

Annie's Orphans Volunteer Orientation

Dog Handling Class for Volunteer Orientation

Safety

Body Language

It is important to know the body language of a dog and what they are trying to tell you when you meet. What they say through body language should tell you whether you should or should not approach them. Shelter dogs should not be handled like you would your own pets.

Always be aware of the dog's body language. The dog could be exhibiting signs of stress by showing any of the following signals: retreating, lunging, tail carried low or tucked up by the belly, raised hair between the shoulder blades and/or down the back, growling and/or baring teeth, freezing (standing still), etc.

Approaching a Dog That You Do Not Know

1. Approach the dog to the side, as dogs approach each other. They do this because it is a nonthreatening approach that allows them to get to know the other dog.
2. Crouch down to the dog's level. Do NOT tower over it, as this may be perceived by some dogs as a dominant stance.
3. Offer your hand in a cupped position; palm down, like a paw, as a sign of friendliness.
4. Avert your gaze from the dog. Do not make direct eye contact.
5. Talk to the dog in a gentle, upbeat voice while looking to the side.
6. Move slowly, especially with a shy dog.
7. When the dog shows signs of interest by interacting with you such as sniffing your hand and approaching you, encourages this with gentle, inviting words.
8. If the dog seems interested in you,
 - Pet them under the chin.
 - NEVER pet over the head. This is another sign of dominance to a dog.
 - Do not lean over their shoulders or handle their rear end.
 - Do not hug them.

9. If you do encounter a shy or fearful dog, you can try to communicate with it as another dog would. You do this by using the following "Calming Signals"

- Averting your gaze
- Licking your lips
- Stretching
- Yawning
- Scratching
- Pawing at the ground
- Play bowing

Personal Space

Most dogs have a "Critical Distance" of about 6 feet but for some dogs it may be more, for some, less. So dogs should be kept 6 feet apart. If you meet another dog, keep a short leash on your dog and do not let the dogs interact, as some dogs may be aggressive toward other dogs.

Lifting a Dog

If you want to carry a puppy or small dog, place one hand under the dogs' chest and with your forearm; support the hind legs and rump. Bring the dog close to your body while you carry it. This is called the "Sheep Lift." Never attempt to lift or grab a puppy or small dog by the forelegs, tail or back of neck and never drag a puppy or dog.

Always ask a staff member if you have a question or are in doubt about anything! Your safety and the animal's safety are of the utmost importance. Never hesitate if you are unsure. Ask questions or get help!

Always trust your gut feeling!

Socialization

Dogs are social animals and enjoy being out of their cage, spending time with people. Don't just rush them back to their cage, especially right after they have relieved themselves. Spend at least 10-15 minutes with each of them, if possible. They really enjoy being talked to, petted, and played with, especially the puppies that need lots of experiences with new people and things.

Handling

- Not all dogs have been taught that it is safe, and pleasurable to be handled. Use caution when handling a dog's ears, feet, shoulder area, muzzle or rear/tail area.
- Handling should always be a positive experience for the dog. Use treats, gentle petting and an upbeat and gentle voice.
- For a dog that does not like handling in certain areas, you can help teach it to get comfortable with this. Start slowly by very gently touching the area and verbally praising the dog. Reward the dog with a treat if the dog accepts the handling. Proceed SLOWLY and do not rush.
- Gently rubbing a dog's ears is very relaxing to a dog.
- Do not play games with the dogs that encourage jumping or mouthing.
- NO Tug of war games. This can be interpreted as a dominant game.
- Do not roughhouse with the dogs, as you are not sure how they will react with you when they are aroused.

For puppies

- Puppies at Annie's Orphans are under "Quarantine" until notice is given otherwise.
- Socialize and handle them separately from their littermates. They need to learn to interact with people. They already know how to play with their littermates.
- Regularly handle the puppy's muzzle, tail, toes, lips and ears as well as their teeth.
- Get them used to having their scruff handled and do so gently.
- Gently pull on their ears and tail.
- Teach accepting restraint by holding the puppy to your body and when he struggles, hold him firmly so that he cannot get free. When you feel the puppy relax, relax your hold, praise him and offer him a treat. DO NOT set the dog free while he is struggling to get free.

Basic Training Tips

Tone of Voice

- Tone of voice can affect how a dog reacts to a situation and how a dog learns from it.
- Let a dog know verbally and physically when it has done something right as this helps the dog learn what it is you want from him and what is not acceptable behavior to humans.

- Using a whining, reassuring voice if a dog is shy or afraid of someone or something rewards the dog for being afraid.
- Using an upbeat, encouraging voice can help a shy dog come out of their shell.
- Using an upbeat, high-pitched, excited voice can overly excite a confident, outgoing hyper dog.
- While low, deep tones can intimidate some dogs.

Coddling

When a dog acts fearful of a person or situation, this behavior must be ignored. If a dog acts afraid of a noise or an approaching person, you should not coddle, or reassure the dog, because using any verbal or tactile reinforcement rewards them for being afraid. The dog perceives this how you want him to behave.

- Reward a dog when it is being brave taking a step toward the object or person it fears by petting and praising the dog.
- Use an upbeat and encouraging voice.
- You can also encourage a dog by crouching down to the dog's level to encourage it to come toward you if the dog is hesitant to interact with you or hesitating to enter a room or cross a doorway, etc.

Leash walking Tips

- Give the dog lots of praise and positive feedback for sitting or letting up on the pulling!
- Proceed slowly with puppies, as most puppies are not leash trained and will resist walking on a leash.
- Attach a leash to the puppy and let the puppy drag the leash in their run so they get used to the feel of it on their necks.
- If the puppy won't walk and just stops and sits, be patient and take your time.
- Use treats and lots of praise to help them move forward.
- When they do move forward, relax the leash as a reward.
- Do not coddle them, as this will reward them for being scared!
- Do not say "It's OK."

