panting, frequent turning around or other activity, dog does not relax. Seek assistance from your counselor or puppy development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

Car Trips

Safety is the top priority when driving with the puppy. When you are driving alone with a young puppy, *always* put her in a crate. As she gets older, she needs to be taught to lie on the floor of the passenger seat. Begin to teach this behavior when traveling with a friend. The passenger should keep the puppy at his or her feet during the trip. Puppies generally accept this traveling routine after a few trips. You can also spend some time with the puppy in a parked car practicing down and stay on the passenger floor.



When you take your first trip alone with the puppy on the passenger floor, you may want to use a tie-down to prevent her from moving around the car. Attach the tie-down to her buckle collar. For the puppy's safety and yours, don't allow her to ride on the seats or to wander around the car.

Encourage the puppy to willingly enter a variety of vehicles, using praise and rewards. Have her wait to exit the vehicle until you say "okay."

Occasionally, a puppy may be persistently car sick. Signs of car sickness include panting, drooling, whining and restlessness. If this happens, contact your puppy counselor or puppy development. There are training tips and medications that can be helpful.

PLEASE NOTE: In vehicles equipped with airbags, it may not be safe for a puppy to ride on the front passenger seat floor unless the airbag can be turned off. Alternatively, teach the puppy to lie down on the floor of the back seat or be crated.

House Training

“Park” is the cue we use when we want the puppies to relieve themselves. It is taught by repetition and scheduling the puppy’s natural relief times. Successful house training is built upon a dog’s innate desire to “not soil the den,” and upon getting the puppy to her “relief spot” when she needs to go. Accidents are always a human failure—not a puppy’s misbehavior. Practice, praise, rewards and patience are the keys to successful house training as you follow these steps:

- **Use a consistent puppy bathroom area.** “Park” the puppy by taking her to the same spot in your yard each time. This will soon become a signal as to the mission she is to accomplish while outside. It is also helpful to exit your home from the same door as much as possible.
- **Always accompany the puppy.** This is a vital step to house training, even if your yard is fenced. You must be there to praise the puppy when she relieves herself. Watch for the telltale signs of circling, sniffing and starting to squat, then tell the puppy to “park.” Tell her “good park!” as she relieves herself, and praise her like she just won the Super Bowl.
- **Take the puppy out to “park” frequently.** A young puppy will need to “park” every 15 minutes when awake and immediately after she wakes up from a nap. She has a very small bladder and little physical control. As the puppy gets older, her control will improve, and she *may* learn to give you signals when it is time to park. Keep in mind that the puppy will need to go more frequently when very active or highly distracted, and toward the end of the day when tired.
- **Limit the puppy’s freedom during house training.** Dogs are essentially clean animals. The puppy would prefer not to soil her home. By confining her to a small play area, such as a kitchen or mudroom, you can help her learn to wait until she is outside to relieve herself. Even in a small play area, you must watch her closely. It is your job to successfully get the puppy outside when she has to go.
- **Use the puppy’s crate appropriately during house training.** When you cannot supervise the puppy, crate her for safety as well as house training. However, you must continue to get her outside frequently enough to prevent accidents in the crate. A general rule for the frequency of scheduled “park” time, in hours, when a puppy is resting in a crate is her age in months plus 1. For example, a 3-month-old puppy can rest $3+1=4$ hours between “park” times.
- **Expect the puppy to find it harder to “park” away from home.** You will need to allow for extra “park” time when you are away from home with the puppy. She will not have the familiar sight and smells of her home parking spot. She does not have a familiar exit to go to when she needs to relieve herself. Help her by going outside frequently and watching for signals that she needs to “park.”
- **Please remove the puppy’s bandanna or puppy jacket before parking her.** This helps the puppy learn the difference between free time or work time. If you have the bandanna/jacket on

and the puppy begins to park, try to quickly remove it.

When Accidents Happen

Even diligent puppy raisers will have to face a few accidents during house training. There are appropriate ways of responding to their own, and the puppy's mistakes.

- **If you catch the puppy in the act of relieving herself**, you can often slightly startle her into stopping with a verbal “no” or “ah-ah-ah,” then scoop her up and take her out to the “park” spot. As soon as she begins to finish her job outdoors, praise her. Very young puppies (under the age of 12 weeks) cannot physically stop relieving and start again, so at that age the puppy will likely not be able to resume relieving when taken outdoors.
- **If you find the “evidence” but don’t catch her in the act**, reprimand *yourself* for not being diligent in getting her out when she needed to go. Adjust her “park” schedule to get her out more frequently if needed, and reduce her indoor play area to a more manageable size. **Do not scold her after the fact.** She will not understand. If anything, she will think that, “Mom does not like that stuff, so I better hide it better next time.” You may begin to find accidents in out of the way places like behind furniture.
- **Accidents on carpets:** For effective long lasting clean up, use enzyme-containing cleaning solutions especially designed to destroy urine odors. These are readily available in pet stores and through pet catalogs. General household disinfectants are not nearly as effective.
- **Accidents may happen in public places.** It is embarrassing, but true. Getting a young puppy out to familiarize is so important, but there may be a few accidents. Use your best house training skills to prevent accidents, but always be prepared to clean up. Carry paper towels, moist towelettes and plastic bags with you at all times. Stay on hard surfaces such as linoleum while the puppy is very young.

Expectations of Puppy Maturity and House Training

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy is beginning to establish a “park” routine. She may signal that she needs to relieve herself by whining, pacing or going to the door. She is starting to sleep through the night in her crate and is able to keep her crate clean when left alone. As a general guide, you can estimate the number of hours the puppy can stay dry by adding 1 to its age in months. For example, 4 months old +1 = 5 hours. She may still have a few accidents, even in public. Give her the opportunity to relieve herself on different surfaces (concrete, asphalt, mulch, grass, stones).

Puppies 4–9 months: The “park” routine is established and accidents seldom happen. The raiser can stand in one place, give the cue to park and the puppy will usually comply. She should be clearly indicating when she needs to relieve herself, and she should be able to go on different surfaces (concrete, asphalt, mulch, grass, stones).

Puppies 10 months and older: Accidents no longer occur in a healthy puppy. She should willingly park on different surfaces (concrete, asphalt, mulch, grass, stones). She should be able to walk one mile without needing to relieve herself. She should relieve herself on cue with the raiser standing still, within a leash length of the raiser. Expectations for a puppy's park routine at 10 months of age can be found in the In-For-Training (IFT) Standard 8B.

Undesirable behaviors: Occasionally problems arise in developing good “park” habits. The puppy may favor specific surfaces or may not have a clear indicator when she needs to relieve. She may be reluctant to relieve on leash or in new environments. The puppy may relieve herself unexpectedly during walks or

indiscriminately in the home, requiring confinement to prevent accidents. Your puppy counselor can assist you in analyzing and solving puppy relief problems.

Leashes and Collars

Leashes

You will receive a leather Leader Dog leash when you pick up the puppy. It should last throughout the year. Leather leashes are long-lasting and easy on the hands. Nylon leashes are harder to hold and have a tendency to burn your hands if the leash slips



Buckle Collars

You will receive a buckle collar with a puppy tag attached when you pick up the puppy. As the puppy grows, you will need to remove the tag from the puppy collar and attach it to the larger one of the same type that will be in your puppy bag. Leader Dog recommends a flat buckle collar for the puppy to wear all the time. Use this collar for the puppy tag, rabies tag and any other identification tags you purchase.



Martingale Collars

You will also receive two martingale collars. These collars are best used for on-leash walking, and adjusted properly, they can prevent a puppy from slipping out of its collar. To adjust a martingale collar properly, buckle it around the puppy's neck. Situate the collar right behind her ears, high on the neck, and gently tighten the chain part of the martingale. When tightened, the two D-ring ends of the nylon collar should be about 2 inches apart. If they touch, the collar is too loose. When there is no pressure on the collar, it should rest at about the middle of the puppy's neck.

For safety reasons, the martingale collar should remain attached to the leash. When you take the leash off, you don't unsnap the leash; instead, remove the leash by unsnapping the martingale collar.

Never leave a martingale collar on the puppy when she is not on leash.



Other Types of Training Collars, Halters and Harnesses

Prong, pinch, slip, choke and electronic collars are *not* to be used on a Future Leader Dog.

Head halters like the Gentle Leader or Walk 'n Train and body harnesses are used under specific circumstances, and **only with permission** and guidance from your puppy counselor or puppy development. If you feel a halter or harness would be helpful in your situation, please contact your puppy counselor **before** purchasing or borrowing one.

Fences and Tie Outs

Fences

A fenced-in yard can be a great asset in raising a puppy. You can let the puppy out for fresh air and a chance to run off some steam. *Caution:* Puppies left outside unsupervised can climb, dig, squeeze through small openings and escape from safety. They can become entangled in something or be stolen from your yard. If you use a fenced area for the puppy, inspect every inch of your fence regularly. Make sure that all gates are secure and that there are no gaps or holes where a puppy could escape.

Tie Outs

Many pet stores carry lightweight, chew-proof cables that can be used to tie out the puppy. Some even have a spring “shock absorber” as a safety and comfort feature. They can be hooked to something solid, or to a horizontal cable or clothesline to allow the puppy to exercise. Tie outs can be very handy, especially while traveling or camping. However, they require very close supervision to prevent entanglement or a slipped collar. *Never use a rope or any sort of tie out that the puppy can chew through.*

Always keep an eye on the puppy while she is outside. Her safety is your responsibility. Under no circumstance should a Future Leader Dog be allowed off leash outside of a completely enclosed, securely fenced area.

Electronic Fencing

Electronic fences are popular, especially in neighborhoods where fenced yards or dog kennels are not permitted. Leader Dog does *not* consider this a safe alternative for our puppies. If you use electronic fencing with your family pets, you will need to plan another form of enclosure for the Leader Dog puppy or take her out on a leash.

Exercise

A Future Leader Dog is not allowed to be off leash unless she is in a safely enclosed area. If you do not have access to an enclosed area, putting the puppy on a long line 20–30 feet in length and taking her to a safe, open area is a good option.

Walking a puppy is a good way to familiarize the puppy to new environments, as well as get some needed exercise. Be mindful of the distance you are walking, and make sure it is appropriate to the age of the puppy as well as the temperature on that day. If the puppy keeps stopping, you are going too far.

Be aware that in the year you have the puppy, she will be growing at a very fast rate. Her bones will also go through periods of rapid growth. Because of this growth, it is not appropriate for the puppy to perform exercises that are repetitive in nature, particularly on hard ground. This would include exercise such as jogging, biking or roller blading. The impact of this type of exercise could damage the puppy’s growing joints, and impact the overall health of the puppy.

Boarding Kennels and Puppy Sitters

Boarding Kennels

You may need to house the puppy at a professional boarding kennel for short periods during family vacations or other events. A well-managed kennel can provide the puppy with a safe and valuable learning experience. After all, when the puppy returns to Leader Dog, she will be housed in a large kennel

for a number of months. A positive boarding kennel experience can make her transition back to Leader Dog less stressful. Leader Dog does not recommend kenneling puppies under 4 months of age, or puppies that have not finished their required vaccinations.

Finding a well-managed kennel is well worth the time it takes to check out what is available in your area. Your veterinarian, puppy counselor or other puppy raisers may have recommendations. Visit the kennel ahead of time and inspect the dog runs and exercise areas; they should be clean and relatively odor free. The dogs should look comfortable and not overly stressed. The kennel should require a complete vaccination record including a recent Bordetella vaccine. They should be willing to feed your food and specified amounts. If you find that these things are missing, keep looking.

If the puppy will have a long stay at a boarding kennel, you can ease the transition by first arranging for a day or overnight stay. This will also allow you to get some feedback on how the puppy adapts to the kennel.

A boarding kennel may allow the puppies/dogs some time to run and play together (pack running). Keep in mind that our puppies should avoid dog parks, and pack running is not recommended.

Puppy Sitters

A good source for a puppy sitter is your puppy counselor. They may know of past or current Leader Dog puppy raisers who are able to help out with watching the puppy. These raisers are already familiar with the Leader Dog guidelines so the puppy will continue to receive some consistency.

As with boarding kennels, it is advisable to check out any puppy sitting arrangements ahead of time. The puppy sitter, whether a past or current puppy raiser or very reliable family member or friend, should be capable of handling the puppy and any other pets in the home. They should understand and be willing to follow Leader Dog requirements for pet safety and containment.

If the puppy will be staying in someone else's home, plan a visit prior to your trip to acquaint the puppy with the sitter and the home.

SECTION 3 – Keeping the Puppy Healthy

Excellent health is a combination of many things—good diet, healthy weight, exercise, grooming, dental care, vaccinations and other preventive care. The puppy depends on you to keep him healthy. This chapter will help you do that by explaining the basics of health care. Being able to react quickly and appropriately to health emergencies is also an important part of keeping a puppy healthy. The first aid information in this chapter should help.

Evaluating the Puppy's Health

A Leader Dog must learn to tolerate a physical exam without excitement or resentment. By routinely examining the puppy, you can teach him to enjoy being handled and you will be able to spot potential health problems early, when they are more easily treated.

You will receive weekly “Puppy Timeline” emails from Leader Dog, which will guide you through early handling exercises, up until the puppy is 16 weeks old. For very young puppies, start your exams when the puppy is tired. Use a portion of the puppy’s kibble to reinforce good calm behavior to make these exams something the puppy not only tolerates but enjoys. Lift an ear, a lip, close a hand around a paw, lift a tail and follow each movement with a piece of kibble. Multiple positive experiences go a long way in reducing fear behaviors that may develop when veterinary care is necessary for the puppy. This is an important life skill for any puppy!

Most examinations at a veterinary office will be carried out on an examination table. To prepare him for the exam, start the puppy handling exercises on the floor, then gradually move him up to a platform, table or counter top. Dogs feel insecure on slippery surfaces, so use a small rubber bath mat to increase traction. Remember to reassure the puppy using a calm voice and gently petting him.

Health exams should be done in a routine, consistent manner so that nothing is overlooked. Start with the dog’s head and then move down the length of the back and legs. Slowly lift the lips to examine the dog’s teeth and gums. In the future it may be necessary to brush his teeth and this will help prepare him for that experience. Next, gently open the dog’s mouth to look at his tongue and the roof of his mouth. Do not exceed the range of comfort for the dog. If you are patient, he will not resist the oral exam.



Next, examine each ear, including the earflap and the ear canal. The ear canal should be clean and dry without odor or debris. If you find redness, heat, pain or anything unusual, follow up with your veterinarian.

The eyes should be clear and bright. The amount of eye discharge varies from dog to dog, but should be minimal, and clear or white. Check with your veterinarian if there is pain or excessive blinking, redness, tearing or squinting.



Using both hands simultaneously and starting with the head, gently slide your hands back over the shoulders, sides, rump, and down his tail. Everything should feel symmetrical. Start at the top of each limb and move downward to the paw. Turn each paw over to check for debris, matted hair or injuries. Check the nails to see if they need trimming. Nails should not make a clicking noise as they walk on a tile floor. If they do, you need to trim the tip off each nail. If you are unsure of how to trim the nails, have your veterinarian show you how to do it properly. If the nail is trimmed too short, it will bleed and cause discomfort

for the puppy.

Next, lift the tail and look at the anal area. There should be no matted hair or stool, and no indication of diarrhea. Tapeworm segments, if present, will look like small pieces of rice when dry or may be moving slightly if recently exposed. If you see tapeworm segments, contact your veterinarian immediately.



Spend a moment gently restraining the puppy to get the puppy accustomed to holding still for injections, blood draws or vaccinations. The puppy should calmly accept being held starting with a few seconds and building up to a minute or so.



Most puppies will accept a health exam if it is done slowly, one step at a time and with regular positive reinforcement. Remember that a puppy has a short attention span and you may have to break this into small segments for younger puppies. The puppy will learn to trust and enjoy the attention he receives from you during regular health exams, building his confidence in people and preparing him to accept the training he will receive as a Leader Dog.

Grooming

Brushing and Coat Care

Daily grooming helps build a bond with the dog and teaches him to trust your gentle hands. Have patience with the puppy and he will learn to look forward to this special one-on-one attention. Start by using just your hands to stroke the puppy's coat until he accepts the idea. Use your grooming sessions to check for external parasites such as fleas and ticks, and look for any cuts or spots where he has been scratching.



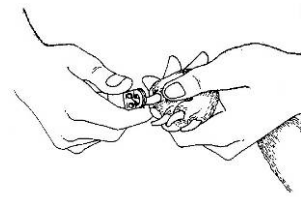
An odor can develop from dirt that is trapped in oil secreted by the dog's skin. Brushing will strip off this old oil, dirt and dead hair and provide healthy stimulation for the skin. Well-groomed dogs are sleek and shiny and are much nicer to be around. A well-groomed puppy in public helps to make a good representative for Leader Dog.

Use a soft brush starting on the puppy's neck. Brushing with the lay of the coat, move down the back and legs. Use a KONG toy with a bit of peanut butter on the inside to keep the puppy occupied while you apply the brush down the back or on the puppy's tail. If the puppy tries to bite the brush, stop, ask the puppy to sit or lie down, and try again. Breaking the process into small steps and stopping when the puppy becomes mouthy is the best way to accustom the puppy to being brushed.

Pet stores carry a large supply of grooming equipment. Start with a soft brush and acquire additional brushes, slickers, shedders and combs as needed. The puppy will need to be accustomed to a slicker brush (see photo) for his IFT assessment. Expectations for the handler's exam and grooming can be found in the In-For-Training (IFT) Standards at www.leaderdog.org/puppyraisers/.

Toe Nails

The puppy's nails should be trimmed a minimum of every 2–3 weeks. Be careful to trim just the excess nail. Trimming a nail too short is painful and may cause bleeding. Using a styptic pencil, applying cornstarch or inserting the nail into a soft bar of soap can treat nail bleeding. Gently and regularly play with the puppy's feet to build trust and acceptance of nail trimming. In addition to handling the feet, handle the toes with a trimmer in your hands and pretend to trim the nails. This will prepare the puppy for the actual event. If the puppy is reluctant to have his feet handled, please contact your puppy counselor for advice.



Nail trimmers are available in several different styles. If you have questions or need help, your vet or puppy counselor can help you.

Ears

Your grooming routine should include an ear check for dirt or odor. When ear cleaning is needed, use a canine ear cleaning solution available at pet stores. Place a few drops in one ear and gently massage the ear and ear canal. Use a cotton ball, gauze or tissue to gently wipe out the inside of the ear. Use new material to clean the other ear. If there is smelly discharge, redness, scratching or head shaking, consult your veterinarian.

Bathing

With regular brushing, the puppy should only need a bath every six to eight weeks unless he rolls in something disgusting. Bathing too frequently can dry and irritate the puppy's skin. Sometimes a plain water sponge bath is all that is needed to clean the puppy. When a bath is truly needed, use a mild shampoo made for dogs.

First, thoroughly wet the puppy's coat and skin with tepid, not hot, water. A dog's skin is very sensitive to heat. *Dilute your puppy shampoo at least by half with water*; it will be much easier to work into his coat and will rinse out more easily. Rinse the puppy thoroughly. When you think the soap is all gone, rinse him twice more. Soap residue can make the puppy itchy.

Dry the puppy with old towels, and then allow him to air dry. Do not use a human hair dryer. The heat can be intolerable for the puppy and it will tend to dry out the skin. Low heat or cool air dryers may work, but go slowly, allowing the puppy time to adjust to the feel and sound.

Expectations for Grooming and Handling

Puppy under 4 months old: Allows examination of ears, eyes, teeth and feet with minimum of mouthing and wiggling. Allows brushing and nail trimming but may need to be held in lap to accomplish these tasks. Exams can be done by raiser or a stranger.

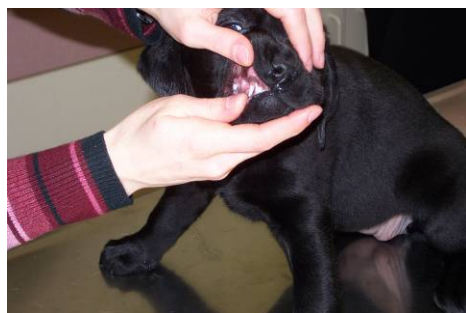
Puppy 4–8 months old: Allows examination of ears, eyes, teeth and feet in a sit, stand or down position with handler support. The puppy will allow veterinary exams with a minimum of fuss. Willingly allows ear or eye drops to be administered and allows oral medications to be administered. Nails can be trimmed without restraint. Bathing can be accomplished by one person.

Puppy 9 months or older: Stranger can examine ears, eyes, teeth, pick up each individual foot and brush the puppy. Puppy remains in a sit, down or stand under handler direction and with handler support. Bathing, administering eye or ear drops, nail trims and brushing can be done by one handler. Puppy remains calm throughout the procedures.

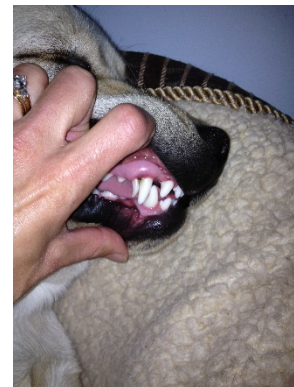
Important Routine Health Care

Dental Care

Puppies start losing their temporary teeth at about 12 weeks of age and by 9 months usually have all of their permanent teeth. As part of regular grooming, practice lifting the puppy's lips and checking his teeth. Watch for adult teeth that may grow in crooked or push into the gums. Check for discolored or broken teeth that may need the attention of a veterinarian. Your puppy counselor can assist you in evaluating the puppy's bite and tooth alignment. If you have questions, you can photograph the teeth and email them to the Leader Dog veterinarians.



Routine teeth cleaning can be done with a square of gauze, terry cloth or an extra soft toothbrush. Wrap the gauze or terry cloth around your index finger and gently massage along the gum line. There are many dog toothpastes or powders you may use if you wish. Do not use human toothpaste; its foaming action can cause an upset stomach.



Regular teeth cleaning can reduce plaque and tartar buildup and minimize the need for professional cleaning, which requires anesthesia, is costly and has some risk.

Vaccinations

The puppy most likely received his first set of immunizations shortly after weaning to help prevent some common viral and bacterial diseases. The vaccines usually include components for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, kennel cough (parainfluenza, adenovirus, Bordetella), parvovirus, corona virus and rabies. These vaccines must be repeated at specific intervals for maximum immunity.

Leader Dogs for the Blind will supply you with a vaccination schedule based on age, whelping date and disease prevalence in your area. Your veterinarian may modify the schedule depending on disease conditions in your area and the brand of vaccine used at his or her clinic. *Be sure the puppy gets his immunizations on schedule. They are essential for his health.*

Puppy raisers who live near Leader Dogs for the Blind may make an appointment, free of charge, at our clinic for routine care such as vaccinations. Raisers unable to come to Leader Dog are responsible for the cost of routine veterinary care. Many veterinarians will give a discount for a Future Leader Dog. When you pick up the puppy, you'll receive a copy of a letter to present to your veterinarian explaining the puppy raising project with Leader Dog's 501(c)3 nonprofit number should your veterinarian wish to give a discount and use it for tax purposes. It's best to have this conversation with your veterinarian prior to taking the puppy to the clinic so that he or she has time to consider the request.

Appendix B includes a copy of the Leader Dog vaccine schedule and record sheet that you will receive with the puppy.

Intestinal Parasites

Intestinal parasites can cause serious illness if left untreated. Common intestinal parasites found in dogs include roundworms, tapeworms, whipworms and hookworms. Protozoa infestations can include giardia, coccidia and toxoplasmosis.

The puppy was treated for worms and had a fecal test just before you took him home. Take a stool sample with you when the puppy sees the veterinarian for vaccinations and heartworm tests. If caught early, intestinal parasites are easily treated and will do no lasting damage.

Fleas and Flea Prevention

Fleas are parasitic insects that live on blood from your pet. When it comes to fleas, an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure. Leader Dog recommends that you use an oral or topical flea treatment, spray, powder or dip during warm months. Apply the repellent to the puppy each time you take him away from home, or as often as directed by the product label.

Monthly topical ointments, such as BioSpot®, Advantage®, Frontline® or Revolution® can be used once puppies are old enough, based on the product label. Check with your veterinarian regarding oral medications available for flea control such as Nexgard. Read the labels for these types of products very carefully. Some kill and repel fleas, while some only kill fleas. If the product does not repel fleas, a flea may still jump onto the puppy, get into your home and lay viable eggs before biting a treated dog. To be effective, your flea preventative program must include all the cats and dogs in your home.

