



PAWS[®] CHICAGO

TRAINING PROTOCOLS | Managing Behavior

It is correct to assume that you are in charge of all your dog's resources. In other words, everything your dog needs for survival and everything it finds pleasant or rewarding, is controlled by you. This can be used to your advantage when it comes to finding a non-confrontational way to manage your dog's behavior. The concept is not new; it involves teaching your dog that in order to get what it wants; it needs to give you what you want. This is the basic principle of the "Nothing in Life is Free" program and the "Say Please Program."

By asking for a specific, desired behavior before giving access to the things it likes, you may teach your dog good manners in a non-confrontational way. Clear rules with enjoyable outcomes can help build your dog's confidence and reign in pushy, rude behavior. For fearful dogs or those with separation anxiety, this plan can make life more predictable and may lower anxiety levels.

Helpful Tips

- Start with easy cues that your dog knows such as "sit" before a treat, its meals, or putting on its leash to go outdoors. It may take 10 attempts the first time you try, but turn and ignore until you get what you want. Hang in there, it will get easier every time!
- If your dog is crazy about its food or you are worried about weight gain, save some of your dog's food for reinforcing behavior. This way you can teach it to work for its dinner.
- Pick cues that may be incompatible with behaviors you want to change. For example, if your dog jumps up and is excited to greet you or new people, ask for "sit" before it is allowed to do so. Your dog can't sit and jump up at the same time.
- Initiate all interactions with your dog. If your dog paws, barks or nudges for attention, ignore it completely. Call your dog over when you are ready to interact and ask for a behavior first before engaging.

Step 1

First you'll need to teach your dog a few simple cued behaviors such as sit, touch, watch or down. ***See Clicker Training Basics.** Make sure your dog knows these cues and can do them for a treat before proceeding.

Step 2

Make a list of things your dog finds enjoyable. This can be food, treats, walks outdoors, playtime; meeting new dogs or people; receiving a belly rub; being invited up on the couch or bed; or going for a ride in the car.

Step 3

Before giving your dog access to any of the things on your list, give your cue one time only. If your dog does what you ask, it gets what it wants; if the dog ignores you, turn and walk away. Scolding, saying, "no!" or even looking at it constitutes attention; so turn and ignore your dog. Return when your dog is calm and ask for the behavior again. But ask only once. Ignore any pushy attempts for attention such as barking, jumping up, pawing, mouthing or nudging.

Step 4

Be consistent! This is the hardest part. It is important that all members of the family partake in this program for best results. Be patient with your dog at first. It may take a while before it understands that it needs to work for the things it wants and that good manners are always expected.

These simple rules can help you live in harmony with your dog. Having clear rules with predictable outcomes creates clear communication. An added bonus is having a dog with good manners; and who doesn't enjoy that?