

# PET DOG AMBASSADOR

Your Companion-Dog Skills Assessment Program

## Pet Guardians' Guide



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## About the Pet Dog Ambassador Program

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The Pet Dog Ambassador Program (PDA) is a program for dog guardians to test their knowledge, skills and ability to manage their canine companion(s) in real life settings. The aim of the program is to acknowledge the hard work and commitment that guardians and their dogs undertake to make their

shared lives enjoyable. Agility dogs, show dogs, obedience dogs and many other dog sport competitors gain titles as acknowledgement for the hours of dedicated training undertaken, and rightly so. We want to take nothing away from their efforts. The Pet Professional Guild (PPG) firmly believes that pet dogs and their people also deserve similar accolades. This program recognizes these efforts from a puppy's very early training and aims to encourage guardians to continue training and developing new skills, abilities and knowledge.

### The benefits of the program are to:

1. Improve the relationship between pet dogs and their guardians.
2. Help guardians gain a better appreciation of force-free dog training and its applications to everyday living.
3. Improve the knowledge of socially responsible pet guardians.
4. Increase guardians' knowledge and understanding of local laws in their locality.
5. Equip dogs and Guardians with the skills to be out in the wider community in settings such as cafes and outdoor eating areas, off leash areas, busy streets and beaches.
6. Demonstrate to the public the advantages of a well-trained dog.

## Assessment levels



The PDA program consists of five levels. Each level builds on the previous one to strengthen the knowledge, skills and abilities of dogs and their guardians. Each guardian will start on either Level 1 or Level 2 depending on the age of their pet. The program levels are:

1. PDA – Level 1 (Puppy)
2. PDA – Level 2
3. PDA – Level 3
4. PDA – Level 4
5. PDA – Level 5 (Championship)

Before starting the program, the dog's guardian must complete the online open book quiz that checks their knowledge on dogs and their needs. The quiz must be completed successfully before starting Level 1 or Level 2, which are the entry points to the PDA program.

**Level 1** (Puppy) Dogs, like people, learn best when they are young. That is why we love to see puppies (aged 4 to 9 months) reach their first pet dog training goal early. Qualified assessors assess puppies in class. This can be the class teacher (if PPG qualified to assess) or an assessor brought into class for the purpose of assessing the work done by participants.

**Level 2** (any dog over the age of 6 months) builds on the work undertaken at Level 1. It is at a level where those who did not undertake Level 1 (because they did not fit the age bracket) can still have an easy entry into the program. This too is assessed in a class situation.



**Levels 3 and Level 4** build further on the dogs' and guardians' skills, knowledge and ability and culminate in assessments both in real life settings and in the class situation.

**Level 5** (Championship) is where everything the dog and guardian have learned is put to the test in real life settings. There are location options available to help assessors make real life training relevant to their clients. Assessors will be able to create scenarios that may be appropriate to their local surroundings, provided they include all of the compulsory exercises and two from the selection of optional exercises.

### Earning qualifications

The dog earns qualifications as he passes each level. The qualifications are placed after the dog's name and are:



PDA-1 for Companion Dog Assessment – Level 1  
(Puppy)

PDA-2 for Companion Dog Assessment – Level 2

PDA-3 for Companion Dog Assessment – Level 3

PDA-4 for Companion Dog Assessment – Level 4

PDA-5 for Companion Dog Assessment – Level 5  
(Champion)

We wish dogs and their guardians every success in undertaking these assessments and look forward to seeing the results reflected in the behavior of dogs and their guardians in the community. Have fun with your dog. Be proud of your dog. Always remember that the force-free way of training is the best way of developing a bond with your dog such that your relationship will build based on mutual trust and respect.

## Who Can Be Involved?

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### 1. Dog guardians and their dogs

Guardians and their dogs who have been working with a PPG licensed instructor and/or assessor are able to undertake assessment on the condition that the instructor or assessor considers the team suitable candidates. Pet guardians who register for the program must be willing to declare their adherence to the PPG guiding principles, which can be found in the appendix of this guide or on the [website](#).



#### *\* Reactive/anxious dogs\**

*Not all dogs are suitable to undertake every level of the PDA Program. However, the PPG is working towards an assessment program that reactive and/or anxious dogs may undertake. We firmly believe that the attention to their dog's welfare and the amount of hard work that pet guardians put into reactive and/or anxious dogs should receive recognition. We will announce this program as soon as it is ready.*

### Why pet dog guardians should become involved

- a) By training through all levels of this program both dog and family maintain and/or increase their skills, knowledge and abilities and guardians can be guided by force-free trainers if/when behavioral problems arise.

### 2. Pet dog training instructors

Any person who is a dog training or dog behavior consultant member of the PPG may apply for a PDA instructor license provided they meet the eligibility criteria of the licensing agreement. [The application form is on the PDA website](#).