If you find fleas on your pets or in your home, you will need to go through a complete flea removal regimen. Remove and wash or throw out all pet bedding. Thoroughly vacuum your house, paying special attention to dark out-of-the-way areas and along walls where fleas prefer to lay their eggs. Throw the vacuum bag away. Use a premise spray or bomb, paying special attention to those dark corners. Your outdoor puppy play area should be sprayed or bombed. Thoroughly clean and spray any area your pets frequent. Don't forget your car. Use a topical ointment on the puppy and any other family cats or dogs. All these things must be done at the same time and the premise spray must be repeated again two weeks later to kill any eggs that may not have been affected by the original treatment. It is a good idea to have a stool sample tested soon after fleas are diagnosed since fleas are common carriers of tapeworms. A complete flea treatment can cost \$100 or more.



Ticks and Lyme Disease

Several species of ticks are common in certain areas of the United States. Some spread serious diseases including Lyme, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and tick paralysis. These eight-legged parasites have a hard, flat, shiny shell, becoming soft, dull and enlarged as the tick gorges on blood.

Ticks tend to be most prevalent in the spring and fall. In tick-infested areas you need to carefully check the puppy daily for ticks and use a tick repellent.

A tick buries its mouthparts into flesh, often making it difficult to remove. First, spray the attached tick with flea and tick spray. After a few minutes, use tweezers to grasp the tick by the head and gently, with even pressure, pull the tick off. Some veterinarians or pet stores sell specially designed slotted “spoons” or other devices that aid in tick removal. Clean the area with soap and water and watch the area for signs of infection.

Flea and tick sprays can be used routinely to discourage ticks. Monthly ointments such as BioSpot®, Frontline®, Defend®, Revolution® or ExSpot® can be very effective at repelling and or killing ticks, and can be used according to label directions when your puppy is old enough. Some of these products are combination flea and tick killers or repellents. It is very important to read the product label carefully to know exactly what it effectively treats. Discuss oral medication such as Nexgard and collar tick control options with your veterinarian.

Heartworm Prevention

Parasitic heartworm larvae migrate to the heart and lungs where they mature into adult worms. These worms impair the heart’s ability to pump blood to the lungs and the body, and ultimately can cause heart and lung failure. A single mosquito bite can transmit this parasite to a dog.

Ivermectin is given year-round on a monthly basis to prevent heartworms and some types of intestinal parasites. Ivermectin works “backward” by killing any larvae that may have been acquired the previous month. Ivermectin is provided for puppy raisers under the trade names “Heartgard” and “Iverhart.”

Adult dogs are given an annual blood test prior to starting heartworm medication because infected dogs can have a fatal reaction to the medication. Rarely, a puppy can get heartworm from its mother; because of this, your veterinarian may decide to test the puppy prior to starting treatment.

The heartworm medicine dose will increase as the puppy grows. You will need to weigh the puppy to calculate how much medicine he needs. For daily medications, re-weigh the puppy every two weeks. For monthly medications, weigh him prior to each dose. Leader Dog will provide Heartgard to use year-round with the puppy.



SECTION 4 – Common Sense First Aid

Even with the best of care, illnesses and injuries can happen. Some symptoms call for an immediate trip to the vet. In other cases, you can be reasonably safe caring for an illness or injury yourself. This chapter will help you assess the puppy’s condition, decide how urgent the problem might be, and determine when to call the veterinarian.

The puppy’s vital signs include her temperature, heart rate (pulse) and respiratory rate. Abnormally high or low vital signs at rest may be an indication of health problems. Your veterinarian may want to know this information, especially the puppy’s temperature, if she is sick.

Normal Vital Signs for a Resting Dog	
Temperature	100 to 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit
Heart Rate (Pulse)	60 to 100 beats per minute
Respiratory Rate	20 to 24 breaths per minute

To take the puppy's temperature: Use a human rectal thermometer coated with petroleum jelly or other lubricant. Gently insert into the puppy's rectum about ½ inch, or until the bulb is just covered. Wait a couple minutes until her temperature has been registered.

Respiratory rate: While the puppy is lying on her side, watch her rib cage and abdomen. Count the number of times her rib cage rises and falls in a minute. You may also listen to her breathing.

Signs of Ill Health

There are many possible indications that the puppy isn't feeling well. She may be lethargic, have diarrhea, be constipated, urinate frequently, vomit, drink excessively, or have specific or general stiffness or soreness. You may just have a feeling that she is "not herself." Observe her symptoms carefully. If the problem is very mild or intermittent, keep a written "history" of her symptoms and when they occur. This medical history can be very helpful if the problem doesn't resolve itself.

Diarrhea

Withhold solid food for 12 to 24 hours. If there is no vomiting, give Pepto Bismol or Kaopectate every 4–6 hours. Puppies under 20 pounds should receive 1–2 teaspoons each dose; puppies over 20 pounds can receive 3–4 teaspoons each dose. Use an eyedropper or dosage syringe. *If the puppy has bloody diarrhea or black tarry stool, see your veterinarian as soon as possible.*

If the puppy seems otherwise healthy, you can start her back on a bland recovery diet (see following). If the diarrhea persists or returns, call your veterinarian. Have the puppy's temperature, a description of the stool and medical history available when you call.

Bland Recovery Diet for Dogs

Mix

- Three parts cooked rice
- One part boiled hamburger, chicken or cottage cheese

Vomiting

Withhold solid food for 12 to 24 hours. If the puppy is otherwise normal, and not lethargic, start her on the bland recovery diet (see above). If vomiting or other symptoms persist or return, call your veterinarian. Have the puppy's temperature and medical history available, including an account of how often the puppy is vomiting, how long after the last meal and what was in the vomit.

If the puppy shows signs of a painful abdomen or his gums are abnormally pale, see your veterinarian as soon as possible. These symptoms may indicate the puppy has swallowed a foreign object and needs immediate attention.

Limping, stiffness or soreness

Puppies can become lame or sore for many reasons. They can play too hard, fall or run into things, causing bumps, bruises and strains. Some puppies go through a growth phase that causes them to be intermittently lame, often on a different leg with each episode. If the lameness or soreness seems mild, keep the puppy on quiet rest for several days. If the lameness remains mild or goes away, continue rest for a week before gradually allowing the puppy to return to her normal exercise level. Keeping a puppy from playing hard can be difficult. You will have to crate her or keep her on a leash. The puppy needs to see a veterinarian if the lameness or soreness is severe, or if she does not respond to rest.

Frequent or excessive urination

If you thought the puppy was house broken, and suddenly she starts to have unexpected and frequent accidents, she should be seen by a veterinarian. Urinary tract infections can cause these symptoms and are not uncommon.

In addition, excessive drinking and urination can be a sign of other diseases or poisoning. If the puppy suddenly starts drinking and urinating in large volumes, see a veterinarian right away.

Constipation

If the puppy is straining uncomfortably or has not had a bowel movement for two days, contact a veterinarian.

Hot Spots

A “hot spot” is a skin infection and inflammation that can come on quite suddenly and rapidly worsen. It will be wet or moist looking, with an oozing or pus-like layer. Clean the area with hydrogen peroxide and apply a hydrocortisone ointment. Clip the hair around the area if necessary. Try to prevent the puppy from licking the area by covering with a t-shirt. If there is no marked improvement in two days, see your veterinarian. A prescription ointment may be necessary.

Medical Emergencies

If the puppy should be severely injured, poisoned or ill, her life may depend on your ability to respond appropriately and quickly. Keep your veterinarian’s phone number near the phone and know how to reach him or her after hours. *Leader Dog emergency veterinary contact information located on page 6 of this manual.*

Keep in mind that even the sweetest dog may bite when frightened or injured, and it may be good idea to muzzle her. A product called Vet Wrap® comes in 2” wide rolls and sticks to itself, but not to skin or hair. If Vet Wrap is not available, panty hose work just as well. Wrap it around her upper and lower jaw so that she cannot open her mouth wide enough to bite. Make sure the muzzle is not so tight that it interferes with breathing. *Never leave a muzzled dog unattended. The muzzle must be removed immediately if she vomits or has difficulty breathing.*

Bee Sting Allergic Reactions

For most dogs a bee sting is uncomfortable but causes only localized soreness and swelling. However, for dogs that are allergic to bee stings, the reaction can be life threatening. The throat and lungs may swell to the point that the dog cannot breathe. If the dog is experiencing breathing issues after getting stung, take her to a veterinarian immediately.

Choking

Choking can happen very fast—if you didn't actually see the puppy eat the object, you may not even realize immediately what is happening. A choking dog may be suddenly frantic, rubbing her face on the ground and pawing at her mouth. Her eyes may bulge and her tongue turn pale or blue. Be cautious, as a panicky dog may bite. Open the dog's mouth and sweep the back of her throat with your finger to try to remove the object. Don't mistake her larynx for a foreign object—it is hard and bony, and at the back of the throat. You can pick up a small puppy or dog by her hind legs, so that gravity can help force the object out. If she is able to breathe despite the object, do not try to remove it because you may push the object deeper into the throat. Get her to the veterinarian.

If she cannot breathe, try a Heimlich-like maneuver to expel the object. If she is conscious and standing, grasp her around the chest just below the last ribs. Give a quick pull up and thrust together with your arms.

If she is unconscious, lay her on her side, extend her head straight out and pull her tongue out. Push in and up on her abdomen just below the rib cage. The goal is to cause a sudden increase in pressure coming from her lungs and out her throat to force the object out.

Get the puppy to the veterinarian even if you successfully remove the object. She could have internal injuries or a cracked rib from the process.

Eye irritation or injury

You can rinse debris out of the puppy's eye with a contact lens saline solution. Do not apply any medications to the eye without consulting a veterinarian. A veterinarian should see all eye injuries.

Severe injury

If the puppy is hit by a car or otherwise severely injured, you need to react quickly. *Keep her warm and quiet.* To stop bleeding, apply direct pressure with a clean bandage or towel. If bleeding persists, add more bandages without removing the soaked ones and maintain pressure. Monitor the puppy's vital signs. Don't move her unless she is in danger. See if the veterinarian can come to her. If you must transport the puppy to the veterinarian, slide a piece of plywood or cardboard under the puppy and keep her as immobile as possible. Alternatively, slide a large towel under the puppy then, with the aid of another person, pick up the puppy by keeping the towel stretched as tightly as possible.

Heat Exhaustion

The hot sun can quickly take its toll on puppies. When a dog over exercises in the heat and becomes dehydrated, she may not be able to keep her body temperature within normal range by panting. Signs of heat exhaustion include excessive panting, weakness, loss of balance and in severe cases, seizures. Heat exhaustion must be treated quickly to lower her body temperature. Get her to shade and soak her whole body with cool (not ice cold) water. Offer drinks of cool (not ice cold) water and allow her to rest. If you don't see a quick recovery, get the puppy to a veterinarian.

To keep the puppy safe from heat exhaustion, avoid spending time on hot pavement areas and make sure the puppy has plenty of water to drink (and maybe play in) on hot days.

Poisons

If the puppy ingests something potentially poisonous, contact your veterinarian or **National Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435**. Have a sample of what the puppy ingested available to give a

description to the veterinarian. Do not make the puppy vomit unless directed to do so by a veterinarian or the poison control center. See Appendix C for a list of poisonous plant household chemicals and foods.

SECTION 5 – Raising a Well-Mannered Dog

As a puppy raiser, your goal is to produce a confident, well-trained, well-socialized dog. The sense of accomplishment that comes with bringing out the best in this puppy will be immeasurable. From the day you bring the puppy home, he will be learning from you, whether you realize it or not. You will be learning from him too, and if you raise more than one puppy, you will find that the learning never stops.

Raising a puppy to become an obedient dog includes much more than formal obedience training on a leash. The puppy is always learning and obedience should become part of your everyday routine. He will be learning important words from the very start, including his name, “sit,” “park,” “come,” “stay,” “down” and more. Very importantly, he will also be learning a way of life that includes being focused and calm in the face of distractions, and having patience and good decision-making skills.

Keys to Effective Training

There are many daily opportunities to establish a training routine and to lay the foundation for raising an obedient dog. The following simple guidelines may help you keep things in perspective and bring out the best in the puppy.

Use reward markers. A reward marker tells the puppy the exact moment that he is behaving correctly. The reward marker used for Future Leader Dogs is the word “yes.” When the puppy does something correctly, mark the behavior with a “yes” and then provide a primary reward to the puppy (piece of kibble).

A clicker can also be a reward marker. Puppy raisers are asked to use the verbal marker “yes” in place of a clicker. If you wish to use a clicker with the puppy, permission must be obtained from the puppy development department. You will be asked to submit a quiz regarding the method and a video demonstrating your clicker knowledge.

Be consistent. The puppy will have a hard time understanding that he can chew on this shoe, but not that one; get up on the couch today, but not tomorrow; jump up on you while you are wearing jeans, but not dress clothes. So stay consistent—no chewing shoes, never on the furniture and no jumping on people.

Keep it simple. Make rules you all can live by. Have four feet on the floor before petting. Sit before eating. No biting. Wait for permission to go through doors, get in/out of cars and leave the crate.

Make it happen. When you say “sit,” even before he knows the word, make it happen. Hold his food dish or toy above his head, so he instinctively sits. *Never* give a cue that you can’t successfully accomplish. For example, if the puppy hasn’t learned “come” when on leash, never use “come” when he is playing in a fenced yard because he can’t be successful at it. You are helpless to make it happen, and it will become a meaningless word to him. Practice in non-distracting situations where you can set up the puppy for success. “Come” when standing in a boring hallway needs to be mastered before the

distractions of the outside world are added.

Say it once. “Sit, sit, sit, sit, SIT,” is no more effective than “sit.” The first four “sits” are useless and confusing since the puppy didn’t have to sit. If you say “sit” and it doesn’t happen, perhaps the puppy was focused on something else and didn’t hear you. If you say “sit” again and nothing happens, you need to go back and do more training. Remember that dogs do not necessarily understand that “sit” in the kitchen means “sit” at puppy class. You need to train and practice in different areas to get reliable responses to cues. If the puppy does not sit on the first try, give a different cue that you are confident the puppy will respond to (such as “touch”). Then go back to try “sit” again.

Reward success. The *instant* the puppy accomplishes what you have asked, let him know it! Rewards come in many forms. If you have just gotten a microsecond “sit” as you set down the food bowl, release him. He will quickly learn that dinner follows “sit.” Or, as he gives up that forbidden pair of underwear from his mouth, tell him “good dog,” and give him a toy or a food reward.

Pay attention to your tone of voice. Dogs pay attention more to your tone of voice than your actual words. If you say “good boy” using an angry tone of voice, the puppy will feel he is being scolded. On the other hand, if you use an upbeat tone of voice when telling a dog “you little scoundrel,” he will think you are praising him.

Use distraction and redirection. If you see the puppy heading for the wastebasket, grab a KONG or Nylabone and slide it across the floor in front of his nose, or drum your hands on the floor or get down on the floor to play. Make yourself more interesting than the forbidden wastebasket, and then quickly get the wastebasket out of reach. You just helped the puppy do the right thing, without any unkind words.

Help the puppy succeed. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Keep tempting food off of counter edges and out of reach so the puppy never begins to “counter surf.” Put wastebaskets, remote controls, books and magazines out of reach.

Have reasonable expectations. Maybe a 6-month-old puppy can do a two-minute down-stay at the end of a leash at home, but don’t be surprised if he acts like he never heard the word “down” during the first 10 minutes of a monthly puppy meeting. As distraction level increases, mentally subtract months from his age in your expectations. Guide him into a down, and stay close to him so you can prevent a mistake as well as reinforce good behavior. Don’t ask more of him than he is capable of doing in the situation. You want him to succeed.

Timing is everything. When you catch the puppy *in the act* of urinating, interrupt him with an “ah-ah-ah” or “no,” scoop him up and head out the door. That’s good timing. But, if you find the puddle 10 seconds after it happened, the same response will be meaningless to the puppy. He just can’t make the connection. He may know you are unhappy, and tuck his tail between his legs, but he really doesn’t understand what he did.

End training sessions on a positive note. Several short training sessions that end on a positive note are much better than one long session when boredom and frustration can make things go downhill fast. Pay attention to the puppy’s attention span, and don’t exceed it. A good, intense training exercise typically lasts about two minutes. Take small breaks between sessions to set both of you up for success.

Use “No” sparingly. Suppose the puppy is tearing around the house like a wild man and you yell “no!” but the puppy keeps running. You might as well have yelled, “Keep going.” “No” is meaningless in this

situation because it has no consequences. On the other hand, you notice the puppy is thinking about going after a sandwich that someone left on the coffee table, just as he goes for it you appear out of nowhere, yell “no!” and snatch it from beneath his nose. In this case “no,” plus the element of surprise, are effective.

Words of Wisdom

This year of training and socializing the puppy may sail by smoothly, or you may come across a few bumps in the road. Even experienced puppy raisers often find that each new puppy can present surprising and unexpected challenges. Please remember that your puppy counselor and the puppy development department at Leader Dog are here to support you. We will do our best to help you and the puppy navigate successfully through the difficult moments. Don’t hesitate to contact us if you need help. With our collective experience, we come close to having “seen it all.”

When training is not going well, don’t be too hard on yourself or the puppy. We all make mistakes along the way. Do your best to learn from those mistakes, acknowledge that you’ve found something that doesn’t work, so now you can try something else that might. If you follow the advice in this manual, the puppy timeline and work through problems with your puppy counselor or Leader Dog, chances are there will be no lasting damage from training mistakes.

Positive Reinforcement Training

Positive reinforcement training is payment for desirable behaviors and for making good choices. It is proactive, purposeful and specific. It is teaching that is not based on fear. A soft, neutral tone of voice is used. Positive reinforcement training is not permissive, loud, sharp, forceful, painful, reactive or dependent on manipulation of the dog’s body. Leader Dog puppies are raised and trained using positive reinforcement from a few weeks of age through adulthood.

With this method the puppy is reinforced for good behavior with something he values, typically a food reward. You will be using “**yes**,” a *verbal reward marker*, to let the puppy know that the behavior is good **and** that a reward is coming. The *verbal reward marker (yes)* gives the raiser time to produce the reinforcer (in this case, food) and feed it to the puppy. The verbal marker for Leader Dog is the word “**yes**” spoken in an upbeat manner.

Food rewards

The best food reward for a young puppy is a portion of her daily food ration. One cup of puppy food will contain about 175–200 “treats” for a puppy. Most young puppies will enthusiastically work for puppy kibble. Older puppies working in higher distraction settings may at times need more enticing food rewards, such as high quality small dog treats, or novel high quality dog kibble. High value treats should only be from chicken, turkey, beef or lamb protein sources. Your counselor can provide recommendations if this is needed.

Positive Reinforcement Example: Teaching the puppy to sit before getting his meal, using positive reinforcement and reward marker (“yes”)

Before you start the training sequence, you should:

1. Know what you want (puppy sits as food bowl is presented).
2. Know your criteria for the behavior (puppy sits until bowl is on the floor).
3. Know what behavior to reward (puppy sits until food bowl is on the floor; if the puppy stands before the food bowl is on the floor, do not reward).

The sequence should look like this:

1. Prepare puppy's food.
2. Hold bowl and wait for puppy to sit.
3. Verbally reward mark (puppy sitting) with the word "yes."
4. Put the bowl down so the puppy can eat after the "s" sound from the word "yes."

Remember the following:

1. Only ask the puppy to perform something he is able to do. If the floor is slippery, the puppy may not be able to maintain a sit due to sliding.
2. Only ask the puppy to do a behavior for the length of time he is capable of performing. You may need to start with the bowl close to the ground because the puppy is not ready to hold a sit for the length of time necessary to lower the bowl from a higher height.
3. Observe the puppy closely to make sure he is not getting frustrated. A puppy that keeps breaking a sit when repeatedly being asked to sit until the bowl hits the ground can become frustrated and jump up. If the puppy is unable to perform the behavior, make it easier for him to be successful.
4. Verbally mark and frequently reward all good behaviors. Sometimes an attempt is worth rewarding to get the training back on track. Divide the meal into smaller portions so you can practice several times with one meal.
5. Give a reward every time a behavior is marked ("yes"), regardless of whatever subsequent behavior is happening. So if you mark "yes" as the puppy sits, and then the puppy gets up, the puppy has still earned a reward.

Observe, Mark, Reward

Puppies are "behaving" every waking minute. It is so easy to overlook good behavior and to only notice your puppy when undesired behavior begins. Every day is full of rewardable moments. Coming to a nice stop on a loose leash deserves a "yes" and a reward. Choosing to rest quietly on his mat while you eat deserves a "good dog" and/or a quietly delivered treat on the mat. Look for and reinforce desired behavior every day!

Learning Effective Treat Delivery

The use of food is a very powerful tool in dog training, and proper treat delivery is an important part of making the training successful. This is a skill that you, as the puppy's handler, will be working on throughout the year you are puppy raising. You should at first practice the skill necessary to perform correct delivery without the puppy. Use an empty cup as the "puppy's mouth" to practice delivering the treat. Or someone in the family can play the part of the puppy as you practice this skill! You will receive a treat bag from Leader Dog when you pick up the puppy; if you don't have a treat bag of your own, use a cup, baggie or other container to hold treats for your practice sessions.

Please practice the skills exercises below—they will help you develop good treat delivery skills, and help you avoid poor treat delivery habits.

Part One

The lesson is: Effective food reward delivery promotes desired position and also prevents/cures rough food taking behaviors. Food can be delivered either in a cupped hand or between thumb and forefinger.

The instructions are: When using the verbal marker “yes,” at the conclusion of the “s” sound the treat delivery hand moves to the treat bag.

The focus point (the most important thing to remember) is: **“S” triggers hand movement.**

Practice the skill 10 times!

Part Two

The lesson is: Effective food reward delivery promotes desired position and also prevents/cures rough food taking behaviors. Food can be delivered either in a cupped hand or between thumb and forefinger.

The instructions are: Food treat is delivered directly to the dog using a cupped hand or between thumb and forefinger. The dog remains stationary at the handler’s left side during this process.

The focus point (most important thing to remember) is: **Direct delivery to dog.**

When practicing without a dog, it is important to deliver the treat directly into the cup. With the new puppy, the treat goes directly to the mouth of the puppy (the puppy does not move forward, snatch, grab or jump). This is an important first step in self-control around food.



Part Three

The lesson is: Effective food reward delivery promotes desired position and also prevents/cures rough food taking behaviors. Food can be delivered either in a cupped hand or between thumb and forefinger.

The instructions are: Delivery of the food rewards should be done in a way that promotes the desired position (in most cases, in heel position at the handler’s left side, facing the same direction the handler is facing). The treat should be delivered in this area even if the dog is out of position during the reward process.

The focus point (most important thing to remember) is: **Outside of handler’s left leg.**

Many times puppy raisers fall into the habit of treating the puppy in front of them, or at the right hand. Positioning is very important for guide dogs. Establishing a habit of treating in heel position (puppy on left side, parallel to handler and facing the same direction) will help with many basic obedience skills. Keep in mind that a puppy that “hangs out” in front of the handler is a tripping hazard.

Part Four

The lesson is: Effective food reward delivery promotes desired position and also prevents/cures rough food taking behaviors. Food can be delivered either in a cupped hand or between thumb and forefinger.

The instructions are: After treat delivery, move treat hand to a neutral position.

The focus point is (most important thing to remember): **Hand to home (neutral position).**

If you keep food in your hand, or food in your pocket with your hand in it, or food in the treat bag with your hand in it, the puppy will stay focused on that hand. When that happens, the puppy is no longer learning but just waiting for the hand to move. By removing the hand to a neutral position (along the

pants seam of the leg or to the middle of the body), you will make the treat delivery sequence “clean” so that the puppy can focus on learning the skill you are teaching.

Treat Pouch and Treat Delivery Hand

With small puppies (under 4 months), it is easiest to keep your treat pouch on your left hip and deliver treats with your left hand. This works because the treat pouch is not within the small puppy’s line of sight, and reaching across your body with your right hand can be difficult when the puppy is so small and close to the ground.

With older puppies (over 4 months), your treat pouch should be on your right hip, and treats should be delivered to your puppy with your right hand. This works best because larger puppies can easily see and focus in on a treat pouch on the left side of the handler and can also easily see your left hand move toward the treat pouch. Your right side is more out of the line of the puppy’s sight, and his behavior is less likely to be influenced by the visible presence of food.

Expectations of Puppy Response to Reward Marker

Puppies under 4 months: Puppy responds to word “yes” with anticipation of food reward. Puppy may need handler support to remain in position while food reward is delivered directly to the puppy’s mouth.

