

# **It's A Dog's World™**

## **K - 9 A C A D E M Y**

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### **PUPPY KINDERGARTEN WEEK 2**

The goal for this week is to teach your puppy how to accept being held without struggling, to start improving your puppies focus, especially on you and to introduce some basic commands, such as “Sit & “Stand”. We will also discuss ways to deal with puppy chewing and playful biting.

#### **TRAINING COLLARS**

There are a number of styles of training collars available. The trick is to determine which type of collar best suits your dog's personality and temperament and facilitates the best result with the least amount of correction. Types of collars that are effective include head halters such as the Gentle Leader® or Halti® brands as well as Martingale “check-chokes”. You may even try a Gentle Leader® Easy Walk Harness, particularly effective for those dogs with a sensitive neck.

Head halters fit over the dog's muzzle and snap snugly behind the ears. When you look at your dog's head from the side, the collar should form a “V”. Head halters work by gently guiding the dog's head in the direction you want to go and so they work especially well in preventing pulling behavior when walking. The Martingale collar is similar in appearance to a flat collar, except that it is connected by a small loop of chain, which causes a “ratchet” sound when the leash is pulled. Your trainer will help you select the best collar for your dog and fit it correctly. You may need to experiment with different collars to see which style achieves the best results.

#### **SIT**

First, start off by holding a treat between the thumb and index finger of your right hand. Put the treat on the tip of the dog's nose. Draw the treat straight up the dog's nose and in between the dog's eyes and give the command “sit”. Naturally, when the head goes up, the bottom goes down. Once the dog's bottom hits the ground, release the treat into the dog's mouth and say “good sit!” Before you move your hand away, give the dog its release word. Then go ahead and play with your dog. This would be a perfect time to throw the ball around or play with your dog and his or her favorite toy.

#### **STAND**

The purpose of the “Stand” command is to teach your puppy to stand calmly for grooming or examination by your vet. Start by having your puppy sit parallel to the front of your body. Hold a treat in your right hand and place it near your sitting puppy's nose. Slowly draw the treat away from your puppy in a horizontal straight line. Try not to raise the treat up high from your puppy because this may cause him to jump. Lure the treat a foot or two away from your puppy and as your pet gets up to follow it, say the command “Stand”. Stop luring and hold the treat at your standing puppy's nose for a second or two while repeating the command, then reward and praise your puppy.

## CHEWING

Chewing, ripping, shredding, tearing up and generally destroying stuff are as normal for dogs as tail-wagging. If you have a dog, expect chewing. Provide him with his own toys and teach him to use them or he will destructively chew anything available, such as your furniture, carpet, clothing or shoes.

Puppies do not chew and destroy your house and belongings because they are angry, jealous or spiteful. They do it as a way of not only exploring their world, but also as part of the teething process. Puppies will normally start teething around 4 months of age. At that time, you may see an increase in their chewing behavior. It is very important that you have plenty of appropriate items available for your puppy to chew on. Just like teething human babies, puppy gums will become sore and irritated when they are cutting their adult teeth. During this time, it is not uncommon to find your puppy's baby teeth on the floor, however, in most cases; your puppy will usually swallow their baby teeth.

Provide your dog with a wide variety of toys and make sure they are available in the area where your dog is confined. Since he will have no other choice of things to chew, he will learn to chew and play with his own toys. Some good types of toys for your dog are Kongs®, Nylabones®, rope toys, etc. Be sure that any toys you leave for your dog cannot be splintered or chewed into small pieces that could cause your dog to choke. Toys that can be stuffed with food treats, like Kongs® or Buster Cubes® will keep your dog's interest for long periods of time. You can extend the entertainment value of your dog's toy and sooth your puppy's gums at the same time by placing their chew toy in the freezer. Try stuffing a Kong with peanut butter and freezing it overnight. Your dog will be entertained for hours trying to extricate the treats from the toy and the cold toy will ease his gum irritation. Avoid rawhide toys because certain types of rawhide will not dissolve in the dog's digestive track and can cause impactions.

Never give your dog an item made of anything that you do not want him or her to chew on. For example, if you do not want chewed shoes, never give your dog an old shoe to play with. By allowing the dog to chew on an old shoe they get the idea that all shoes are fair game.