## Why pet dog training instructors should become involved

- a) The program allows for a structured approach to both group and private lessons.
- b) Resource materials are available to PPG members who are instructors to assist with instigating the program.
- c) The program helps to build and retain clients.
- d) The program promotes PPG's force-free methods that better develop lasting relationships between dogs and their guardians.

## 3. Shelters and rescue facilities



Licensed PDA Instructors who work with a shelter or rescue facility may instruct the program.

### Why shelters/rescue facilities should become involved

- a) The program will help develop dogs that people want to adopt and who are less likely to be returned to the shelter.
- b) The program will help to enrich the lives of the shelter/rescue dogs while

waiting for their forever homes.

## 4. Pet Dog Training Clubs

PPG members who meet the required eligibility criteria, who become PDA instructors/assessors, and who work/volunteer with a force-free dog training facility may instruct this program within the dog training facility.

### Why dog clubs should become involved



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- a) Dog clubs that offer this program can rightly be proud of the service offered to their local community.

## Are You Eligible to Be a PDA Candidate?

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### Candidates

All dog guardians who have reached the legal age of accountability in their country of residence (usually 18 or 21 years) are encouraged to become actively involved in the PDA program. The program is suitable for all, including guardians and/or dogs with a disability or special needs. Your best chance of success within the program is to link with a PPG PDA instructor or assessor who will be able to guide you through the pet dog exercises necessary for a great life at home with your dog. These exercises double with those required to pass the assessment. You can find a list of instructors on the [PDA website](#).

### Junior applicants



Junior applicants are those who have not yet reached the age of legal accountability in their country of residence. This will either be age 18 or 21. When applying to become a junior candidate, it is essential that the junior applicant's parent or legal guardian complete the parental permission

section of the application form. Without this, a junior applicant cannot apply to become a candidate. [The application is on the PDA website](#).

Please note that not all assessors will assess junior candidates. The Assessors Directory indicates the willingness of each assessor to assess junior candidates.

[The directory is on the PDA website](#).

## Canine candidates

These are dogs of any breed or mixed breed aged four months or older. Dogs with special needs can also be assessed and exercises can be adapted if necessary. On successful candidate application, the Health Check form can be downloaded from the [Candidate Knowledge Center](#) on the website.



## Reactive/anxious dogs

Not all dogs are suitable to undertake every level of the PDA program. However, as previously mentioned the PPG is working towards an assessment program that reactive and/or anxious dogs may undertake.

## Get Started

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### Register online

Candidate registration should be undertaken online at the [PDA website](#). When you register, you will receive a PDA membership number. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assessor receives your PDA membership number. You will use it as your identifier and it is unique to you as the handler. It will apply to you and

the first dog that you register for the program.



Should you want to register a second, or more dogs, your number will remain the same but will also contain the first three letters of your dog's name.

It is advisable that you also register a second handler so that, should exceptional circumstances arise, you have

someone registered to take your place if you are unable to proceed with the assessment. Special needs candidates are strongly encouraged to do this. There is no cost for registering a second handler. If there is no second handler registered, the assessment cannot continue if, for any reason, you are unable to complete the assessment.

If you have registered a second handler, that person and your registered dog will use your membership number and you will be required to show the assessor your registration letter, confirming the name of your second handler.

You will be responsible for ensuring that your assessor has your PDA membership number in order to upload your PDA scores for verification. The information is

used to record your details on the assessor's PDA Account and to also record the outcome of your level assessment.

From [the website](#) you will note the minimal cost involved in registering for the assessment. If you register for more than one pet, then you will be invoiced for the additional dogs.

**When you register you will have a choice of the following levels:**

- Guardian Level 1 (for adult guardian with dog under 9 months of age)
- Junior Level 1 (for junior candidate with dog under 9 months of age)
- Guardian Level 2 (for adult guardian with dog over 6 months of age)
- Junior Level 2 (for junior candidate with dog over 6 months of age)

For those wishing to apply for long distance assessment, please register using the appropriate level as above and once your registration is accepted, you may then, at no charge, apply for your distance assessment.

Likewise, for special needs candidates, register and then use the Modification Form that can be found in the [Candidate Knowledge Center](#) of the website.

When you register for the next level, your membership type will change. All levels from entry (Level 1 or Level 2) must then be undertaken sequentially to the Championship Level (Level 5).

## Health Check



Before each level can be undertaken, it is necessary that the dog's Health Check form is current. Once you are a registered candidate you will be able to access this downloadable form from the [Candidate Knowledge Center](#) of the website.

You must complete your details and those of your dog and your veterinarian and then present this form to your Assessor. Along with your form you must show to your

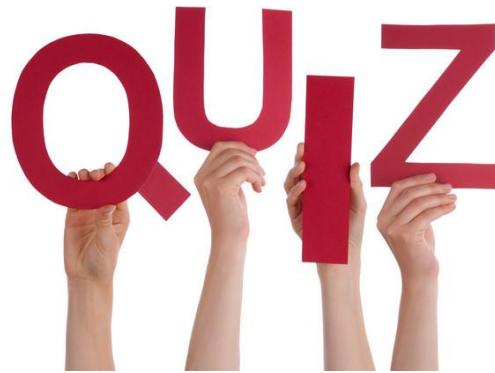


Assessor your dog's current vaccination status. This can be by way of a veterinary vaccination certificate or on presentation of current titre levels for your dog. Vaccination certificate or titre level documentation must indicate that your dog is currently immunized against the diseases most common in your area. Your Assessor may also ask you some questions about your dog's health care plan (i.e. flea treatment, worming and grooming routine).

