REFERENCES

Every reference to guide dog school, SEGDI, Southeastern, or Southeastern Guide Dogs is a direct reference to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.

Every reference to campus, unless otherwise noted, refers to the Southeastern Guide Dogs main campus located at 4210 77th Street East in Palmetto, Florida 34221.

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DEDICATION

The 2019 edition of the Southeastern Guide Dogs Puppy Raiser Manual is dedicated to the hundreds of Southeastern Guide Dogs Puppy Raisers, Area Coordinators and Group Leaders who have given their time, resources, hearts, and homes to raise and train more than 300 puppies each year. Without the efforts and unwavering dedication of these volunteers, the Puppy Raising Program of Southeastern Guide Dogs would not be possible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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All Puppy Raisers – past and present
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CHAPTER 1: WELCOME TO PUPPY RAISING AND TO THE SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS FAMILY
PUPPY RAISERS

It is a very special person who has the heart to be a Puppy Raiser. It is the person who hears about the program and says without hesitation, “I want to do that!” The born Puppy Raiser doesn’t say, “I could never do that; I could never give the puppy up!”

As the Puppy Raiser, you know the puppy belongs to Southeastern Guide Dogs and will be taken into your home and heart as if it were your own. Yes, you are special because you give of yourself expecting nothing in return except the hope that one day, the puppy you raised may bring mobility, independence, and companionship to someone in need. That is your gift you give no strings attached.

Area Coordinators (ACs) and the Puppy Raising Services department are here to assist you with every question you might have and provide you with the support that is needed. We want this to be a positive and fulfilling experience for you. It takes a pack to raise a pup. There are breeder host families, puppy nursery and puppy education volunteers, kennel staff, veterinary caregivers, our Puppy Raising Services team, administrative staff, trainers/instructors, maintenance staff, sponsors and fundraisers, and many more. It is our privilege to have you as a part of our family.

Congratulations, thank you, and good luck with the new puppy. We’re here for you!

ABOUT SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS, INC.

Southeastern Guide Dogs transforms lives by creating and nurturing extraordinary partnerships between people and dogs. The organization employs some of the most talented and innovative scientists and trainers in the working-dog industry and operates the most advanced training facilities of any service dog organization in the world. Our experts train guide dogs, service dogs, and companion dogs for people living with significant challenges, including those with visual impairments and veterans with disabilities. **All of Southeastern Guide Dogs' services - which include selective breeding and expert dog training and conditioning; comprehensive on-campus student instruction; and lifetime alumni support - are provided at no cost to the recipients.** The charity relies 100 percent on private donations and receives no government funding. Southeastern Guide Dogs has the distinction of being dually accredited by the two premier, global accreditation bodies: the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International.

Campus

Our main campus is located on 33 landscaped acres in Palmetto, near I-75 and I-275 and now encompasses six modern, state-of-the-art facilities totaling 100,000 square feet: The Margaret and Isaac Barpal Veterinary Center, The Keith G. Hirst Canine Assessment Center, The Barpal-Hirst Student Center, The Grant and Shirle Herron Puppy Academy, The John and Sheila Auer Canine University Training Center, and The Canine University Residence Halls with the John and Sheila Auer Wing, the Progressive Wing, The Mary Scharf Wing and The Norman and Phyllis Siskel Wing.

Website


Mission

The mission of Southeastern Guide Dogs is to transform lives by creating and nurturing extraordinary partnerships between people and dogs.

Vision

Our vision is to be the best service dog school in the world in terms of impact, innovation, and integrity.
Welcome to Puppy Raising

Core Values

- Respect and kindness for one another
- A culture of excellence and innovation
- Uncompromising integrity and transparency
- A passion for the care and wellbeing of our dogs
- Mindful stewardship of our precious resources

YOUR ROLE AS PUPPY RAISER

The months ahead of you with a puppy will be filled with a lot of fun and a lot of personal time commitment. In our team effort, Southeastern Guide Dogs provides you with guidance, materials, support, and all authorized veterinary care. Your part is to:

1. Provide a safe, loving home with appropriate food, toys, and crate.
2. Keep the puppy well-groomed and healthy by paying attention to the puppy’s physical condition and completing all vaccination requirements.
3. Teach the puppy appropriate house manners.
4. Teach and condition the puppy in obedience skills and appropriate behavior using Southeastern’s commands and techniques.
5. Apply obedience skills during everyday life and while on outings.
6. Promote confidence in the puppy and an eagerness to work through positive reinforcement.
8. Attend mandatory Puppy Kindergarten classes and minimum of 2 meetings per month. We strongly encourage raisers to take advantage of all learning opportunities.
9. Complete and submit puppy evaluations in a timely manner.
10. Attend 2 Walk & Talk appointments with your Regional Manager: one post-placement (3-6 months of age) and one 9 - 12 months of age.
11. Ensure your puppy experiences at least one Puppy Camp. This may include exchanging puppies with another raiser for the puppy camp period.
12. Seek assistance as needed from your local Area Coordinator, Co-Area Coordinator, Group Leader, or Puppy Raising Services.
13. Volunteer, when possible, for public presentations and expositions in your area, and help raise awareness for Southeastern’s mission when you’re out and about.
14. Have fun with and enjoy your puppy!

These responsibilities and guidelines are addressed throughout this manual and are referred to by your AC and Puppy Raising Services. Realize that we are thinking about both the puppy and you, and are available for support and guidance. Working together, we can best reach our goal of working with the puppy to achieve his full potential.

As a Puppy Raiser, you will love and become attached to the puppy. If you didn’t, we would worry! You should always remind yourself of the purpose of raising the puppy and keep that as your focused mission. You will work with the puppy to the best of your ability and will no doubt experience and learn many things while serving as a Puppy Raiser. You’ll have lots of questions; don’t ever feel that a question is not worth asking. Our support system is designed to help you help the puppy. It is going to require concentration and maybe even habit changes on your part as a handler in order to send the correct message to the puppy.
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM PUPPY RAISING SERVICES

From the time you make your first inquiry about our program until the final career placement and at every point in between we are here to provide you with:

Support

• Informative puppy pick up session with medical and temperament information on your puppy and what you need to know to get started.
• Knowledgeable paid and volunteer staff to answer your questions, troubleshoot and problem solve any areas of concern in person, over the phone, or by email throughout the raising period.
• Twice monthly local group meetings and six week Puppy Kindergarten classes.
• Continuing education opportunities: puppy classes, webinars, conferences, Back to Basics classes, one on ones with your Regional Manager, and group meet-ups.
• Comprehensive Puppy Raiser Manual available online and paper copy (if desired).
• Instructional videos on training techniques.
• Dedicated Puppy Raiser Resources page on our website.
• “Freshman Orientation” program when you return the pup to us for formal training.

Communication

• Monthly video news with updates, tips, and reflections on raising.
• Private Facebook page to connect with other raisers and ask our staff for advice.
• Monthly Training updates when the dog is in for training.
• Relevant Status updates – medical assessments, placements, career paths, etc.

And More

• Covered veterinary care costs
• Puppy Raiser “Goody Bag” with heartworm preventative, ID card, puppy ID tag, puppy toy, grooming supplies, and other assorted “starter” items
• Puppy Raiser polo
• Photos (Puppy - 6 weeks, In-For-Training)
• Certificate of Appreciation
• Invitation to Puppy Raiser brunch or dinner if your pup is matched in class as a guide dog or service dog for veteran

If you do not receive items listed (such as the newsletter or In-For-Training picture), please let us know!
TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Southeastern Guide Dogs Puppy Raising program employs positive training techniques. We use a variety of rewards to motivate the puppy, including food, treats, toys, praise, and play.

Every dog is an individual, and it is important to remember to train the dog in front of you. Do not compare the puppy to other puppies you have raised before, or other puppies in your group. Every dog is different, even siblings, and that is a good thing!

When choosing training techniques to modify behavior, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is it kind? (Does it avoid the use of pain or significant discomfort?)
2. Is it fair? (Does it make the desired behavior clear to the dog?)
3. Does it stop the unwanted behavior?

Being a good teacher and a good leader for the puppy you are raising should not involve harsh corrections or punishment. The manual outlines techniques that set clear expectations for the puppy. There are often several options to try for commands or problem behaviors. It may take some practice to find out what works for YOUR puppy.

There are NO quick fixes and no shortcuts to a well-behaved puppy. It will take time, practice, patience, and consistency. We want training to be fun for both you AND the puppy. We want you to raise a puppy who thinks work is enjoyable, who isn’t afraid to make decisions, and who is enthusiastic in his responses to commands.

REGIONAL MANAGERS

Regional Managers (RMs) are full-time paid staff members of the Puppy Raising Services’ department and serve as a liaison between the department and Puppy Raiser groups within an assigned region, providing direct supervision, training, and on-going development of volunteer Area Coordinators and puppy raisers. RMs possess a solid background and understanding of positive dog training techniques, behavior modification, and an ability to instruct in both group and one-on-one settings. RMs visit groups on a regular schedule and are there to ensure that raisers and puppies are progressing as expected and provide coaching and support as needed. RMs work directly with your Area Coordinator to maximize your volunteer experience in accordance with Puppy Raising Services’ best practices, policies, and protocols.

AREA COORDINATORS

Area Coordinators (ACs) are appointed volunteer representatives of Southeastern Guide Dogs. ACs assist Puppy Raisers located in certain geographical areas by working within specific guidelines established by Southeastern Guide Dogs. ACs are experienced Puppy Raisers who have undergone our certification program. ACs provide support and leadership to Puppy Raisers while acting as liaisons between volunteer Puppy Raisers and Southeastern.

ACs hold a position of responsibility and authority and are available to assist Puppy Raisers and respond to requests from Puppy Raisers for assistance. Puppy Raisers should consider their AC an important resource and contact him/her with any questions or concerns before contacting Puppy Raising Services.
MEETINGS FOR PUPPY RAISERS

Puppy Raiser meetings are designed to benefit both the puppy and the Puppy Raiser and are held twice a month. These **mandatory** meetings provide an opportunity for raisers to meet each other, discuss issues, raise questions and have fun! The Area Coordinator(s) or Group Leader(s) will run the meeting which lasts an average of one and a half to two hours. Meetings may be obedience based or may combine obedience with an outing.

Meetings are organized locally and usually held the same days each month, such as the first Saturday and third Tuesday. A meeting notice with agenda and directions will be provided to you. Most meetings will be centrally located, but depending on where you live, some meetings may require more travel time than others. Meetings may be held at malls, airports, downtown locations, and restaurants, etc. You may also be asked to lead a meeting.

