

AKC Canine Clubs-Community Dogs-Week 3

Trust, Emotion and Play

- Skills Practice. (5 min)
 - For the first 5 minutes of each class students will be able to practice commands with the dog. Students will have to practice patience, taking turns and asking each other politely for a turn.
- One of the most important parts of training is building a relationship of trust with your dog. Today we will work on building trust through play. Do you all like to play? Dogs love to play, too. Just because he's a service dog doesn't mean he cannot have fun. The most important is to have a balance between work and play. You all probably feel the same way. That's why we have recess, right? We need a break from doing work, too.
- Rules for playing (write these on the board) (2 min)
 - If dog jumps or starts play mouthing, turn your back and ignore the dog until he calms down. Then redirect his behavior with a sit or down.
 - Redirection: Ask the dog for a different, desired behavior to replace an undesired behavior.
 - No chasing. Otherwise it becomes a game where the dog is not listening to you. If there is any chasing, stop your movement.
- How to play tug-of-war (30min)

The dog will need breaks. The students get to play with the dog and they help determine when the dog needs a break (if the dog is getting over excited or tired). During the breaks we will cover the lessons on socio-emotional behavior below. Total time playing and learning the lesson will cover 30min.

 - How to safely present the toy to the dog.
 - "Out" command. Hold the toy still and ask in an even tone "out" until the dog lets go. If you move the toy, the dog will think you are still playing.
 - Give and take. It's not about who's the strongest or who wins. It's about playing the game together. If you and I were playing a game, and I was always winning, you probably wouldn't want to play anymore after a while. Working with your dog is a partnership. We want to let the dog win, too. We can play along with the dog for a while and then just let the toy go. You'll see the dog gets even more excited and shows you he wants to play more by bringing the toy back to you. (Demonstrate.) Other times we can ask the dog for an "out." Then we start the game again with a "yes."
 - Let students take turns playing.

- Emotion: focus on the moment.
 - Frustration: If you feel yourself getting frustrated, take a deep breath. I guarantee you if you are frustrated, your dog will pick up on it.
 - Confidence: Your dog is looking to you for guidance. It is up to you to help him feel comfortable and make clear your expectations. If you are hesitant about what you are doing, your dog will get confused. Be deliberate and purposeful with your commands and movements.

Tone: A loud voice will ramp up the dog, get him more excited. A softer, soothing tone can get the dog's attention and they will listen to you. The dog is actually more likely to listen to you when you whisper than when you yell. It's kind of like how if you whisper into someone's ear, another person will want to know what the whisper was about.

- Duration, Distance, and Distraction: These are three variables you can change to increase or decrease the challenge level you are setting for your dog. You want to be mindful of all three and adjust them to set your dog up for success.
 - Duration: how long you are asking your dog to do a behavior. If my dog is just learning a new skill such as "stay," I would only ask my dog to "stay" for a second or two at a time. As the dog learns the skill, I can increase the duration, asking him to "stay" for a minute, two minutes, five minutes.
 - Distance: how far away you are from a distraction or how far away you are from your dog. The closer your dog is to a distraction, the harder it will be for him to listen. Also, if you are farther away from your dog, he may not listen as well. For example, if you are three feet away from your dog and ask him to "come," your chances of success are higher than if your dog is twenty feet away.
 - Distraction: what obstacles you are exposing your dog to that will inhibit his ability to pay attention. For example, a busy street would be high distraction, while a room in your house would be low distraction. If I'm just starting to teach a dog a new command, I would want to start training him in my house so he can use his full attention to learn. As the dog learns to understand a skill, I can increase the level of distraction and work my way up to the busy street environment.

- Take-Home Sheet