You must complete the Health Check form and procedure for each Level you undertake.

### Online open book quiz - the Guardian's quiz

A quiz must be undertaken prior to assessment at the entry level of the program (Level One or Level Two) in order to assess a guardian's knowledge about their dog and his needs.



Once registered you will receive an email confirmation with your PDA number and informing you how to undertake the quiz.

#### **About the quiz:**

- The quiz is online and open book, comprising 30 questions.
- Find the answers throughout this guide and in the Check Your Quiz Knowledge at the back of the Guide.
- You need to gain a pass rate of 90 percent before you and your dog can be practically assessed.
- You can take the quiz at any time and you only need to pass it once before the first level attempted.
- If you do not pass the first time, you must wait a minimum of 24 hours before you can attempt the quiz again. As the questions are randomly allocated to

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the person taking the quiz, some questions may change each time you attempt the quiz. When you have completed it at the required pass rate you can then download and print your PDF results.

## Finding an instructor



Instructors are dog training or behavior consultant members of the PPG who have passed the PDA instructors exam. They have undertaken to abide by the PPG guiding principles of force-free training and are willing and able to help you achieve your PDA goals.

You will find an international Instructors Directory on the [PDA website](#).

## Finding an assessor



PDA assessors have proven to the PPG's satisfaction that they have maintained their practice within the PPG guiding principles and have passed the assessors examination. Assessors can both instruct the PDA program and assess candidates.

Your assessor must maintain continuing education in the field of force-free dog training and behavior and is subject to reassessment of the rules of the PDA program and the PPG guiding principles every two years.

You will find an international Assessors Directory on the [PDA website](#).

## Practical assessment

If your dog training instructor is a qualified PDA assessor, approach them about assessment. Ensure that your instructor believes that you are ready to undertake assessment.

If your instructor is not a PDA assessor, ask if they know of a local assessor or check the Assessors Directory on the [PDA website](#). Make contact with this assessor to discuss an assessment for you and your dog.

### Long distance assessment

In some cases, distance or circumstance makes contact with an assessor difficult or impossible. Although live assessments are preferable, it is possible to have your assessment undertaken by video submission. Not all assessors may wish to undertake distance assessment. Each assessor in the Assessors Directory has indicated their willingness (or not) to undertake distance assessments.

## How You and Your Dog Are Assessed

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At the conclusion of each exercise the assessor will mark you and your dog's performance with one of the following:

- **Achieved** – You and your dog were successful.
- **Almost there** – There was a minor error that disallowed successful completion of the exercise.
- **Not yet able** – There was more than one major error that disallowed successful completion of the exercise.

*All exercises must be marked as Achieved in order to gain qualification.*

On receiving one failure to pass an exercise, the candidate will be asked if they wish to continue. It is incumbent upon the assessor to continue to assess the candidate. However, should the candidate fail three exercises within the one level, the assessment will be terminated.

### Right of appeal

If you feel that your efforts have been inappropriately assessed, you must first speak with your assessor. Your assessor should be able to justify how your assessment results have been determined within the rules of the assessment.

If you are dissatisfied with the results, please complete the Right of Appeals form that can be accessed at the [Candidate Knowledge Center](#). *You are required to notify your PDA Assessor first if you wish to appeal your result.* The PPG may contact you for further information. They will also contact your assessor and ask for information about the assessment. The decision of the appeals committee will be final.



## Repeating assessments

If you are unsuccessful in an assessment, you must wait a minimum of 30 days before undertaking your assessment again. This will give you time to practice those things that you did not achieve. You will need to re-register to retake the assessment but you do not have to retake the Guardian's quiz.

If you find that you have repeated an assessment twice without achieving success, you should ask your PDA instructor for revision of the exercises in the level you want to achieve. Your PDA instructor will let you know when you are ready to undertake the level again.

## Long distance assessment



In some cases, distance or circumstance makes contact with an assessor difficult or impossible. Although live assessments are preferable, it is possible for a candidate to have their assessment undertaken by video submission. Not all assessors may wish to undertake distance assessment. Check the Assessors Directory on the [PDA website](#).

Details of how to apply for a long distance assessment can also be found on the [PDA website](#).

## Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustment for disability or special needs will be made

The PDA program welcomes dogs and people who may have special needs that require adjustment to the program. If you or your dog has a disability, you can request a modification to the assessment criteria. You can ask your training

instructor to request the modification from the assessor or you can request the modification directly from the assessor yourself. The modifications must align closely with the original assessment but meet your needs. Each exercise must be undertaken and where necessary, each exercise will be modified to accommodate you and your dog.