Puppies 4–9 months: Puppy responds to verbal marker “yes” with animated anticipation of food reward. Puppy is able to maintain its position at the time of the mark, waiting for the handler to deliver the food reward. Any movement towards food occurs in a mannerly fashion.

Puppies 10 months and older: Puppy responds eagerly to the verbal marker “yes” in anticipation of food being delivered. Puppy does not move towards the food, but waits for the handler to deliver the food.

Problem behaviors: Puppy does not recognize verbal marker “yes,” or becomes assertive towards food reward (moving to where food is kept; paws on handler). Seek assistance from your counselor or Puppy Development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

Expectations of Treat-Taking Behavior

Puppies under 4 months: Puppy is learning to take dry food rewards without causing handler discomfort. Food rewards come from the handler’s left side delivered with the left hand.

Puppies 4–9 months: Puppy will eagerly work for dry food in most training situations. Higher value treats may be needed in high distraction settings. Puppy will take treats gently in most settings and will wait for treat to be delivered to him. Food rewards come from the handler’s right side and are delivered with the right hand.

Puppies over 10 months: Puppy will readily work for dry food and wait for the treat to be delivered in most settings. Handler feels no discomfort in delivering the food to the dog, even when closing their eyes. Food rewards come from the handler’s right side and are delivered with the right hand.

Undesirable behaviors: Puppy does not show enjoyment over regular dry food and requires higher value rewards. Puppy causes handler discomfort when taking the food. These problems can reflect a need for more correct treat delivery or may reflect a high level of distraction for the puppy. Seek assistance from your counselor or puppy development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

Paw Pads and Platforms for Position Training

Use of Paw Pad Exercise

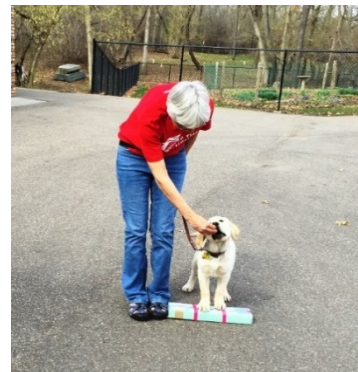
Paw pads and platforms, as described below, are great tools that can be very helpful when working on the treat delivery skills described above. They are also great aids in teaching sit, stand and down, as described later in this manual.

Purpose: Paw pads help to teach correct body positioning in relation to the handler in a sit, down or stand by having the puppy put its front paws on the pad at the handler's left side. It is also useful for defining direct treat delivery by keeping the puppy from moving forward, as well as useful in keeping a puppy in position during distraction training.

Goal: Puppy places front feet on paw pad without being physically manipulated by hands or leash.

Method: Most puppies initially will step over the paw pad or stand still.

- Encourage front foot movement by using a treat as a magnet (lure) to move the puppy's head. A treat should be held between the handler's thumb and forefinger (preferably in the right hand) close to the puppy's nose. As the puppy follows the treat, the front feet will move.
- Initially the puppy will likely step over the paw pad. This is fine! You can feed the puppy the treat you have been having him follow with his nose!
- Hold another treat between your thumb and forefinger, and lure the puppy into moving his feet. If he steps over the paw pad, use the treat to back him up. Often this causes him to shorten his step, and land on the paw pad. Feed several treats for having a paw on the pad!
- Work for 2–3 minutes, then give the puppy a break. Allow the training session to “marinate” for a short time.
- Often on the next try, the puppy will be more comfortable putting his feet on the paw pad.
- Once the puppy is visibly trying to place his paws on the pad, you can start marking the correct behavior with a “yes” followed by a treat. If he gets confused, or refuses to try, you may need to go back to using the treat magnet (lure).



Make sure you keep your sessions short and fun! When the puppy is confident in placing his front feet on the pad in a standing position, you can work on duration of the stand by having the puppy stay on the paw pad as you move around. For some puppies this can be quite difficult, so be patient.

Making a Paw Pad

Pad: 2" x 4" x 18" (suggested size)

Materials: foam board (look in the floral section of craft stores), wood or other type of block. A swimming noodle can be cut in half, and into sections, to use.

Make the material less slippery by covering with duct tape, carpet, cloth or vinyl.

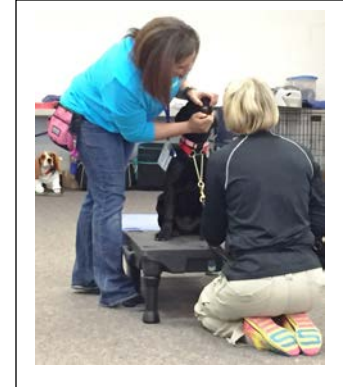
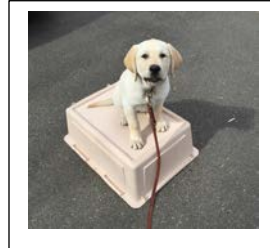
Duct tape a paint stick to the pad for the handler to stand on, so that the paw pad doesn't move!

Other options include using a phone book or other sturdy item that has some height to it. Some puppies who have difficulty with a lower height do better with a higher paw pad of 4" or higher.

Platform Exercises

Platforms can be a book on the floor, the inverted bottom half of a plastic crate, or be one you make for yourself. Platforms can be very helpful in teaching new behaviors, building duration in behaviors and in positioning the puppy at your left side.

For example, when teaching a puppy to calmly accept handling exams, a platform can keep the puppy located in one spot, without the need for physical restraint. Also, when teaching duration for a cued behavior such as “sit,” the puppy is more likely to be able to hold the position when on a platform.



Basic Obedience Foundations

Loose Leash Walking

Loose leash walking is a fundamental skill that you will be working on and reinforcing every time the puppy is on leash. Dogs instinctively resist pressure on their collar. If a handler tries to pull a puppy along, he will dig his heels in and resist. If the puppy pulls and it gets him where he wants to go, he will quickly become a puller. The process of teaching loose leash walking rewards a loose leash and giving in to pressure, rather than pulling against it.

Loose leash walking is not a “cued” behavior like “sit” or “come”; rather, it is the way a dog moves with his handler that is fundamental to his future work as a Leader Dog. Loose leash walking can be done by the dog in any position around the handler and on a short or long leash.

By using effective treat delivery as described above, the puppy is being reinforced more specifically for loose leash walking in the heel position, a behavior that will become the “cued” behavior: “heel.”

Introducing the puppy to a leash

The puppy has had some experience walking on leash in the days before you pick him up. He may already have learned that coming toward the person with the other end of his leash can be rewarding. Your job will be to look for every opportunity to mark (“yes”) and reward the puppy for moving toward you and along with you on leash.

Inevitably, the puppy will find that the leash and collar are preventing him from going where he wants to go, and he may put up quite a struggle. Don’t drag him along. Get down on his level and coax him to come to you. Make it a game. Run away from him (baby steps) and he may instinctively want to follow. When he is moving along with you, be happy or silly, whatever it takes to keep him interested. Mark “yes” for moving in the right direction and follow up with a food reward.

It is okay to pick a young puppy up, especially when he gets tired or you are rushing out to park, or the world is too big or too distracting for him. It is much better to do so than to drag him unwillingly. Make each leash walking experience a positive one!

Teaching Loose Leash Walking and Heeling

This approach to teaching loose leash walking focuses on marking and rewarding a loose leash before the puppy pulls on the leash. It also uses the powerful tool of variable rewards. The key to the variable reward system is that the puppy will not be able to predict when or how long it will be until the correct behavior is marked and rewarded. At the same time, the correct behavior and reward must come frequently enough that she stays interested and enthusiastic. As described below, the number of loose-leash steps expected of her is gradually and variably increased in stages as her loose leash skills improve.

How to start teaching loose leash walking:

- Start with the puppy at your left side.
- Move forward a step or two.
- If the leash is loose and the pup is at your side, mark “yes” while the leash is loose.
- Stop.
- Deliver a treat to the pup at your left leg, and wait for her to finish eating it.
- Initially, work just a step or two so that you can frequently “catch” the pup on a loose leash at your side.
- Once she understands this, you can begin the variable reward process.

Initially, the goal is to have the puppy take an average of 5 steps on a loose leash. BUT, the reward isn’t delivered every 5 steps—just on average, every 5 steps. Using “yes” as a marker, the reward may come at 2 steps—YES, 4—YES, 1—YES, 5—YES, 3—YES, 7—YES, 2—YES, 5—YES, 6—YES, 2—YES, 4—YES, etc.

- With the puppy on your left side, begin walking.
- Count out steps and if the lead is loose for the pre-determined number of steps, mark (“yes”).
- Stop.
- Deliver a treat to the pup at your left leg, and wait for him to finish eating it.
- Repeat, using a variable schedule of steps.

Important: Mark (“yes”) only if the lead has been loose for the number of steps that you had pre-determined. Mark (“yes”) while the leash is loose, and then give the reward. Because you are stopping to give the treat, initially the lead may tighten. Reward even if the leash tightens after you say “yes.” “Yes” always means a treat is coming.

What to do if the puppy pulls:

If the puppy surges on the lead, there are several things you can do, including stopping or turning. For example:

- As you see the puppy move ahead of you or out of position, smoothly turn (usually to the right, since the pup is on your left side), so that he ends up behind you.
- Just as he catches up to your left knee, mark (“yes”), stop and reward.

Alternatively:



- As you see the puppy move ahead or out of position, steady your leash hand on your leg or waist, so that your arm will not “follow” his movement.
- Stop.
- Immediately loosen the leash a bit and encourage him back into position, and begin again.

After the puppy masters loose leash walking with rewards on an average of every five steps, gradually decrease the frequency of treats by increasing the average number of steps as described above. Remember to keep the treats coming at variable step intervals so the puppy cannot predict exactly when the next reward will come.

Adding the “Heel” Cue

The exercise above marks and rewards the puppy for maintaining a loose leash in the heel position with her shoulder close to your left leg. When the puppy is consistently maintaining a loose leash for several steps, then add the cue “heel” just as you begin to move forward.

Suggestions:

- Don't rush too quickly to the next level. Make sure the puppy understands what you are asking of her.
- Set up your training environment so the puppy can succeed. Reduce the level of distraction by changing environments, and/or increase the value of the treat rewards.
- If the puppy is excited or distracted, you will need to reduce your expectations and reward more frequently.
- Give the puppy a break as needed. Stop and sit, let her watch the world go by, and then start again.
- End your session before she is tired.
- Mark (“yes”) and reward frequently when the leash is loose so that this behavior becomes preferable to pulling.
- Good name recognition allows you to redirect your dog's intentions.
- Try a zig-zag route, an "L" route or a winding route.

Exercises that Build Loose Leash Walking Skills

The exercises below will help you and the puppy become skilled in walking on a loose leash.

Connect the dots

Connect the dots heeling is a way for the raiser to practice giving the puppy high rates of reinforcement while walking on leash. The “dots” can be cones, lines in a parking lot, cracks in a sidewalk, parking meters... the list is endless. Practicing “connect the dots” will help the raiser and the puppy create a good relationship, which is necessary to produce good loose leash heeling.

- The goal is for the handler to practice treat delivery at regular intervals; if using cones, they help to act as a reminder to offer a treat near the left knee.
- Space the cones 2–3 steps apart in a single line.

- Stop when handler is aligned with the cone. Treat at the left leg regardless of what the puppy is doing.
- Be mindful of clean delivery of the reinforcement.
- The puppy should completely finish eating the treat before proceeding to the next cone.
- You do not use the marker word (“yes”) because a treat is delivered at each cone regardless of what the pup is doing. This is a training exercise for the handler to focus on frequent rewards and proper treat delivery technique.
- Because the puppy is getting frequent rewards, he very likely will become attentive and enthusiastic about this exercise!



Silky Leash

Silky leash is a technique of teaching the puppy to yield to leash pressure. The gentle pressure on the leash becomes the cue (signal) to move in the direction of leash pressure. This exercise reinforces loose leash walking.

Begin practice while seated in a small, distraction-free area. The puppy should be wearing his regular buckle collar with the leash attached. Using a martingale training collar also works, but it is easier to feel your puppy “yield” to pressure if he is on a buckle collar.

- Apply light pressure (like pulling a silk thread) on a horizontal plane, level with the puppy’s collar, and to the left or right of the puppy. The instant he loosens tension on the leash, mark that behavior with a verbal “yes” and treat the puppy. Note: Initially, be ready to mark even the slightest yield to pressure—your puppy may lean in that direction but may not move his feet initially when giving to pressure.
- Move your hand slightly to change the direction of horizontal pressure on the leash to move the puppy in different directions. Mark “yes” and treat the pup every time the puppy loosens tension on the leash by moving a step or two toward the direction of leash pressure.
- Then begin to mark “yes” the instant the puppy moves in the direction of leash pressure but slightly delay treating the puppy until he has moved a step or two. This means you will also have to slightly move your hand in order to continue the same amount of pressure as the puppy moves toward the leash pressure.
- The next goal is to get the puppy to move with the leash pressure and keep moving until pressure is released. Mark “yes,” then treat the puppy.
- Practice silky leash while standing but be sure to keep the leash pressure more horizontal at the level of the puppy’s collar. Slowly move the puppy back and forth in front of you, taking care not to move your feet as that may become part of the cue required to move the dog. Progress may occur in small steps until the puppy learns to yield to gentle pressure and the movement becomes smooth in both directions.
- After that behavior is reliable, begin moving the puppy in a circle in one direction. Mark and reward the smaller steps toward successfully completing the circle. Once the puppy masters this, try moving the puppy in a circle the opposite direction.
- Progress occurs by spending a few minutes with your puppy every day working on this technique. As with teaching any new behavior, be sure to end the session while your puppy is still engaged in the game.

Set your dog up for success:

- Begin training in a small area without distractions.
- Move to a slightly larger area with a few low-level distractions.
- Then begin practice in busier settings, keeping enough distance from higher level distractions to be successful.

Spend time teaching a new behavior by breaking it down into smaller steps that set the puppy up for success and frequent rewards. It will keep the puppy willing and ready to learn, and more attentive to you. It is also part of building a good relationship.

Sniff Walking

Loose leash walking skills can make taking your puppy for a relaxed walk much more fun. Puppies love to sniff their world, and walking politely on leash can bring this pleasure to them. The rule for sniff walking is simply: the leash remains loose.

- Use your leash at full length, about 6 feet.
- Allow the puppy to move around you and to enjoy sniffing the ground. Feel free to pause when he finds something interesting, so he can take a moment to sniff.
- Move forward when you are both ready.
- The puppy may walk anywhere within the 6-foot length of the leash.

If the puppy pulls:

- Steady your leash hand firmly at your mid-section, so that the pup will not cause you to extend your arm. You can hold your waistband or belt, hook a thumb in your pocket, or firmly hold your hand on your hip.
- Stop.
- Wait a few seconds for the puppy to release the tension, and if necessary back up a few steps.
- Release the tension on the leash.
- If the leash remains loose, continue your walk; if not, change direction or move to a less distracting area.

Expectations of Loose Leash Heeling

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy should be able to walk on a loose leash for an average of 10 steps in low distraction settings between food rewards. Puppy is learning to walk on a loose leash through doors, on stairs, along traffic and through crowds with appropriate rewards for loose leash behavior.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy should be able to maintain a loose leash for an average of 20 steps in moderately distracting settings between food rewards. Some puppies may need a management tool such as a head halter (provided by the puppy counselor or puppy development) to meet this goal. Higher value treats and more frequent rewards may be needed in high distraction settings. Puppy is confident in going through doors, on stairs, along traffic and through crowds with appropriate rewards for loose leash behavior.

Puppies 10 months and older: The puppy should be able to walk on a loose leash in moderately high distraction settings with infrequent food rewards. Use of management tools (head halter or harness) are being phased out or not used at all. Use of food reward is random and not allowed on the IFT assessment. See to IFT Standards 3A, 3B, 3C and 4.

Problem behaviors: The puppy chronically pulls forward or lags behind handler. Puppy cannot perform loose leash without a management tool (head halter or harness). Puppy lunges at distractions with little or no recovery. Seek assistance from your counselor or puppy development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Loose Leash Walking can be found in the Puppy Timeline Week 2 and the Assessment for “In-For-Training” Readiness of Leader Dog puppies Standard 3. The ideal baseline: maintains a normal pace on a loose leash, verbal “reminders” to heel are okay.

The “Transport” Method

Occasionally you will find it difficult to practice good loose leash walking. The puppy may be tired or distracted, or you simply need to get from point A to B in a timely fashion. In these situations, you will want to “transport” the puppy. “Transport” is the ability to move a dog from one point to another without the dog practicing undesirable behavior. Transport can be accomplished in several ways:

- Handler holds onto the collar with one hand while delivering constant reinforcement (food or toy) with the other hand.
- Handler holds reinforcement as a lure in one hand at the dog’s nose for the dog to follow.
- Handler picks the puppy up.
- Handler walks backwards while coaxing the dog with reinforcement.
- Handler creates distance by placing the dog on the side opposite the distraction or by re-negotiating the line of travel.

About Lures

A lure is food or other desired object that is used to move a puppy from place to place, or position to position. Typically the puppy is so focused on the lure that learning is inhibited. Why use a lure? A lure can be useful in transporting a puppy from point A to point B, as described above. It can also be a useful tool in showing him what you want him to do. For instance, holding a piece of kibble between your thumb and forefinger (or for a young puppy a little peanut butter on a paint stick), and keeping it at a puppy’s nose (like a magnet) can help a puppy sit, lie down, stand or move from place to place. Using lures for teaching obedience skills such as sit, down or stand can be helpful on a limited basis. The lure should be faded out once the puppy is reliably offering the desired behavior.



Basic Cued Behaviors

What is a cue? It is the **signal** that is used to inform the puppy of what behavior is expected. We often use visual or verbal signals, or both, to cue a desired behavior. Common cued behaviors are sit, down, stay, come, etc. Here is a description of the relationship between the behavior of sit (puppy puts bottom on the floor), and the cue for that behavior, the word “sit”:

Future Leader Dogs are “shaped” from the time they are very young to sit for attention and feeding. Over the time they are with the host home and with the on-campus puppy volunteers, the puppies “offer” sit for something they want. However, during that time period the puppies are not taught the verbal cue “sit.”

As the puppy raiser, you should be able to anticipate your puppy offering the sit behavior, for instance, when the food bowl appears. As the puppy starts to sit, then you can add the verbal cue “sit.” After multiple repetitions of the cue as the puppy starts to perform the behavior, the puppy starts to understand that a verbal “sit” means to place her bottom on the floor. So while it is true that your puppy comes to you knowing that sit brings good things into her life, she has not been introduced to the verbal “sit” cue. As a puppy raiser, that is your job!

Name Recognition

Overview: A puppy that responds to his name by looking at the handler is much more likely to respond to any cue that follows his name, for example, “Buddy, sit!” The puppy’s name can precede cues such as sit, down, stand, come, etc. The puppy’s name should be used if he is distracted and not looking at the handler, to redirect him and give him additional cues, if necessary.

How: To teach name recognition, you will mark/reward the instant the puppy *begins* to turn toward you when you say his name. Watching the neck muscles may help you see the beginning of a head turn. Marking this movement ensures that you are telling him that a response to his name is what you want. As he improves he will whip his head around at the sound of his name.

- Begin this exercise in low to low-moderate distraction surroundings.
- Use food rewards that the puppy really likes.
- During this exercise you will remain quiet with the exception of calling the puppy’s name and marking “yes.”
- Use a 6-foot leash. Allow the puppy to explore an area with mild distractions. Alternatively, you can work off leash in a small enclosed area.
- When the puppy is turned away from you, focus on his head and neck, and call his name.
- Immediately mark (“yes”) for **any** head movement in response to his name.
- Deliver the reward close to your left knee so the puppy will come to you.
- As the puppy becomes more proficient, gradually increase the level of distractions.

Pointers:

- Say the puppy’s name only once in a positive, upbeat tone of voice.
- If he doesn’t respond immediately, touch him in the flank or shoulder area and immediately mark/reward any response.
- If he still does not respond, move to a lower distraction setting and ensure that the food rewards are valuable to him.

Expectations of Name Recognition

Puppies under 4 months old: The puppy responds to his name by looking at the handler in low or moderate distraction settings. The puppy may need handler support by making a noise or touching the puppy.

Puppies 4–9 months old: The puppy responds to his name by looking at the handler in moderate to high distraction settings. The raiser is still marking and rewarding correct responses. The puppy may need handler support.

Puppy 10 months or older: See IFT Standard 5E.

Sit

Initially it is easiest to capture the sit behavior when you observe the puppy starting to sit. Feeding time is great because your puppy will reliably sit when she sees her food bowl.

- As she starts to sit, say “sit.” Mark with “yes.”
- Reward by giving her the food bowl.
- Watch for her starting to sit in other settings. As she begins to sit, say “sit,” mark with “yes,” and reward with a piece of kibble. Look for opportunities to use the cue “sit” in situations where she can reliably be predicted to sit.

You can also lure the behavior at times when she is not sitting on her own.

- Show her a piece of kibble at the tip of your fingers, just above her nose. As you lift your hand, she will begin to sit. The kibble is being used as a lure.
- As she begins the sit movement, mark with “yes,” and reward with a piece of kibble. The process is: lure – observe sit movement – mark “yes” – treat.
- Fade the lure. Use the same hand cue but without a piece of kibble. Start when she is eager to respond and in a non-distracting area. The process is: hand cue – observe sit movement – “yes” – treat.
- Add the verbal “sit” cue only after she is reliably sitting with the hand cue. The process is: cue “sit” – hand cue – observe sit movement – “yes” – treat.
- Fade the hand movement. Gradually increase the time between the cue “sit” and the beginning of the hand cue. The idea is to give her a chance to begin sitting before she sees the hand cue. The process is: “sit” – pause – hand cue – observe – “yes”/treat.
- At the same time begin minimizing the hand cue—move your hand less and less, and farther away from her.
- Gradually add distraction. Your puppy may understand “sit” in familiar settings but need help from you (by going back to adding a hand cue) in more distracting settings.

Pointers:

- Consistently practice the “sit” cue in heel position.
- Using a paw pad can be very helpful in teaching the pup to stay in heel position as she sits.

Expectations of Sit

Under 4 months old: Puppy can sit on cue in low or moderate distraction settings and hold position for 10–15 seconds. Puppy will sit in front or at left side of handler on cue.

4–9 months old: Puppy will sit on cue at handler’s left side and will hold position until released for at least 30 seconds. Puppy may be cued to “stay.”

10 months or older: See IFT Standard 5A.



TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 1, sit for attention. Assessment for “In-For-Training Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies” Standard 5A: Ideal Baseline: Sits from a stand-in-heel position on the first command and stays in position. Dog should maintain behavior asked for until the release word of “okay” is given, which should be approximately 30–60 seconds.

Down

Teaching down may be a bit more difficult at first because the down position has not been reinforced quite as much as the sit position. You can find opportunities to reinforce the position, especially when using her mat. Have her mat in a quiet place, and reward with a treat quietly placed near her when she is in down position on her mat. No verbal cues are needed for quietly rewarding her for being down.

How: To teach the verbal cue “down,” follow a similar process to the process for teaching “sit.”

- Capture, as described above. Find situations where she reliably lies down, and cue “down” as it is happening, mark “yes”/treat.
- Shape the behavior. Hold a treat near her nose, and then draw it down toward the floor and towards her chest. As she starts to go down, mark “yes” and treat. At first, mark “yes” and treat for the *beginning* movement of a down. She is just getting the idea of what is being rewarded. Gradually delay your “yes” until she is closer to a down position. At this point, you are OBSERVING the behavior, MARKING the behavior and TREATING the behavior, in that order.
- Fade the lure. Do this when she is reliably moving from the sit to down position with the lure. Use the same hand cue, but without the treat. The process is: hand cue – observe down movement – “yes” – treat. Continue until she will go down reliably with the hand cue but no treat in your hand.
- Add the verbal “down” cue. The process is : cue “down” – hand cue – observe down movement – “yes” – treat.
- Fade the hand movement. Gradually increase the time between the cue “down” and the beginning of the hand cue. The idea is to give her a chance to begin going down before she sees the hand cue. The process is: “down” – pause – hand cue – observe – “yes”/treat.

- At the same time begin minimizing the hand cue—move your hand less and less, and farther away from her.



Expectations of Down

Puppy under 4 months: The puppy is able to go down on cue with help in low to moderate distraction settings and can remain down with appropriate reinforcement for 15–20 seconds.