Meetings will start promptly at the time specified in the notice. We are often working with other people’s schedules regarding the social exposure, so it is imperative you be there and ready to begin on time. If the puppy gets excited about attending the meetings, arrive early and work on settling the pup down before the meeting is to begin.

Within two weeks of receiving puppy, you will be required to attend Puppy Kindergarten Classes. These classes run for six consecutive weeks, are approximately one hour in length, and in lieu of the regular meetings during this time period.

Bring the puppy, puppy bandana or coat, busy bags, paper towels, water, and a bowl (in your car). The puppy should come to the meeting in bandana or coat and ready to work.

**Upon Arrival**

- Start with proper unloading procedures from your car.
- Relieve the puppy (out of coat) before joining the group. Take as long as you need to get the puppy under control in order to approach the group without the puppy pulling. Use the collar pressure protocol or Paw Pad.
- Keep the puppy under control.
- Do not allow puppy to pull you to greet other puppies or people.
- Ask puppy for alternate behaviors he knows, such as SIT or DOWN, to help keep him under control and calm while walking into the meeting.
- Take your time. We are all in the same boat and understand what you are trying to achieve.
Expenses
We are often fortunate enough to get normal entrance fees or other expenses waived for raisers attending a meeting. Occasionally, however, a raiser may incur an out-of-pocket expense for a special meeting. If this does occur and it is financially difficult for you, please let your AC or a Puppy Raising Services staff member know.

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory at all meetings your assigned group holds. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you must call your AC or GL beforehand. Try to make arrangements for the puppy to attend (either with another raiser, family member, or friend). Multiple missed meetings may result in the puppy being removed from your care. We also offer classes, such as Back to Basics, and encourage raisers to take advantage of any and all learning opportunities. These additional classes are not in lieu of your assigned group's regular meeting.

Meeting Ideas
Feel free to share meeting ideas with your AC. He or she is always interested in hearing new suggestions about fun outings for the puppies.

PUBLIC ACCESS
Every Puppy Raiser/Family is required to sign a Public Access Policy form when receiving a puppy to raise. The following is a brief summary of Southeastern’s Public Access Policy for Puppy Raisers.

We are fortunate that many businesses and individuals, as well as society in general, recognize the importance of the socialization that our puppies need to be successful and allow us into their establishments. Depending on state law, they may or may not be required to let us in. When taking your puppy to a place where pet dogs are not normally permitted, the puppy must be wearing a puppy coat, and you should have your Southeastern Puppy Raiser identification card with you. Do not carry small puppies (bandana age) in and out of places for socialization. If a puppy needs to be carried, the puppy is too young to be doing that exposure.

When in public with the puppy:
• Have the puppy under control and on leash at all times.
• Do not let the puppy jump, lick or block passages.
• Be sure the puppy is well groomed and wearing a clean puppy coat.
• Always have cleanup supplies (such as "busy" bags and paper towels) with you to pick up after the puppy.
• Only a Puppy Raiser or someone with puppy raising experience should be handling the puppy in public when the puppy coat is on.
• Do not allow children to handle the puppy.
• Do not allow friends, relatives, or puppy sitters who do not have knowledge of the specifics of the program to take the puppy out to public establishments as a Puppy Raiser would do.
• Do not hand off or let a stranger walk the puppy, especially children.

It basically comes down to common sense, good manners, and consideration for others while on public outings with the puppy.
Denied Access

If you are denied access upon entry to a particular location, politely ask to speak with a manager if you are not already speaking with one. Explain the purpose of your visit with the puppy and the importance of social conditioning.

If you are denied access, even after speaking with a manager, do not argue with whoever is denying access and do not get into a debate on public access law.

Please be polite and leave when asked. Let your Area Coordinator know as many details as possible: when and where you were denied access, and the names and titles of people with whom you spoke. The school will follow up with the establishment to make it aware of our program and the importance of public exposures.
WHAT TO DO

As you wait to receive the puppy, follow these steps to prepare adequately for the puppy’s arrival.

1. Read the *Puppy Raiser Manual* cover to cover. Then read it again.

2. Attend Puppy Raiser group meetings/classes and learn as much as you can. Expect and ask to handle a dog. Expect also to sit for a puppy in the group.

3. Tour the Southeastern Guide Dogs’ campus if possible; this will provide you with an overall view of your role in the organization. Tours are booked online and raisers may attend for free. Ask your AC for additional information.

4. Go shopping! Refer to the *Shopping List* section for the suggested shopping list.

5. Purchase or assemble a tie-down, possibly several for different areas in your home.

6. Puppy-proof your house and yard. Everything on the puppy’s level should be removed or secured.

7. Organize your home veterinary kit and review information on common medical conditions (see Chapter 7).

8. Make note of your everyday activities so that you can detect any challenges to keeping the puppy under your direct supervision at all times. When you are conditioning the puppy to appropriate behavior, the puppy will be on a leash or tie-down while you are home, or in a crate when you are not at home. These are the tools that help you keep the puppy under your direct control and supervision and make for quicker and more effective communication between you and the puppy. A puppy can also be under your direct supervision behind a baby gate or in a fenced yard with you present. Allowing a pup unsupervised freedom too early can result in poor house manners.

WHAT TO BUY

**Crates**

A dog crate is a rectangular enclosure made of wire, metal, or molded fiberglass/plastic, with a door providing access. Crates are made in a variety of sizes. A crate should be large enough to allow a dog to lie comfortably without being cramped. **The dog should be able to sit up, stand, and turn in his crate without hitting his head.**

Many wire crates come with a divider for the inside; this allows you to purchase a single crate that will grow with the puppy. Alternatively, you can block off a portion of an adult-dog-sized crate with something sturdy to make the crate the appropriate size.

**Tie-Downs**

Tie-downs are a convenient tool used in housebreaking and preventing inappropriate behavior. Tie-downs help prevent housebreaking accidents and destruction of your house. Like a crate, they keep the puppy safe and secure. The tie-down length should be between 24” and 48” in length. It can wrap around the leg of a sturdy piece of furniture or snap onto an eyehook that has been anchored into a wall. The tie-down should be long enough that the puppy can move around comfortably, but not so long that the puppy can get tangled.
Preparing for Puppy

The preferred tie-down is made from a light chain leash or cable so that the puppy cannot chew through the tie-down. Tie-downs are also available for purchase through Puppy Raising Services or the Southeastern Guide Dogs gift shop.

A puppy should only be secured on a tie-down using a buckle collar, or a martingale on the “dead ring.” Do not leave the puppy unsupervised on the tie-down.

A tie-down can be made utilizing a medium weight, about 24” in length (longer if you are wrapping it around furniture) training collar. See your AC for instructions.

Continue to use the tie-down regularly, even when the puppy is well-mannered in the house. When a guide dog is matched with a new handler, he will be on tie-down often during the adjustment period.

Baby Gates

A baby gate is another tool you can use for supervising the puppy. Use baby gates to confine the puppy to certain areas of your home, making it easier for you to watch your puppy while still allowing the puppy freedom out of a crate, off the leash, or away from the tie-down. Some baby gates come with doors that make it easier for people to go in and out of the room.

When the puppy is young and learning about freedom, it is important for you to be in the room with your puppy when he is free. Being in the room enables you to monitor and catch him if he needs to relieve himself or if you need to redirect an inappropriate behavior.

Toys

Toys are fun for a growing puppy. Appropriate toys help develop social skills, provide mental and physical stimulation, and give relief during teething. They can help keep a puppy occupied if you want to take a breather, you need to do something else around the house, or you want to distract the puppy from chewing inappropriate items. However, it is important to make sure that toys are safe as well as fun.

There is no one best toy for every puppy. Every dog is different, and you have to consider the puppy’s preferences, physical strength, and energy level when choosing toys. There are three criteria to consider when choosing a toy. A toy should be:

- Sturdy. The puppy cannot break off pieces or shred a sturdy toy.
- Teeth-safe. The toy must not be too hard for the dog’s chewing style.
- Inedible. The puppy should not be able to ingest parts of toy.
- Size appropriate. Puppy-sized toys can be choking hazards for older pups.

Some toys may meet the criteria for your puppy at a young age, and then fail the criteria as he grows. Always check every toy for damage. If the pup begins to destroy it, break off pieces, or ingest it, remove the toy. Any toy can pose a danger to a dog.

Tips on Teeth-Safe Toys

When a dog chews on a toy that doesn’t have any flexibility, there is a risk that he can break or crack his teeth. The most common breaks are slab fractures (molars) or cracked canines. These most often occur with “dedicated chewers,” who take a toy like a sterile bone into the back of their mouth and start chomping. However, the softer toys can often be destroyed and there is a risk of the puppy ingesting pieces. There is not one toy that is universally indestructible and also teeth-safe. Choice of chew toys will depend heavily on the puppy’s individual personality and chewing style.
Some of the toys approved by the Puppy Raising Program are listed below. Check with your AC if you are not sure which toy is right for the puppy.

**Kong®**

Kong has long been a favorite among puppy raisers, trainers, and guide dog users. They make a variety of toys, most of which are appropriate for our puppies. They also have a variety of strengths as well as different types of toys. The Classic Kong is a bee-hive shaped rubber toy that can be stuffed with food or treats. For young puppies, there are “teething strength” Kongs that have a tie-dyed appearance. For average chewers, there are red strength Kongs. For tougher chewers, there are black and royal blue strength Kongs.

Kong also makes several other shapes and types of toys, such as the Genius and the Goodie Bone. These are designed for chewing or stuffing with food. To stuff a Kong, you can moisten their dry food and mash it into the Kong, use the canned puppy food counterpart, or use a treat such as Kong Stuff’N or a peanut butter (use these sparingly). Freeze the stuffed Kongs to make them last even longer. The Kong Wobbler is a kibble-dispensing toy (not designed for chewing) that for many pups is a fun, interactive puzzle toy.

Do not use any Kong products that are made from ropes, have squeakers or are shaped like tennis balls.

**Nylabone®**

Another favorite toy is the Nylabone. The Nylabone brand offers a lot of options for a variety of chewers. The Puppy Chew, Gumabone/FlexiChew®, Rhino, and Romp ‘n Chomp™ are good for teething pups or soft chewers. For more intense chewers, the DuraChew®, Big Chew, and Galileo bones are good options.