### *Candidate Modification Request*

On successful candidate application, the Candidate Modification Request form can be found in the [Candidate Knowledge Center](#) and completed online.

Examples of modifications may include such things as:

- Change of dog handler under exceptional circumstances. You should register a second handler at the time of registering online.
- Assistance for a wheelchair Guardian when loading a vehicle.
- Allowance for elderly guardians.
- Amendments to distances detailed in the guide or other conditions at the discretion of the assessor.
- Modifications can also be made in order to encompass the laws of the land that make the current program unachievable. Specifics of the law must be given to the committee when the Candidate Modification Request form is completed.

### *Maintaining your level achieved*

To make sure your titled dog remains a true Pet Dog Ambassador, he must be re-tested every two years in order to maintain his title. This must be at the highest level he has so far achieved. If your dog is not re-tested, then his qualification will expire. In particular, if you wish to undertake the next training level and your current qualification is not up to date, you will be required to repeat the lower level before undertaking the higher. For example, if your dog has attained Level 2

and three years have gone by without you sitting for Level 3, it would be necessary for you and your dog to undertake Level 2 again prior to sitting for Level 3. Your dog's certificate will be dated and you will receive an email from the PDA administrator to remind you of your need to update your dog's status should you so choose.

### On successful completion of each level

When candidates are successful at each level, the assessor notifies the PDA administrator who enters the candidates' scores into the database. If you have been successful, your qualification certificate will be emailed to you and your medallion will be posted or given to you in recognition of your achievement.

## Your Quiz Knowledge Information

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The following will assist you in preparing for the online open book quiz. Each of the links in this document can be found in your knowledge center for ease of opening and learning more.

### Senses

Dogs view the world in a very different way than humans do. While humans rely



heavily on their sense of sight to function in the everyday world, dogs rely heavily on their sense of smell and their sense of hearing to interpret the human world in which they live. While their sense of sight is still important, it is not as good as a human's (with the exception of sight hounds), and will often be used to back

up what they smell and hear rather than being used as a primary sense for gathering information. It has been said that if the scent receptors of a dog's nose were all spread out, they would amount to the size of a handkerchief, compared to the size of a postage stamp for a human. This explains why using attractive smelling treats and scenting exercises can be useful when training our companions.

Recommended reading:

❖ [Inside of a Dog: What dogs see, smell and know](#) by Alexandra Horowitz

### Handling

Handle all parts of your dog's body on a regular basis to make sure he is in good health and, at the same time, comfortable with the process.



Developed and designed by a team of PPG Men

This simple routine will help your dog to like being handled.

Handling is also great for bonding and helps to lower stress levels for both you and your dog. It is a good idea to start handling your puppy from an early age by gently picking him up and holding his paws, playing with his ears and tail, and stroking him all over his body including his tummy. This can all be paired with delicious treats so there is a positive association with these interactions. It is also important to be able to look inside your dog's mouth and you can even clean his teeth with specially formulated doggy toothpaste! If your dog is older when you adopt him, take this process very slowly and ensure that he enjoys it.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Dr. Sophia Yin](#) on low stress handling.
- ❖ [Dog Star Daily](#) on training and handling gently.
- ❖ [About.com](#) on how to train a dog to accept handling.

## Breed differences

Over the last 150 to 200 years, different breeds of dogs have been used for different functions. For example, terriers were bred to hunt and kill vermin and herding dogs (such as border collies and Australian kelpies) were bred to herd cattle and other livestock. Others, such as pugs and cavalier King Charles spaniels were bred specifically for companionship.

As a result, different breeds of dogs will often behave differently to one another. It is always a good idea to research what your dog was originally bred for so that some of his behaviors will not be such a surprise to you. It also allows you to assess whether or not a certain breed is suitable to your environment. It might be unrealistic to expect your working dog breed to want to lie around with you at

home during the day or to ask your companion dog to help you round up the sheep. Although both may



Developed and designed by a team of PPG members in Australia. Copyright Pet Professional Guild 2016.



be possible, it could be a difficult task.

There are, of course, individual characteristics to take into consideration as well as differences in breed. No two dogs will behave exactly the same even though they may have the same genetic make-up; just as no two siblings from the same family are exactly alike.

Recommended reading:

- ❖ [Dogs: A New Understanding of Canine Origin, Behavior and Evolution](#) by Ray and Lorna Coppinger.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Evolution and domestication](#)
- ❖ [Breed profiles](#)

## Exercise

Dogs have primary needs of food, water and shelter. They also have secondary needs of social contact, mental stimulation and physical exercise. Going for a daily walk with your dog has the advantage of meeting his secondary needs all at once.

A daily walk also helps to develop the bond with you, his Guardian. A walk gives your dog the opportunity to socialize with others and to use his brain to interpret the smells in the environment outside his home.