Puppies 4–9 months: Puppy will go down on cue in moderate to high distraction settings. Will hold position for at least 30 seconds with handler support (may tell the dog to stay). Puppy remains in close approximation to heel position.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT assessment standard 5b.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 3, Obedience. Assessment for “In-For-Training Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies” Standard 5B: Ideal Baseline: Down from a stand or sit-in-heel position on the first command and stays in position. Dog should maintain behavior asked for until the release word of “okay” is given, which should be approximately 30–60 seconds.

Touch

Teaching the puppy to touch his nose to your outstretched hand can be useful in a variety of situations. You can use the “touch” cue to guide him onto a scale at the veterinarian’s office, guide him around to your right side, and to assist in teaching him to stand on cue.

- Hold a flat open hand in front of the puppy, with your palm about two inches away from his nose.
- The puppy will probably move forward to sniff your hand. The instant you feel his nose touch your palm, say “yes!” This immediate feedback tells him that the thing he’s doing at that instant is what earns him the treat. The better your timing is with the “yes,” the faster the puppy will master the exercise.
- Immediately feed the puppy a small treat from your other hand.
- Repeat the exercise from the beginning.

Once the puppy can reliably (9 of 10 times) touch your hand, make the exercise more challenging:

- Move your hand to different positions to the right, left and above his head.
- Use the “touch” cue in more distracting settings.
- Use the “touch” cue to move him several steps.

Pointers:

- If the puppy doesn’t touch your extended palm with his nose, remove your hand (the target) and then present your hand again.
- Aim for two or three training sessions a day. Your sessions should be short; using 5–10 pieces of

kibble is about right.

- This behavior is useful for redirecting a puppy that is distracted back into heel position.
- If the puppy licks or bites at your hand, try to verbally mark the behavior *before* the puppy reaches your hand. Present your hand in a calm, direct fashion because quick movements or encouraging quick responses will make the puppy think this is a game, which can lead to biting or mouthing. If the puppy becomes too excited, withdraw attention and work on something else. You can always come back to working on touch or end the session and try another time when the puppy is less excited.
- Once the puppy will reliably touch the palm of the raiser's hand, the presentation of the hand should be done either at the handler's left leg (encouraging heel position) or when calling the puppy to the handler on a recall (front of the handler's body). Refrain from using it as a game to continually move the puppy.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 1, Touch – teach the puppy to touch his nose to the palm of your hand.

Head in Bandanna or Jacket



Teaching the puppy to put his head in his bandanna or puppy jacket builds on the “touch” cue discussed above. It is a foundation skill. Once the puppy is in formal guide dog training at Leader Dog, he will need to allow a harness to be placed over his head. This skill also makes it much easier to put the bandanna/jacket on the puppy when your hands are full of other things.

How: The puppy should already be familiar with the “touch” cue. Have the puppy sit at your left side. Present the bandanna, held in an open circle, in front of the puppy's face. A curious puppy may move his head to sniff the bandanna or your hand. Mark the movement with the marker word “yes.” Place the reward so that the puppy has to push his head through the bandanna opening to receive it.

- Repeat the exercise from the beginning for a total of five times.

Once the puppy is moving his head into the bandanna opening four out of five times, you can start gradually moving the bandanna farther away from his nose. Do not move the bandanna so far away that the puppy needs to get up from the sit to push his nose into the bandanna.

Pointers:

- If the puppy does not move his nose toward the bandanna, use the palm of your hand and cue him to “touch” by pushing his nose through the opening and to your hand.
- Make sure the puppy is pushing his nose through the opening or standing still while the bandana is placed over his head.
- Have the puppy eat the food reward while the bandanna is being pushed over his head.

- Keep sessions short. One session of five repetitions per day is good.
- Be patient when out in public. Give the puppy the opportunity to demonstrate this skill when placing the bandanna on him.
- On older puppies you can practice the same skill with the puppy jacket (front strap should be buckled and the puppy pushes his head through the opening or stands still while jacket is being placed over head).
- If the puppy hesitates, steps back, or avoids the bandanna and jacket, go back to the first training steps and build the behavior back up.

Expectations of Head in Bandana/Jacket

Puppies under 4 months: Puppy will sit or stand and allow the bandanna to be placed over his head. A hand target for “touch” may be used followed by a piece of kibble. Some minor movement is acceptable.

Puppies 4 months to return for training: Upon presentation of the bandanna or jacket (front clip closed) the puppy will sit or stand quietly allowing the item to be placed over his head, as well as fastened if the item is a jacket.

Undesirable behaviors: Mouthing, backing up, jumping, ducking away or refusing to stand still while the jacket is fastened. Seek assistance from your counselor or puppy development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

Stand



A puppy that understands the cue “stand” should respond by standing calmly in heel position with his shoulder close to your left leg, facing the same direction as you. Because he may “swing” its hips out so that he can look at you, this exercise is easiest taught at first along a wall or other small barrier to help him remain straight. For small puppies it may be more easily taught if the handler is kneeling. Remember that all the puppies have spent a lot of time learning to sit, so it is not unusual for “stand” to be confusing for them.

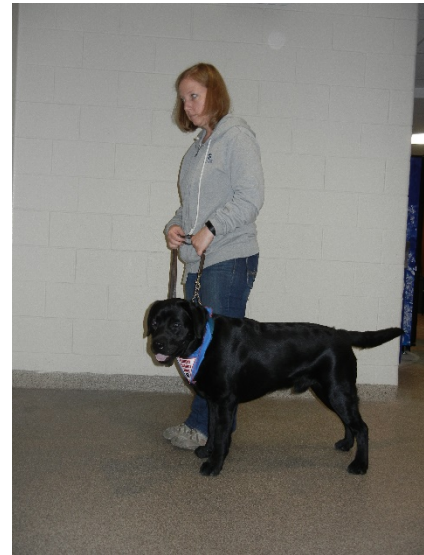
How: Start with the puppy sitting on your left side and parallel to a wall or barrier on his left side.

- If the puppy knows the “touch” cue, hold the palm of your right hand in front of her nose, encouraging her to reach out and touch. Alternatively hold a treat near her nose, and then draw it forward. As she starts to get up, mark “yes” and treat. At first, mark “yes”/treat for the *beginning* movement of a stand. She is just getting the idea of what is being rewarded. It may also be helpful to take a small step forward yourself to encourage the standing up movement. Gradually delay your “yes” until she is closer to a full stand position. At this point, you are **OBSERVING** the behavior, **MARKING** the behavior and **TREATING** the behavior, in that order.
- Fade the lure. Do this when she is reliably moving from the sit to stand with the lure. Use the same hand cue, but without the treat. The process is: hand cue – observe stand movement – “yes” – treat. Continue until she will stand reliably with the hand cue but no treat in your hand.
- Add the verbal “stand” cue. The process is: cue “stand” – hand cue – observe stand movement – “yes” – treat.

- Fade the hand movement. Gradually increase the time between the cue “stand” and the beginning of the hand cue. The idea is to give her a chance to begin standing before she sees the hand cue. The process is: “stand” – pause – hand cue – observe stand movement – “yes”/treat.
- At the same time begin minimizing the hand cue—move your hand less and less, and farther away from her.

Pointers:

- Whenever you get up from a chair, or when the puppy has been sitting or lying down, and you know the puppy is likely to stand anyway, go ahead and cue “stand.”
- Make sure you spend some time throughout the puppy’s travels rewarding the puppy for remaining in a stand position. You do not need to mark each time as this is a duration behavior. For example, when standing at a curb waiting to cross the street.
- Practice having the puppy stand from a sit or a down. This is required in the IFT assessment.
- Reward the puppy for standing in heel position while the bandanna, puppy jacket or leash is attached. This skill will be very helpful for a blind or visually impaired client.



Expectations of Stand

Puppies under 4 months: With handler support the puppy can stand and remain in position for 10 seconds. Handler may need to kneel on the floor.

Puppies 4–9 months: Puppy should stand on cue in heel position. Handler may use the “stay” cue. The puppy should maintain position for at least 30 seconds.

Puppies 10 months and older: See IFT Standard 5C.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy **Timeline Week 5–Assessment** for “In-For-Training Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies” Standard 5C: Dog should maintain behavior asked for until the release word of “okay” is given which should be approximately 30–60 seconds. When performing “stand,” handler may take a step to help the dog move into a stand. Ideal Baseline: Stands from a sit or down-in-heel position on the first command and stays in position.

Game: Puppy Pushups

Once the puppy has been introduced to a sit, down and stand, you can begin to play the puppy pushup game. For very young puppies, this can be done with a food lure (holding a piece of kibble in front of the puppy’s nose). By guiding the food so that the nose tilts up, you can ask the puppy to sit. By guiding the nose down in between the front feet you can get the puppy to down. By moving the nose forward and directly in front of the puppy you can lure him into a stand.

Once the puppy easily lures into a sit, down and stand, you can remove the food and use your hand to

signal the behaviors. You can randomly choose when to deliver a food treat during the pushup sequence. These “puppy pushups” offer the puppy a good way to exercise his canine brain.

A sample of a sequence would be something like this: sit-down-sit-stand-down-stand. Once the puppy is proficient on the verbal cues for the behaviors, you could choose to cue the puppy in that manner.

For the first sequence only reward the puppy following each change of body position. On the second sequence, reward after every other change; then after three changes and so on until the puppy performs an entire sequence of six responses for just one reward. After only a few trials, a single food reward is more than sufficient for the puppy to perform several complete sequences in succession.

Vary the sequence to avoid the puppy anticipating which cue is next.

Around

Overview: The puppy will move from heel position on your left side, behind you to your right side. This cue is used to reposition the puppy to a safe place when going through doors that have hinges on the left side as you face the door. Hinges on the left can be awkward because the door will open into the puppy’s face, forcing him out of position, or it may close on his toes or tail.



How: Start by standing facing the door with the puppy in heel position. Reach behind you with your right hand and pass the leash behind you. Encourage the puppy to move behind you and to your right side as you say “around.” Once the puppy is on your right side, open the door and walk through together as a team without your puppy pulling you through the doorway.

Once you are two steps past the doorway, stop. Pass the leash behind your back again and encourage the puppy to move behind you, back to heel position as you say “Buddy heel.”

Pointers:

- You don’t need a door to practice the “around” command. You can practice it anywhere so that the puppy will understand the position he is supposed to be in when you ask him to go “around.”
 - If you have practiced the silky leash exercise (see the Loose Leash Walking discussion), the “around” cue will be easier for the puppy to understand and learn quickly.
- Be careful that the puppy does not begin to automatically go around when you approach a door. He should wait until told to go “around” and “heel” before moving.

Come

Goal: The puppy will come directly to you whenever you call “Buddy, come!”

Overview: Teaching “come” begins with *not* using the word “come.” When the puppy has that forbidden pair of socks, your first instinct might be to yell “Buddy, come!” *Don’t do it!* If you can’t make it happen, you shouldn’t use the word “come.” Use anything else instead (“hey puppy, hey puppy, over here!”), all said in an exciting tone of voice. Your voice and body language can encourage the puppy to want to come to you. You will save the word “come” for times when you can be 100% sure that the puppy will come to you. Coming when called should never result in a negative consequence for the puppy.

How: Start with the puppy walking on a six-foot loose leash and in a low distraction setting. Wait until his attention is not directly on you.

- Say “Buddy, come!”
- *Pay attention.* The instant he takes a step in your direction, mark “yes!”
- Take several small steps backward as he comes toward you to encourage him to keep coming.
- As he approaches, hold the open palm of your hand near your knees, giving him a target to touch.
- Touch the puppy’s collar while getting a high-value food reward to his mouth.

Chasing moving things is a natural instinct, so as you move backward away from the puppy, he will want to run after you (come toward you). When he gets to you, make yourself more interesting and fun than anything else so that he will want to come to you. Do not chase him, as that will actually “push” him away from you.

Once the puppy is enthusiastically responding to “Buddy, come!” you can stand in one position as you call him. Be sure he comes all the way to you, and be sure you **always** reinforce the come with a high value reward and praise.

Come Game

This off-leash exercise can highly reinforce the “come” cue. You will need two people, some very high value food rewards and a low-distraction, enclosed area.

- Your helper holds the puppy by the collar at one end of the enclosed area.
- You come up to the puppy and show him the yummy reward, and immediately jog away from the puppy for 10–15 feet.
- Turn to face the puppy, and call “Buddy, come!”
- At the same instant, your helper releases the very excited puppy.
- As the puppy races toward you, give him a hand target near your knees.
- Say “yes” as he touches your palm and immediately reward him as you touch his collar.
- Repeat this exercise several times.

The next step is to set up for a “come” exercise when the puppy is slightly distracted. You will need the low-distraction enclosed area and very high value treats that you have prepared but have not shown to the puppy.

- Release the puppy into the enclosed area, and wait for him to take his attention off of you.
- Call “Buddy, come!” as you jog briefly away from him. He should be running toward you at this point.
- Turn toward the puppy, give him a hand target, and say “yes” as he touches your hand.
- Give him a high value reward as you touch his collar.
- Repeat several times, and end the game on a great come.

You can use lots of games to encourage “come behavior,” even though you don’t use the word come. When you are outside playing in a fenced area and are able to get the puppy’s attention, make something fun happen. Lean over, back away from him, say “Hey puppy, hey puppy, hey puppy,” encouraging him to move toward you. Grab a toy and entice him with it. Whenever he comes to you, make it lots of fun. If a leaf or a good smell along the way distracts him, oh well. It was just a game and you didn’t use the word “come,” so no harm is done.

Pointers:

- If the puppy is not enthusiastically running toward you with the “come” game, reevaluate the setting. Be sure the reward/reinforcer is very high value to him. Reduce distractions in the area. Play this game or teach come with a wide-awake “ready to go” puppy.
- When using the cue “come,” *always* be sure that you can make it happen. If a puppy learns that the cue “come” is optional, it can be hard to change his mind.
- *Always* praise the puppy when he approaches you, even if he is carrying a piece of your new shoe. In his mind coming toward you should always be a good thing.
- Avoid the word “come” when approaching the puppy to give a bath, trim nails, end a fun play session or to take something away from him. You can use his name, words like “let’s go” and body language to encourage him to approach you, and be sure to praise and reward him if he does approach you. You want to avoid pairing the cue “come” with anything unpleasant.

It is helpful to think of the word, “come!” as an emergency tool. If it is practiced so that the puppy is nearly 100% successful, then the probability of him responding to “come!” in an emergency situation is much higher.

Expectations of Come

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy will come to the handler when called from a distance of 4–6 feet with help from the handler (moving backwards, coaxing or providing a hand target).

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy will sit and stay while the handler goes to the end of a 5–6 foot leash. Handler may use touch cue in addition to, or in place of, the “come” cue. The puppy comes close enough to the handler that the puppy’s collar can be touched.

Puppies 10 months and older: IFT Standard 5F: Obedience Recall.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 2, Recall – look for opportunities to reward your puppy for coming to you. They happen all the time! His world is small and you are the center of it! Assessment for “In-For-Training Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies” Standard 5F: Ideal Baseline: Returns directly to handler on first command, handler can take hold of collar, dog maintains position.

Release Word – “Okay”

A release word is used to let the puppy know that a cued obedience skill is over. The release word we use is “okay.” For example, when the puppy is cued to sit, she should hold the sit position until released by the cue “okay.” This is important because you do not want the puppy to decide when the exercise is over.

How:

- Cue the puppy to sit.
- Wait a few seconds, say “okay” then mark “yes” as the puppy is moving, and reward.
- The puppy may get up when you mark “yes,” and that is okay, because “yes” marks the end of a behavior and is technically a release word.
- Often the puppy will not immediately get up from the sit or other cued behavior. Then say “okay,” mark “yes” and encourage him to move out of the sit. You can give him a toy, use the silky leash skill or other activity to get him to leave the sit position, as well as giving him a treat.

When teaching cued behaviors such as sit or down, the puppy is expected to perform the behavior on cue and maintain the behavior until released. He is learning duration of a behavior without the use of the word “stay.” The cue “stay” can be added later but is not necessary for duration. For the IFT obedience skills, the puppy is expected to maintain the position until released without the use of “stay.”

Building Duration – Modified Relaxation Protocol

Many cued behaviors, such as sit, stand and down, have a duration component. As a puppy matures, we expect him to be able to hold a specific position for longer periods of time. The Modified Relaxation Protocol is a series of exercises designed to teach the puppy to relax in one cued position (sit, down or stand) while a variety of distractions are presented. The puppy is reinforced for holding the cued position with food rewards given at variable intervals. The Relaxation Protocol exercises are excellent at building duration for cued behaviors, as well as teaching patience and self-control. Audio files guide the handler through the relaxation protocol. Two mp3 versions of the protocol are available at this website: <http://championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files/>. You will need a mat for the puppy and about 45–50 small food rewards.

- Place the mat either in front of you (puppy will be facing you) or in heel position (at your left side).
- It is important that you remain calm, quiet and focused throughout the session.
- Cue your dog for the position at the beginning of the session (“sit,” “down” or “stand”) on the mat.
- Reward (treat) your puppy at the end of each segment of the session.

- Remain silent during the entire session—don't re-cue “sit,” “down” or “stand” at the beginning of each segment.
- It is permissible to re-cue if the puppy breaks position. Repeated breaks will indicate you need to go back and work on obedience, choose a less distracting environment, or suspend the session for that day.
- Say “okay” and mark (“yes”) only at the end of the entire daily exercise (or however far you go with it. See sequence below).
- Reward with several treats at the completion of the whole exercise (see sequence below).

Progression

- Ideally the entire 15-day protocol should be completed in one location before moving to a different location; however, “mini-MRP’s” can be done anywhere when the puppy needs help settling.
- Set your puppy up for success. If your puppy can't hold position, go back to a level where the puppy was successful.

Below is an example Relaxation Protocol session, designed to take about 10 minutes.

Day 1: Dog's Task (LDU New Version)

1. Sit for 2 seconds
2. Sit for 5 seconds
3. Sit for 10 seconds
4. Sit while you take 1 step back and return
5. Sit while you take 2 steps back and return
6. Sit for 5 seconds
7. Sit for 10 seconds
8. Sit while you take 1 step to the right and return
9. Sit while you take 1 step to the left and return
10. Sit for 5 seconds
11. Sit for 10 seconds
12. Sit while you take 2 steps back and return
13. Sit while you take 2 steps to the right and return
14. Sit for 5 seconds
15. Sit for 10 seconds
16. Sit for 15 seconds
17. Sit while you take 2 steps to the left and return
18. Sit for 5 seconds
19. Sit for 10 seconds
20. Sit for 15 seconds
21. Sit while you clap your hands softly once
22. Sit for 5 seconds
23. Sit for 10 seconds
24. Sit for 15 seconds
25. Sit while you take 3 steps back and return
26. Sit while you count out loud to 3
27. Sit while you count out loud to 5

28. Sit while you count out loud to 10
29. Sit while you clap your hands softly once
30. Sit while you count out loud to 5
31. Sit while you count out loud to 10
32. Sit while you count out loud to 5
33. Sit while you count out loud to 10
34. Sit while you count out loud to 20
35. Sit while you take 3 steps to the right and return
36. Sit while you clap your hands softly twice
37. Sit for 3 seconds
38. Sit for 5 seconds
39. Sit while you take 1 step back and return
40. Sit for 3 seconds
41. Sit for 10 seconds
42. Sit for 5 seconds
43. Sit for 3 seconds

Stay

Overview: The puppy will stay in the position he was in (sitting, down or standing) at the time you gave the “stay” command, until he is released with “okay.” You can walk toward him or away from him, and he will stay in the same location.

How: By teaching “sit” and “down” as described above, you are actually already working on the foundation for “stay.” You have been expecting the puppy to remain sitting or down until released with “okay,” even though you have not been specifically saying “stay.” Now you will be expecting the puppy to stay where he is even if you move away from him. The Relaxation Protocol as described above is an excellent daily exercise for building a solid stay.

- Cue the puppy to “sit” and then add the verbal cue “stay.”
- After a short time, use the release word “okay!” Say “yes,” move the puppy out of the cued “sit” position, and reward.

Pointers:

- Add distance and distractions **slowly**. It is easy to expect too much, too soon when teaching stay.
- When teaching a duration behavior, do not use the verbal marker “yes” until after the release word “okay” is given. The verbal marker denotes the end of the behavior, so do not give it if you want the behavior to continue.
- Keep your voice low-key.
- If the puppy breaks a stay, re-cue the “sit” position and start over. Be careful that you are not expecting too much. Take into account the length of time and level of distractions present.
- If you are having difficulty, review and practice the Relaxation Protocol.

Expectations of Stay

Puppies under 4 months: Puppy can hold a position (sit, down or stand) for 15–20 seconds. May require reinforcement or handler support. Handler is within two feet of the puppy.

Puppies 4–9 months: Puppy can hold a position (sit, down or stand) for at least 30 seconds with handler at full leash length away from the puppy.

Puppies 10 months or older: IFT assessment standard 5d.

Impulse Control Exercises

Overview

The capacity to have self-control is an absolute necessity for a working Leader Dog. Helping the puppy to control impulsive behavior is essential to her success. A puppy with self-control will have the patience to settle quietly when tethered or on her mat, and will calmly allow handling and examinations.

Patience is also an important component of self-control. Most working Leader Dogs spend hours every day resting quietly while their human partner works or rests.

Puppies need three critical areas of exercise each day as a part of being receptive to developing good self-control.

- **Physical exercise.** This needs to be in conjunction with humans, not just putting a puppy out to play in the backyard. The most valuable physical exercise is a neighborhood walk, although playing with one or two other trustworthy dogs or people is also worthwhile. Let the puppy dictate the distance of the walk. If a young puppy sits or lies down, it is time to end the walk. Keep in mind that exercise increases a puppy's cortisol levels and she may actually be energized when she returns home. That's a good time to get out the chew toys.
- **Chewing and toy exercise.** Rotate the puppy's toys so that he doesn't get bored with the same old toys. Be creative in using peanut butter, kibble and biscuits in KONG toys. Chewing is a great stress reliever and pairs well with settling down after exercise.

Mental exercise. This means training! Several short three- to five-minute training sessions daily are much more effective than one longer session. The Modified Relaxation Protocol discussed earlier in this manual is an example of a training exercise that helps build self-control and patience, as well as duration for cued behaviors. The exercises described below are also excellent tools for building self-control and patience. Because the exercises below are duration exercises, the marker word "yes" is not used.

Calm Tethering Exercise

The puppy will need to accept tethering when he goes into formal guide dog training at Leader Dog. Tethering comes in a variety of forms: the handler's foot on the leash, leash tethered to an object, puppy placed on a tie-down at the raiser's desk at work. When returned for formal training, the puppy will be tethered while waiting his turn for a bath or while in the veterinary clinic, on the training truck or in the client's residence room.

Tethering with a foot: Placing a foot on the leash is very useful in giving the puppy consistent feedback regarding the limits to what he can do. Practiced consistently, it also helps with settling behavior.

- Put the ball of your foot on the middle part of the 6-foot leash, so that the puppy has about 2 ½ to 3 feet of leash between him and your foot. This provides a clear signal to the puppy when he reaches the end of the leash.
- If the puppy jumps, lunges or pulls, ignore him.
- When he settles without pressure on the leash, quietly give him a treat. This is a duration exercise, so a marker word ("yes") is not needed.

- Continue quietly giving treat rewards intermittently.
- When the exercise is over, say “okay” and have your puppy get up.

Pointers:

- A young puppy may need more frequent rewards. Older, more experienced puppies can be expected to settle on a tether with infrequent rewards, verbal praise or gentle stroking.
- Give the puppy toys to play with, especially when young or inexperienced with this exercise.
- Most puppies will stop pulling against the leash in less than a minute and then you can reward calm behavior.
- If the puppy becomes frantic with this exercise, stop. Evaluate the situation, and consider moving to a less distracting setting, or trying again when the puppy is tired.

Tethering to an object: This is especially useful in teaching a puppy to tolerate your moving away from him.

- Use your leash to tether the puppy to a secure object, such as the leg of a heavy piece of furniture. If he is a chewer, use a nylon, cable or chain tether, rather than your leather leash, and monitor him. He should have about 3 to 4 feet of leash to move around with.
- Start this exercise in a low distraction area, such as at home.
- Go about your business, but within sight of your puppy. Doing this in the kitchen while fixing a meal is a good option.
- Ignore any whining, barking, rolling or playing. Any attention for this behavior will be reinforcing.
- Wait for a moment of quiet settling behavior, and then quietly give him a treat.
- Most puppies quickly realize that treat rewards appear when they are settling quietly.
- End the tethering session on a good note, before the puppy has exhausted his patience.