Do not use any Nylabone products with ropes or squeakers, or the edible bones.

**Stuffable**

There are some other brands of toys that can help to occupy your puppy. The Starmark™ brand makes some excellent treat-dispensing toys that we’ve used in our kennel enrichment program. In particular, the Everlasting TREAT Ball®, Everlasting Bento Ball®, and Everlasting Fire Plug® engage the dogs and hold up well. The cone-shaped Everlasting TREATS® are best used for older puppies, as they are fairly large. For younger puppies, small treats or kibble can be stuffed into the center of the toy. Very determined chewers may be able to rip pieces off of this toy. We have found that the Everlasting TREATS® do keep them more interested in the treats themselves rather than the toy, and most dogs take their time working on the treats. There are, of course, stories of dogs who removed the large treat within minutes, and those dogs will not benefit from this type of toy. But most pups will remain safely entertained for long stretches of time.

Some other good options are available from Premier® Busy Buddy, Petstages (the Occupi and the ORKA Jack), and Bionic.

**Puzzles**

This category of toys encourages problem-solving. These toys are good for providing a challenging and mentally stimulating task for your pup. These toys are not generally designed to withstand chewing, although they hold up well to being tossed around. These toys will make a lot of noise on tile floors; sensitive puppies might benefit from
playing with the toys outside or on carpet. There are several brands of puzzle toy, but generally Nina Ottosson is considered the biggest innovator. We most often use the DogTornado and the Treat Maze in kennel enrichment. Since Nina's toys came on the market, many other toy companies have followed suit. The Kyjen brand has some excellent, readily available puzzle toys. The previously mentioned Kong Wobbler is another interactive, food-dispensing toy worth a try. Fill puzzle toys with food pulled from your pup's daily allowance.

**Soft**

Soft toys, consisting of stuffed animals, braided fleece, and tugs, are good interactive play toys; they are not recommended for chewing. These are most commonly used as a reward with which to play fetch. Soft-mouthed puppies and pups who take comfort in carrying objects will appreciate soft toys. If you have a pup who tends to want to carry his leash, grab people's arms or clothes in greeting, or who picks up objects when you get home, channel this behavior into HOLD games with soft toys.

Soft toys are often easily shredded and small pieces can be ingested. To prevent this:

- **Never** allow puppy to have unsupervised access to soft toys.
- Save the toys as a special reward, and interact with the pup by tossing it, or encouraging him to carry it; use this reward when the puppy is on leash to prevent “keep away” or settling in for a chew.
- Choose toys with minimal or no stuffing.
- Do not use rope toys. Braided fleece is okay, but rope strings shred too easily and are very dangerous if ingested.
- Pop or remove any squeakers, or choose toys that the puppy cannot squeak. Many pups cannot or will not squeak dense toys, like the Kong Wubba.
- Teething puppies with sore gums may appreciate gnawing on a soft toy that has been soaked in water and frozen. Pick more durable materials, such as canvas, and be sure to supervise.
- **Reduce or stop the use of soft toys after 6 months of age.** You still may be able to use a soft toy as a reward for an older puppy with a soft mouth (and if it is a fun, safe reward for the puppy, by all means, continue to use it), but some puppies will begin destroying soft toys too quickly.

Popular soft toys include: the Kong Wubba, fire hose toys, braided fleece tugs, and canvas/reinforced stuffed animals.

**Sterile Bones**

Sterile bones (hollow, bleached leg bones, available at pet stores) are approved only for puppies under 6 months of age and **with supervision.** The risks associated with sterile bones are that the bones may splinter or break, that heavy chewers could damage their teeth, and that many dogs consider bones to be “high value” and therefore worth guarding.

Be sure that you are only using this for teething-aged puppies; after 6 months of age, switch solely to Nylabones as the primary hard chew. Be sure to play HOLD/DROP IT with the sterile bone and trade it for a treat often, so that the puppy is comfortable with you removing it. Do not allow other dogs to bother the puppy while he is chewing the bone. In the dog world, chewing a bone is generally considered a private affair, so avoid conflict by ensuring that the puppy does not have challengers.

**Never** use the following toys with the puppy:

- Rawhide
- Basted bones
- High-pitched squeaker toys
- Sticks
- Balls of any kind
- Rope toys
- Deer antlers
- Bully sticks
- Greenies
- Anything that the puppy can shred, tear up, or ingest
Equipment
A properly fitted collar, an appropriate length of leash, and a consistent training program are the most important elements in puppy training. There is not one piece of equipment that is appropriate for every dog, and no equipment is a quick fix for problems. Choosing the right equipment for the puppy can be a confusing task, so talk to your AC about any concerns you may have.

Approved Collars and Leashes

Buckle Collar
A buckle collar is a great choice for puppies and adult dogs. It is adjustable, limited in movement, and if a young puppy gets excited and lunges, there aren’t immediate negative consequences from the collar, which helps to build confidence. The buckle collar is also the appropriate collar to use with a tie-down. Some dogs will have a tendency to pull harder when on a buckle collar, because the collar puts an even spread of pressure on the dog’s neck. When using this collar, it is important to start appropriate leash management skills early, and to never allow the puppy to strain and pull against the buckle collar. Slight tension is acceptable, but the puppy should not be leaning into the collar, regardless of age or size.

A properly-fitted buckle collar will allow for two fingers to slip under the collar. The buckle collar is a good, everyday collar.

Martingale Collar
A martingale is a “limited slip” collar, which means it can be tightened only to a certain point. It is made of a loop of nylon, which goes over the head, and a loop of nylon or chain, to which you attach the leash (to the “live ring”). Martingale collars should not be used on puppies under 6 months of age unless recommended by your Regional Manager.

When properly fitted, a tightened martingale collar will not slip over the puppy’s head, but will loosen comfortably. The two rings (“dead rings”) should have about an inch of space between them when the collar is tightened. The collar should not have a gap off of the neck when tightened.

Infinity Collar
An infinity collar has a figure-eight design that fits around puppy’s upper neck and snout, crisscrossing under the chin. The leash attaches to a ring off the top of the neck. When puppy pulls, pressure is applied gently behind the head and under the jaw: pressure points that are calming for puppy. The upward pressure raises puppy’s head. When introducing the infinity collar, make it positive and fun with treats. Several sessions for a few minutes each day (more for sensitive or resistant dogs) are recommended.

Four- to Six-Foot Leash
A standard training and walking leash is four to six feet long, and made of cotton, nylon, or leather. Teething puppies may be tempted to chew on leather, but leather is a more comfortable material to handle.

Long-Line Leash
When practicing recalls, distance obedience work, or stairs, a long leash is a safe way to add distance while keeping control. The long line is also a useful tool with helping build confidence in young puppies. Usually around 10-20 feet long, this type of leash can also be useful to exercise your dog in an unfenced area. Keep your long line in good condition, making sure there are no frays or knots which could break if a puppy were to lunge suddenly. Take care to only use the long line in areas that are safe for the puppy to be 10-20 feet away from you, such as fields or parks.
Preparing for Puppy

WHAT TO KNOW

Safety
It is your responsibility to protect the guide dog puppy from accidents or mishaps.

1. Keep the puppy on a leash. The puppy can be off leash only when you are in a fenced area.
2. Leave the puppy in the dog crate when you are not home.
3. Supervise the puppy in your fenced yard.
4. Keep an ID on the pup at all times except when in the crate.
5. Advise children to be careful going in and out of the house and to shut outside doors securely behind them.
6. If you have a swimming pool, make sure that the pool is not accessible to the puppy unsupervised. It is best that within a few days after the puppy’s arrival, you teach it how to get in and out of the pool. This should be done so the puppy knows what to do in case it should accidentally fall in.
7. When traveling with the puppy, always have it secured by a leash, tie-down or in a crate.
8. Generally, remove collars when the puppy is playing with other pups/dogs. Jaws can become twisted in the collar, causing injury. However, there may be exceptions if you are dealing with a puppy that tends to overwhelm the other dogs or otherwise gets into trouble; in that case, leave the collar on so you can easily retrieve the puppy and redirect him.
9. Do not smoke or drink alcoholic beverages while handling the puppy.

Never use the following equipment or training techniques:
- Slip collars,"choke chains", prong or pinch collars
- Collar corrections
- Retractable, bungee or elastic leashes
- Citronella, shock collars (electronic or electric fence), or ultrasonic collars
- Squirt bottles
- “Alpha rolls” (rolling the puppy onto his back)
- “Scruffing” (grabbing the puppy by his neck scruff)
- Hitting, striking, “swatting,” or spanking the puppy
- Jaw/tongue pinching
- Stepping on or pinching the puppy’s toes
- Running or jogging with the puppy

Never take the puppy on the following outings:
- Theme parks or exotic animal zoos – Disney World, Busch Gardens, Sea World, Big Cat Sanctuary, etc.
- Large state fairs
- NFL games
- Dog parks
- Riding escalators or moving sidewalks
- Revolving doors
- Theme park rides, carousels, or other rides
- Fireworks displays
If an Accident Happens
Southeastern Guide Dogs knows that you would not intentionally hurt the puppy, but occasionally, an accident might occur that is out of your control. Most incidents can be prevented using the tools and advice we provide. If, however, the puppy is injured by raiser neglect or by not following the program guidelines, Southeastern Guide Dogs may hold the raiser responsible for any medical expenses. Southeastern Guide Dogs will not, however, hold the raiser liable for the replacement cost of a puppy in the unlikely event that the dog dies.

Liability
Southeastern Guide Dogs strongly recommends that Puppy Raisers include the guide dog puppy on your homeowner’s insurance or renter’s insurance policy; contact your insurance agent for information on how to add the puppy. This is liability insurance and not replacement value on the puppy. Although Southeastern Guide Dogs does carry liability insurance, it is important for your protection that you do, too. Although Southeastern Guide Dogs owns the puppy, it is under your immediate control and you are responsible for its behavior. You may have to comparison shop for the best policy and rates. You may discover that your own pets are not currently covered; it is a good idea to have liability insurance for your own pets as well.

Fenced Yards
A fenced yard can provide a place to exercise, play with, and relieve your puppy. However, your puppy should never be left alone or unsupervised in a yard. Leaving the pup unattended in a yard can lead to safety issues, such as injury, ingestion of poisonous plants or other dangerous items, insect or snake bites, heat stroke, wildlife encounters, or even theft or escape. Behavior problems can also arise such as digging, barking, fence-running, or suspicion of strangers. These unsafe situations and behavioral problems can only be prevented if you are present. Never use an invisible fence system with the puppy; these systems employ electronic shocks to set boundaries and we do not expose guide dog puppies to this.

