

# THE ANIMAL CARE CENTER AT GRANVILLE PUPPY KINDERGARTEN MODULE 2

## **TOPICS COVERED**

- A. Discussion of proper toys
- B. Taking food away from puppy
- C. More involved grooming/brushing
- D. Starting puppy to walk on a leash
  - 1. Puppy dragging leash
  - 2. Face puppy and use leash
    - a. Use of food treats
  - 3. Walk at your side
    - a. Use of verbal and physical praise
    - b. Motivation
- E. Application of food treats
  - 1. When and why
- F. Puppy Imprinting--the DOWN command
- G. Wait/Stay
- H. Noises and Distractions
  - 1. How to introduce each new object
- I. Introduction of stairs

## **INTRODUCTION TO MODULE 2**

The purpose of this session is to build on the information discussed in the last class. In this session, we will continue exercises to assert the human as pack leader as well as continue some initial and early obedience training known as imprinting. The puppy will be introduced to the leash and taught to walk on it. The introduction of noises and distractions will also be addressed.

## **PROPER TOYS**

Although there are hundreds of toys available in today's commercial pet industry, some thought and common sense should be used in selecting the proper ones for your puppy. One of the most serious mistakes we see puppy owners make is the purchase of rawhide chew toys for their pets. Rawhide is made, of course, from leather--the same thing your expensive dress shoes or purse are made of. In addition to the facts that much of the commercial rawhide is imported from other countries and may be treated with harmful chemicals and that dogs who eat the product typically cannot digest it well, you are also telling your puppy that anything leather is fair game to chew on. Since leather tastes like leather to him, he is not able to tell the difference between his chew and your shoe. By correcting him for chewing the shoe but giving him a rawhide toy, you are sending him a mixed message that will thoroughly confuse him. Along the same lines are pig ears and cow hooves. Both are messy and smell unpleasant when wet.

One of the best rules to follow in the purchase of toys is to buy bigger than what the puppy's mouth size is at the present time. This is for the safety of the pup. Toys that are small might be swallowed and lodge in a throat, stomach, or bowel, requiring surgical removal if the animal doesn't suffocate in the interim. The gumabone products, plaque attacker toys, and hard rubber kong toys are safe options to choose from. Extremely hard toys such as Nylabones, antlers, real bones or cow hooves can fracture teeth. Avoid soft plastic or rubber toys, especially the ones with squeakers--they are quickly chewed apart and the squeaker may be swallowed. Some dogs are content to carry around soft stuffed fleece toys.

This is acceptable only if the dog does not chew it--only carries it. Some breeds and most young puppies are such avid chewers that this typically is not a good option. It is wise to monitor your pet with toys and learn their chewing habits.

One other mistake puppy owners often make is to give the pup an old sock to chew on. Again, this is sending a mixed message to the puppy--he can't tell the difference between his sock and the one he just got out of the laundry basket, yet he is being scolded for the one from the laundry when they both seem the same to him!

## **REMOVAL OF FOOD**

This is one of the most important exercises you will ever do with your puppy. Dogs may become extremely protective and possessive of their food and food bowl, and it is important to teach the dog that you, as pack leader, can remove the food at any time you choose with no resistance from him. This becomes very practical should the dog ever pick up something in his mouth that you wish to remove.

Begin by giving your puppy a bowl of food and allowing him to eat for a minute. Quietly walk up, reach down, and very casually pick up the bowl. If the pup simply looks up at you questioningly, place it back on the floor, praise him, and allow him to continue eating. This should NOT be repeated at each feeding, but should be reinforced a few times a week.

If the pup growls, snaps, or shows any form of aggression over having the food removed, action must be taken at once to stop the dominant behavior. Begin by putting the pup on a leash, and have someone stand behind him, steadying him in a sit position while you place the food on the floor. The pup must sit until he is told he may go eat. The next step is to give permission to eat but to stay next to the bowl with your hand on it. You may pet the pup gently and talk quietly to him as he eats. Step 3 is to place the bowl on the floor, and then release the pup by permission to eat. Once he has begun, walk up and stand next to the bowl. Step 4 repeats Step 3, but additionally, begin to pet the pup while he eats. Step 5 is to walk up to the bowl while the pup eats, and place your hand on the bowl. For Step 6, walk up as the pup eats, bend down and pick up the bowl. Then return it with praise. If at any point the pup snaps, growls, or shows aggression, you must say "No" while the person holding the leash jerks back on it, pulling the dog back from the food. When the pup quiets, praise him, put him in the sit position, and allow him with permission to approach the food. Take your time with these exercises--one step may take several days. Again, do not practice this at every meal, but remember that it is of utmost importance to stop this form of behavior EARLY.

## **ADVANCED GROOMING**

By now the puppy should be used to having its feet, ears, mouth, and body handled. At this time, we want to practice not only handling the ears, but looking in them as well. We should begin to lift the lips to look at teeth, perhaps by starting with the command "Teeth" as you do. Practice tipping the puppy's head back and opening his mouth. Touch each toenail, examine the pads and the hair between, and brush the pup all over with an appropriate brush.