Note: Puppies must be supervised when tethered. He could get tangled or do damage to walls or furniture.

Expectations of Tethering Skills

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy remains calm or does minimal fussing on a leash tether. When tethered to an object, the handler can move 10 feet away and return while the puppy remains calm. Toys can be used to help the puppy relax.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy remains calm on leash tether, mainly lying down. The puppy may whine or need toys to maintain calm behavior.

Puppies 10 months or over: The puppy remains calm on leash tether and upon the handler’s return remains sitting, standing or lying down without any cue from the handler. (IFT – separation)

Restraint Exercises

Restraint exercises help acclimate the puppy to everyday situations where restraint may be needed.

Cradling (for small puppies): Hold the puppy gently on his back as you would cradle a small baby. If he struggles, hold him firmly but gently until he quiets for 10–15 seconds. With larger puppies, you can do this as you sit on the floor with the puppy between your legs.

Quiet lying down (for all ages): Place the puppy on the floor on his side with all four legs pointing away from you. Place your hands on his neck/shoulder area and middle to cue the position. The puppy should voluntarily accept this position. When he is quiet, give him treat rewards. This is a duration exercise, so

no marker word is used. Lengthen the time that you keep him quietly in this position. When he accepts this position well, handle his paws and muzzle while keeping him quiet.

Pointers:

- Practice these exercises when the puppy is tired or sleepy at first, to build success.
- These exercises build trust and help to teach calmness. Don't use them for discipline.
- Start these exercises several times a day where there is little distraction. When the puppy accepts them well, do these exercises in different settings and with more distractions.
- If the puppy has difficulty accepting this exercise, try using the "Hands On/Hands Off" exercise described later in this chapter.

"Go to the Mat" Exercise

Picture this: You are having dinner out at a busy restaurant. You put the puppy's mat under the table, and he quickly settles down, lying on the mat. The puppy has learned to go to his mat and has been reinforced for being on his mat many times. The presence of his mat in a distracting environment is a calming tool that helps him settle quickly.

A mat can be a towel, rug, or even a mouse pad. It is a "target" for the dog, where good things happen.

Preparation:

- You need a mat and food rewards.
- Train this exercise off leash in a quiet, non-distracting setting. A bathroom or other small enclosed area works well.
- This is a quiet exercise. There is no need to talk or "encourage" other than marking "yes."

How:

- Place the mat on the floor with the puppy watching. He will likely be curious and sniff at or step on it. Mark with the verbal marker "yes" and drop several pieces of kibble in succession onto the middle of the mat. Give him a moment or two to stay on the mat.
- Reset the exercise. He may leave the mat on his own, or you can give him the "touch" cue and reward him away from the mat. Watch closely for the puppy to look at or step toward the mat. Mark with "yes" and drop a several small treats or kibble onto the middle of the mat.



- Reset the exercise, and repeat, several times.
- End the exercise after 1–2 minutes, pick up the mat, and give the puppy a break.
- When the puppy reliably steps on the mat (four out of five attempts), you can raise your expectations. This is called “shaping” a behavior. If the puppy was only stepping on the mat with his front feet, wait until he steps on the mat with three feet or four feet before marking “yes” and rewarding him.
- Be prepared to lower your expectations if the puppy gets “stuck” and doesn’t perform to the desired level. Do this by marking and rewarding any movement or orientation toward the mat. Picking up the mat and setting it down again may help. Keep the sessions short—1 to 2 minutes. After a short break you can start another session.
- Once the puppy reliably (four out of five attempts) gets all four feet on the mat, wait for any movement toward a sit or down before marking “yes” and rewarding.
- Once the puppy reliably (four out of five attempts) will sit or down on a mat, start sending him to the mat from a short distance.
- Begin using the cue “mat” as the puppy moves toward the mat.



Pointers:

- You want the puppy to love his mat so much that he becomes “magnetized” to the mat. A magnetized puppy barely waits for you to get the mat on the floor before he is on it. These training sessions help teach him that the mat is a great place to be.
- When out and about, take your mat with you and place it under a chair or table at restaurants, meetings or church. Give him a favorite chew or KONG stuffed with kibble on the mat. Use it at the table when you are eating.
- Put it down near you when you are preparing food in the kitchen to keep the puppy out of the way. Send him to the mat with the “mat” cue, and reward him frequently.
- Stealth-treat when your puppy is not looking at you. If he falls asleep, place several treats near the inside curl of his body for him to find when he wakes up.
- Use the mat when practicing the relaxation protocol.
- A mat is only used when you want the puppy to relax on it. Otherwise it should be picked up and stored until needed again.



TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 2: Go to your mat—this behavior is very useful both at home and on the road. Teaches a very useful settling behavior.

Handler’s Exam

Overview: The goal is to have a puppy that will comfortably allow anyone to give him a thorough physical examination. The puppy will need to be handled by numerous people over his lifetime. If he is familiar with being handled he will be more comfortable and relaxed if an emergency arises or he is

stressed by illness.

Preparation for the handler's exam begins with having your puppy become comfortable with being handled and touched anywhere on his body. Pick a time when the puppy is tired and relaxed to begin. Feel for any new lumps, bumps or scabs, and look for fleas and ticks. Touch all four legs and feet, look inside his ears, and gently lift his lips to check his teeth for proper development. Practice while the puppy is lying down or standing up.

You can use some massage to relax and calm the puppy. End the session when the puppy is relaxed and calm.

The "Hands On/Hands Off" exercise below is an effective way to teach the puppy to calmly accept handling and examination by anyone.

Hands On/Hands Off Exercise

Instructions: Two people participate in this exercise.

- The **handler** will have a handful of small, easily eaten treats in hand, and is responsible for providing reinforcement.
- The **examiner** will be doing the "hands on" touching of the puppy.
- The puppy will be in a sit, down or stand (maintaining a position is not a requirement. If the dog breaks position, the feeding will continue if hands are on the dog).
- The handler and the examiner will agree that they will communicate by letting each other know when the examiner will put her hands on and when she will remove her hands and step away. For example: If the handler starts to run out of treats, he or she will say "hands off" to let the examiner know that she should remove hands from the dog and step away.

Hands On: The handler continuously feeds treats directly into the dog's mouth while the examiner has her hands on the dog. The handler and examiner must communicate precisely. The examiner's "hands on" must start at exactly the same time as the handler begins feeding treats to the puppy.

Hands Off: The handler immediately stops feeding the dog when the examiner's hands are removed from the puppy. Clear communication and exact timing are required between the handler and the examiner.

A version of this game is useful in public when people ask to pet a puppy (or do not ask to pet and just go ahead and do it!). The handler will continuously feed the puppy while the hands are on her.

Want to work on this game alone? Use peanut butter on a sticky bone (<http://www.amazon.com/Chase-Chomp-Sticky-Bone-Chew/dp/B00D0S4MOY>) or peanut butter/squeeze cheese on a refrigerator door. Do grooming or exams while the puppy is engaged in licking the peanut butter!

Next Steps: When the puppy clearly understands that "hands on" means that payment is available, you can move on to the next step in the hands on/hands off game. Most commonly when the examiner puts her hands on the puppy's body, the puppy will look at the handler as if to say "you're paying, right?"

The next step is to start *shaping* the behavior you want. This means that instead of paying the entire time the hands are on the puppy, you will be paying for a puppy making a good decision while the hands are on the puppy. The examiner will help by shortening the length of the exam (such as only touching one part of the body at a time, removing hands in between repetitions). Treats should be given more frequently when areas that are sensitive to that individual puppy are examined (feet, tail, teeth, ears).

For example, the examiner:

- Puts hand under puppy's jaw, handler pauses 1 second, then says "yes" and treats (repeat several times).
- Puts one hand under puppy's jaw, one hand on top of nose, handler pauses 1 second, then says "yes" and treats (repeat several times).
- Adds lifting puppy's lips, handler pauses 1 second, then says "yes" and treats (repeat several times).

Here is a video on hands on/hands off:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzdlGqJfLo&feature=youtu.be>.

Expectations of Handler's Exam

Puppy under 4 months: the puppy will allow the raiser to gently examine his eyes, ears, teeth and feet. Nails can be trimmed (an assistant may be used). The puppy will allow himself to be brushed. Mouthing or biting at the brush is easily discouraged or redirected to a chew toy.

Puppy 4–9 months: the puppy will allow a stranger to gently examine his eyes, ears, teeth and feet. Nails can be trimmed without assistance. The puppy allows brushing without mouthing or biting at the brush. The handler can support the puppy by offering treats.

Puppy 10 months or older: See IFT standard 2.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 1, Handling exercises. Assessment for "In For Training" Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies Standard 2. Ideal baseline: Calm through the examination in any position but doesn't struggle.

Calm Greetings

Goal:

The puppy sits quietly at your side when someone approaches to greet you or the pup. The puppy should sit (or stand) calmly when petted, or being given a physical exam. We can "shape" a quiet calm greeting. SHAPING the behavior involves gradually making the greeting more challenging for the puppy, while working within the puppy's ability to be successful at remaining calm.

- You will need treats and a person to be the "greeter."
- Sit the puppy at your left side.
- Have the greeter approach to the point that the puppy notices the greeter but still remains quietly in a sit.

- Mark the behavior with a “yes” then treat the puppy as the greeter moves away.
- After several repeats, the puppy very likely will look at you in anticipation of a treat as the greeter approaches. It is NOT necessary for the puppy to look at you. If she remains in position on a loose leash, mark (“yes”) and treat.
- You want to be able to mark “yes” and treat the puppy at a fairly high level of frequency, so the greeter should retreat and then approach again in a short period of time.
- If the puppy gets up or gets excited at any time, have the greeter retreat, and then increase the distance between the greeter and puppy for the next approach.

Below are steps to gradually increase the greeting challenge. Move to a more challenging step only after the puppy can be successful four out of five times. Keep training sessions short. It is better to have several 2 to 5 minute sessions than one long one.

Greeter approaches:

- Approach calmly to within 10 feet. Mark the calm behavior “yes” and treat (Y/T). Start with a greater distance if your puppy needs it.
- Approach calmly to within 5 feet. Y/T.
- Approach calmly to within 3 feet. Y/T.
- Approach to within 5 feet, then lean forward, extend arm toward puppy slightly. Y/T.
- Approach to within 3 feet, then lean forward, extend arm toward puppy slightly. Y/T.
- Approach closely enough to touch pup, extend arm to just touch puppy’s shoulder. Y/T.
- Approach, stroke puppy for a second. Y/T.
- Approach, stroke from top of head to shoulder. Y/T.
- Approach, stroke from head to tail. Y/T.
- Approach, touch and stroke leg. Y/T.
- Approach, stroke leg and then pick up foot. Y/T.
- Approach, stroke from top of head around to side of face, lift lip gently. Y/T.

Work within the puppy’s abilities, and end on a positive note. Completing all these approaches may take days or weeks. The goal is to be able to have anybody greet a calm puppy. Over time, add challenges by using greeters of varying ages, men and women, and in various settings.

Expectations of Self Control when Dog is Greeted

Puppy under 4 months: The puppy will allow stranger to quietly approach without jumping. Handler may need to use food reinforcement during gentle stroking on his side, to prevent licking or mouthing.

Puppy 4–9 months: The puppy will sit or stand quietly while stranger approaches. The handler can support the puppy by offering treats while stranger pets the puppy on head and back.

Puppy 10 months or older: See IFT standard 1a and b.

TIMELINE AND IFT REFERENCE: Puppy Timeline Week 1, Handling exercises. Assessment for “In For Training” Readiness of Leader Dog Puppies Standard 1a and b. Ideal baseline: Maintains sit or stand position on loose leash. Puppy gives no more than one lick. May make small movements but does not tighten leash.

Building Good Decision-Making skills

Overview

The impulse control exercises described in the previous section all contribute to the development of good decision-making skills. Puppies that are competent with these exercises are also well on the way to being able to make good decisions in the face of novel and unexpected distractions or experiences. The exercises below will help establish strong good decision-making skills.

Leave It

Overview: A Future Leader Dog should move away from objects, people, food or other dogs when cued to do so. A trained guide dog will ignore many interesting things in the environment, keeping his blind or visually impaired handler, as well as himself, safe.

How: Because food rewards are used in training, it is important to teach a puppy to move away from food, or “leave it,” when asked to do so. Once the puppy is familiar with moving away from food, other items can be added to the training plan.

- Present the puppy your fist containing a treat. Allow sniffing, pawing, licking—whatever he wants to do to try to get the treat. Wait for the puppy to show the slightest inclination to move away from the treat hand. Mark “yes” and feed the treat directly to the puppy’s mouth, either from your flat hand or between your thumb and forefinger.
- Present the hand again, and wait for the puppy to move away, mark “yes” and reward directly to the puppy’s mouth. The puppy’s head should not move forward to the reward.
- If the puppy is frantic to get to the treat, use something less exciting (even something non-food).
- Once the puppy consistently (4 of 5 times) moves away from the treat hand when it is presented, pause for a second before marking “yes” and rewarding. This helps to build duration.
- Mark attempts where the puppy moves away and stays away from the hand for two seconds.
- When the puppy consistently (4 out of 5 times) moves away from the treat hand and stays away for two seconds, then add the cue “leave it.” Present your hand and cue “leave it” as the puppy moves his nose away. Say “yes” and directly deliver the treat to the puppy’s mouth.
- Add difficulty. Use higher value treats in the presented hand. Switch presenting hand. Hold your fist different ways (higher, lower, to the side, on a table). Each time you use a new position or approach for the treat hand, remove the cue words “leave it” until the puppy can reliably (4 of 5 times) move away from the hand.
- Go back to a low value treat in your fist, but allow a small portion to show. Watch and mark the puppy moving away from the exposed treat. Don’t add the cue again until this behavior is reliable.
- Practice in different locations.
- Increase the time the puppy remains away from the treat to three seconds.
- You may be tempted to try with a treat in your open hand. Keep in mind that if the puppy gets the treat you will have to start the whole training sequence over again from step one. Be prepared to quickly close your fist over the treat if you are trying this option.

With this “leave it” exercise, you are teaching not only a response to the cue “leave it” but also, **the presence of food itself** has become a cue to move away. The verbal cue “leave it” is handy when you can see food or another attractive object near the puppy. A person who is visually impaired often won’t see the attractive object and therefore frequently won’t use the verbal cue “leave it.” Therefore, it is important to mark and reward the **behavior** of leaving or moving away from food, even when the verbal cue is not used.

Ground Tether Game

The ground tether game is an exercise that can be taught to a puppy of any age, though it is best to start with younger puppies. This exercise should be performed with a leash attached to the puppy’s collar (not a head halter). The leash should be opened to its full length, and the raiser should stand so that the puppy can sit, stand or lie down without creating leash tension. The handler should stand on the leash using both balls of their feet, at about shoulder width apart. The handler must be able to prevent the puppy from getting away if he lunges.

An assistant is needed to introduce distractions. The distractions are introduced in a slow progression, with emphasis on the puppy being successful in making good choices. The handler does not verbally tell the puppy what to do, but rather marks and rewards any good choices. Marking and rewarding the puppy does not require eye contact with the handler. It does require the puppy to be marked “yes” and rewarded precisely, for making good decisions.

How

Stand on the leash, giving the puppy enough leash length to sit and turn around, as described above. Assistant approaches with the distraction, but stays far enough away that the puppy can make good decisions. **What can you mark and reward?**

- The puppy looks at the distraction and doesn’t move. **YES!**
- The puppy looks at the distraction, moves toward it briefly, and releases tension on the leash. **YES!**
- The puppy looks at the distraction and looks at you. **YES!**
- The puppy stands up, moves, then backs up, releasing the tension on the leash. **YES!**
- The puppy gets up before the distraction appears, sniffs, looks at the distraction, and chooses not to pull towards it. **YES!**
- The puppy lies down and ignores the distraction. **YES!**
- The puppy looks at the distraction, looks at you, looks back at the distraction, looks at you... this means you are really late with your **YES!** which should have been used the first time the puppy made a choice.

Where to reward: You must mark the good decision precisely when it happens, as described above. The treat reward can be delivered at the outside of your left leg. This treat placement serves to reinforce heel position, and also “resets” the puppy for the next decision choice.

The following behaviors are **not** required during the ground tether game:

- Maintaining a sit, down or stay

- Verbal instructions to the puppy
- Looking at the handler (this may happen, but we want the puppy to see the distraction and make a choice. **Don't** delay marking and rewarding because you are waiting for the “look at me”)
- Remaining at your left side (use reward placement to encourage the puppy to hang out on your left side)

The ideal outcome of this game is a calm, outwardly focused puppy that checks in with the handler in the face of distractions. While at times the puppy may choose to look up at the handler, the goal should not be a puppy that constantly watches the handler, but rather a puppy that watches the world while choosing to hang out with the handler. Please enjoy this video of the ground tether game with an 8-week-old puppy: https://youtu.be/FcoSMeW_YTw. The ground tether game can be played with any type of distraction: people, objects, food, other animals or objects.

Adapting and using the ground tether game for good decision making in the real world: The world is full of distractions that call for good decision-making. For example, the puppy may notice children in the distance. You can:

- Stop and anchor your leash, under your foot if you have time, or anchoring your hand to the core of your body.
- Mark “yes!” any of the appropriate behaviors described above. Place the treat at the outside of your left leg, to reset the puppy for the next decision.
- If the distraction is too close or too powerful for the puppy to make a good decision, move farther away and try again.

Expectations of Leave It and Good Decisions

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy reliably moves away from food in a closed fist. He may pull toward or away from a mild distraction or sudden noise, but is able to choose to release the tension on the leash.

Puppies 4–9months: Will respond with handler by checking in when distractions are present, and has been introduced to the “leave it” cue in regards to food, objects, sudden movement or strange dogs. Confident and calm around sudden noises though may occasionally require handler support.

Puppies 10 months and older: The puppy consistently responds to distractions by checking in and to the “leave it” cue by moving away. The puppy will demonstrate self-control with minimal support from the handler when observing moving objects, noise or dog distractions. See IFT Standards 6 A, B & C.

Problem behaviors: Fear with no recovery at sudden noises, lunging at moving objects or dogs, scavenging or snatching food rewards. Seek assistance from your counselor or puppy development to help the puppy overcome these problems.

Section 6 – Home and Social Skills

Games and Activities that Build Good Social Skills

Playing is as important as eating and sleeping from a puppy's point of view. Much of her learning will happen during playtime and she will think of you as one of her primary play partners. You can enhance the puppy's playtime learning by choosing toys and games that will give her healthy exercise and teach her problem solving skills, trust and appropriate behavior.

Toy Hide and Seek

Show the puppy her toy, and then hide it under a pillow, behind your back, etc. Let her use her nose and ingenuity to figure out where it went. Increase the difficulty to match the puppy's abilities. This game is great mental exercise and fun for all.

“Take it” and “Give”

When the puppy takes a toy from you, say “take it,” and when she gives it back to you say “give.” Practice frequently, and “trade up”—give her something of higher value when she releases the item in her mouth. She will be much more willing to give up inappropriate or high value items if she is familiar with this game. Always encourage her to come to you to give up an item, rather than you chasing her and always reward her when she gives up something, no matter how valuable or inappropriate the item is.

Fetch and Bring Back

Many puppies, especially Labradors, will almost instinctively run after anything you throw or roll and head back toward you with it. Make sure that fetch games are kept low-key by rolling or sliding a toy. As soon as she gets the toy in his mouth, start heading away from her so she will come toward you. Be silly to encourage her to keep coming. When she gets to you, play with her. Have her “give” the toy to you briefly, give her a treat and then return the toy to her. She will learn that bringing things to you is great fun. This is *very* handy when she has your shoe instead of a toy.

Pointers:

- *Never* chase the puppy or she will quickly learn to run away from you. Your goal is to make coming to you a lot of fun. If you find you are playing keep away, stop the game. Ignore her, but engage yourself in something she finds interesting. When she moves toward you, be ready to praise and treat.
- Use a variety of toys and avoid using only one type, such as a ball or Frisbee, which the puppy may fixate on. Some dogs become so focused on retrieving that it can interfere with other training.
- Use opportunities that do not involve throwing a toy. For instance, the puppy may find a stick in your fenced yard and you can turn it into a “bring back” game.
- If you see any signs that the puppy is too focused on fetch games, drop them from playtime.
- To balance play with work, use toys as distractions during training sessions. The IFT assessment includes a section where a puppy needs to ignore a moving object (often a ball) rolled near the puppy.

Hide and Seek

Hide and seek games can be played indoors or outdoors in a fenced area and help teach the puppy to “tune in” to where you are. They work best in new surroundings. Wait for a moment when the puppy seems to forget about you and duck out of sight, but keep an eye on her. When she notices that you aren’t there, make a little noise to get her headed toward you but don’t give yourself away. Let her spend some time trying to find you, giving hints if needed. When she finds you, make it lots of fun by rewarding her with treats.

Swimming

Swimming and wading are loads of fun for the puppy, especially when the weather is hot. A child’s wading pool in your fenced yard can provide hours of fun. If you take the puppy to a lake, use a long rope so you can safely keep her with you. Always remember that the puppy should never be off leash unless in a fully enclosed area!

Pointers:

- Rinse the puppy off after a swim and dry her, especially her ears. Leaving the puppy wet can cause hot spots and ear infections.
- Don’t overdo it. If you see signs that the puppy is too focused on swimming every time she sees water, drop swimming from your playtime.
- If you have a female puppy and she happens to be in season, please do not give her the opportunity to swim as she can easily get an infection.

Controlled and Calm at the Door

Having a plan for when people come to visit will help the puppy learn proper greeting behaviors. The following exercise helps prepare the puppy to receive guests. Have your dog on a 5- to 6-foot lead, and place your dog on a sit/stay about 6 feet from the door.

- Walk to door and return to dog; mark/reward for remaining in stay
- Walk to door and touch knob; mark/reward for remaining in stay
- Walk to door and open door; mark/reward for remaining in stay
- Walk to door, open and say “hi/come in”; mark/ reward for remaining in stay.

Practicing the Modified Relaxation Protocol Days 8 through 14 will also help the dog to succeed at remaining calm at the door.

How:

- Keep a leash and treats by the door.
- The puppy will always beat you to the door. That’s okay; put her on a short leash.
- Open the door, control her with the leash and invite your visitor in as you step back.
- Call your dog’s name and walk backwards, luring if necessary. Mark her focus on you with “yes” and provide a food reward.
- Stand several feet away from your visitor. This is important to prevent jumping.
- Cue the puppy to sit. Wait quietly until she does, mark with “yes” and reward.
- Now you can pay attention to your guest.
- Ask your guest not to look at, speak to or touch the puppy.
- Lead your visitor into the house. The entryway is too exciting, so get out of there!
- Keep the puppy on leash while visitors are present. Have treats ready.

- Reward intermittently for quiet behavior.

Pointers

- If you have more than one dog in the house, the others will need to be kenneled, gated or tethered.
- Use gates, tethers or kennels to prevent any practicing of out-of-control greeting.

Games and Activities to Avoid

Undoubtedly you and the puppy will come up with a variety of game ideas. In deciding whether the game is appropriate, consider the following:

- Is the game helping to reinforce positive behavior?
- Does it teach skills such as problem solving?
- Does it build trust and self-confidence?
- Does it provide good exercise?
- Does it reinforce any negative behaviors such as running away, biting, jumping or being aggressive?
- Is it safe for you and the puppy?
- If you were blind or visually impaired, would this game be appropriate?

With the end goal to provide a guide for a client who is blind or visually impaired, the games below have the potential to complicate the life of someone who cannot see, and as such are not allowed.

Off limits: Tug-of-war (human and dog): If done inappropriately this game can teach the puppy to become aggressive or possessive of its toys. It may conflict with the puppy understanding “give.” Tug-of-war is natural between dogs, so the puppy and your pet dog can play tug-of-war as long as it does not get out of control.

Off limits: Wrestling and roughhousing: These activities encourage biting, growling, jumping and should never be a part of the puppy’s playtime. Please do not allow family members to encourage this type of play. While roughhousing with people is not appropriate, it can be a normal way to play with other dogs. If you are concerned that the play is too rough, contact your puppy counselor for guidance.

Off limits: Finger and hand games: Some people like to make quick finger and hand movements around a puppy’s head to engage it in play. Puppies love chasing a moving object, and finger and hand games quickly lead to nipping and biting. All hand movements should be kept slow and low key to avoid biting.

Off limits: Chase-the-puppy games: Although it is wonderful when we can get the puppy to follow us, games should *never* involve chasing the puppy. She will quickly learn that she can succeed in getting away from you—one of the worst possible lessons. When you need to get an inappropriate object, entice her to you—don’t chase her. Move away from the puppy and make yourself *really* interesting and fun to get her to come to you. When you do get her to come to you, be prepared to trade a toy or a treat.