Inspect your fence often, making sure there are no holes through which the puppy could escape. Make sure the fence is sturdy enough and tall enough to contain the puppy.

Let the puppy enjoy the freedom and fun of playing off leash with you or with other pets in the yard as you supervise. However, during the housebreaking period (until at least 6 months of age), make sure you relieve the puppy on leash at least 50% of the time. After that, make sure you are still busying the pup on leash at least 25% of the time. Relieving on leash helps keep the puppy focused on the task at hand, allows you to teach him to eliminate on command, and prevents him from only wanting to relieve when loose in the yard. A dog that will relieve on command when leashed is a pleasure to travel with and is more adaptable to changes in routine.

Be prepared to leash your dog regularly in the fenced yard if you begin to encounter behavior problems. Your puppy can earn his freedom back as he shows you good behavior.

Dog Parks
Public dog parks are not allowed as the safety and health of the guide dog puppy needs to be considered at all times.

Pools and Swimming
As another safety precaution, do not leave the puppy unattended near water. If you have a pool, be sure to teach the puppy how to get out so it will know what to do should it fall in. Treat the puppy as you would a small child. You would never leave a baby by a pool, and you shouldn’t leave a puppy, either.

Some puppies love to swim while others don’t. Make sure that you have the puppy’s swimming habits under control. You decide when the puppy can swim; the pup doesn’t make that decision. Give the pup a BREAK when it is all right with you for him to go in. Do not allow the puppy to leap off of the edge into the water. He should go into the
Preparing for Puppy

pool by the steps; encourage as controlled of an entry as possible. Being “water crazy” is another potentially dangerous situation for a blind person, should he/she happen to walk by a fountain, pond or pool, and the dog decides to jump in!

If the puppy swims a lot, pay particular attention to the skin and ears. Water in the ears can cause ear problems and chlorine in the pool can cause skin irritation.

Summary of Shopping List
Southeastern Guide Dogs recommends the following supplies and equipment, available at your local pet supply store or online.

- Puppy food
- Adjustable nylon snap collar
- A four- or six-foot leash, preferably cotton, nylon, or leather
- A long-line leash
- Grooming supplies such as a brush, shampoo, and nail clippers
- Two stainless steel or ceramic dog dishes
- Toys (see the Toys section in this chapter)
- Dog crate made of metal or heavy plastic
- Baby gate(s)
- Tie-down
- Ingredients for your home veterinary kit (following page)

Resources
You’ll be raising the puppy under the careful guidance of your AC and Puppy Raising Services staff. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask. There are many dog training resources available concerning general dog training, including books, videos, and social media groups, but be aware that these are not specific to our program. If you are interested in outside reading, some suggested books are:

*The Other End of the Leash* by Patricia McConnell, Ph.D.

*On Talking Terms with Dogs* by Turid Rugaas

*The Culture Clash* by Jean Donaldson

*Decoding Your Dog* by the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

Now that you have everything you need to prepare for your puppy—you’ve puppy-proofed your home and yard, purchased equipment, stocked a home veterinary kit, and filled a basket with appropriate toys—you’re ready to welcome the new puppy home.
HOME VETERINARY KIT

1. Dog Owners Home Veterinary Handbook, Carlson DVM & Giffin MD
2. Latex gloves
3. Gauze sponges (various sizes)
4. Roll bandages
5. Material to make a splint
6. Bandaging tape (1-inch works best)
7. Non-adherent sterile pads
8. Small scissors
9. Syptic powder
10. Penlight or good flashlight
11. Needle-nose pliers
12. Forceps to remove stingers/splinters
13. Turkey baster or large syringe
14. Cotton balls (for cleaning ears)
15. Nylon leash
16. Towel
17. Muzzle (nylon or cage muzzle)
18. Pediatric Digital Rectal Thermometer (normal temp. of dogs: 100.5-102.5)
19. Water-based sterile lubricant
20. OTC antibiotic ointment
22. Phone numbers for your vet, emergency vet and pet poison control (888-426-4435)
23. Hydrogen Peroxide 3% (for cleaning of minor cuts; inducing vomiting if instructed by veterinarian for ingestion of toxins)
24. MalAcetic Otic (DermaPet) solution: to clean ears
25. Nail Clippers or emery board to keep nails short
26. Sterile ophthalmic saline for tending to mild eye irritation
27. Dog toothbrush and toothpaste
CHAPTER 3:
THE FIRST WEEKS HOME
ARRIVAL OF THE PUPPY

The Ride Home
If possible, bring someone with you when you pick up the puppy. Bring several old towels and “busy” bags for any cleanups needed. You may also consider having a crate for the puppy in the car for the ride home. Don’t forget to bring a collar and leash, as you may need them on the way home.

The puppy should ride home on the floorboard of the passenger side of the car. If you are unable to turn off your passenger side airbag, have puppy ride in a crate. A passenger can help the puppy feel secure; offer a piece of kibble if the puppy relaxes (although he may not feel like eating). An alternative would be to place the puppy in the crate for the ride home.

Introducing Household Dogs
If you have other dogs, introduce them outside of your house and yard. Not going inside immediately will give a family member or a friend the opportunity to bring other pet dogs outside to meet the puppy. Arranging introductions between your dog(s) and the new puppy outside of your house and yard will help prevent the resident dog(s) from feeling territorial.

All household pets will adjust to the puppy eventually. It is your responsibility to keep both the personal pets and the new puppy from overwhelming or irritating one another. If the puppy is irritating any personal pet or is getting overly vocal in play, tell the puppy NO and give him a time-out away from the other pet. Follow the same guidelines if one of your pets is too rough with the puppy. YOU are “top dog” of the house; the other pets should follow you. They are all counting on you to be the leader and keep them safe.
Preparing for Puppy

The First Weeks Home

First Time in Your House
After you have let the puppy relieve himself and have introduced other pets, you are ready to bring the puppy inside. At first, allow the pup to explore your entire house on leash under your watchful eye. Keep a close eye out for any squatting or circling. After about 10-15 minutes of house exploration, take the puppy back outside for a few minutes for another opportunity to relieve. Meanwhile, if he squats or circles while touring the house, you’ll be right there to gently interrupt the accident. Pick the puppy up immediately and it will stop the relief process. Do not give a harsh correction. Carry him outside and give another relief opportunity.

Benefits of an Older Pet in the Home

An older dog with appropriate social skills can often communicate so much more clearly than we bumbling humans can. Not every dog can serve as an appropriate teacher, and there are often potentially negative interactions between dogs. No one would suggest that you let your puppy into a pack of furniture-destroying, carpet-soiling, socially inept dogs.

But a well-behaved dog can positively influence a puppy’s behavior. An older dog can show the puppy where the door to the backyard is, and also influence the puppy’s door manners. If the older dog waits calmly for the door to open, a puppy will have an easier time learning to stay at the door. An older, housebroken dog that relieves himself outside leaves scent that can help clue the puppy in to the correct potty area.

One of the biggest benefits of an adult dog, however, is the social interaction. This socialization can be achieved even in single dog households by allowing the puppy to visit with a responsible older dog. A well-socialized dog tends to be very patient with puppy silliness; it will often interact, play, and allow the puppy to expend some energy. The older dog will also, however, let the puppy know when he is biting down too hard with little baby teeth or getting too wild.

It is important to allow your puppy to have interactions with other dogs in order to “learn the language.” However, it is also important to pay attention to the dogs’ body language. The onset of puberty can create some tension between dogs that have previously been friendly together. Too much stiff, upright body language means it’s time to end the playtime. There are times when adult dogs can overcorrect puppies, and there are also times when puppies are bold enough that they feel like fighting back. Those are negative interactions that should be interrupted before they escalate.

Finally, an older dog can help instill confidence in potentially worrying scenarios. For example, a puppy might show a fear of blow-up holiday decorations appearing in yards during the season. Bringing a more confident dog along for a fun walk can help the exposure become successful. If the puppy sees that the other dog is unconcerned and willing to investigate, the positive example can help the puppy work through his fears.

Family and Friends
As the puppy is learning to adapt to his new home, try to keep family, friends, and other animals from overwhelming him. Have children sit on the floor when greeting the puppy, and make sure the puppy is not mouthing or jumping on the children. It is never too early to start teaching the puppy to sit to receive attention and praise.

Children or adults can give the puppy a toy and encourage him to play. All people in contact with the puppy can quickly learn how to give it appropriate attention, and you can advise what verbal and physical communications they should use.

Puppies who are “done” tend to either go off on their own to sleep, or get wild and “cranky.” If the puppy seems overwhelmed, give him a quiet place to rest.
**The First Night**

Plan to be a little tired for a few days or even weeks. This will pass! The puppy is just a baby, and he won’t sleep through the night right away.

The puppy should stay overnight in a crate (see Introducing the Crate in this Chapter). Placing the crate in your bedroom is ideal, as your puppy will sense your closeness. With the crate ready, follow these tips for the first night.

- Keep your puppy awake as long as possible, until about 10-11 p.m.
- Just before bedtime, give the puppy an opportunity to relieve himself outside.
- While you get ready for bed, the puppy can be on a tie-down with a toy to get him used to the routine of settling down when bedtime routines start.
- Place the puppy gently in the crate. Offer a toy or a treat to make him more comfortable.
- After you shut the door on the crate, it is best not to leave the room. It’s time for you to read or turn the light out.
- If the puppy whines, ignore him. Wait and see if he settles down. If the puppy’s volume gets louder, you may soothe it with a short verbal, “it is fine, puppy,” just so it remembers that you are there. **Do not** take the puppy out of the crate or open the door and physically comfort him, or you will reinforce the whining behavior.
- The puppy may cry for a long time. **Ignore him.** A radio on low or the ticking of a loud clock sometimes helps to soothe him. Be visible to the pup so he knows you’re there. Give him **very little** verbal acknowledgment and give him **no** physical acknowledgment.
- If the puppy wakes up in the middle of the night, he may have to go outside. Take your puppy out of the crate and carry him outside. Give some verbal and physical praise in greeting, but don’t play. Wait and see if he needs to both urinate and defecate, but do not wait more than about three minutes. Praise only when the puppy relieves and then finishes. Bring the pup back inside and put him back into the crate. You can put another toy in with the puppy, but ignore him if he whines or barks.