Every dog is different regarding the ideal length and intensity of his exercise requirements. You must know your own dog's specific exercise needs in order to adequately meet them. Considerations may be the age and size of your dog,



current fitness level and breed, e.g. brachycephalic dogs (short-nosed breeds like bulldogs and pugs) can often overheat more quickly. Discuss your dog's

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specific exercise needs with your vet and happy walking!

Recommended reading:

[Canine Cross Training: Building Balance, Strength and Endurance in Your Dog](#) by Sasha Foster

Links with more information:

[Walking Your Dog: How to Do It Well and Why It's So Important on Healthy Pets:](#)

### Local jurisdiction laws and regulations

Knowing and complying with dog-related laws and regulations in your area is an important part of being a responsible dog Guardian. In your area, there may be legal requirements relating to such things as:

- a) Your dog being on a leash unless in a designated off-leash area.
- b) Your dog being identified by a tag showing his name and your contact information.
- c) What public places your dog can or cannot visit.
- d) Picking up your dog's feces.
- e) As a responsible pet owner, take the time to research your local laws and regulations as they relate to you and your dog.

***Where relevant to your jurisdiction, the types of questions you may be asked about during assessment are:***

- a) At what age must a Guardian register his dog?
- b) How often must a Guardian register his dog?
- c) At what age can a person legally own a dog in your area?
- d) Having just moved house, does a Guardian need to re-register her dog with the relevant new jurisdiction?

- e) What are the Guardian's obligations regarding disposal of a dog's feces in a public place?
- f) Is it an offence for a dog to defecate in a public place?
- g) Must a dog always be on leash in a public place?
- h) What is the maximum leash length for streets, roads and public places?
- i) How many dogs may be kept in residential premises without permission from the relevant jurisdiction?
- j) Within the local jurisdiction is it compulsory to neuter/spay a dog?
- k) Are there penalties for dogs wandering at large?
- l) Are there any areas where dogs are prohibited?
- m) Does the local jurisdiction offer any rebates on dog registration (e.g. a discount for a desexed dog)?
- n) What is "effective control" as dictated by the local jurisdiction?
- o) Does a dog have to be restrained when in a motor vehicle?

For more information, check your local jurisdiction laws and regulations.

Assessors will glean questions and answers from their local area jurisdiction. The above questions are examples only.

## Reward-based training

Training your dog using force-free techniques involves rewarding your dog for desirable behavior with something that they consider pleasurable.



Many people believe that force-free training is all about using food rewards. This is not the case. Force-free training is science-based whereby your dog learns he will get what he wants if he does what you ask. It entails using anything your dog finds reinforcing, such as treats, a favorite toy, a game, praise, petting, or life rewards like

playing with other dogs or going out for a walk.

It is often easy to start with small, tasty treats so you can reinforce behavior immediately (e.g. lure your dog into a sit and reinforce immediately with a treat). Once your dog can sit reliably, you can start reinforcing intermittently or changing the reward to something else the dog likes, such as going for a walk or playing with a toy.

Using food can also help determine your dog's emotional state when training, as stressed dogs often will not eat or 'grab' food from your hand when training. This can be a useful tool for determining if your dog is capable of learning in any given environment. Your dog might not respond to your cue if he is feeling stressed or unwell, or the reinforcers you are offering are not rewarding to him.

You may also hear that dogs do not generalize well. This means they may understand the 'sit' cue in the kitchen but not necessarily in the lounge room or outside. It is important to teach your dog to perform different behaviors reliably in different environments with different distractions before you can say that your dog really 'knows' the behavior. This is called proofing the behavior.

It is also important that all members of the household use the same cues and have the same rules for your dog so he understands what is expected of him and

how he can meet those expectations. Have a family conference to determine what is required of your dog and the family.

Considerations may include:

- a) Who will feed and toilet the dog?
- b) Who picks up the feces?
- c) Who will walk the dog?
- d) Where in the house the dog will have access to?
- e) Dogs need predictability and consistency to feel safe

Recommended reading:

- ❖ [The Power of Positive Dog Training](#) by Pat Miller
- ❖ [Culture Clash](#) by Jean Donaldson
- ❖ [Train Your Dog Positively](#) by Victoria Stilwell

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Reward Based Training Brochure from the Australian Veterinary Association](#)
- ❖ [The Proper Use of Food in Dog Training by The Pet Professional Guild](#)

## Socialization



Socialization is “a special learning process whereby an individual dog learns to accept the close proximity of other dogs, as well as members of other species.” (Australian

Veterinary Association: Puppy Socialization Statement). It also includes everything your dog is likely to encounter in your world.



Appropriately socializing your puppy from 8 to 12 weeks is very important because unwanted behavior issues can develop at an early age. It is not possible to 'un-teach' behavior. Even if it seems to disappear, it will remain in the dog's repertoire for life, so it is better to teach your dog what you want in the first instance. Hopefully your dog's breeder has done the work required during the first eight weeks of the puppy's life. Do not forget though that ongoing socialization for life is also very important.