If she will not be enticed to come to you, then follow—don’t chase—her. Deliberately walk toward her without talking or being fun. If she moves away from you, keep following her at a walk. If she turns to come toward you, *immediately* take baby steps backward and praise her, enticing her to keep coming

toward you. If she does not come to you, she will eventually get tired of being followed and let you come to her. When that happens, gently and quietly take the forbidden object from her saying “give” while providing a reward.

Problem-Solving Unwanted Behaviors

During her first year the puppy will go through stages where she discovers behaviors that, though perfectly normal for other dogs, simply aren’t acceptable with humans. These behaviors are often part of a developmental growth stage and are fairly predictable. It will help if you are prepared to deal appropriately with them. As with all training, persistence, consistency and rewarding what you want will help you and the puppy get through these stages.

Biting

Biting is a very common behavior for young puppies. If one puppy bites another too hard, the other puppy might yip and stop playing. Eventually the puppies learn to control the force of their play biting so that the fun can continue. It is very important that a puppy in a human family learns that biting hurts people and will not be tolerated. They need to know that you are not a play toy. *Everyone must be consistent* in responding to biting so that the puppy won’t be confused.

When the puppy puts her teeth on you, let out a loud YELP. Your yelp must be one loud quick noise that starts the second a bite begins. Most puppies will startle from the sound. The second she stops biting, offer her a toy to chew on. Make the toy interesting by wiggling it in front of her face. Your goal is to *redirect* her chewing to an appropriate object. Praise her as she begins chewing on the toy.

If yelping doesn’t work or even makes the puppy more excited and nippy, try another approach. The instant she bites, YELP, then get up and leave. Give the puppy *no* attention. After all, her main goal is entertainment.

Be ready to repeat one of these responses many times while the puppy is very young. She will outgrow the “mouthy” stage if you are consistent in your responses to biting.

Pointers:

- Always keep a supply of toys handy, so you can give her something appropriate to chew on.
- Don’t ever allow biting. Be consistent in discouraging it.
- It is not normal for a puppy to routinely tear clothing or break skin. If this happens, contact your puppy counselor.
- Biting is not a function of “teething.” The puppy will begin to lose baby teeth around four months of age. In a puppy younger than four months, biting with those sharp baby teeth teach the puppy how hard she can bite before her play partner yelps and stops the session.
- Young children often cannot defend themselves from or react appropriately to over excited, biting puppies. Use gates for safety or put the puppy in her crate if out of control behavior occurs.
- Not all pet dogs appreciate puppies and not all of them will discourage a puppy from rough play or inappropriate biting. Sometimes it may be necessary to keep the puppy separated from your pet dog for its comfort and safety.
- Snuggle or pet the puppy only when the puppy is relaxed or sleepy.
- If you are going to sit on the floor with a puppy, have an assortment of toys handy so that you can redirect biting behavior. If the puppy becomes overly excited, stand up and end the game. Reward

- good behavior, such as sitting, with a treat or another chance to play.
- Teach games such as low-key fetch, hide and seek with toys or hide and seek with recalls to keep the puppy entertained.
 - Touching the puppy on the head invites biting. Puppies invite play with other puppies by biting at faces. Scratch the puppy on the chin or chest instead.
 - Do not wrestle with the puppy, and do not allow other family members to wrestle with the puppy. The puppy needs to accept handling of all different body parts for grooming and veterinary exams. Wrestling will make it more difficult for the puppy to accept this type of exam quietly.
 - When the puppy bites at feet or clothing as you are walking, be prepared to redirect with a toy. Have treats handy to reward any good behavior the puppy may show. Teaching the puppy to sit and stay on a mat while you walk by is a handy behavior to use. If you do not have time to deal with puppy biting as you get ready to leave the house, manage the puppy in a crate or behind a gate. A KONG toy with kibble in it will keep the puppy occupied.
 - Keep track of the times of day when the puppy is more likely to engage in biting behavior.
 - If the puppy is wildly biting at you or the leash when on leash, straighten your arm and hold the puppy out away from you (make sure all four puppy feet are on the ground) until she calms down.
 - If the puppy is biting or chewing on household items, she needs closer supervision. Use crates or baby gates to create safe play areas for puppies. Prepare several KONG toys stuffed with kibble, using small amounts of peanut butter or biscuits so you have something always ready to give the puppy when necessary.
 - Rotate the puppy toys so that every two to three days you change the toys available. Handling the toys regularly makes them more enticing for the puppy.
 - Do not shove or wiggle toys in the puppy's face. This is a deterrent to play. Instead wiggle a toy along the ground.
 - An overly tired puppy may bite more intensely. Make sure the puppy gets regular naps.
 - A puppy that is constantly biting is frustrated by not having her needs met. Make sure you expose the puppy to something new every day. Take her out on a long line and let her run around if you don't have a fenced-in yard. Feed the puppy her meals in a KONG toy or other food-dispensing toy. This will help her use her brain and mouth and tire her out. Make sure you hold out a portion of the puppy's food ration per day to reward the puppy for good behavior. One cup of food will give you approximately 200 opportunities a day for rewards. Regular training will make the puppy much easier to live with.
 - Let the supervised puppy drag a light, long leash around in the house, and if biting starts to happen, step on the lead until it stops, or hold the puppy out away from you until she tires out (all four feet on the ground).
 - Do not use punishment-based techniques (holding the puppy's jaw, holding the mouth shut, etc.) The fallout from these techniques can make a puppy hand-shy.
 - Do not use repetitive verbal cues (no, no bite, ouch, etc). If you have to repeat a cue, it is not working, and it will teach the puppy that your words have no meaning. In addition, if the puppy is seeking attention, giving verbal recognition to the behavior will reinforce the need for attention.
 - All members of the family need to consistently use the same methods to teach the puppy.

Inappropriate Chewing

Chewing is normal and necessary for a growing, teething puppy. She explores much of her environment by chewing. It is your responsibility to teach her what she can appropriately chew on. Prevention along with supervision is critical. Keep inappropriate objects out of reach. If the puppy gets something she shouldn't have, distract her with a toy and make a "trade." Say "give," and reward her with an appropriate toy or a food reward, as she gives up your sock or shoe.

Practice prevention by closing off kid's rooms, closets or other areas where forbidden objects are laying about. Spend time practicing "take it" and "give." Many items that are interesting to a young puppy become boring as the puppy gets older. You won't always have to leave the roll of toilet paper on the bathroom counter.

Supervise the puppy, or crate or confine her when you can't supervise. Puppies can be quick to learn when no one is watching them.

Teething pain may cause a young puppy to chew. Teething starts around four months of age and should be done at about seven months of age, when the adult teeth are fully erupted. Freezing some her toys can help a puppy that has difficulty with teething.

Jumping Up

A puppy often jumps up because it gets her closer to you as she seeks attention. Follow the simple rule of "four feet on the floor" before giving the puppy any attention. This will keep you from reinforcing the jumping behavior. The puppy has learned from a young age to sit for attention. Make sure you are diligent in reinforcing this good behavior.

Sometimes a puppy figures out that in certain situations or with certain people, jumping up is an advantageous behavior. This can mean anything from jumping on people to jumping up at a table or counter. Spend extra time working on sit and stay behavior, or send the puppy to a mat, to control jumping on objects. If the puppy is jumping on people do not allow her to be petted in public, even if the greeter tells you it is okay with him or her. Consistency is very important. Teach the puppy what *you want* her to do and spend time reinforcing the behavior. Ignore jumping by turning your back and folding your arms around your waist. Do not make eye contact or talk to the puppy because this rewards the jumping behavior.

Be sure you consistently reward the puppy for making good decisions when greeting people. When bad behavior gets all the attention, it will escalate. Reward what you want and it will happen. Review the sections on "Calm Greetings" as well as "Controlled and Calm at the Door" for a training plan (see section 6). Should you have continued problems in this area, contact your puppy counselor.

Barking

Barking in the crate: The puppy's crate should be a happy and safe place. When leaving a young puppy in her crate, make sure you pair the entry into the crate with a KONG toy that has a bit of peanut butter and kibble in it. This gives the puppy something to do and the chewing/licking behavior is calming. Keeping her crate close to you will minimize loneliness barking. Mental or physical exercise before crating can help.

When the puppy barks, ignore her, but listen closely for a moment of quiet, and then reward her calmly with a treat. If you correct or draw attention to the puppy when she is barking, you are teaching the puppy that barking gets your attention. Release her from her crate while she is sitting quietly, not while she is barking.

If the puppy has been crated at home while you are gone, don't rush to her when you return. If she is quiet, move calmly to her before she barks. If she is barking, wait for a pause in the barking before going to the crate. Do not release the puppy from the crate unless she is sitting quietly (exceptions can be made if the puppy really needs to go out and park!).

Barking in public: A puppy that gets frustrated during training or out in public sometimes develops a habit of barking. Looking at the puppy, speaking to her or saying "quiet!" can reinforce barking as an attention seeking behavior. Prevention is always best. Bring a mat for the puppy to relax on and provide a special chew toy to keep her occupied. Practice the relaxation protocol (see Section 5).

If you are sure the puppy doesn't need to park, isn't thirsty and that the expectation is not beyond the puppy's skill level, ignore the bark by turning away. When the puppy is quiet, reward her. If you are in a meeting, a restaurant or other venue where the barking is disruptive, remove the puppy from the situation. Be aware of how the puppy's behavior may be impacting other people. An occasional bark is not cause for concern, but repeated episodes call for removal.

Other Suggestions for Barking:

Make sure barking does not pay, period. If the puppy barks to get out of her crate, don't let her out until she sits quietly. If she barks to go outside, have her sit and wait until she is quiet to go out. If training elicits barking: have the puppy sit, down, heel and do so at a brisk pace. Spend time having the puppy down and stay while you sit in a chair and do something else. Initially you may have to make your sessions very short, but the idea is to set yourself up for success and end the session before the puppy starts to bark. Always reward good performance!

Sometimes dogs will stare at an object, person or another dog and start barking. Once the barking starts, the dog cannot learn or even hear any instruction you may be giving. In these cases, move the dog so she cannot stare at the reason for barking. Sometimes you may have to look at blocking sight lines or going around a corner until the barking stops. Then gradually move closer to the reason for barking.

If the puppy starts "alert" barking at other dogs or people, contact your puppy counselor for guidance.

Thievery

A puppy that gets in the garbage or takes things from counters is a big frustration. PREVENTION is by far the best approach. Keep lids on trash cans, take the toilet paper off the dispenser, close closets, keep shoes off the floor and do not leave food within reach on counters or tables—the list is endless. As the puppy gets older, she will lose interest in some of these items. Until then, do not allow opportunities to practice thievery.

Sooner or later the puppy will get into something she shouldn't. You can trade an item with her *only* if you catch her in the act. If you find the pieces of the remote control with no puppy around, it's too late to do anything about it. If you find her carrying a shoe, don't automatically go on a rampage. Encourage her to come to you and give it up. If she does, praise and reward her. It is extremely important that the puppy feels safe in your presence so that you can trade for these objects because sometimes the object is a danger to the puppy. Acknowledge that you should never have left the item out where she could get to it.

As the puppy gets older, items on the counters may become enticing. Keep your counters clear at this age. Once started, counter surfing is a very difficult behavior to eliminate. If the puppy starts counter surfing, contact your puppy counselor immediately for training options.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to thievery. When you see the puppy about to go after something she shouldn't, say her name, physically block her from the object and redirect her attention to an acceptable object. Should you need more assistance with this, contact your puppy counselor or puppy development.

Getting on Furniture

Prevent this problem by *never* allowing the puppy on the couch, bed or chair. If the puppy has learned that the chair or couch is a place to be, and you catch her in the act, tell her "off." Praise her once she gets off. The more consistent you are, the faster this problem will go away. If she is persistent in trying to get on furniture, use laundry baskets or other objects to prevent access.

Provide the puppy with a mat or rug to lie on at your feet while you sit on the furniture. Watching television with the puppy at your feet on leash is a useful training tool. Encourage the puppy to chew on her toys while she learns to relax at your feet.

Shyness or Fearfulness

Puppies go through distinct developmental phases where a fearful experience can have a lasting effect on their behavior. During their first four months, there is a "window of opportunity" when puppies can accept many new experiences. This is why early positive familiarization is so important.

If the puppy is fearful or shying away from something, you will need to help her overcome her fear. Be patient! Allow the puppy to make good decisions. Do not drag the puppy towards an object or person that she is afraid of. Give the puppy time to assess the situation, in many cases curiosity will take over and she will approach whatever is scaring her. Do not try to distract her with food, but instead give food rewards for good decision making. Quiet praise can be effective in some situations, but discontinue it if the puppy does not respond well. If she is afraid of a statue or other object, put her to work at a distance and gradually move closer, making passes past the object.

Make sure you don't push the puppy beyond her capabilities. It is sometimes better to leave a situation that she can't cope with so that you don't make the problem even worse. For instance, Independence Day fireworks or a stadium full of screaming people may be just too much.

Note: Contact your puppy counselor or the puppy development at Leader Dog if you are having trouble solving shyness problems. We will help you overcome this problem before it becomes a major obstacle.

Over-Attachment

Some puppies would happily go off with anybody holding their leash, while others may develop a strong attachment to their puppy raiser. If the puppy is so attached to you that she won't let another person work with her, you will need to help her become more independent. In leaving your home to enter guide training, in learning to trust and work with a new trainer, and switching from the trainer to a visually impaired client this is a vital skill for a successful guide.

You might want to try trading puppies with another puppy raiser for a few days, so she can become accustomed to trusting someone else. You can go for a walk with a friend and have the friend hold the leash while you walk next to him or her. Make opportunities for the puppy to socialize with other puppies and people. Start by having the other person handle the puppy while you are not around. Keep in mind that having someone attempt to work the puppy while she is crying and trying to get back to you is not productive. Work in settings that allow the puppy to have success.

Expectations of Normal Attachment

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy can be left with a stranger while handler moves around the room, or goes out of sight for very brief periods (15–30 seconds). The stranger can provide the puppy with toys or food rewards to keep her calm.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy can be left with a stranger (or another person) while the handler leaves the immediate area for up to a minute. The stranger can use a toy or provide support to the puppy by gentle praise or petting.

Puppies over 10 months: IFT Standard 7; Separation

Problem behaviors: Crying, barking, pulling towards where the handler exited, jumping on stranger, anxious or restless behavior, or jumping on handler upon return.

Tips for Success in Problem Prevention

- Prevent unwanted behaviors before they happen. Puppy proof your home, and use a crate, gates or an exercise pen to keep the puppy contained. Don't give her access to unsupervised areas. Allowing the puppy to practice unwanted behaviors just makes her better at it.
- Use name recognition when the puppy is distracted. Remember to verbally mark and reward when the puppy looks at you and redirect the puppy to an acceptable behavior.
- Teach the puppy what you want her to do. It is an inefficient use of your training time to focus on what you don't want the puppy to do. If the puppy is misbehaving, decide what you want her to do and teach her to do it!
- Have a plan and be prepared. If you are attending a meeting, bring the puppy's mat and a special toy so she has something to do while you are occupied. Always be prepared to reward the puppy for good behavior. If a session or outing doesn't go as planned, think about what you can do the next time to make the event successful.
- Be aware of how you are handling food rewards. Food rewards should only be in your hand to deliver the food to the puppy's mouth. If you feel the puppy is trying to get your attention so she can earn a reward, make sure you are not "tipping your hand" by putting a hand in your pocket, moving the hand towards your treat bag or using a treat like a magic wand. A reward *must* be earned; this means the behavior has to happen *before* the treat appears.
- If you think the puppy is too interested in food, reevaluate how you handle food rewards. Timely marking, good treat delivery and frequent rewards will solve this problem in most cases. Good consistent training creates a reward history where the puppy will work *for* the food instead of working to *get* the food.
- If you need help, contact your puppy counselor. Don't let misbehavior become a habit that will be much harder to retrain as the puppy gets older.

Behavior at Home

A dog going into the home of a person who is blind or visually impaired needs to demonstrate suitable home manners. Here are some guidelines for home manner expectations:

Expectations for Settling at Home

Puppies under 4 months (off leash): Puppy is comfortable with limited freedom in proximity of humans. The puppy plays with her own toys with human coaching, and will settle and sleep when tired.

Puppies 4–9 months old (off leash): Puppy has a good concept of what her toys are and what human items are. Puppy requires less redirection to what is acceptable. She may get excited with changes to the home environment (people coming over) but will settle after five minutes and will lie down and sleep when household is quiet.

Puppies 10 months and older (off leash): Puppy is comfortable in home environment and will spend a good deal of time sleeping or lying down. She will play with available toys but does not require toys to stay occupied. Plays in a gentle manner with humans. If she has household item, she does not destroy it.

Undesired behaviors: Constantly moving round in calm environment, attention seeking, vocalizing, chewing on human items instead of toys, looking for garbage or counter surfing, keep away behavior, destructive chewing of household items, high activity level, jumps on people or furniture, or rough play with other pets.

Resource Sharing

It is important that the puppy is relaxed and calm around food and toys in the presence of people as well as other animals. Puppies that “guard” these items will not adjust well to kennel life with other dogs around, or to the public life of a guide dog. To teach the puppy to be relaxed around the food bowl, please refer to section 5 under “Positive Reinforcement Training.” Should you notice that the puppy guards its food or toys, please notify your puppy counselor or the puppy development department.

Expectations of resource sharing

Puppies under 4 months: Puppy is relaxed with humans around food. Puppy will share items with humans and other dogs. An empty food bowl can be picked up without incident.

Puppies 4–9 months old: Puppy is relaxed around food. Puppy will disengage from other pets over toys or other valued resources. Puppy may remove a toy from area or eat faster in the presence of people or other pets.

Puppies 10 months and older: Puppy is relaxed around food and toys, and shares easily with other pets and humans.

Undesired behaviors: Resource guarding behaviors such as defends food or object from people, growls, hackles or shows other defensive/aggressive behavior around food or other resources.

SECTION 7 – Familiarizing the Puppy

Providing a rich social environment for the puppy is an important responsibility. He needs to experience and be comfortable in a wide variety of situations and environments to develop into a sound, stable dog. Leader Dog makes every effort to breed dogs with good temperaments for guide work. You are an important part of guiding the puppy through various familiarization experiences to make him a good guide candidate.

Early positive exposure to new environments is crucial for puppy development. If you wait, the puppy will miss out on important familiarization time. After five months of age, puppies less readily accept new sights and sounds. Look for a wide variety of environments that include stairs, different footing surfaces,

elevators, noise, traffic, crowds, adults, children, squirrels and riding in vehicles so the puppy can learn to take these things in stride.

NOTE: Puppies that have not received their second round of vaccinations (first round is given at Leader Dog) should avoid areas frequented by dogs of unknown vaccination history.

Puppy Raiser Responsibilities in Public

While it is important to get the puppy out in public, please consider what is appropriate for the puppy's age and level of training. For baby puppies, refer to the puppy timeline for places to take the puppy that are appropriate for his age and vaccination status. A good first step is a trip to a store where you can sit on a bench and watch the crowds. Keep early outings interesting, short and not overwhelming. Excessive heat, cold, noise, crowds and potentially frightening distractions should all be avoided. If you have questions, ask your puppy counselor.

Stores and other businesses that grant access to Future Leader Dogs are truly invaluable partners. Business owners and citizens will ask why you have a puppy with you, and as you explain the puppy raising program, you and the puppy become ambassadors for Leader Dogs for the Blind. *We rely on you to be courteous and responsible with the puppy in public.*

- **Always bring clean up equipment.** Even if it's just a short trip or the puppy just "parked," accidents happen when you least expect them. Always have plastic bags, paper towels and a cleaning solution with you. Responsible puppy raisers are welcome to return, while irresponsibility ruins it for others and leaves a poor impression of Leader Dog.
- **Remember to ask permission before arriving.** LEADER DOG PUPPIES DO NOT HAVE AUTOMATIC ACCESS RIGHTS. Asking for permission ahead of time allows business owners to consider your request without pressure. Consider providing the business with a general Leader Dog or puppy raising program brochure (a letter is provided in your puppy packet for this purpose). Your puppy counselor can tell you which businesses in your area welcome Leader Dog puppies. Please contact puppy development if you have questions or concerns about outings.
- **Remember that the puppy is a puppy.** Select age appropriate outings and activities, and don't expect young puppies to be perfect. If you have a difficult time with the puppy in a store, be considerate of others and leave. Come back another day when things are going better.
- **Be friendly and answer questions.** Many people will want to know about the puppy and working dogs. Some will just want to tell you about their own dog. If you must ask them not to pet the puppy, do so in a positive way. For instance, ask them to help you train the puppy by performing an appropriate greeting exercise. Let them know about the important job the puppy is being raised to do.
- **Puppies that have not received two sets of vaccinations should not be exposed to dogs with unknown vaccination history.** The puppy received one set of vaccinations at Leader Dog. You *may* attend puppy counselor outings where the only dogs attending are Future Leader Dogs. You *should not* go to pet stores, parks, rest areas, training classes or other areas where pet dogs may frequent until after the second set of vaccinations.

Appropriate Places to Familiarize

- **Your neighborhood.** Neighborhood walks present opportunities for familiarization—people, animals, cars, noise, garbage cans and more.
- **Other neighborhoods.** Find a neighborhood that is different from yours—more or less traffic, bigger or smaller yards, houses closer or farther apart, and streets wider or narrower.
- **Downtown.** Traffic downtown is much noisier than traffic in residential areas. Expose the puppy to grates in the sidewalk, fountains, people, skateboarders, roller bladers, parking meters, statues, bicycles, storefront windows and manhole covers.
- **Schools and sporting events.** Familiarize the puppy around school buses or when children are coming and going. Get permission to attend events like baseball, football, soccer and basketball games, or school concerts. Make sure the puppy is exposed to people of all ages—toddlers through adults. Be careful that the puppy minds his manners among youngsters and don't let him become overwhelmed. You might want to volunteer to visit classrooms to talk about Leader Dog.
- **Parks.** Bicycles, joggers, kids, dogs, squirrels and birds offer new sights and sounds.
- **Department stores and malls.** Get permission first. Stick to places with hard surfaced floors until the puppy is housebroken. Even if you don't go in, entry areas can be a good place to expose the puppy to crowds and foot traffic. The goal is a relaxed puppy that can watch while the world passes by.
- **Puppy play-groups and obedience classes.** The puppy needs the opportunity to play with other puppies, especially if there are no other dogs in your home. Arrange puppy playtime with one or two other puppies, off leash, in a safe, fenced-in area. Consider puppy kindergarten and obedience classes from a reputable trainer that uses positive reinforcement methods. Make sure that the puppy's playmates are up-to-date with their immunizations and use a flea repellent before these outings. While off-leash play is permitted with puppies of similar age and size, Future Leader Dogs should *never* be allowed to play with other puppies or dogs while on leash.

Places to avoid

- **Zoos.** Respect other species of animals that may be fearful of dogs.
- **Dog parks.** Leader Dog puppies should *never* go to a dog park. Unsupervised play can lead to injury to dogs and people. Observing other dogs while the puppy is outside a dog park is acceptable.
- **Doggie daycare.** Puppies are not allowed to attend daycare. Lengthy play sessions can lead to injury and dog distraction issues.
- **Dog agility classes.** Guide dogs are taught to go around obstacles, not over or through them.
- **Firework shows.** If the puppy becomes afraid it is impossible to remove the puppy from the situation. With the proliferation of neighborhood fireworks, the puppy should have adequate exposure to the noise and smell.

Places to attend with caution

- **County and state fairs.** Respect other species of animals that may be fearful of dogs. Be aware of the temperature and make sure the puppy doesn't get overwhelmed.
- **Parades.** Puppies can burn their feet on hot asphalt. Be aware of the temperature. Be prepared to provide shade, water or a vehicle to ride in. Leave the puppy at home if temperatures are unsafe.

Familiarize but Don't Overwhelm

Familiarization should not include frightening the puppy. Let the puppy observe new things from a distance until he is comfortable. If the puppy starts showing fear behaviors like backing away, tucking his tail, plastering his ears to his head, groveling or trying to hide, you need to remove the puppy to a more comfortable distance from the scary object. Be calm and matter-of-fact. Don't reinforce a puppy's fears by providing excessive comfort, but if your touch calms the puppy that is acceptable.