After a few days or weeks, the puppy will grow bigger and learn to control his elimination desires. You should not have to get up in the middle of the night after this point.

**FEEDING**

**Food**

Southeastern Guide Dogs routinely monitors the best nutrition available on the market and provides our Puppy Raisers with our recommendation. We will advise you of any change in our recommendation via the Puppy Raiser News Video.

**2 Months to 10-12 Months (and older)**

Hill’s Science Diet Large Breed Puppy is the recommended food for puppies in our Puppy Raising Program. At 12 months of age, puppies are transitioned to Hill’s Science Diet Sensitive Skin and Stomach or another adult food on the approved list.

While Hill’s Science Diet Large Breed Puppy is recommended, the following list contains other foods that are acceptable. If a Puppy Raiser wishes to provide a food other than Hill’s Science Diet Large Breed Puppy or those listed below, he/she must contact Puppy Raising Services or their Regional Manager to discuss and received approval. Grain-free diets require the approval of Southeastern veterinarians.
The First Weeks Home

Other Acceptable Foods

While Hill's Science Diet Large Breed Puppy or Hill's Science Diet Sensitive Skin and Stomach are recommended, the following list contains other foods that are acceptable. If a Puppy Raiser wishes to provide a food other than those listed below, he/she must contact Puppy Raising Services or their Regional Manager to discuss and receive approval. Grain-free diets require the approval of Southeastern Guide Dogs veterinarians.

- Purina ONE Large Breed Puppy or Adult
- Royal Canin Maxi Large Breed Puppy or Maxi Adult
- Iams/Eukanuba Large Breed Puppy or Adult
- Nutro Large Breed Puppy or Adult
- Natural Balance Large Breed Puppy or Adult
- Innova Large Breed Puppy or Adult
- Blue Life Protection Puppy Lamb & Oatmeal, Adult Lamb & Rice, Adult Fish & Oatmeal
- Blue Wilderness Rocky Mountain Recipe Puppy Red Meat
- Hill's Metabolic Chicken or Lamb (prescription required)

Feeding Schedule

Feed the puppy at the same times each day. Do not keep the food bowl down for longer than 10 minutes and do not free feed by refilling the bowl during the day. Guide dog pups need to learn to eat specified amounts on schedule.

You will be told the amount and frequency of feeding when you pick up your pup. Recommended feeding amount for pups:

- 8-10 weeks: 2/3 cup, 3x per day
- 10-12 weeks: 1 cup, 3x per day
- 13-16 weeks: 1 ½ cups 2x per day

*Begin to eliminate the midday meal at 13 weeks of age by gradually lessening the amount of food fed at that time. Evenly distribute the portion of food from the noon meal into the breakfast meal and dinner meal, gradually increasing the amount added to each meal over the next four weeks.

13 weeks  lunch ¾ cup  breakfast and dinner 1 1/8 cup
14 weeks  lunch ½ cup  breakfast and dinner 1 1/4 cup
15 weeks  lunch ¼ cup  breakfast and dinner 1 3/8 cup
16 weeks  breakfast and dinner 1 1/2 cup

Puppies will consume more food while going through growth spurts. If you increased the food amounts during the growth spurt, watch the pup’s weight closely.

By 10-12 months of age, the puppy should level off its growth and you may need to cut back on the amounts you are feeding. Dogs that come in for training receive 1½-2 cups of dog food twice a day; smaller dogs require the lesser of those amounts.

Weight is such an important factor in the health of the pup; please monitor closely. The heart, lungs and hips are greatly stressed in overweight puppies.

Need help? Tell your AC how much you’re feeding and let them assess the body condition of the puppy to help you evaluate the puppy’s metabolism.
Weight Chart—Evaluating Dog’s Weight
How skinny is “pretty skinny?” How heavy is “not as thin as he should be?” The Purina body condition system provides a uniform way to describe a pet’s weight, from “emaciated” to “grossly obese.”

1. **EMACIATED**: Ribs, lumbar vertebrae, pelvic bones and all bony prominences evident from a distance. No discernable body fat. Obvious loss of muscle mass.


3. **THIN**: Ribs easily palpated and may be visible with no palpable fat. Tops of lumbar vertebrae visible. Pelvic bones becoming prominent. Obvious waist and abdominal tuck.

4. **UNDERWEIGHT**: Ribs easily palpable, with minimal fat covering. Waist easily noted, viewed from above. Abdominal tuck evident.

5. **IDEAL**: Ribs palpable without excess fat covering. Waist observed behind ribs when viewed from above. Abdomen tucked when viewed from the side.

6. **OVERWEIGHT**: Ribs palpable with slight excess fat covering. Waist is discernable viewed from above but is not prominent. Abdominal tuck apparent.

7. **HEAVY**: Ribs palpable with difficulty, heavy fat cover. Noticeable fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent or barely visible. Abdominal tuck may be absent.

8. **OBESE**: Ribs not palpable under heavy fat cover, or palpable only with significant pressure. Heavy fat deposits over lumbar area and base of tail. Waist absent. No abdominal tuck. Obvious abdominal distension may be present.

9. **GROSSLY OBESE**

Treats
You may give the puppy soft treats, pieces of kibble, or dog biscuits as treats. For training purposes, the puppy’s kibble or small treats (about the size of your pinky fingernail) work best. This allows you to monitor and measure the puppy’s food intake. Measure out the puppy’s meals, and retain some of the kibble as treats. If the puppy is not motivated by his normal kibble, or if he is in an especially distracting situation, you can try a different brand of kibble or a small, soft treat to give him some novelty.

We do not recommend giving the puppy ice cubes. These are too hard and can cause damage to teeth. Shaved or crushed ice is okay as a treat occasionally. You can also put toys in the freezer to use as a soothing toy for teething puppies.

Puppies should receive only what is given to them in their bowls or from the raiser’s hand. Peanut butter filled Kongs are permissible and given to dogs on campus. Kibble or Zuke’s are the preferred treats; anything else either for meals or treats (carrots, green beans, etc.) must be at the direction of a Southeastern Guide Dogs staff member.

Water
**Cool, clean water should be available at all times** in a stainless steel dish for the puppy in your home. Never restrict water from your puppy unless recommended by a vet. If the puppy is going to be on tie-down or crate frequently, offer water at specified times (at least 3 times a day) and let the puppy drink his fill. If you are concerned that he is taking in too much water, talk to your AC. In some cases, adding water to the food can help reduce excessive water consumption. Water restriction can cause water obsession or urinary tract problems, so do not try to reduce his water intake without veterinary guidance. Keep the water in the same place so the puppy knows where it is. The kitchen or an alcove is a good place.
The First Weeks Home

Don’t leave water in the crate with the puppy overnight. Monitoring water intake during the evening hours will help housebreaking.

It’s a good idea to carry fresh water and a bowl in your car when you go to meetings and outings for socialization and exposures. A small cooler with cool water is good. You don’t need to physically carry water for the puppy if your outing is less than a couple of hours, except in extreme heat or if the puppy will be exerting a lot of physical activity. Do not give the puppy ice water if he seems overheated as this can shock the puppy’s system and cause it to vomit. If the puppy is too hot to drink water, the puppy could be suffering from heat exhaustion. (See Chapter 7: Health and Veterinary Care, Overheating.)

**INTRODUCING THE CRATE & ESTABLISHING A ROUTINE**

Crates offer a confined, welcoming space within your home for a puppy to be supervised, and to nap, sleep, and retreat. Crate training the puppy must be done gradually. You can make the crate appealing by taking the following steps:

- Place the crate in your bedroom for the puppy to sleep in overnight.
- During the day, use a second crate or move the primary crate into a frequently accessed room in the house such as the kitchen or family room.
- Leave the crate door open when the puppy is not being confined. You may find that the puppy goes into the crate on his own.
- Set puppy up for success by crating when puppy is tired and likely to fall asleep rather than when puppy is feeling energetic. It is much easier for the puppy to be quiet when tired. This helps form an association of relaxing/sleeping when in the crate.
- Crate game: Say KENNEL IN as you toss a treat into the crate. Once the puppy is eagerly jumping into the kennel for the treat, progress to saying KENNEL IN first, then tossing the treat when the puppy goes in. Gradually increase the distance from the crate, so that the dog will enthusiastically KENNEL IN even when he is several feet away from the crate.
- You can also toss a treat into the crate while the puppy is resting calmly to reward his relaxed behavior.
- Set aside a favorite toy that the puppy only gets when he goes into the crate, such as a hollow rubber toy stuffed with food.
- Put the puppy in the crate periodically throughout the day for brief periods. The crate should not become a signal of your departure. If the crate becomes a regular part of the routine, it won’t have a negative association.
Tell the puppy to STAY and begin to open the crate door. The puppy can be standing, sitting, or lying down (he will likely be standing). Start to open the crate door. If he tries to burst out, quickly (but carefully) close the door, wait a moment, then try again. When you are able to get the door a little more open, tell him OUT and allow him to exit. Gradually build STAY duration as you open the crate door.

Establish a crate routine the day the puppy comes home. Perhaps use the crate for his first nap, first feeding, and, of course, the pup’s first night. Put the puppy in the crate when you must leave him alone. However, during the day, the puppy should not be left in the crate for more than 3–4 hours at a time. The pup needs to have an opportunity for relief and exercise at those intervals.

More than likely, the puppy will be at least a little unhappy in the crate at first. That is why it’s important for you to stay in the room so the puppy isn’t scared and doesn’t feel abandoned. If the pup is unhappy the first few minutes, ignore him. If the puppy continues whining or barking after a few minutes, use a few words of comfort. Acknowledge or remind the puppy that you are in the room with him. “I’m right here, puppy; settle down.” After the puppy has settled, even just for a few moments, go ahead and let him out of the crate. Practice this technique for a few minutes at a time, several times a day, and you will begin to teach him that being quiet results in being let out.

If the pup continues to whine or bark and is escalating in intensity, you can firmly say, “No, Quiet.” Do not use a loud or scolding voice; use a firm and low tone. The idea is not to punish him, but to try to interrupt him from working himself into a panic.

When he quiets down, walk up to the crate, drop in a piece of kibble, and walk away. Repeat this occasionally. Ideally, wait until he is totally silent before dropping in the kibble, but if he is really worked up, you may have to reward a reduction in noise levels first (i.e., he may stop barking but is still quietly whining; it is okay to reward that at first, just to reward the fact that he is calming down). Eventually, only give him kibble when he is totally silent.