There is always a small health risk associated with taking your puppy out in public before the entire course of vaccinations is completed.

Not socializing your puppy early, however, carries a greater risk of surrender or euthanasia for behavior reasons when older.

Attending a suitable and well-managed puppy class in a sanitized area will give your puppy the best start in life. Organize a 'puppy party' with friends and family in a safe environment to start exposing your puppy to everything he will have to deal with as he grows: different people including children, other dogs and animals, different sounds and music, different surfaces and objects. Never force your puppy to deal with anything he is frightened of, instead allow him to 'advance and retreat' in his own time, rewarding with treats as he becomes braver.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [How to socialize your puppy by Karen Pryor](#)
- ❖ [Puppy Socialization Worksheet from The Pet Professional Guild](#)
- ❖ [American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior Position Statement on Socialization](#)
- ❖ [Position Statement on Puppy Socialization from The Pet Professional Guild](#)

## House training



Puppies – just like babies – are not born toilet trained. They need to be taught how to toilet in a suitable area and be rewarded for doing so. Restricting their access (with closed doors, a play pen or baby gate) is also important so they do not think the entire house is their toilet area. It is important to take your puppy out to toilet regularly, use a cue like ‘toilet’ or ‘potty’ and reward when he does it in the right area. Puppies need to toilet as soon as they wake, after eating, after play and excitement and every 90 minutes as a general rule when they are 8 weeks old. They will be able to hold for longer as they get older. Do not punish your puppy for making a mistake in the house – instead ensure you are watching, taking him out often enough and rewarding the correct behavior. Consider any mistake to be your mistake and be proactive rather than reactive.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Puppy Housetraining by Victoria Stilwell Positively](#)
- ❖ [How to Potty Train Your Puppy the Clicker Way](#)

## Crate training

It is a good idea to introduce your puppy to a dog crate at a very young age, not only for toilet training but also to prevent chewing and to encourage calm behavior. Dogs like to have a safe place of their own and a crate is ideal if it is trained positively early on. A crate is ideal for managing a new puppy around children as well, particularly when puppy is going through his teething stage.



Links with more information:

- ❖ [Crate Training by Victoria Stilwell Positively](#)

## Barking



Barking is a natural canine behavior and can occur for a range of reasons, including excitement, frustration, boredom, play, seeking attention and alarm. The types of bark will differ and you will get to know what each one means if you listen carefully. If you wish to stop your dog barking, do not yell at him as he will think that you are 'joining in' and you are all barking together. Instead make a noise that will attract/distract him (a hand clap is a good idea) and give him a treat as soon as he is quiet. Alternatively, you could thank him for his watchdog activities (i.e. "job's done, good boy"), call him to you and

then reward the quiet time. In both instances, follow up with a chew or a toy so he is not inclined to return to his barking.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Humane Society of the United States, barking causes](#)
- ❖ [Nuisance Barking by Victoria Stilwell Positively](#)

## Humans greeting dogs

Humans approach each other face-to-face, making eye contact. To a dog, this behavior can appear threatening and confrontational, particularly if the dog is



timid or worried. Dogs should be able to choose whether or not they want to engage with humans and do so at their own pace. The best way to approach a dog is to stand about 2 feet away, turn side on and avoid eye contact. If he chooses to approach you, pat him gently under the chin, ensuring all movements are casual and relaxed. If he chooses not to interact, respect that decision and leave him alone. Patting a dog on the head can also be threatening and some dogs may bite when hands come over their heads. Not all dogs like to be hugged by humans either as this is not a normal behavior for dogs. It can

make them feel stressed if they are confined and unable to get away. Sadly, children often get bitten on the face when hugging dogs that are not comfortable in this situation.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [How to Greet a Dog by Dr. Sophia Yin](#)
- ❖ [How to Greet Dogs by Debbie Jacobs](#)

## Dogs greeting dogs



Although some guardians get embarrassed when their dogs sniff the tails of other dogs, it is good to allow dogs to meet nose-to-tail. This allows the dog to use his sense of smell to determine if the other dog

wants to engage or not. While this would not be appropriate in the human world, it is desirable in the dog world! Nose-to-nose introductions are impolite in dog language and can appear threatening. If your dog feels threatened by an unfamiliar dog, calmly move him away and create some distance from the other dog.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [The Whole Dog Journal Dog Socialization](#)

## Clicker training

Clicker training is an effective method that involves making a click sound to mark or bridge the dog's correct behavior and then reinforcing (rewarding) it. It tells your dog that he is doing the right thing and that a reinforcer is coming. Clickers make a distinctive and consistent sound but a whistle or specific word can also be used. Reinforcers can be treats, toys or 'life rewards' such as walks, play or games. The use of clickers and force-free training is positive and fun for



both dog and Guardian.