Young puppies in crowds can be better socialized while being held so they are not overwhelmed. Always be prepared to leave a situation in which the puppy is overwhelmed, overstimulated or over-aroused. Contact your puppy counselor for suggestions on how to handle the situation in the future.

Take into account the length of the outing, the obedience skills of the puppy, the weather or temperature before you go out. You are always training the puppy when you have him at the end of your leash. If the outing involves social commitments on your end of the leash that are not compatible with puppy training, it is appropriate to leave the puppy at home.

Important Experiences for the Puppy

Traffic

Leader Dog puppies need to be comfortable and confident in all types of traffic. Start with quieter streets and gradually build to heavily traveled intersections to help the puppy become accustomed to the sounds and motion of traffic. Look for opportunities to experience heavy traffic, loud trucks, horns and sirens as the puppy's confidence builds. Your goal should be a puppy that can sit or stand quietly at a busy intersection.

Expectations of Traffic

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy has been exposed to vehicle traffic and is comfortable observing moving cars. The puppy can walk alongside traffic calmly with handler support.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy can walk on loose leash with handler support in moderate to heavy traffic coming from behind. The puppy can hold a sit or stand with handler support at a busy intersection for the length of a traffic cycle.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT Standard 4: Traffic

Undesirable behaviors: Fear of traffic or wanting to chase traffic, inability to remain at a traffic corner without being distracted by scent, movement, people or dogs.

People

Provide the puppy with the opportunity to see all different types of people—children, teenagers, women, men, shapes, sizes, colors and dress. Sitting on a bench in a mall is a good way to let the puppy see the human world and all its variety.

Crowds

Build the puppy's ability to work in busy, crowded areas. Have the puppy sit or down before petting. As the puppy gets older, he may expect people to come and pet him. At this point, it is okay for you to decide when and who will pet the puppy. When someone asks to pet the puppy, you might say that the puppy is working and now isn't a good time. They will understand. Remember you need to be in control of the situation. A mob of people could scare a young puppy or a puppy lunging at a passing child could scare the child. Both situations should be avoided.

Your goal in training is to be able to walk the puppy on a loose leash through the many distractions a crowd produces. Puppies should be comfortable on all types of flooring including polished shiny surfaces. Keep your puppy's nails trimmed so he can walk more securely. During winter months, check your puppy's feet for packed snow which may cause him to slip on smooth floors.

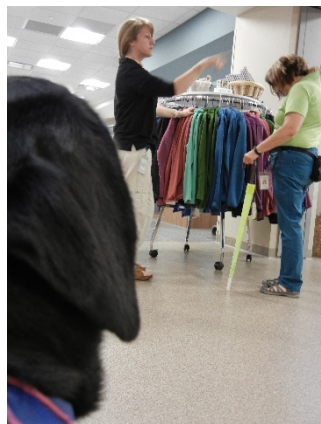
Expectations of people and crowds

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy should be exposed to different surfaces with support from the handler. The handler should use frequent food rewards to make the puppy comfortable while walking on different surfaces. The puppy should be able to sit on a loose leash while crowds pass by. Care should be taken to make sure the puppy is not in a situation where he becomes overwhelmed.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy should confidently walk across different surfaces on a loose leash and should be able to walk through crowds on a loose leash with reinforcement from the handler.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT Standard 3C: Walking Randomly Through a Crowd of People.

Undesirable behavior: Lunging, jumping on people, licking or mouthing hands, fear or refusal to cross different surfaces, or inability to walk on a loose leash.



Settle while the world goes by

One of the most important traits in guide dog work is to have the dog settle and relax while the world goes by. Look for opportunities to sit on a bench while the puppy relaxes in a down at your side or under the bench. The puppy should not seek attention from passersby. Benches are available in major grocery stores, big box stores, malls, parks and city streets. Sometimes stationary exposure to crowds can be an important step before a puppy is confident enough to walk among crowds.

Stairs

Overview: Start out with a few sturdy steps and eventually build up to open-backed, open-graded stairs. Work on all types of stairs—open, carpeted, metal fire escapes, slippery, and anything that looks new or unusual. The puppy should walk comfortably up and down in a slow, controlled manner without jumping off the bottom steps or lunging to the top. Think about how it would feel to go up or downstairs with your eyes closed. Guide dogs work stairs at a slow pace, especially on the “down” portion of a staircase. Consider using a “bridesmaid” walk on stairs where you put two feet on every step which helps a puppy slow down.



Limiting exposure to stairs in your home is not sufficient training for a Future Leader Dog.

How: Start with safe, short stairs with good footing. Some puppies can do stairs right away, while others need some support in learning this skill safely. If the puppy needs to relieve himself, carry him up or down stairs. To build confidence, when the puppy has “parked” and is ready to learn, place him on the last step at the top or bottom and allow him to easily negotiate that one step. As he gains confidence, add another step so that he ends at the very top or very bottom of the stairs. This method is called “back chaining” and creates self-confidence in the puppy because he will get more comfortable as he goes up or down. Keep the puppy on a loose leash when attempting stairs. Pulling or forcing the puppy can scare him and make him afraid of stairs. Once the puppy has mastered simple stairs, find more difficult stairs

for him to work on. When using food rewards for good performance, refrain from treating at the top or bottom of a staircase, as that could call the puppy to “rush” to get to the end. Using treats in the middle of a staircase will help a puppy slow down. This is a perfect scenario to “let your treats do the talking” as your leash should remain loose if at all possible while working on stairs.

Expectations of stairs

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy is exposed to safe, easy stairs (closed with secure footing). The puppy may require handler support going up or down stairs.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy can confidently go up and down a variety of different types of stairs in a controlled manner. The handler may support the puppy with food reinforcements for good behavior.

Puppies 10 months or older: IFT Standard 3B: Loose Leash on Stairs

Undesirable behavior: Refusal to go up or down stairs, refusal to do different types of stairs, rushing up or down stairs.

Movement and Noise Distractions

Overview: A Leader Dog will continue to work if he hears an unexpected noise and he will ignore moving objects in the environment.

How: It is important to expose the puppy to environments that are noisy, but always be aware if the puppy is becoming scared or overwhelmed. It is not unusual for young puppies to startle at unexpected or new sounds. Ideally the puppy will identify the sound and if startled, will recover quickly. A puppy that remains fearful should be removed from the environment if possible.

The puppy should be exposed to moving objects from an early age. It is not unusual for a young puppy to find movement fascinating and to want to chase objects. It is important to balance this instinct with self-control (see Self Control exercises in Section 6). Games that involve movement should always be low-key.



Expectations of movement and noise distractions

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy is exposed to different sounds and different moving objects. The handler works on the foundation behaviors of name recognition, and rewarding the puppy for choosing to ignore a sound or moving distraction. It is important the puppy make the decisions for this skill.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy is able to ignore most noise and movement distractions with handler reinforcement and

support. The puppy responds well to name recognition, looks to the handler in the face of the distraction and responds to the “leave it” cue. The puppy is able to make his own decisions without excessive raiser guidance.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT Standards 6 A & B: Noise and Movement Distraction

Undesirable behavior: lunging at moving objects; unable to re-focus after seeing object or hearing noise; fear of movement or noise

Other Dogs

Overview: The puppy should not be allowed to rush up and greet other dogs while on leash. Dog distraction is a major reason for career change. You can expose the puppy to other dogs by visiting a pet store, walking *outside* a dog park, walking through neighborhoods or attending a dog obedience class (the puppy must have had two sets of vaccinations prior to participating in these events). The puppy needs to see different breeds and colors of dogs. Sitting on a bench or standing at an out-of-the-way place in a pet store is a good way to let the puppy see other dogs. Puppies of similar size and age can play in small groups off leash in an enclosed area with appropriate intervention as explained by your puppy counselor. Keep in mind that many adult dogs do not care for puppies.

How: Develop a strong foundation in name recognition. The ground tether game can be a very useful tool. Work the puppy around other dogs at a distance so that he can be successful at remaining calm and focused. Marking and rewarding desired behavior and good decisions should be the basis of building the foundation. This skill needs to be started very early in a puppy's training.

Expectations of behavior around other dogs

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy is exposed to other dogs after the second set of vaccinations have been given (the exception is the puppy may attend Future Leader Dog puppy outings planned by a counselor). The puppy is not allowed to go nose-to-nose with other dogs or puppies while on leash. The handler supports good decisions by the puppy with food reinforcement.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy has a strong foundation in name recognition, looking to the handler in the face of the distraction and understanding of the “leave it” cue if necessary. The puppy can work around other dogs and maintain focus, both in puppy class and when out in public. The puppy is supported by the handler with appropriate reinforcement.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT Standard 6 C: Distraction – Dogs.

Undesirable behavior: Lunging, tight leash, barking, inability to focus or must be physically pulled away from other dog.

Doors

Overview: The puppy should go through a doorway with the handler in a calm fashion. Doorways often lead to exciting places, so it is not unusual a puppy to try to rush through the door. Doors with hinges on the left side are passed through with the puppy on your right side. See “around.”

How: As the puppy approaches a doorway make sure the raiser maintains a loose leash. The raiser should stop at the door and reach for the handle, pausing before opening the door. The puppy should remain calm as the door is opened, and when passing through. If the puppy becomes excited or pulls, the raiser should back up and try again. If someone is opening a door for you and the puppy pulls, it is acceptable to thank that person, explain that you are training, and go back to working with the puppy.

Expectations of doors

Puppies under 4 months: The puppy will calmly approach a door and pass through with the handler's support and reinforcement. The puppy is helped with the "around" skill when passing through a left hinged door by guiding with the leash or using a food lure.

Puppies 4–9 months: The puppy will approach and pass through a door in a calm fashion. The puppy responds readily to the "around" cue and will maintain heel position on the right while passing through a left hinged door. The raiser can provide additional support and reinforcement.

Puppies 10 months or older: See IFT Standard 3A: Walking Through a Door



Problem behavior: Consistently tight leash, lunging, hesitating or refusing to walk through the door.

Avoid Escalators, Revolving Doors and Moving Sidewalks

Escalators, moving sidewalks and revolving doors can severely injure a puppy's feet or tail. Always find an alternate path around these obstacles. Guide dog mobility instructors will teach the puppy about these obstacles during formal training.



SECTION 8 – Milestones in Growth and Development

Despite all the characteristics that make a puppy unique, the general developmental stages she will pass through are fairly predictable. This chapter will help you prepare for and understand what to expect of the puppy in the coming months.

While you may see some of the behavioral characteristics identified for growth stages, you most likely won't see them all. Some may appear earlier or later than this chapter indicates. There is a large range of variability within "normal" development. A few of the many factors that affect development and behavior include:

- Traits inherited from the parents
- Litter size
- Interactions between littermates
- Breed characteristics
- Your family environment, familiarization and training

Age 7–9 Weeks

Once you pick up the puppy you will be receiving a weekly email called the "puppy timeline" that will detail the training and socialization appropriate for this age puppy.

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

Puppy investigates and gets into everything.

- Puppy-proof your home.
- Confine the puppy to two or three manageable rooms.
- Crate train. If you can't watch the puppy, she should be confined.
- What's left on the floor is fair game; keep toys, clothes and other items out of reach.
- When the puppy has something she shouldn't, trade up. Call her to you and exchange for a high value toy or treat.
- Distract the puppy from her desired object and reward her with a chew toy or quick game.

Biting on hands and clothes is normal (but not desired).

- Keep chew toys available and encourage the puppy to play with them.
- "Yip" when teeth contact you.
- Keep the puppy busy with appropriate exercise and training.
- If YOU need a break, put the puppy in the crate.

Housebreaking is still your job.

- Keep puppy on a schedule for feeding and relief times.
- Crate train. If you can't watch the puppy, she should be confined.
- As a rule of thumb, the puppy can "hold it" while inactive for one hour plus one hour for each month in age (i.e. a 3-month-old puppy can "hold it" for four hours when sleeping).
- You may still be getting up at night to let the puppy out.
- Always carry clean-up supplies on outings.

Jumping up is a normal (but not desired) behavior.

- Reward the puppy with treats, praise and attention for keeping four feet on the floor.
- Use this rule right from the start. The puppy gets attention only for good behavior.
- Ask the puppy to "sit" or "down" before people are allowed to pet her.

Training Expectations

1. The puppy is comfortable walking on a leash and the leash is loose most of the time.
2. Sit, stand, down, come, stay, touch, leave it, "park," drop it, name recognition and mat cues are introduced.
3. The puppy will sit before you put down her food bowl.
4. The puppy will eagerly run to you when you play "come games."
5. The puppy has four feet on the floor before she gets petting or attention.
6. Think very carefully about what things you allow the puppy to do. If you wouldn't want a 60–80 lb. dog doing it, don't allow the behavior to start.
7. The puppy is learning to willingly enter a crate and settle quietly inside.
8. Introduce the relaxation protocol (<http://championofmyheart.com/relaxation-protocol-mp3-files/>).

Suggested Outings

- Short trips to the bank, post office, library or drug store.
- Attend outdoor events like ball games. Be prepared to carry the puppy if she tires.
- Keep trips positive and don't overwhelm or expect too much of the puppy.
- Avoid areas frequented by dogs of unknown vaccination history (rest stops, parks, walking areas around your home, pet stores).

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

Age 9–13 Weeks

You will receive a weekly puppy timeline detailing the training and socialization appropriate for this age puppy.

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

Puppies will put everything in their mouth.

- Encourage puppy to come to you, don't chase her. Always praise and treat her when she comes.
- Teach "give" or "drop it" when you take something from the puppy. Always praise and treat.
- Teach "leave it" when the puppy goes after something. Praise and treat her when she listens.

Biting and chewing may increase.

- Ice cubes or chunks of frozen carrots may ease teething pain.
- Have plenty of sturdy chew toys because puppies can be quite destructive during this stage.
- Consistently redirect her when she bites or chews on people or clothes.

Puppies require more exercise and sleep less.

- Offer plenty of exercise when the puppy is active and before crating.
- Use games and toys that build the puppy's problem-solving skills.
- Play times with other puppies and dogs will help tire her out.

The puppy may still have accidents but should begin to show signs of needing to go out.

- Continue a consistent feeding and park schedule.
- Housetraining regressions are common. The puppy is more distracted by things in the outdoor environment and physically can "hold it" longer than previous weeks.
- Avoid too much freedom to roam the house, especially when the puppy is overexcited or overtired.
- Be alert to any signs that the puppy needs to go out and praise her for any efforts to go out, such as going to the door.
- Always carry clean-up supplies on outings.

Training Expectations

1. The puppy sits on voice cue.
2. The puppy will touch, down, stand, stay, respond to her name, walk on a loose leash, leave it and drop items with a voice cue or with additional handler help.
3. The puppy "comes" with lots of reinforcement. Make it a game.
4. The puppy has been introduced and responds to "off," and "leave it" while on leash.
5. The puppy willingly enters a crate and settles quietly.
6. The puppy will lie on a mat and settle quietly.
7. The puppy chews on appropriate toys instead of hands. If the puppy continues to bite or increases biting, get help from your puppy counselor or Leader Dog puppy development.
8. The puppy signals to go outside for relief, but you will likely need to notice the signal right away

to prevent an accident.

Suggested Outings

- Short shopping mall trips.
- Short lunch trips to casual restaurants.
- Talks, programs or booths (keep these activities to a couple hours in length).
- Bowling alley.
- Outdoor sporting events.
- Different surfaces (slippery floors, gravel, grass, bricks, concrete, asphalt (careful if it is hot), carpet or tile).
- Different types of stairs (wood, carpeted, open back, metal grate, tile, closed stairwells).
- Different types of people (men, women, children of all ages). Puppy does not have to interact but should be allowed to observe people.
- Traffic sights and sounds as puppy can comfortably handle
- The puppy will be re-vaccinated in this time frame. You can add neighborhood walks, visits to pet stores, etc. to your outings.

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

Age 13–16 weeks

You will continue to receive a weekly email of the puppy timeline through your puppy's 16th week of age. You will also receive a notice from puppy development to fill out a questionnaire for a puppy 3 months of age.

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

Housebreaking should be nearly complete. Puppy can “turn it on and off” when “caught in the act.” When picked up, the puppy can continue relieving herself outside.

- Continue a regular park schedule.
- Park the puppy on leash and do not allow her to play until she has parked.
- If the puppy does not park on schedule, confine her to her crate or closely supervise until she parks.
- Make sure you ask the puppy to park on different surfaces. Urban settings do not always include the luxury of grass!
- Always carry clean-up supplies on outings.

Chewing still continues and the puppy may find new things to eat or chew on.

- Review and update your puppy proofing.
- Trade a treat for the items that the puppy picks up.
- Be careful that the puppy does not succeed in getting food off tables and counters.

Puppy becomes insistent about greeting people and may lunge, jump or drag you toward people.

- Remember the basics. The puppy only gets attention when she is being calm with four feet on the floor and maintaining a loose leash.
- Use settling exercises (see relaxation protocol).

- Don't allow everyone to pet the puppy. Politely say she is working and keep moving.

Training Expectations

1. The puppy should ride in cars comfortably on leash on the floor, or off leash in a crate.
2. The puppy understands the verbal cues “sit,” “down,” “come,” “off,” “stand,” “stay,” “leave it,” “touch” and “drop it” with little physical need to perform. She recognizes her name.
3. The puppy can “stay” on leash next with the handler 1–2 steps away.
4. The puppy should walk on a loose leash in quiet areas; she will still need some help in areas of high distraction.
5. The puppy should be comfortable around people, moderate distractions and noise. If the puppy shows any signs of aggression or is unusually fearful, get help from your puppy counselor or Leader Dog.

Suggested Outings

- Start longer and busier trips to malls and stores.
- Attend arts and crafts festivals and parades.
- Movie theatres.
- Longer restaurant meals.
- Stairs and elevators.
- Walks on moderately busy streets and through light crowds of people.
- Exposure to light traffic and different types of stairs.

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

Age 4–6 Months

Your training guide is the In-For-Training Standards. You will also receive a notice to fill out a questionnaire for a 6-month-old puppy. You can also self-assess the puppy's progress by completing the “Expectations of Behavior Skills in Puppies up to 9 months old” form here:

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

Obedience should be reliable in low distraction settings.

- Remember that she's still a puppy and needs your guidance and praise. Practice the IFT basic obedience skills of loose leash walking, “settling,” long down-stays and the relaxation protocol.
- Focus on your own consistency. Mark and reward for correct behavior.
- Practice basic obedience in situations with increased distractions. Use distractions as “training opportunities.”

The puppy may still find inappropriate things to eat or chew on.

- Be vigilant in your puppy proofing and monitoring the puppy. Don't leave her unattended where she can get at food or inappropriate items.
- Teething occurs during this time period. Check the puppy's mouth regularly for any dental abnormalities.

Housebreaking accidents can still occur.

- Keep a regular park schedule.

- Keep the puppy on leash when asking her to park, and do not allow play until parking is complete.
- Always carry clean-up supplies on outings.

The puppy may still grab for trash on walks.

- Lookout for food on floors and sidewalks; avoid or use as a training opportunity.
- Do not allow the puppy to succeed in eating something she grabs, even if it means you must fish it out of her mouth.

The puppy may show unexpected fearfulness or hesitate to go places.

- Be watchful for changes in behavior. Continue to offer new experiences, but be careful not to overwhelm the puppy.
- Expose the puppy to something that frightens her slowly and do not overwhelm her. For example, watch a loud parade from a distance and gradually approach more closely as your puppy becomes accustomed to the noise. If she is frightened of an object such as a statue, gradually approach more closely over a period of time (hours or days), as the puppy becomes accustomed to it. Measure success in small increments.

Training Expectations

1. The puppy should have been working on all the basic obedience exercises in the IFT Standards. Get help from your puppy counselor or Leader Dog puppy development if you are having difficulty with basic obedience.
2. The puppy should greet strangers with some degree of self-control.
3. The puppy should ride comfortably on the floor of your car or in a crate.
4. The puppy should walk confidently up and down stairs, and comfortably ride elevators.
5. The puppy should walk confidently in medium traffic (crowds and cars).
6. Loud noises should be accepted as part of the daily routine (slamming doors, dropped pans, clapped hands). Get help from your puppy counselor or Leader Dog puppy development if your puppy is unusually fearful.

Suggested Outings

- Trade puppies with another raiser for a weekend.
- Museums, arcades and parades.
- Fire stations, train stations, bus depots and airports.
- Fire escape stairs.
- Busy downtown streets.
- Ride a bus or train.

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

Age 7–9 Months

Your training guide is the In-For-Training Standards. You will also receive a notice to fill out a questionnaire for a 9-month-old puppy. If you are considering raising another puppy, you should fill out another application when the current puppy is 9 months old.

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

Sexual maturity is beginning. Males may start lifting their leg to urinate. They may mount other dogs; this is normal during play. Both males and females may mount or be mounted. Females may come into season. More detailed information about sexual maturity is found at the end of this section.

Hormone changes may affect concentration and obedience training may seem to regress. The puppy may try to test you or push her boundaries.

- Be firm and consistent in your obedience expectations. Sometimes it is necessary to go back to the beginning to rebuild faltering skills. The world is very distracting to the puppy at this age.
- Be sure the puppy gets lots of exercise. A tired puppy is a good puppy. Exercise comes in different forms: physical (walks or play), chewing (food dispensing toy such as a KONG) and mental (training sessions).
- Continue to work regularly on basic obedience.

The puppy may counter surf or steal things off tables even if she has never done this before.

- Prevent stealing by keeping things out of reach.
- Keep the puppy on leash when food is out on tables and counters or use your mat as a down-stay exercise.

Training Expectations

1. Obedience cues should be reliable almost anywhere. Continue to practice in a wide variety of settings.
2. Stairs and elevators are mastered.
3. Housebreaking accidents should be very rare or absent.
4. The puppy should crate calmly anywhere.
5. The puppy should accept long down-stays in many settings.
6. The puppy should rarely chew on inappropriate items and choose to play with her own toys in the household.

Suggested Outings

- Visit schools, sit in on a class and attend recess.
- Attend meetings.
- Travel in heavily trafficked areas (crowds and cars).
- Visit places you haven't been in a while.
- Visit places you had troubles at previously.

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

Age 9 Months–Return

Your training guide is the In-For-Training Standards. You will receive a notice to fill out a final questionnaire for a 12-month-old puppy, and to schedule a time to return the puppy to Leader Dog for guide training.

Between 10 months of age and return for guide training, the puppy should have an In-For-Training Assessment. You can find an assessor at www.leaderdog.org/puppyraisers under “In-For-Training

Standards.”

Coping with Normal Behavior and Development

The puppy will begin to mature and act more like an adult dog. She should be relaxed and self-confident in new surroundings. She should settle into work without having to exercise to burn off extra energy. She can be trusted for short periods of time by herself without getting into trouble.

- Enjoy this time—you’ve earned it!

The puppy’s adult size and weight make her quite strong.

- Continue to use consistent obedience training to maintain good behavior. You will look to reward *best* performances with a piece of food so that rewards are coming less frequently.

Boredom can be a problem for the puppy.

- Continue to socialize and find new, exciting places to go.
- Go back to old haunts and expect better behavior.
- Practice obedience in high distraction areas.

Training Expectations

1. The puppy knows and readily obeys all obedience cues in a variety of settings.
2. Her house manners are tolerable to excellent.
3. She is friendly without being pushy.
4. She is self-confident, not fearful or shy.
5. She willingly and calmly accepts new experiences and surroundings.

Suggested Outings

- Take her places you might not have considered when she was younger including concerts, business meetings, appointments and formal restaurants.
- Review the checklist below and do any you have not done yet.
 - Eat at several different restaurants
 - Go to the mall
 - Go to a different obedience class
 - Attend school or public functions
 - Go grocery shopping
 - Go to the library, post office and bank
 - Try different types of stairs (metal, enclosed, open)
 - Expose your puppy to heavy traffic
 - Take regular car rides
 - Ride a train or bus
 - Go to public places at least twice weekly

Required Outings

- Attendance at a puppy outing or contact with your puppy counselor (if you are an independent puppy raiser) a minimum of once per month.

More About Sexual Maturity

Males

From around 6 or 7 months of age onward, you will see signs of hormonal changes and developing sexual maturity in a male puppy. His testicles will become more prominent and he may start to lift his hind leg to urinate (not all puppies do this). Be prepared to consistently reinforce expected behavior and obedience. Regular training sessions will help during this time period.

A male dog must not be allowed to “mark territory” while urinating. To teach him not to mark, never allow him to raise his leg against an upright object such as a tree, bush or pole while on leash. When parking at home, always take him *on leash* to his same parking spot. Do not let him play until he has parked on command. When away from home, discourage him from searching a large area for a place to park. Keep him confined to the length of his leash and use the park command. Even doing this, he may still try to mark, so be aware when he is in public and there is an opportunity to mark (trees in a mall, aisle end caps in a pet store).