Praise your puppy when he is quiet. Be consistent. Don’t weaken if he fusses. It will gradually become his room and he will feel very secure there. If you let the pup out while he is making noise, he has learned that when he makes enough noise, you will let him out of the crate.

Use of the crate in conjunction with housebreaking reduces the chances of accidents and of forming bad habits. Correct use of a crate means you can leave home with peace of mind knowing the puppy is safe and secure.

**Tips on Crating and Supervision**

- **Remove the collar and leash while crating.** Collars can become caught in the wires of the crate.
- Alternate between the crate, tie-down, leash, baby gate, and supervised freedom.
- Use the crate even while you are home. Place the crate in the same room with you, and put the puppy in for naps.
- If the puppy has had a difficult time accepting the crate, use the crate for frequent, short periods and use the tie-down the majority of the time. Occasionally reward quiet behavior with a piece of kibble.
- Place a favorite toy in the crate with the puppy. Make sure the toy is durable and that the puppy cannot destroy it.
- Your puppy should sleep in the crate for the entire time you are training him. However, at eight months of age, you can alternate between the crate and a tie-down by the bed.
• Do not give the puppy too much freedom too soon. If the puppy begins to have house manner concerns, increase the level of supervision. You can always go back and supervise more, using the tools available (crate, tie-down, and baby gate). This will continue after a puppy is matched as a guide dog, so be sure that the puppy stays accustomed to occasional restriction.

**HOUSEBREAKING**

The fastest way to housebreak the puppy is through a consistent schedule, confinement (using crates and tie-downs), and a predictable relief routine.

When taking the puppy outside to eliminate, do not play with or praise the puppy while trying to get him to relieve. By leashing him and staying quiet, you will make it easier for the puppy to stay focused on the task at hand. Stay within an 8-10 foot radius of the area you have selected. Keep the puppy moving with the leash. If the puppy sits or lies down, gently tug on the leash to get him up and moving. If he persists in sitting or lying down, stop the session and try again later.

Do not spend a long time waiting for the puppy to relieve. Follow the 5-out, 5-in rule: give him five minutes to relieve; if he does not relieve in that timeframe, take him back inside for five minutes, then try again. If you suspect that he has to go but he is unsuccessful, be sure to confine or supervise him inside until he has eliminated outside. Once he is successful, he can then earn a little bit more freedom.

When the puppy begins to relieve in the desired area, quietly begin repeating the relief command: BUSY BUSY.

**Suggested Rewards for Housebreaking:**

- a walk around the block
- off-leash playtime in the backyard
- playtime inside the house
- verbal and physical praise
- a small treat

Remember that most dogs like to be outside as long as possible. Some pups will learn to hold it until just before you bring them inside to try to maximize their time outdoors. Be sure to follow the 5-out, 5-in rule; if your pup does not eliminate within five minutes, take a break, and go back inside. When he is successful, go take a walk together. This teaches your dog to eliminate quickly when outside, then you both are free to enjoy a walk or playtime. Playing when you get back into the house is also an ideal reward, because the puppy will look forward to coming back indoors rather than dawdling outside.

Do not say the command so loudly that you interrupt the process, however. By repeating the command every time the puppy relieves, he will begin to associate the command with the action of relieving. After he has finished, praise him lavishly.

When your puppy begins to grasp the desired location and regularly eliminate in the correct area, start to use the command as soon as you take him to his relief location. Soon, he will understand how to relieve on command.

**Introduce Flexibility**

After initial success with the regular potty area, occasionally begin to vary where you have the puppy eliminate. Take him to different surfaces, such as mulch, concrete, pebbles, or asphalt. It is important that a guide dog be flexible in where he is able to relieve. Generally, you will find that a dog may be more inclined towards certain surfaces (usually absorbent ones), so you don’t
want to delay the housebreaking process by taking him to surfaces the pup finds aversive. But it is much easier to “busy” the pup on various surfaces when he is young and needs to relieve more frequently.

**When Puppy Has an Accident**

When housebreaking a puppy, the absolute most important aspect is prevention. Using tie-downs, leashes, crates, baby gates, and your attention, you can prevent many accidents and repeatedly direct the dog to the appropriate elimination site. However, accidents can occur when human attention lapses, the puppy is allowed too much freedom, or the pup is overexcited.

While you are supervising your puppy, you may notice warning signs such as circling, sniffing, or whining. You may also notice the puppy squat as he begins to relieve. In either scenario, interrupt the puppy with a sudden noise (“ah ah ah”) and by picking him up, and then take him to the correct relief area. Praise him when he relieves outside. Note: you are *interrupting* the puppy, not *scolding* him. Scolding him harshly can result in a dog that is afraid to relieve in front of you, which will complicate housebreaking further.

If you find an accident and did not catch the puppy in the act, just clean it up using an enzymatic cleaner and vow to supervise the puppy better next time. Showing him the mess and scolding does not teach him anything. Dogs live in the moment and do not associate their previous actions with your current scolding.

If there are certain areas where your dog repeatedly has accidents:

- Clean the area thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner made for pet messes. (Do not use an ammonia-based cleaner.)
- Physically block access to the area.
- Move the dog’s food bowl or crate to that area for a few weeks. Dogs instinctively want to keep their eating and sleeping areas clean, so re-purpose the accident area as a living space, rather than a relief space.

**Summary: Housebreaking Tips**

Here is a summary of effective strategies for housebreaking. Follow these tips and your puppy will quickly gain success and confidence.

- Use the right tools. Alternate between keeping the puppy on leash with you and using a tie-down, a dog crate, or a baby gate to confine the puppy while under your direct supervision.
- Confine your puppy to a crate or tie-down when you cannot watch closely. Nighttime housebreaking hours are generally from 11 p.m. until 6 a.m. for young puppies. Daytime hours in a crate or on a tie-down shouldn’t be any longer than 3–4 hours without the opportunity for relief.
- If your puppy has a habit of relieving in the crate, avoid the use of blankets and towels for bedding.
- Watch the puppy at all times during the housebreaking period. Learn the routine times and signs that the puppy needs to go outside. Take the puppy to its relief area **before** the pup eliminates.
- Use the same relief area for several weeks.
Preparing for Puppy
The First Weeks Home

- During the first month of housebreaking, monitor water intake during the evening hours.
- Stick with a consistent feeding and relief schedule. Do not switch foods; continue with the same brand until your puppy is on a consistent schedule.
- Keep relief opportunities short, just five minutes at a time. Practice the 5-out, 5-in rule. Your puppy will learn to relieve quickly when the opportunity is given.
- Don’t fall into the habit of letting the puppy freely roam outside in a fenced yard to relieve himself because it seems easier than housebreaking on leash, on command. Guide dogs need to learn to relieve on leash, and should be on lead for relief most of the time.

TEETHING TERRORS

An inevitable part of raising a puppy is the terror of teething. Newborn puppies do not have any teeth, much to the delight of their mother. The eruption of puppy teeth starts the weaning process, as mom gets less tolerant of painful nursing. Then the puppy comes home to you with a set of 28 razor-sharp fangs.

Even though puppies don’t start losing their teeth until around 12 weeks of age and generally have their entire set of 42 adult teeth by seven months, the teething process can last a lot longer. The peak is generally around four months of age.

As puppies grow, adult teeth “buds” start to form under the gum line. The baby teeth begin to spread out and shift in their mouth. So the teeth are in a constant state of moving around and preparing to turn over several weeks before any teeth actually fall out.

Puppies start exploring the world with their mouths at a young age, and often seek relief for their aching or itching gums. Their front incisors begin to fall out first, followed by their canine teeth, and then finally their molars. Once all of the adult teeth have appeared, there is a light at the end of the teething tunnel! Some puppies do seem to retain mouthiness for longer than expected. It’s possible that even though they appear to be done with teething, the teeth are still settling and finishing their eruption, even though they’ve all appeared in the mouth. Or it could be that the puppy has formed a chewing habit and takes comfort from mouthy behavior.

Teething sometimes goes hand-in-hand with other behaviors. Along with chewing, some puppies also bark, snap at the air, grab clothing, or dig. All of these behaviors are generally expressions of frustration and are tied to discomfort. There are several techniques for dealing with teething puppies, and there is no one right solution. A good rule of thumb for any unwanted behavior is to verbally correct and redirect. But it is also worth remembering that preventing unfair situations can go a long way. You want to set the puppy up for success, so being prepared is the best treatment for problems.

Keep in mind that teething occurs during a relatively short period in the life of a dog, even though sometimes it feels like a lifetime. As the puppy matures, the sharkiness does subside. If not, see Mouthing in Chapter 6.
GROOMING

Baths

Bathe the puppy only when it is dirty and needs a bath. Many times, if the pup has been in the dirt or swimming, a rinse with plain water is all that is needed. If the puppy has been rolling in something smelly, it’s time to get the shampoo out. Do not use a flea shampoo as it can strip the flea-preventative products from the dog’s coat. It is advised not to use human soaps or shampoos on dogs. Mild dog shampoos that will not dry out the coat are available through pet stores.

To Bathe: The puppy should be on leash or tie-down during the bath (water-loving puppies may not need restraint). Wet the puppy from the neck down using an outside hose or in a shower with a hand-held showerhead. Lather the puppy up where you wetted it down. Avoid soaping the face, and be careful not to get soap in the eyes. Let the soap sit for a few minutes and then rinse thoroughly. If you don’t get all the soap off, the puppy could have white flakes when dry. If you are not using a mild, soap-free dog shampoo, bathing too often can cause dry skin and skin flakes.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas generally gather at the base of the tail, behind ears, on the neck, back, and abdomen. Ticks usually gather in the ears, between the toes, or on the bottom of the feet. Make a habit of checking thoroughly for ticks after a trip to the woods or a wooded park.

Southeastern Guide dogs provides monthly heartworm preventative for the puppy you are raising. Raisers are responsible for purchasing monthly flea preventative. There are a variety of products available, but not all of them are considered safe or effective. There are also different combinations of preventatives; your vet can help you choose which is most appropriate for the puppy you are raising. For example, if you have a pool that the puppy swims in, and you do not live in an area with a tick problem, an oral flea preventative may be more appropriate than a topical.