Clickers are also excellent if you are trying to ‘capture’ a behavior. This is a fun and interesting way to train as you do not need to prompt or cue your dog as he is choosing the behavior himself. This can be used when your dog is offering a paw for example, or tilting his head to one side when listening to you. Just mark the behavior (‘click’) as he is doing it and reinforce!

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Clicker Training](#) by Karen Pryor
- ❖ [Use The Power of Clicker Training](#) by The DogSmith

Recommended reading:

- ❖ [Clicker Training for Dogs: A Beginners Guide](#) by Karen Pryor

Recommended watching:

- ❖ [Kikopup’s Guide to Clicker Training by Emily Larlham](#)

## Dog – dog play

Not all humans want to go out to dinner with everyone they meet and it is no different in the dog world.

If a dog has not been well socialized or has had a bad experience, he may find other dogs threatening and may even want to avoid them altogether. Allowing your dog to make his own choices is very important in preventing conflict and ensuring your dog is not put in a situation he can’t handle. Dogs should not be forced to play with other dogs and socialization at a distance may be more suitable for some dogs.



Dogs have different play styles and a



boisterous dog may overwhelm a calm dog. Recent studies have shown that dogs are more likely to choose one particular play friend and may even resent another dog interrupting their play. Good dog play would include a 'play bow' (front paws leaning on the ground and the bottom up in the air) by at least one dog. The dogs should take turns to lead and chase and have frequent rest breaks.

Recommended reading:

- ❖ [Canine Play Behavior: The Science of Dogs at Play](#) by Mechtild Käufer
- ❖ [Play with Your Dog](#) by Pat Miller
- ❖ [Animals at Play Rules of The Game](#) by Marc Bekoff

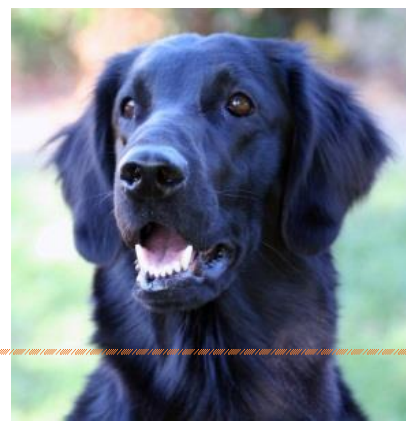
### Dog body language

Dogs' primary means of communication is body language. Different body postures mean different things, so it is important to understand your dog's body language, including his use of facial muscles, ears, eyes and body, and what he is trying to communicate.

Many guardians believe their dogs are happy if they are wagging their tails. This is not always the case and you should look at the dog's entire body to get a real understanding of what he might be communicating. Wagging his tail in a circular, figure of eight pattern with the entire body relaxed, is usually an indication he is happy. If his tail is held high and is wagging stiffly, he may be aroused or alert. If his tail is tucked underneath, he may be feeling threatened or worried. Different breeds carry their tails in different positions so you should know what is 'normal' for your dog.



Take the time to observe your dog in a relaxed state and compare this at other times so you know the changes to look for.



Looking at your dog's ears is another indicator of his wellbeing in any given situation. Generally, if a dog is happy with the situation he is in you will find that his

ears look like the one of the flat coated retriever (the black dog here). However, if he is unhappy about any given situation he will look like the terrier mix in the picture above.

Is your dog's body posture loose and floppy (happy) or is he stiff, perhaps with raised hackles (known as piloerection). This is often indicative of a tense, anxious or angry dog. Piloerection occurs with many different kinds of arousal. It could be because he is scared, angry or even just excited to see another dog – it does not always mean that the dog might attack.

### Calming signals

A dog can signal stress in a number of different ways, mostly through body postures. These postures help calm the dog down and can often calm other dogs and people in situations where they are feeling unsure or stressed.

These signals can often be missed or incorrectly interpreted. They may include:

- Licking or tongue flicking
- Scratching
- Sniffing the ground
- Turning the head and/or body away
- Walking slowly or moving away
- Freezing
- Sitting down
- Yawning

Look at the context in which these signals are occurring to know if it is one of these signals. If your dog is out of his normal environment or if there are strangers or unknown dogs around, some of these signals may be more evident.

Understand what your dog is trying to communicate as you may need to remove your dog from the situation if he is stressed or feeling threatened.

Links with more information:

- ❖ [Calming Signals by Turid Rugaas](#)
- ❖ [Dog Body Language by The Pet Professional Guild](#)



❖ [Canine Body Language by Victoria Stilwell Positively](#)

Recommended reading:

❖ [Canine Body Language](#) by Brenda Aloff

Recommended watching:

❖ [Talk to the Paw](#) by Nicole Wilde

❖ [Learn to Speak Dog](#) by Doggone Safe

## Growling

Although dogs often get into trouble for growling, it is actually good information that the dog is uncomfortable for some reason. If you reprimand your dog for growling, next time he may escalate to biting to get his message across. If your dog growls at you, another person or dog, simply remove him from the situation and make a note of the cause. You should contact a behavior specialist if the growling occurs frequently.