Until your dog can be trusted not to destroy your home and yard, do not give him free, unsupervised run of your house. Give him a pleasant area or room of his own where he can enjoy himself and relax when you are not home or are unable to supervise him. Dog runs, crates, kennels or "puppy-proofed" rooms are excellent for this purpose.

As your puppy matures, his need for chewing may decrease but it will never completely go away. Some dogs will continue to chew because they may be lonely, bored, frustrated or anxious. Active dogs can become restless when left alone for long periods. If you always come home at a certain time and you are late, your dog may become anxious. The dogs' chewing is a form of occupational therapy to relieve stress and release energy. If you come home and find that your dog has destroyed something, **do not punish the dog!**

Be sure to provide plenty of exercise for your dog, especially if you are going to confine them. Chewing helps your dog eliminate pent-up energy, so if your dog has gone for a good long walk or played a rousing game of "fetch" before you leave, your dog will be less likely to be destructive.

When you are home, take time to teach your dog to play with her toys and to seek them out whenever she feels like chewing. Always lavish your dog with praise every time you see her playing with or chewing on one of her toys. Teach your dog to "find" her toys. Scatter several toys in different rooms throughout the house. Tell her to "find it," then immediately lead her from room to room encouraging her to pick up a toy when she sees one. When she does so, reward with praise, affection, play and even a food treat, and then continue the game.

### **Chewing Deterrents**

If you catch your dog in the act of chewing a forbidden item, you can interrupt her with a verbal correction. Immediately direct your dog to one of her own toys and praise her for chewing it. This will teach your dog not to chew forbidden items when you are present, but it probably will not discourage the dog from investigating these items when you are not there. The only way to prevent your dog from chewing these things is to make them inherently unattractive. There are many products in pet stores that are designed to apply to furniture, etc that are safe but repulsive to dogs. Some effective taste deterrents are *Bitter Apple®*, *Vicks Vapo-Rub®*, *BenGay®* or even whiskey. Why chew on something that is boring, distasteful or unpleasant when there are plenty of fun, exciting and tasty things to chew on?

By far the simplest way to keep your dog from chewing on forbidden items is to prevent access to them. Put your shoes in the closet and shut the door. Place the trash outside. Keep doors closed; keep valuables out of reach. Praise and reward your dog profusely for chewing her own toys.

### **PLAYBITING**

Just like chewing, play biting is also a very normal part of puppyhood. This is not a sign of aggression, but is just the way that puppies learn how to play. Fortunately, most biting done by puppies is playful and as your puppy gets older, much of its nipping and mouthing will disappear, particularly if you don't encourage it.

To discourage play biting, avoid aggressive play such as "face-slapping", "boxing", tug of war and wrestling with your puppy. This type of play causes your puppy to become overly excited and difficult to manage. Teach children not to reach over the puppy's head when playing, as this may trigger the puppy to bite the child on the underside of the arm. Instead, encourage your children to pet the puppy on the chest and under the chin where it is harder for the puppy to grab on to little fingers.

As with chewing behavior, it is important to redirect your puppy to appropriate toys anytime it starts to chew on your hands or feet. If your puppy really starts to chew or nip on your hands, try waiving a toy to distract your puppy. Be sure to praise your puppy for showing interest in the toy.

You can also try putting your hands behind your back or keeping your fingers curled because most puppies won't bite a closed hand. If you ever watch puppies playing, you will see that it is very common for them to bite each other. However, when the play gets too rough, the puppy being bitten will give a high-pitched, piercing squeal and then usually get up and ignore the puppy that did the biting. This method also works when you do it. The next time your puppy bites, let out a loud "yelp", then get up and walk away from your puppy. Completely ignore your puppy for several minutes. In most cases, your puppy will be startled when you yelp and will stop biting. He will also quickly learn that biting leads to the loss of his playmate.

Occasionally, your puppy may work itself into a “frenzy” of play and he just won’t stop biting, no matter what you try. This is usually a sign that your puppy needs a “Time-out” to encourage it to settle down. If your puppy has reached this stage, calmly pick up your puppy and place him and a toy in his crate or puppy-proofed area. In most cases, your puppy will probably curl up and quickly go to sleep.

### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

There are eight needs to be aware of when raising a dog. If you don’t meet your dog’s needs successfully, your dog may act out in an inappropriate or destructive manner. Keep in mind that dogs will use their paws or mouth to release boredom or frustration. If you meet all the following needs successfully, your dog’s frustration or boredom level will be eliminated:

**1. Exercise.** Again, you may see destructive behaviors due to boredom. If your dog has an excess of pent up energy, he or she may release it by chewing up the hose, garden or other objects. Most dogs need thirty minutes of cardiovascular exercise five times a week.

**2. Leadership.** Provide your dog with strong and fair leadership. Dogs are pack animals. In the pack there is the alpha figure all the way down to the omega. If you are not the alpha figure to your dog, your dog will feel the need to take that position. Your dog will be much happier and well-adjusted if you step up to the plate and take the alpha position!

**3. Companionship.** As we said before, dogs are pack animals and see you as an extension of their pack. They need to be able to spend time with you as much as possible. A dog should not be your lawn ornament. If you are going to own a dog, he or she should be as much a part of the family as possible. Please don’t use the excuse that your dog is too big to come into the house. If you can come into the house, I think your dog can too! The best way to fulfill some of your dog’s companionship needs is to have your dog sleep inside at night. This will also prevent your dog from barking unnecessarily at night and keeping you and the neighbors awake. The best protection is to have your dog in the house with you. If you hired a personal bodyguard, would you keep him outside in the backyard or outside your bedroom door? Which area of protection would make the most sense? Your dog will be much more effective as a protector and deterrent if he or she is in the house with you.

**4. Consistency.** As with children, learning is best when praise and correction is applied fairly and consistently. Dogs tend to be creatures of habit and love to have a schedule!

**5. Socialization.** You need to socialize your dog from a young age. Many cities now have off leash dog parks that you can take your dog to socialize with other canines. Try to expose your dog to a number of different elements as soon as possible. Try taking your dog with you on your next visit to the beach, Santa Monica Promenade, or Starbucks. Allow people to pet your new puppy. This will make your dog more predictable to different situations.

**6. Altering.** With pet overpopulation an ever-continuing problem, please give every consideration to spaying or neutering your pets. By altering your dog, you may eliminate potential health problems. A male dog up to 5 miles away can smell a bitch in season, without wind! By altering your male, you will prevent the need for him to escape from the yard. Spaying or neutering does not make dogs fat, overfeeding does. Don’t have your dog have a litter just so your children can experience birth, show them a video.

However, if you feel the need to breed your dog, please make sure that your pet goes through the suggested tests to prevent producing dogs with heritable diseases. If you

are going to breed, make it a point to better the breed. Breed for temperament, health and conformation.

**7. Nutrition.** Feed your dog a healthy diet. Steer clear of grocery store dog food brands. Most are filled with fillers that cause your dog to have more bowel movements than necessary. You can find a quality dog food in any pet store or feed store. If your dog is being fed a nutritious diet, your dog will be more focused and alert. It is similar to sending your child to school without a good breakfast. They will not be attentive, nor do well in class.

**8. Health.** Good health speaks for itself. Your dog will have a difficult time learning if he or she is experiencing an ear infection or has intestinal worms. Be sure to look into the heritable problems that run in your dog's breed and have your vet check for them. For example, large dogs tend to have hip and elbow dysplasia, while small dogs can have knee problems. Most new puppies have intestinal worms. There are new products on the market that are one pill for numerous purposes. Sentinel can prevent your dog from hookworms, tapeworms, round worms, heart worms, be a flea birth control pill and more. Have your new puppy's stool checked for coccidia or giardia. Keep your dog up to date on vaccines. It is suggested that your dog goes through a series of Distemper, Parvo, Para influenza, Hepatitis, Lepto, and Corona shots. It is mandatory that your dog receive a Rabies vaccine at four months of age. You must get your dog's license with the city animal control at this time as well. You may want to consider having your dog vaccinated for Bordetella and Lyme disease as well. Talk to your vet about these vaccines.

## **HOMEWORK**

This week, practice the "Watch", "Sit" & "Stand" commands several times a day, as well as "Cradle & Hold". Remember to keep training sessions short – no more than 5 to 10 minutes. Try to do 3 to 4 training sessions a day. Try to reinforce the behaviors by incorporating them into your daily routine. Remember reward your puppy for every correct response and keep your sessions positive and fun!