Southeastern Guide Dogs recommends the following products for flea and tick control:

- Frontline Plus (topical)
- Advantix (topical)

These products are approved, although they are effective against fleas only:

- Advantage (topical)
- Comfortis (oral)
- NexGard (oral)

The following products are also approved for parasite control, but are also heartworm preventatives, so should be given instead of the provided heartworm medication from Southeastern Guide Dogs:

- Trifexis (oral, flea and heartworm)
- Advantage Multi (topical, flea/tick and heartworm)
- Revolution (topical, flea/tick and heartworm)
The safest way to obtain flea preventatives is through your vet. Frontline and Advantage can also be purchased over the counter, but not all sources are reputable and counterfeit products have made their way onto shelves.

**Do not purchase or use over-the-counter topicals such as Hartz, Sargent, Pet Armor, etc. Do not use a flea dip nor a home-remedy type of treatment on the puppy.**

Be sure to choose shampoo that will not wash off the topical medication. Many commercially available dog shampoos state on the bottle that they are compatible with flea medications.

If the puppy becomes infested with fleas or ticks, talk to your vet. There are products (Capstar, prescription tick collars) that can provide immediate relief/protection, as well as longer-term techniques (yard sprays, flea combing, tick removal). Failure to adequately provide flea preventative may result in removal of the puppy.

### Brushing

It is important to teach the guide dog puppy how to stand, sit, or down/stay while being brushed. Practice brushing using all the mentioned options. Brushing has many benefits such as a healthy, shiny coat. For a guide dog user, brushing is giving loving attention to the guide dog. It helps bond them more closely. Brush the puppy regularly, and make it an enjoyable time.

During grooming, also check the puppy’s eyes, ears, teeth, and feet. Praise him for allowing you to examine him. This will prepare the puppy for routine vet checks and alert you to the presence of injuries, fleas, ticks, or other irritants.

### Ears

Check the puppy’s ears once a week and clean as needed. The ears should be clear of debris and light pink in color. Check for foul, “yeasty” smells as well as redness, swelling, and irritation.

To clean the ears, soak a cotton ball with the solution and swab the ear with it. The ear canal is L-shaped so a cotton ball will not make contact with the ear drum (do not use Q-tips). Do not be alarmed at a small or moderate amount of ear debris. You should contact your AC if debris doesn’t go away, changes color, or increases.

Use only ear cleaner made specifically for dogs. Do not use homemade solutions.

### Teeth

Examine the puppy’s teeth once a week, basically to get the pup used to its mouth being looked at. In the first year, the puppy should not need any dental cleanings. You can clean the surfaces of the teeth with cotton gauze to pick up any debris or, even better, by brushing with a toothbrush and canine toothpaste. Veterinary dentists advise at least alternate day (preferably daily) tooth brushing for maximum benefits.

### Nails

Keep the puppy’s nails trimmed. Start at an early age so the puppy will get used to its feet being touched. Massage the feet regularly so the puppy will be conditioned to accepting it. The puppy may be more accepting of this if you try it when he is tired and not distracted. There are dog nail clippers you can purchase, as well as nail grinders. If you have never clipped a dog’s nails before, please ask your AC for instruction. There is a blood vessel in the nail that, if cut, will
bleed profusely. This is not serious, but is painful to the pup. Should this happen, apply corn starch to stop the bleeding.

Some pups may never need their nails clipped because they naturally wear the nails down during everyday activities, especially on concrete. However, the pup should still be conditioned to accept having its feet and nails touched. An alternative way to keep nails from getting too long or sharp is to use an emery board to file the nails. We are increasingly advising visually impaired individuals to use filing for nail care. If using the filing method, you should, however, occasionally still clip the nails so that the puppy is used to it.

**Eyes**

You should check the puppy’s eyes regularly. In the case of a minor clear or cloudy discharge, the raiser may, for up to two days, rinse the eye with a sterile ophthalmic saline. If discharge persists for more than two days or a heavy or colored discharge exists, or at any time the eye seems painful, you should contact your AC for authorization for a veterinary visit. If trauma is a suspected cause of eye discharge or discomfort, don’t wait two days to get authorization to go to the vet. Any traumatic injuries should be reported immediately to the AC for vet authorization.

Puppies are low to the ground and many eye discharges are from dust, dirt, or other irritants. Irrigation for a day or so is often all that is necessary. Persistent discharge could be a sign of more advanced infection and would require a veterinary prescription.

Do not use any medications in eyes without the consultation of a veterinarian.
VET EXAM

Taking the puppy to the vet is as much about creating a positive association as it is about insuring the puppy’s health. The puppy will have many veterinarian visits in his future, and they may not always be pleasant. It is important to build a history of positive experiences so that the puppy looks forward to going to the vet; that way, if he is ever ill or injured, all of the previous enjoyable visits will prevent excessive stress and anxiety.

Bring treats with you to the veterinarian. You may want to break out very high valued treats for such a special occasion. When the puppy first arrives, have anyone who approaches him give him a treat. Receptionists, vet techs, and other owners in the waiting area all can be sources of positivity. In the future, a tech may approach the dog to take him back for a nail trim, blood draw, or other potentially unpleasant activity. You want to ensure that the puppy has a good history of interacting with strangers at the vet office before that unpleasantness occurs.

If the puppy is uncomfortable with the handling and restraint that veterinary staff uses, be sure to have extra practice sessions at home. Make restraint and “hugs” a fun activity in a familiar environment first. When you are at the vet with your puppy, talk to him and reassure him regularly. Give him a piece of food while he is on the exam table or having his ears examined.

If the puppy continues to have a difficult time coping with veterinary visits, talk to your AC.

COMMANDS

When teaching commands to your young puppy, keep training sessions short and fun. You can work the commands into everyday life, in addition to regular—preferably daily—practice sessions. Practice using commands throughout the day using various life rewards, or things that the puppy likes. For example, practice a SIT command before attaching the leash for a walk. Try a DOWN command before placing a bowl of food in front of the puppy. Before giving your puppy a new toy, work on a quick STAY. This technique will teach the puppy to work for a variety of rewards in different situations, not just during specific training sessions.

GAMES

Puppies love to play! Playing games with your puppy is a wonderful way to relieve your own stress, and laughter is a wonderful side effect. Besides the pure fun of it all, playing games provides opportunities for your puppy to gain exercise, mental stimulation, and new skills.

Hold and Drop

*Hold and Drop* is a game that teaches the puppy to take or hold a toy when you give it to him, and then give it back to you when you ask. This game is a great way to teach your puppy about controlled play, to encourage him to release objects when requested, and to encourage a soft mouth. Some puppies will take to this game quickly, and it can be used as a confidence-building tool in new environments; other puppies won’t get as much intrinsic enjoyment out of the game, but can still enjoy learning to take items on command when it is treated like a fun game.
To teach *Hold and Drop*, select a favorite toy and have the puppy on leash; soft toys that the puppy doesn’t normally have access to are often particularly motivating. Have the puppy sit. Offer the favorite toy while telling the puppy to HOLD. Praise the pup while he is taking and holding the toy; do not allow him to run off with the toy or settle in to chew it, but instead, encourage him to walk around and carry it. Use the leash if necessary to prevent him from snatching it and running away. The pup may hold the toy for only a few seconds, which is okay; if he drops it, just encourage him to pick it up again.

After a few seconds, ask the puppy to DROP IT and take it back. The puppy may be confused or resistant at first, but quickly offer the toy again with a HOLD and then give plenty of praise. Repeat the exercise and make it fun. After the puppy figures out what you’re trying to teach him, he will enjoy the game. Teach the hold-and-drop using repeated play and praise. When you are ready to take the toy back and put it away, trade the toy for a treat to keep the association positive. After a few repetitions, the pup should give the toy up willingly.

### Retrieving

Some puppies are natural retrievers, while others are less interested. Retrieving can be a great way to exercise your pup and also serves as interactive, rewarding play. However, some puppies may only want to play keep away. Practicing a controlled retrieve teaches the puppy that playing with you is fun and rewarding, and that trying to entice you to play an unwanted game of chase is not going to work.

Show the puppy the toy you want him to retrieve and encourage him to play with it before you actually throw it. Do not use sticks. Toss the toy a short distance and encourage the puppy to pick it up. If the puppy does not want to get it, run after it yourself and pick it up. Act happy, move the toy around to get the puppy’s attention, and make it a game. The puppy may soon want to race you to the tossed toy.

If the puppy is not interested in retrieving, don’t worry. Some dogs develop an enjoyment for the game and others don’t. When and if the puppy does run after it, offer praise! Give praise as the puppy picks up the object. Back up a few steps, encourage the puppy, and praise him as he comes to you. You can clap your hands and move backward to keep the puppy’s attention on coming to you.
Some puppies will not want to give you the toy. They are afraid they will not get it back. If the puppy would rather play keep away, you can put a leash on him and gently reel the puppy in as you back away, verbally encouraging him toward you. You want the leash to be a guide, not a correction. Praise the pup while he is coming close to you. Do not chase the puppy for the toy or you will be teaching keep away.

Stop all interaction and play if your puppy repeatedly tries to dodge out of reach. Later, once the puppy is calm, would be a good time to play *Hold and Drop* as a separate game.

A controlled retrieve can be taught shortly after the puppy shows interest in chasing the toy, picking it up, bringing it back, and after the hold-and-give game is introduced. It’s a matter of putting all the pieces together.

To be considered a controlled retrieve, the puppy must sit/stay while you throw the toy and stay until you command BREAK. The goal is that the puppy picks up the toy, brings it back to you, presents the toy to you, and gives it to you when you ask. Make each step fun! If your puppy has difficulties with these steps, you may have to revert back to the use of the leash or long line until he has mastered the steps. Occasionally, throw the toy without asking for a SIT first so that you vary the speed, intensity, and reward of the game. You want to hold your dog’s interest, but incorporate obedience in a fun way.

Retrieving can be played inside or out. Just remember though, if your puppy is outside and off leash, it must be in a fenced area.

Some dogs like to retrieve more than others. When dealing with dogs with a high play drive, keep this game on your terms and in a controlled manner. Retrieve should not be played for extended periods of time or in the heat of the day. Some dogs will not know when they are tired and should stop. Be sure that you are monitoring your dog’s activity level and stop when necessary, even if he still wants to play.

**Recall Games**

You can practice the COME command in several fun ways. Adding the fun keeps the command positive and increases your puppy’s enthusiasm. Play these games in a safe area, or have your puppy on a long leash. Three suggested recall games include *Chase and Follow* and *Back and Forth*.