Links with more information:

❖ [Growling at Kids by Doggone Safe](#)

❖ [Signs of Anxiety by Doggone Safe](#)

## Appendix 1 The Guiding Principles

### *Section One – PPG Non-Negotiable*

To be in anyway affiliated with the Pet Professional Guild all members must adhere to a strict code of conduct. Pet Professional Guild Members Understand Force-Free to mean: No shock, No pain, No choke, No fear, No physical force, No compulsion based methods are employed to train or care for a pet.”

### *Section Two – PPG Members’ Professional Ethics*

- We always hold the pet’s welfare as our top priority.  
The pet is the vulnerable component in the consultation process, as they cannot offer informed consent.
- The professionals’ role is one that is beneficial to the pet and never to its detriment. Always seek to do no harm.
- Do not condone or endorse any treatment by a pet’s owner that is physically or mentally cruel. We will opt out of a consulting agreement rather than attempt to manage an unethical course of action.
- We only consult with clients who offer cases that we have the professional competence to deal with.
- We only use procedures, protocols and training tools that are empirically based and have a proven track record.
- We always consider communications with our clients privileged. We will only break that confidentiality if a pet is being abused and the client cannot be dissuaded from using their current approach. We always act according to local and state laws in terms of reporting animal cruelty.
- We recognize that the pet’s owner is responsible for their pet and the owner has the right to make decisions about the professional treatment of their pet.
- Ensure all communications are professional and based in fact. When discussing industry practices, trends or issues, members will limit discussion to practices and consequences rather than the individuals using them thereby ensuring informed, professional and civil exchanges that enrich members and the industry of force-free pet professionals.
- Apply the following ethical principles to each situation you encounter:

Respect for the freedom and dignity of others.

Do no harm, Do good, Act fairly, Be faithful to promises made.

## Appendix 2 Glossary

Some terms and phrases may mean different things to different people. To assist understanding, this glossary explains them:

### ❖ Assessor

A full or associate dog training professional member of the Pet Professional Guild who has successfully fulfilled all criteria and has been awarded a Certified Assessor Number (CAN)

### ❖ Bridge

To mark a desired behavior using a clicker, sound or word

### ❖ Candidate

The person who will undertake the assessment with the dog

### ❖ Cue

The spoken, visual or combined signal to the dog as a request for action from the dog

### ❖ Disability or Special Needs

A physical or mental condition that may limit a person or dog's movement, sense, or activity or a disadvantage or handicap especially one imposed or recognized by law

### ❖ Entrance

A gate or door

### ❖ Force-Free

No compulsion based methods used to train or care for a puppy or dog meaning no shock, no pain, no choke, no fear, or physical force

### ❖ Guardian or Handler

The person who will conduct a puppy or dog in the program

### ❖ Knowledge Center

A section on the website accessible once you are registered in the system that holds all your necessary documents

❖ **Known or Tester Dog**

A dog known by the dog being assessed and approved by the assessor as being suitable for use in an exercise

❖ **Known Person**

A person who could be an instructor, assessor or assistant known to the dog

❖ **Crate**

Mat or bed

❖ **PPG**

In the text PPG will be taken to mean Pet Professional Guild or any of its legitimate Chapters E.g. Pet Professional Guild Australia, Pet Professional Guild British Isles, Pet Professional Guild Singapore

❖ **Reinforcer or Reinforcement**

A treat, toy, gesture or something used after bridging to strengthen a behavior

❖ **Team**

Dog and Guardian being assessed

❖ **Unknown Dog**

A dog approved by the assessor as being suitable for use in an exercise and who has not met the dog and Guardian team before

❖ **Unknown Person**

A person approved by the assessor as a suitable person to take part in an exercise who has not met the dog and Guardian team before

## Appendix 3 Level Progression

Each level progresses in complexity. Although exercises may look the same, the difficulty increases as the level increases, and other exercises are absorbed into the intricacies of a new level. The table below shows how the exercises flow from one level to the next.

Exercise	Level 1 (Puppy)	Exercise	Level 2	Exercise	Level 3	Exercise	Level 4	Exercise	Level 5 (Championship)
1	Sit and collar take	1	Car manners						
2	Give, take, exchange	2	Gate/door manners	1	Gate/door	1	Back up at gate/door		
3	Leave it	3	Leave it	2	Leave it				
4	Loose leash walking	4	Loose leash walking with social interaction	3	Street walk	2	Street walk	1	Street walk
5	Social interaction								
6	Wait to be fed	5	Wait to be fed	4	Wait to be fed				
7	Recall	6	Recall	5	Recall	3	Recall		
		7	Emergency stop	6	Emergency stop	4	Emergency stop		
8	Handling	8	Handling	7	Handling			2	Veterinary exam/grooming
9	Go to place	9	Stay or settle	8	Settle	5	End of walk pack up		
		10	Being alone	9	Being alone	6	Being alone		
								3	Visual/spoken cue discrimination