Females

A female puppy will probably reach sexual maturity between 6 and 14 months of age, when she has her first heat cycle or “season.” Some puppies come into heat early and others won’t come into heat until after they return to Leader Dog. The first signs of her impending heat cycle may be some swelling of the vulva and frequent licking. Her behavior may become especially playful, kittenish, flirty and affectionate. She might also begin to urinate much more frequently.

The beginning of the heat cycle is signaled by a bloody discharge from the vulva. The discharge will be pale-pinkish to start, then become bloody-red and finally turn brownish. The heat period lasts about 21 days from the day the discharge begins. You must watch the dog carefully the entire time to make certain that she is not allowed to mate with a male. *An accidental mating must be reported to Leader Dog for the Blind immediately.*

You can purchase special “panties” that are effective at keeping your house and the puppy clean. They can be used with regular sanitary pads and are washable. Other alternatives are disposable diapers with a hole cut for the tail or a pair of boy’s underwear worn backward with a sanitary pad. These must be removed when you take her outside to park.

Familiarization does not need to completely cease when the puppy comes into season. You just need to be very careful about where you take her. This is an excellent time to practice in traffic, downtown areas with crowds and fire escape stairs. Stay away from stores and areas where there may be loose dogs while she is dripping. If she has been well socialized, a little down time will not be detrimental if you find taking her out while in season is a problem.

Altering

Leader Dog selects its breeding stock from puppies raised in the program. All puppies raised for Leader Dog are technically potential breeding stock dogs, although this determination is only made after the dog is returned for training. Therefore, dogs are usually not altered until after they have been returned and have been evaluated. Male dogs are castrated and female dogs are spayed before they are given to a Leader Dog client for use as a guide dog. Additionally, all dogs that are career changed are altered before being released to their adoptive home.

Although Leader Dog will accept an altered dog for training, Leader Dog almost never grants permission to alter a puppy prior to its return for training. Behavior problems related to sexual maturity can almost

always be handled more effectively in ways other than altering. *Authorization must be obtained from Leader Dog for the Blind before a puppy is spayed or castrated.*

Donated Puppies

Leader Dog puppies come from carefully selected Leader Dog or privately-owned breeding stock dogs. Leader Dog only accepts donated puppies from pre-approved litters. This policy ensures that puppy raisers' time and efforts are being utilized to raise a puppy that has the maximum possible chance of successfully becoming a guide dog.

Anyone wishing to donate puppies should check with Leader Dog in advance. In order to ensure that the breeding efforts produce desired characteristics, Leader Dog requires the following information on both the sire and dam prior to breeding:

- A.K.C. (or C.K.C.) registration for both parents
- O.F.A. (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) certification and results (Hips & Elbows)
- C.E.R.F. (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) results (eye examination)
- Cardiology clearance by board certified Cardiologist
- Complete pedigree and health record
- Previous litter results (if any)

If you would like to donate puppies or breeding services to assist us in this most rewarding way please contact the breeding department.

Hosting a Breeding Stock Dog

Once a puppy is returned for guide training, he or she may be evaluated to become part of the Leader Dog breeding program. The puppy raiser will be notified and may be asked if there is interest in becoming a volunteer host for the puppy. Breeding hosts of male dogs may also raise a puppy at the same time. Due to the quarantine rules for hosting a female breeding stock dog, puppy raising is not allowed while hosting a female dog. Please contact puppy development if you have questions.



SECTION 9 – The Leader Dog Training Program



Returning a Future Leader Dog for Training

When you pick up a puppy, the contract you sign will include a *tentative* return date. The return date may change slightly as puppies are born and as litters are returned. When the puppy is three months away from being returned to Leader Dog, you will receive an email notification with the “latest permissible return date.” You will need to return the puppy to Leader Dog *no later* than this date and up to a month prior. Leader Dog needs your cooperation in order to fulfill the needs of our blind and visually impaired clients who are counting on us. Due to the number of dogs we work with each week, we can only accept 11 puppies each week. Because of this, we spread the return times for all the puppies returning for training over a four-week period. Call the puppy development department to schedule a return appointment time so we know when to expect you and the puppy. Your appointment will last approximately a half hour. We accept puppies seven days a week with time slots in the morning and late afternoon. Early afternoon appointments are available on weekends. The sooner you contact us, the more likely we will have availability to schedule your preferred return time.

You will receive an email notice around two months prior to the “return by” date to complete the following.

- The online Final Report (12-month questionnaire)
- The In-For-Training Assessment (IFT)
 - The puppy raiser schedules this assessment with one of our volunteer IFT assessors at www.leaderdog.org/puppyraisers.

What to Expect

When you return the puppy to Leader Dog, a kennel administrative assistant will greet you and take you to our intake room. They will place a new collar and tag on the puppy and ask you a few questions. These questions are similar to what you would tell a dog sitter so we can make the transition for the puppy as smooth as possible. The tag the puppy has worn during his stay with you will be altered and returned to you. Once you are ready and have had a chance to say good-bye, the dog will be taken to the kennel area to continue on his journey to become a Leader Dog. On average, the training process takes four to six months. For dogs chosen into the special needs (deaf/blind) program the training process will be longer.

Checking on the Puppy’s Training Progress

Puppy counselors receive monthly updates on the training status of puppies raised in their group and can provide you with information about the puppy. You can also call the puppy development department to receive an update on his progress. You will receive an email around three weeks after you return him to Leader Dog with an update on his adjustment in the kennel, medical information and a photo. During this time, the puppy is becoming accustomed to kennel life, receiving health exams, spending time with canine support volunteers and getting ready to be picked up by a guide dog mobility instructor (GDMI) or chosen as a breeding stock dog. After all the evaluations and decisions are made and the puppy is working with a GDMI, there will be news to share with you at specific time periods. It will include areas in which the dog is doing well and what the GDMI is working on at the time.

Stages of Training

Training Available. When puppies return to Leader Dog, they receive baths, updated vaccinations, health examinations and are spayed/neutered (if not pulled for breeding). Dogs in similar stages of training are housed together in the “villages” of the canine development center where each dog has its own kennel or may be paired with a “cage buddy.” Our canine care team cares for the dogs and closely monitors their adjustment to the kennel. They, along with canine support volunteers, spend individual time daily with each dog. The time spent at this stage is variable and depends on when a new training class begins.

Once a dog begins formal training, it moves through four training stages. Each stage introduces more challenging work, and is approximately 4–6 weeks long. Guide dog mobility instructors (GDMI)s work in teams. When the team begins with a new class of dogs, each GDMI is initially assigned a string of about 8 dogs, with a variety of sizes, breeds and temperaments. A variety of dogs is needed to successfully match the right dog with each blind or visually impaired client.

Foundations. The GDMI will immediately begin to build a relationship with the new dog and introduce a sound marker (clicker) as well as the guide harness. The dog will also begin platform training in preparation for learning about curb work. The GDMI will be asking the dog to do many of the IFT skills the puppy raiser taught, including loose leash walking, obedience skills and taking treats nicely. The first two weeks of foundations are spent on the Leader Dog campus. The dogs then progress to working on quiet streets as they learn basic cues. About five weeks into foundations, the puppy raiser will receive an email with a training update and a photo of the dog in harness.

Basic. At this level the GDMI will continue to build on guide skills such as stopping at curbs, straight line travel and traffic. In addition, new skills are added such as having the dog find an empty chair. Group obedience classes are started to ensure the dogs are responding to the instructors on an individual basis. To increase the complexity of the training, distractions are added to the group classes. During this level the dogs must pass an additional health exam, as well as meet training standards.

Intermediate. This stage includes the addition of work in the country and larger urban areas. The dogs have established the basic skills and met standards up to this point. In country training the dogs are taught to walk along the left side of the road where there are no sidewalks. For dogs being trained in the deaf/blind program, some of them may learn to alert to a sound such as a doorbell or knock on the door. GDMI)s along with client services will be “pre-matching” dogs to client applicants. Training may proceed differently for a dog that may go to a large city versus a dog that will be working in a country setting. About 13 weeks into training the puppy raiser will receive another email update on the dog’s progress.

Advanced. This is the most difficult phase of training. Dogs must master complex situations, multiple moving cars, busy streets and difficult obstacles in order to be ready to be matched with a client. The GDMI)s do city bus training with most, but not all dogs. They focus on the dogs that they know will potentially be living in a large city. Exposing the dogs to city busses can be a challenge since we have up to six GDMI)s with dogs on one bus. Airbrakes and crowded busses are the biggest challenge with this training. Some dogs adapt quickly and others are not quite sure what to make of this at first.

There will be a training session in Detroit Metro Airport. This exposes the dogs to ticket check in lines, moving sidewalks, passengers pulling rolling bags, ribbon barriers, security check in process, and entering airplanes. Airplane entry is not done for every string of dogs due to scheduling an airplane to be

stationed at a gate for the dogs to enter and exit.

During the last week of Advanced, things wind down for the dogs. They come back to quiet residential areas in preparation for where they will begin with their blind partner. GDMIs review videos of incoming clients in order to make the best client/dog matches possible. At this time about 25–30 dogs are ready for clients. There are always more dogs than clients. The dogs must also pass another health exam before being called “class ready.”

Class. During the last few days before the dogs are issued to a class of clients, the GDMIs have no contact with them. Dogs receive care from our canine care team. When the day comes where the dogs are issued to clients (issue day), the dogs are eager for love and ready to befriend their new partner. On issue day the puppy raiser will receive an invitation to meet the client with his or her new Leader Dog. The visit is held on a Saturday evening about midway through the class training cycle. For the next 3 ½ weeks, the GDMIs work with the dog/client teams, teaching progressively more challenging skills that are needed for success.

Holdover. Trained dogs that are not matched with a client become “holdover” dogs. Their holdover status is generally a reflection of not having a client that needs what the dog has to offer. It does not mean that the dog is any less qualified as a Leader Dog. GDMIs who have strings in advanced classes have the opportunity to selectively pick up holdover dogs so they stay in training and are quickly issued.

Holdback. Occasionally dogs in training that do not progress fast enough or need extra work are not career changed. Instead, they are held back in training. A “holdback” dog goes back one or two phases of training to refine areas where it needs more experience. The dog completes training from that level going forward or is career changed if not making adequate progress.

Delivery Dogs. Some clients prefer to have their Leader Dog delivered by a GDMI directly to their home environment. If a particular dog is scheduled for delivery, if at all possible the puppy raiser will be notified and given a chance to say goodbye to the dog.

Leader Dog has more than 20 GDMIs. There are teams of GDMIs at each level of training at all times. It is very important for Leader Dog to have puppies ready on a schedule so dogs are available when needed by GDMIs. At the same time, we do not want dogs to be waiting in “training available” for too long. When puppy raisers return a puppy by its scheduled return date, it is very helpful to the Leader Dog team.

When the Dog Graduates

Upon the dog’s issue to a client, the puppy raiser will receive an email invitation to meet the client with his or her new Leader Dog, if the client is willing to do so. This visit will occur while the dog and client are receiving their training on the Leader Dog campus.

Upon the dog’s graduation, you will receive a letter and photo of the Leader Dog and the client. The letter includes the graduate’s name and the state or country where he or she lives. Leader Dog clients come from all over the world, so you never know where the dog might end up. If you wish, you may write a letter to the client, and send it to the puppy development department. They will forward the first letter to the client, who may choose to write back. If he or she does, you may correspond directly with the client. Graduation photos are also posted on the Leader Dog Facebook page by class.

It is very important that you *do not* undermine the clients' confidence in his or her dog when you communicate. A simple comment about how you "can't believe he graduated because he was so sassy" can hurt the newly developing relationship with their Leader Dog. Your correspondence should be upbeat and positive.

Please remember that the client should receive all advice and training *directly from Leader Dog*. If you are asked any training questions or feel that the client needs help with a problem, please encourage him or her to contact the client services department. Even simple behavior problems may lead to a larger problem that Leader Dog needs to know about.

Career Changed Dogs

Only the dogs best suited for guide work become working Leader Dogs. Some common reasons for career change include:

- Avoidance – The dog chooses to avoid the guide harness, or curbs and traffic after having been taught to stop for them
- Suspicious – The dog is not trusting of strangers, dogs, objects or the environment
- Inconsistent – The dog's work attitude is unpredictable. Performance is good one day, but poor the next.
- Lacks responsibility or initiative – The dog is distracted while working and is not concerned about the work.
- Unable to adjust – The dog does not respond well to training and is unhappy in the kennel environment.
- Distracted – By the environment, people, scents, objects, small animals or other dogs. The dog is unable to focus on the work because of the distraction.
- Anxiety – From being kenneled, from the stress of the work or in general
- Does not settle
- Easily excitable or hyper
- Lack of response to handler input – Unwilling to learn new concepts, and/or not making progress in training
- Medical – Hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, cataracts, recurring skin or ear infections or allergies are some of the reasons a dog may not be healthy enough to be considered for guide work.

Alternative Careers for Career Changed Leader Dogs

Because our future Leader Dogs have been bred and raised to be of service, our dog adoption process allows more of them to be placed in alternative careers. We are actively seeking organizations that are interested in adopting our dogs for training in their programs. We have a strict evaluation protocol to ensure that the organizations adopting our dogs have standards of care and training as high as ours. This evaluation reviews the organization's certification, training guidelines, methodology, and mission of the organization. We have identified four alternative careers for our career changed dogs: **Canine Advocacy Program, service/assistance dogs, veteran dogs and working dogs** (which is defined below).

Starting with puppies born on February 1, 2016, the following career change process will apply:

- The dog is evaluated for an alternative career opportunity.
- If an alternative career is possible, the organization is contacted to come to Leader Dog to evaluate the dog.

- If the organization accepts the dog, the puppy raiser is notified of the placement.
- If the organization does not accept the dog or there isn't a suitable organization for adoption, the puppy raiser is notified and may adopt the dog as their personal pet.
- If the puppy raiser does not adopt the dog, it will be available for adoption in the following order:
 - VIP (major donor approved by Leader Dog senior management)
 - Breeding host (of dog's mother or father only)
 - Leader Dog team member
 - Leader Dog volunteer
 - General public

Puppies born prior to February 1, 2016 are covered under the previous process so the puppy raiser will be contacted first if the dog is career changed.

We are excited to have more of our dogs placed into alternative careers. The love, time and commitment you put into preparing your dog to become a Leader Dog will be honored through an alternative career. Over the past years many puppy raisers have voiced the desire for their career changed dog to be placed into an alternative career, and our new process now makes this a reality.

Canine Advocacy Program (CAP) – There are times when a child witnesses or is a victim of a crime that requires them to be deposed. The crime has often caused an emotional trauma that hinders the child's ability to explain what transpired. Through CAP, young victims find the courage to tell their experience to law enforcement and/or court personnel through the comfort of a dog.

Dogs suitable for this type of work possess the ability to be a quiet, calming comfort to a child, display exceptional obedience skills, resist distractions, lie settled for long periods of time and are able to withstand the emotional state of the victim they are serving.

Service/Assistance Dogs – People with disabilities other than visual impairment can increase their independence with a service dog. These dogs are custom trained to the specific needs of the individual's disability. Some of the disabilities service dogs are trained to aid people with are balance issues, autism and the use of power or manual wheelchairs.

Dogs suitable for this type of work possess the ability to easily learn task-based training and have the confidence to decide when to act.

Dogs for Disabled Veterans – Military veterans suffering from physical or emotional trauma may struggle acclimating to civilian life after returning home from duty. By having a dog to support them during times of physical or emotional stress, many veterans have been able to reclaim their lives. These dogs are trained to identify and interrupt the individual during a stressful situation, and navigate him or her away from stressors that threaten their emotional state.

Dogs suitable for this type of work possess traits of companionship, strong awareness of a person's physical and emotional state, confidence and the emotional fortitude to stand strong beside a veteran that has served our country.

Working Dogs – Law enforcement and search and rescue organizations train dogs to detect the odor of accelerants, bombs, narcotics, human skin cells and other scents.

Dogs suitable for this type of work possess excessive high energy, a strong desire to work, an impulsive ball or toy drive, confidence in confined spaces, the ability to problem solve to find a scent and the stamina to work in various weather conditions for long periods of time.

When You Meet a Leader Dog

Our mothers taught us to “mind our manners,” and most of us still follow those early lessons. There is one situation, however, your mother probably didn’t cover— *how to act when you meet a Leader Dog*.

A LEADER DOG IS A WORKING DOG

Leader Dogs are friendly animals that like attention. However, it is important that most of this attention comes from their human partners.

When you encounter a Leader Dog:

- Do not pet a dog in harness.
- Ask the handler’s permission before touching the dog or making eye contact. Eye contact can distract the dog, so always interact with the person—not the animal.

A PERSON USING A LEADER DOG IS INDEPENDENT

Often, if a visually impaired person needs assistance, he will ask for it. If it appears the person needs help, ASK FIRST, then:

- i. Approach the person on her right side, as the Leader Dog is usually on the left.
- ii. Never startle her by grabbing her arm.
- iii. Do not take hold of the Leader Dog or its harness.

1. ASSISTING WITH VERBAL DIRECTIONS

- When delivering directions to a person who is blind or visually impaired:
 - i. Speak to the person—not the dog.
 - ii. Do not use hand signals such as pointing or broad statements like “It’s over there.”
 - iii. Use detailed, easy-to-follow indicators like “Go north two blocks, then east” or “Turn left and go two blocks.”
2. NEVER OFFER FOOD TO A LEADER DOG
 - Leader Dog handlers follow a veterinarian-prescribed diet for their animals. Treats should only be given to a Leader Dog by its human partner.
 3. ACTING AS A HUMAN (SIGHTED) GUIDE
 - At times it is safer or easier to serve as a human guide instead of giving verbal directions.
 - To act as a human guide:
 - i. Initiate contact by offering your elbow by brushing it against the person’s arm.
 - ii. The person will hold your arm above the elbow and drop the harness handle, signaling to the dog that it is temporarily “off duty.”
 4. AN ALTERNATE METHOD IS THAT THE LEADER DOG USER WILL INSTRUCT HIS DOG TO “FOLLOW” YOU
 - Walk ahead of the person at normal speed; inform him when he is approaching turns, doorways, stairs and drop-offs.
 - At street crossings, walk with him across the street and onto the opposite curb. The Leader Dog will resume its duties once on the sidewalk.
 5. APPRECIATING INDEPENDENCE
 - Leader Dogs provide independent travel for thousands of people across the globe. As friends, family and coworkers of these people, we must respect the role the guide dog plays in their lives. Leader Dog handlers realize that their dogs create unique social situations. However, there is more to the person than just the dog.

To help fulfill each person's potential, we also must remember to engage the individual as you would anyone else—sighted or not.



The mission of Leader Dogs for the Blind is empowering people who are blind or visually impaired with lifelong skills for safe and independent daily travel.

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APPENDIX A – Recommended Reading

The Power of Positive Dog Training, Pat Miller, 2001

The Culture Clash, Jean Donaldson, 1996

Excel-erated Learning, Pamela Reid, 1996

Don't Shoot the Dog, Karen Pryor, 1996

Surviving Your Dog's Adolescence, Carol Lea Benjamin, 1993

Second Hand Dog, Carol Lea Benjamin, 1988

Dog Problems, Carol Lea Benjamin, 1989

Super Puppy, Peter J. Vollmer, 1988

What All Good Dogs Should Know, Wendy Volhard, 1991

Successful Dog Breeding, Chris Walkowicz and Bonnie Wilcox, DVM, 1994

How to Raise a Dog When Nobody's Home, Jerry Klimer, 1991

Through Otis' Eyes – Lessons from a Guide Dog Puppy, Patricia Berlin Kennedy and Robert Christie, 1998

Puppy Primer, Brenda K. Skidmore and Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D., 1996

Beginning Family Dog Training, Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D., 1996

Planet of the Blind – A Memoir, Stephen Kuusisto, 1998

The Other End of the Leash, Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D

Reaching the Animal Mind, Karen Pryor

Plenty in Life is Free, Kathy Sdao

Behavior Adjustment Training, Grisha Stewart

Puppy Start Right, Debbie Martin

Dog Training Solutions Bundle, Dogwise

Control Unleashed – The Puppy Program, Leslie McDevitt

Dog Sense: How the New Science of Dog Behavior Can Make You A Better Friend to your Pet, John Bradshaw

When Pigs Fly, Jane Killion

Bones Would Rain from the Sky, Suzanne Clothier

Fur Covered Wisdom, by Gila Kurtz

APPENDIX B – Health Records



Health and Vaccination Record

Dog number:

Call name:

In care of:

Coat color and breed:

Birth date:

Gender:

<u>Vaccines given to date</u>	<u>Date Given</u>	
DA2PP Puppy 1 st in series		
VACCINE SCHEDULE		
<u>Vaccines required</u>	<u>Date Due</u>	<u>Date Given</u>
DHLPP		
BORDETELLA		
DHLPP		

RABIES - 1 year		
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	Microchip

If the puppy is not brought back to Leader Dog for vaccines, your veterinarian may modify this vaccine schedule depending on disease conditions common to your area.

Leader Dog now recommends year-round heartworm medication for our puppies. The puppies will receive a heartworm test when returned to Leader Dog for training instead of the traditional spring heartworm test.

*Bring a stool sample to each vaccine appointment. Puppies are routinely de-wormed at Leader Dog. Your veterinarian may use his/her discretion.

*Please record any medical treatments and return this form to Leader Dog when requested with your questionnaires.

Date	Treatment
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APPENDIX C – Poisonous Plants, Household Substances and Foods to Avoid

Common Plants Poisonous to Dogs

Amaryllis (bulb)	Elephant Ear	Monkshood
Andromeda	English Ivy	Mushrooms
Apple Seeds (cyanide)	Elderberry	Narcissus (bulb)
Arrowgrass	Foxglove	Nightshade
Avocado	Hemlock	Oleander
Azalea	Holly	Peach
Bittersweet	Hyacinth (bulb)	Philodendron
Boxwood	Hydrangea	Poison Ivy
Buttercup	Iris (bulb)	Privet
Caladium	Japanese Yew	Rhododendron
Castor Bean	Jasmine (berries)	Rhubarb
Cherry Pits (cyanide)	Jerusalem Cherry	Snow on the Mountain
Chokayecherry	Jimson Weed	Stinging Nettle
Climbing Lilly	Laburnum	Toadstool
Crown of Thorns	Larkspur	Tobacco
Daffodil (bulb)	Laurel	Tulip (bulb)
Daphne	Locoweed	Walnut
Delphinium	Marigold	Wisteria
Dieffenbachia	Marijuana	Yew
Dumb Cane	Mistletoe (berries)	

Common Household Poisons

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Daytril, etc.)	Gasoline	Rubbing Alcohol
Antifreeze	Hair Colorings	Shoe Polish
Aspirin	Herbicides	Sleeping Pills
Bleach	Insecticides	Snail or Slug Bait
Boric Acid	Kerosene	Soaps
Brake Fluid	Laxatives	Sugar Free Gum (Xylitol)
Carbon Monoxide	Lead	Suntan Lotion
Carburetor Cleaner	Lye	Tar
Chocolate	Matches	Turpentine
Cleaning Fluid	Metal Polish	Windshield Washer Fluid
Deodorants	Mineral Spirits	Wood Preservative
Deodorizers	Moth Balls	
Detergents	Nail Polish	
Disinfectants	Nail Polish Remover	
Drain Cleaner	Paint	
Dye	Permanent Wave Lotion	
Fungicides	Phenol	
Furniture Polish	Photographic Developer	
	Rat Poison	

Common Foods to Avoid

Although Future Leader Dogs are not to be fed “people” food, we are providing this information. Please be aware of what the puppy is doing and make every effort to have him avoid human food for a number of reasons. The foods listed below may cause a problem such as diarrhea or vomiting, or may cause more severe issues such as an obstruction, coma or death. Please note: these are not *all* the foods that could be harmful to a puppy.

Alcohol	Macadamia nuts
Apple seeds	Meat (raw)
Avocado	Milk and dairy products
Bones	Mushrooms
Caffeine	Onions
Candy	Peanut butter sweetened with Xylitol
Cat food	Raisins
Chewing gum	Salt
Sugarless chewing gum (Xylitol)	Sugar
Chocolate	Yeast
Corn on the cob	
Eggs (raw)	Human medications
Fat trimmings	Tobacco
Garlic	
Grapes	

ADDITIONAL NOTES: