



Basic Puppy and Dog Training for Fosters at SAYv Animal Organization

As a foster at SAYv Animal Organization, you play a crucial role in preparing dogs for their forever homes. One important aspect of this preparation is training. By teaching basic commands and addressing common behavioral issues, you can help make the transition to a new home as smooth as possible for your foster dog.

What is “positive reinforcement” and why do we use it?

SAYv Animal Organization uses [positive reinforcement](#) for training because it is a humane and effective way to train dogs. This approach to training is based on the principles of operant conditioning, which states that behavior is shaped by its consequences. When a dog exhibits a desired behavior, it is rewarded with something it finds valuable, such as a treat or praise, in order to strengthen that behavior. This type of training helps to create a positive relationship between the dog and its owner, and allows the dog to learn and grow in a positive environment.

Positive reinforcement training is particularly important for rescue dogs as they often come from difficult backgrounds and may have experienced neglect or abuse. Using positive reinforcement training helps to build trust and confidence in the dog, which can make them more adoptable.

Additionally, positive reinforcement training promotes a non-violent and non-punitive approach to training, which is more likely to result in a well-behaved, happy and confident dog. Positive reinforcement training is an effective, efficient and humane way to train dogs, which leads to a more adoptable dog, a stronger bond between the dog and its owner, and helps to create a positive and confident dog.

Potty training

Potty training can be one of the most challenging aspects of raising a new puppy or dog. However, with patience and consistency, it can be done. Here are a few tips to get you started:

- Establish a routine. Take your dog out to the designated potty area first thing in the morning, after meals and naps, and before bedtime.
- Use a cue word, such as "potty," to let your dog know it's time to go.
- Reward your dog when they go potty in the designated area. This can be with treats, praise, or a favorite toy.



- Be patient. Accidents will happen, but with consistent training, your dog will learn where they are supposed to go.

Basic commands

Teaching basic commands like sit, stay, and lay down can help build trust and communication between you and your foster dog. Here are a few tips for teaching these commands:

- Use positive reinforcement. This means rewarding your dog with treats, praise, or a favorite toy when they obey a command.
- Keep training sessions short. Dogs have a short attention span, so it's best to keep training sessions to 5-10 minutes at a time.
- Repeat commands often. The more you repeat a command, the faster your dog will learn it.
- Be consistent. Use the same command and hand signal every time you want your dog to perform a certain behavior.
- **Sit:** Use a treat to lure your dog into a sitting position, and then immediately reward them with the treat and praise. You can also use the hand signal of pointing to the ground while saying "sit." Repeat this process until your dog associates the command with the behavior.
- **Stay:** Start by teaching your dog to stay in a sit or down position for short periods of time. Use the command "stay" and hold up your hand as a signal to stay. Gradually increase the amount of time your dog stays, and also add distance and distractions. Remember to reward your dog with treats and praise when they stay.
- **Lay Down:** You can use the same method as teaching "Sit" command, the only difference will be the hand signal, you can use a hand signal of pointing down the ground while saying "down" instead of pointing up.
- **Shake:** Start by holding a treat in one hand and a hand that you want the dog to shake. As soon as the dog gives you a paw, reward them with the treat and praise. Repeat the process until the dog learns to give you their paw on command.
- **Consistency is key:** Use the same command and hand signal every time you want your dog to perform a certain behavior.
- **Be patient:** Teaching basic commands to more stubborn dogs may take more time and patience. Keep in mind that every dog is different, and some may take longer to learn



than others.

- **Break the commands into smaller steps:** Some dogs may struggle with certain commands, so it may be helpful to break them down into smaller steps and teach them one step at a time.

By following these tips, you can help your foster dog learn basic commands and become well-behaved and well-trained. Remember to always be patient and consistent, and to use positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior.

Crate training

Crate training can be a valuable tool for helping your foster dog feel safe and secure. Here are a few tips for crate training:

- Introduce your dog to the crate gradually. Place treats and toys inside the crate to make it more inviting.
- Use positive reinforcement. Reward your dog with treats or praise when they go inside the crate on their own.
- Keep the crate in a familiar and comfortable area of the house.
- Don't leave your dog in the crate for long periods of time. A general guideline is that a dog can hold their bladder for one hour for every month of age.

Leash training

Leash and walk training is an essential aspect of preparing your foster dog for their forever home. Teaching your dog to walk calmly on a leash can help make walks more enjoyable for both you and your dog, and it can also help prevent behavior problems in the future.

Here are a few tips for leash and walk training:

- Start by training your dog to associate the leash with positive things, such as treats and praise.
- Gradually introduce your dog to the leash and help them get used to it by letting them sniff and explore it.
- When you are ready to start walking, use positive reinforcement to encourage your dog to walk calmly by your side. A good rule of thumb is to start with very short walks, and gradually build up to longer ones.
- Use a comfortable and well-fitting collar or harness.
- If your dog starts to pull, stop walking and stand still until they calm down.



- Practice walking in different environments and with different distractions to help your dog become more confident and well-behaved on walks.
- And most importantly be patient, it takes time and consistency to train your dog to walk on a leash.

Food aggression

Some dogs may display food aggression, which can be a sign of insecurity or past trauma. To address food aggression in your foster dog:

- Feed your dog in a separate area away from other dogs or people.
- Use positive reinforcement to teach your dog to be calm and relaxed while eating.
- Gradually introduce other dogs or people to the feeding area while rewarding calm behavior.

Barking

Barking is a natural behavior for dogs, but excessive barking can be a problem for both you and your foster dog's future family. To address excessive barking:

- Identify the cause of the barking. Is your dog bored, anxious, or trying to get attention?
- Use positive reinforcement to teach your dog an alternative behavior.
- Provide plenty of exercise and mental stimulation for your dog.
- Reward your dog for being quiet.