

LEADERSHIP

Leadership and control

Positive and consistent training, both in action and in attitude, are needed to gain control of your puppy. In the dog pack, a dog will assume a position in the hierarchy based on its genetics and the results of its ongoing social interactions with other pack members. Although the human household may not be entirely representative of a dog pack, any dominant displays, postures, or attitudes toward the owners (e.g., nipping, excessive mouthing, mounting, jumping up) must be discouraged, while obedience or deference to the owners should be encouraged. At the very least, if these behaviors have been reinforced or are allowed to continue unabated, they become increasingly difficult to resolve and may even progress to more intensive displays of overexuberance, disobedience, dominance, and aggression.

A. Be fair

1. Be consistent with rewards and corrections. Set rules that everyone observes. This is the only way that the puppy can learn what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.
2. Don't take good behaviors for granted.
3. Be generous with praise; give much more praise than scolding.
4. **Never** hit the puppy or use any type of physical punishment.

B. Make the puppy aware of your importance in its life

1. Feed it on schedule at specific times.
2. Make the puppy say please by responding to a command before it gets anything it wants or needs (dinner, treats, toys, picked up, walks, petting, play). It may help to keep in mind one of these two catch phrases: 'Learn to earn' or 'Nothing in life is free.'
3. Once it learns to stay, ask it to stay for a second or two before following you around the home, in and out of rooms, and in and out of the home.

C. Do not allow the puppy to take control

1. Do not allow it to constantly solicit attention.
2. Do not defer or give in to the puppy's demands, unless the behavior is desirable (e.g., barking at the door to eliminate outdoors).
3. Teach the puppy to stop play biting on command.
4. Curb excessive barking.

D. Show your leadership in actions

1. Train your puppy to learn commands and then insist that he or she is immediately responsive. If the puppy ignores you or refuses to obey, gently but immediately show the puppy what is expected.
2. Be certain that you are the one to initiate all that is positive. This means that the puppy should not get affection, attention, or treats on demand, but rather when they are initiated by you or when you are using them to reward a desired behavior. Deferring to the owner should be encouraged.