- For a more outgoing puppy that may be lightly pulling, just stop walking and ignore the puppy until it calms down. Give the dog praise and positive feedback for calming down and letting the leash go slack.

Jumping

- Dogs have a tendency to jump on humans if you allow it.
- The following techniques help to stop this behavior:
 - Turn your back to the dog when it jumps on you.
 - Only praise the dog for having all four feet on the floor.
 - Do not react negatively to the jumping (i.e., telling it to get down, pushing it off, etc.) as this is rewarding to the dog even if it appears negative to you.
- Be consistent with ALL dogs, including puppies.

Mouthing (Puppies only)

- Mouthing is essential for young puppies to learn how to inhibit their bite.
- They must first be taught to inhibit their bite then be taught little by little that mouthing humans, no matter how gentle, is not acceptable.
- When a puppy mouths, you should use a loud, firm "Ouch."
- If the puppy stops mouthing or mouths lighter, verbally praise him for doing so.
- You can provide a puppy a toy and teach it that this is the appropriate thing to have in its mouth.
- Try to interrupt or prevent the behavior by distracting the dog before he nips. When you approach a puppy, have an acceptable chew toy in your hand and praise the dog when he chews the toy.
- Replace the nipping behavior with acceptable behavior. Call the dog to you and have him sit. Reward the dog with treats and praise for coming and sitting.
- Never use body parts to entice play; instead use a favorite stuffed toy or ball to direct the play. Do not play rough games with the puppy (tug of war, wrestling, pushing, etc.) use a game of fetch or just toss toys.

Walking Shelter Dogs - Procedures/Rules

1. Choosing your dog:

- Go to the dog walking board and see who needs to be walked. Walk the dogs at or below your color level.
- If dog is marked as "STAFF ONLY"; which is indicated by a red dot, you **cannot** walk that dog.
- Go to the cage and read the cage card and greet the dog by letting the dog sniff your hand through the cage door.
- DO NOT walk the dog if you feel the dog will be too much to handle; be safe.
- If the cage card is missing, the dog may still be walked, just use extra caution around children and other dogs.

2. Getting the dog out of the cage:

- Get a shelter slip leash and use it even if a dog has a collar.
- Approach the cage to the side and do not crowd the door.
- Crouching down can be helpful in maneuvering the cage doors and getting the leash over the dog's head.
- Crowding the door can sometimes overwhelm some dogs.
- Read the dog's body language before proceeding.
- Open the cage door inwards and be ready to slip the leash over the dog's head.
- BE PATIENT, the dog should be calm when collared.
- Use treats to encourage the shy dogs out of the cages.
- Use the sheep lift if a dog needs to be carried.
- NEVER pull or drag a puppy or dog from a cage by its paws, legs, underarms, scruff, etc.
- Walk out of the general dog area; do not linger with visitors; ask them to join you outside if they want you to answer a question.

3. Walking your dog:

- Walk the dog out to the perimeter road. Please don't run the dog from the kennel area. That's an sure way for accidents to happen and it sends a wrong message to the dog.
- Use caution going in and out of the run.

- Never drag a dog or puppy that is refusing to walk. Verbally encourage the dog with an upbeat voice to move forward but do not coddle the dog.
- Once on the walk, remain fairly neutral to the dog until the dog eliminates. When the dog eliminates, praise and pet the dog.
- CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG!!!!!! Regardless of where it eliminates, this is your responsibility.
- Spend about 10-15 minutes with the dog before returning the dog to its kennel.
- Always pay attention to your dog and talk to the dog as you walk and interact with him.
- Be aware of how the dog reacts to the environment, children, other dogs, etc.
- Report anything unusual regarding the dog's health by filling out a Health Observation Form and placing it _____.
- Report anything unusual with the dog's temperament/behavior by either talking to the volunteer coordinator, and writing in the behavior notes.
- Report any bites or scratches that break the skin to the Volunteer Coordinator.

4. Returning your dog to the cage:

- If your dog does not want to go back into the cage, try the following:
 - o Throw treats into the dog's cage and the dog will likely go into the cage to get them.
 - o Take a step into the cage to get the dog to enter its cage.
 - o Ask for help.
- Make sure that the cage doors are securely closed after you return the dog to the cage.
- Secure clip to run gate.
- Return the leash and collar to the Doggie Den.
- Always check the dog's water and refill it if it is empty. (do not refill the dog's food bowls unless instructed to do so by staff)

5. Miscellaneous Dog Handling Rules:

- Only ONE dog is allowed in the play yard at a time, unless you know they get along together.
- Be courteous to other dog walkers.
- The "Out to Surgery" sign means the dog is scheduled for surgery and his food and treats need to be restricted so do not feed a dog with this sign attached to his cage door.

6. Other General Information

If all of the dogs have been walked when you are here, please keep in mind that there are many things that you could do. Please don't just leave. A list of ideas follows:

- The dogs can be walked again.
- The dogs could always use some extended one on one time with volunteers.
- Grab a brush and sit somewhere out of the way and brush the dog.
- Check the water bowls in the kennel to make sure that they're full.
- Make up some kongs for the dogs
- Make sure that the toys are put up in the play yard.
- Gather leashes/collars from all areas and return to the Doggie Den.

Please note: Annie's Orphans does not condone or permit negative correction or punishment. Volunteers observed negatively correcting behavior might be asked to discontinue their volunteer service with Annie's Orphans.