## **BEGINNING LEASH TRAINING**

For puppies who are unfamiliar to a leash, their first time can resemble trying to saddle a rodeo horse. They may scream, buck, flail, balk, sit down, or throw themselves on their backs. Once they understand the slight pressure on their collar is not harmful, they will usually settle down. At first we like to attach a lightweight nylon leash to the collar and allow the pup to drag it around while supervised (no chewing on the leash allowed!) This accustoms him to having something on his neck, and, as he steps on the leash himself, will begin to get him used to

pressure on the leash. Next, we will work on drawing the puppy towards us. Face the puppy at full leash extension, crouch down, and call the pup in a happy tone. If needed, use the leash to draw the pup to you. Praise the pup and reward with verbal and physical praise and a food treat if needed. Repeat this process several times and then begin to back up as you draw the pup in. As the puppy learns to move as you move, you may turn and face the same direction as the puppy. Bend down slightly and pat your leg for encouragement as you call the pup in a pleasant, happy voice. Use lots of body language and praise as the puppy begins to move forward with you. AVOID using the word COME however, as this may confuse the pup later in formal obedience. LET'S GO or WITH ME along with a clicking or kissing sound is a better choice to encourage your puppy to accompany you.

## **APPLICATION OF FOOD TREATS**

Food treats are a great training aid for young puppies and dogs, but should be used sparingly (remember those extra calories!) They work well for a puppy with a short attention span and also are helpful when a puppy needs extra motivation. The pup should NOT be allowed to grab the treat from your hand, but rather accept it gently. As a puppy becomes more proficient in learning commands, food can be alternated with verbal and physical praise. Additionally, small pieces may be given rather than a whole biscuit each time the animal performs properly.

## **PUPPY IMPRINTING--THE DOWN COMMAND**

To begin this process, we will use food treats as we did for the sit command. By now the pup should have an idea of what sit means. Down is a more submissive position for a dog and generally the one most difficult to train in formal obedience. Accustoming the pup to it early makes later training much easier.

Place the puppy in a sitting position with the food treat over his head. However, this time instead of then giving the pup the treat, begin saying "Down" as you draw the treat down in front of his nose, past his chest and front legs, and forward from his paws along the ground. At the same time, use your other hand to gently apply pressure on the pup's shoulder blades to help him down. Reward with the food and praise when he lays down. (Note: remember the word DOWN is ONLY used when we want the animal to lay down on the floor. The word for correcting when the dog jumps on someone or on a piece of furniture is OFF. Be careful to use these two correctly to avoid confusing the dog!)

## **WAIT/STAY**

Teaching your puppy to wait or stay are two of the most important commands he will ever learn. They have a broad application--teaching him to stay in one place while you are eating, to stand on a table quietly while being groomed or examined, and, most importantly, to keep him from bolting out of the door or the car, thus possibly saving his life.

Wait is used for short term duration, and stay is for time over 1 minute. At first, of course, a very young puppy will not have the attention span to stay anywhere for a whole minute, so today we will focus on wait. Our initial goal is just a few seconds. Stand next to your puppy, facing the same direction. With your right hand holding up one finger, motion directly in front of the pup's eyes and say "Wait." Turn quickly on your left foot so you are now standing directly in front of the puppy's toes so that he cannot move forward. (Be careful NOT to step on his feet). Count to

5 and move back into position at the puppy's side. Wait a second or two before saying "Good wait" in a happy voice. If the pup starts to move, stand up or lay down, you must catch him and correct him by saying "No" as he moves, push him back to a sit position while you say "Sit", and then repeat the wait command. As your puppy becomes proficient at this exercise, gradually increase the time you stand in front of him until you can achieve 30 seconds. If, as you are standing in front of the pup, he begins to move, you may also hold up your one finger again and quietly say "Wait."

## **INTRODUCTION OF NOISES AND DISTRACTIONS**

During this developmental phase, puppies need to be introduced to a wide variety of sights, sounds, smells, and people to become well-rounded, confident individuals. The manner of introduction of all these things can be either positive or negative for the puppy and affect him for life. To introduce something like a vacuum cleaner or blow dryer, let the puppy examine it with the motor turned off. Then take the pup some distance away and turn the object on for a short period. Ignore it yourself and play with the pup or practice sits--something the puppy is familiar with. Turn the object off. Repeat this several times for short periods. Then turn the object back on and walk the pup towards it, talking in a positive but not condescending manner. If possible, walk past the object. If the puppy hangs back, DO NOT drag or force him toward the object. Also, DO NOT talk to him in a baby tone of voice reassuring him that everything is OK and that the object will not hurt him. This simply reinforces the fearful behavior. Rather, you should approach the object yourself, pat it and talk to it in a positive way until the puppy approaches on its own. This may take several sessions if the puppy is rather fearful.

## **INTRODUCTION OF STAIRS**

Stairs can look like a mountain to a small puppy and can be very intimidating. It is critical to start the pup out properly to avoid the animal developing a fear of steps. Place the puppy on the bottom step and a food treat on the floor. Encourage the pup by patting the floor. Praise the puppy as it comes down the step. Gradually increase the number of steps over a period of time, taking care that the pup does not fall down the steps or off the side. To teach the pup to go up steps, put the pup on the top step and a food treat on the top floor. With one person standing on the step below the puppy to protect it from falling, have the other person encourage the pup from the top. Keep in mind that steps without backs are particularly frightening to dogs and may require extra work to teach the animal to go up and down.