**Chase and Follow**

Although you don’t want to encourage chasing games with your puppy when he has a forbidden item or when he doesn’t want to listen, there is a chase game you can play on your terms. This game will help with the COME command, as well as give you a way to interrupt keep-away games that in which you do not want to participate.
To teach *Chase and Follow*, grab a handful of treats or your puppy’s favorite toy. When your puppy is distracted or not looking at you, gently poke him lightly, turn around, and begin to move away from him. When he starts to chase you, call him to COME and toss a treat or a toy. Dogs are attracted to movement away from them, and this will help encourage him to follow you and respond to your command.

You can also use this game when the puppy has the “zoomies” and is in the mood to race around. Move towards the puppy until you are in his line of vision, then run away.

Practicing this game frequently can pay off in the long run. If your puppy gets out of the house and you find yourself chasing him, get his attention and run away from him, encouraging him to follow you to safety.

**Back and Forth**

You will need at least one other person to play this game. Begin simply by taking turns calling the puppy, one at a time, and rewarding him. He will quickly figure out the game and begin to anticipate the recall, so if he comes to you before you have called him, ignore him and do not reward him. The other person can then call him and reward him when he responds. Increase the distance or number of people to continue to challenge him.

**Tug of War**

*Tug of War* is not recommended for most puppies because it can create too much excitement and increase vocalization. Your AC or RM may recommend this game for a puppy what would benefit from having confidence built.

Puppies that are possessive or take the game too seriously should not be allowed to play this game. A good way to test your puppy’s temperament is to play tug briefly, then allow the puppy to win the toy. If he brings it back to you and pushes it towards you to play again, or just walks around carrying the toy, then he is enjoying the game and not taking it too seriously. Discontinue the game if he guards the toy or won’t let you remove it from his possession.

While you are playing tug, if the puppy is getting worked up and you would like him to calm down, gently take hold of his collar and relax your tugging hand. By holding on to his collar, you are preventing him from engaging in any tugging behavior. When the puppy relaxes, tell him DROP and remove the toy from his mouth. You can also have the puppy SIT. Then you can toss the toy or allow him to tug again. By stopping and re-starting the game, you teach your puppy to enjoy controlled play, and he also learns that wild behavior will cause the fun to end.
CHAPTER 4: PROTOCOLS AND TRAINING CONCEPTS
EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GUIDE DOG PUPPY

Southeastern strives to produce excellent guide dogs for our visually impaired handlers. There are several appropriate behaviors we seek to instill into our puppies as we prepare them for harness training. The priority for puppy raisers is to raise well-behaved puppies, especially in regard to house and general manners. Exposures, while important, are not the priority.

The In for Training ready puppy:
- Has a big "bank account" of Impulse Control set-ups
- Knows basic obedience skills and is able to generalize skills in distracting environments
- Is comfortable in the crate at any time (not just at night)
- Accepts body handling
- Adapts to tight spaces
- Has good house manners
- Accepts all people
- Settles easily in new environments

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

ABCs of Puppy Raising
When people hear of the ABCs, they think of the basics. Keep these basics in mind when raising your puppy; they are key elements that make a big difference in the raising and conditioning of the puppy.

A = Awareness
Be aware of...
- Where the puppy is and what it is doing at all times
- The puppy's reaction to the environment and activities
- Other people around the puppy and what they are doing
- When the puppy is overwhelmed or fearful of someone or something
- What both ends of the puppy are doing (scavenging end and busying end)
- Changes in behavior or the physical condition of the puppy

B = Balance
Balance...
- Work with play, so the puppy understands the difference
- Familiar exposures with new exposures
- Supervised freedom with restricted activity
- Short exposures with long exposures
- Use of crate with use of tie-down
- Night outings with day outings
Protocols and Training Concepts

C = Consistency
Be consistent with...

- Feeding and relief schedules
- Commands and actions
- Praise
- Expectations
- Your schedule
- Daily obedience conditioning

Consistency is extremely important. All family members must handle the puppy the same way all of the time. It can become very confusing for something to be done differently with each handler. The expectations we have for our puppies have to be taught, and the puppy will learn rapidly if all handlers follow the same protocols.

OBEDIENCE

Praise and Rewards
Remember that praise is your puppy’s most important paycheck. Incorporate play, treats, and toys into your training sessions, but be sure to use your praise voice, too! Praise is something you always have with you, and building a positive relationship with your puppy is just as important as training him.

If you are consistent with your praise and rewards every time the puppy performs a desirable behavior, that desirable behavior is more likely to occur again. Always remember to use praise immediately after the puppy has done something well. Timing is important, because you want to give the puppy immediate feedback. If you praise too late, he won’t know what he is being praised for, or might even associate the wrong behavior with the original command.

When using food reward training, you want to be constantly raising the bar. As the puppy becomes more proficient at his commands, be sure you are on a variable schedule of reinforcement, giving treats for the best responses (not for every single response).

Expectations—Box of Acceptable Behaviors
Once the puppy begins understanding and meeting your expectations, you can start holding him to a higher standard of behavior. Train yourself to give the command only one time. If your pup does not respond correctly, it is for one of two reasons: the puppy does not fully understand the command in the current context, or the puppy is distracted.

If your puppy does not respond to a known command, consider whether you really have the puppy’s full attention and whether he is in a new situation. Puppies do well with obedience in familiar settings, but may regress when you take them to a novel location. If that’s the case—if you are in a new location and puppy is regressing—go back to the basics and re-teach the command.

If the puppy is distracted, try to reduce the distractions. If he is jumping and pulling because he wants to go visit other dogs, walk him away to a distance at which he can focus on you. Be sure you are giving the puppy many chances to get the right answer; it is unfair to correct him if your expectations are too high.

If the puppy is aroused by a stimulus (whether it be other dogs, birds, smells, people, etc.), it is similar to an adrenaline rush. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for a puppy to process commands when he is in a state of arousal. Work on getting the puppy calm and focused before proceeding. Refer to the Box of Acceptable Behaviors (BOAB). You may have to reward the puppy simply for the behavior of standing at your side on a loose leash, or responding to his name.
When practicing obedience with your puppy or when taking a walk, the leash should be loose. You want to **train**, not **restrain**. If you use the leash to restrain or steer the puppy, he is learning to ignore you and only pay attention to the leash. You want the dog to be making conscious choices on a loose leash, rather than being held back. Your left arm should not be tired! The puppy is only going to get stronger, so start working on proper leash management now.

### COMMANDS

As the puppy matures, gradually increase the difficulty, duration, and distractions of your commands. If you give a command, such as SIT or DOWN, be prepared to gently enforce it. If the puppy does not immediately respond, take him to a less distracting area to try again. This method helps teach the puppy that you will always enforce commands, but also keeps in mind that he may be too distracted to focus properly.

Do make sure that you are giving your puppy enough time to process what you’re telling him to do. When you give your puppy a verbal command, allow him a few seconds to respond.

Always give your commands on a loose leash; do not tighten or pull up on the leash when you give a command.

Any time you give a command, be sure that you are prepared to follow through. You should have the puppy’s attention, and if necessary, you should be prepared to help the puppy.

### Name Recognition

The puppy’s name should be positive and attention getting. Start early pairing the puppy’s name with good things, such as praise, petting, play time, and meal times. The puppy’s name will be used to get his attention or before giving commands. For example: “Rover, SIT.” Using the puppy’s name alerts the puppy that you are addressing him, and also allows you to see if you have his attention before giving a command. **Do not use the puppy’s name prior to using negative commands or in anger.**

Because Southeastern puppies do not receive their name until placement, one of your first tasks as a raiser will be to teach your puppy his name.

1. In a room with minimal distraction, call pup’s name.
2. When puppy turns his head towards you, mark with “YES.” (Note that the puppy does not need to come TO you before saying the marker word; he only needs to direct his attention towards you, indicating that he recognizes his name.)
3. Encourage the puppy with praise to approach you for the treat.
4. Give treat.
5. Praise puppy.
6. Repeat when he directs his attention away from you.

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**Box of Acceptable Behaviors (BOAB)**

When you are raising the puppy, it is important to set your expectations for the puppy based on age and environment. The Box of Acceptable Behaviors is a theoretical box containing all of the behaviors your puppy is allowed to do in a certain circumstance. If you require your puppy to perform specific behaviors that are beyond his reach—whether due to age or distractions—then you are setting him up to fail. Instead, start out by broadening the list of acceptable behaviors so he can learn, be successful, and get praised. Then narrow the BOAB as circumstances dictate.

For example, young puppies have short attention spans and may not be able to hold a SIT/STAY command the entire time they are being greeted. So instead, reward the puppy for not jumping.

Give the pup a Box that is just the right size to challenge him, but ultimately allows him to be successful.
You can also practice the Name Recognition exercise in a group, where one person calls the pup’s name and follows the directions above. After the pup has received his treat, another person can call pup’s name and repeat exercise, etc.

All Southeastern puppies are given names that are sponsored by generous donors. These names have significance to the donors and we like to honor those name submissions. It is very important that your puppy responds to his given name. It is fine to give nicknames, but only once the puppy is responding to the given name. Once in training for guide or service dog work, your dog will be referred to by his given name. If you typically use a nickname or shortened version of your puppy’s name, you will need to occasionally work on the Name Recognition exercise with your dog’s given name to make sure he maintains this skill. Additionally, it is very important that you always refer to your puppy with his given name in official Southeastern documents and correspondence, including email.

Yes! (marker word)
Sometimes it can feel like a juggling act trying to manage the puppy, the leash, and treats, especially out in a distracting environment. Using a short, consistent “marker word” can help bridge the time between the dog’s good behavior and your ability to deliver a treat. A good marker word is “Yes!,” because it is concise and easy to say happily. If you consistently pair the word with the reward, the pup will understand that he is correct the exact moment you verbally mark his behavior.

There are three basic rules when using the “Yes” marker word:

1. If you say “yes” as a marker word, you MUST give a treat reward – even if your timing was off
2. “Yes” is NEVER used as a praise or reward word
3. ALWAYS use the marker word in this order: “Yes!” → Treat → Praise

For more information on how to use the “Yes” marker word, please refer to the Blue Cape Journal entry, “Reward Based Training: Using the ‘Yes’ Marker Word” (February 2016).

Break (release word)
Use BREAK to release your puppy from a particular command; you can also use it to allow the dog to sniff, greet, play, or to end an obedience session. BREAK lets the puppy know that he is free from structured obedience. For example: any time you have the puppy in a STAY, use BREAK when you are ready for him to get up. Initially, be sure that the puppy gets up and moving every time you use the word BREAK; that will help him understand that the release word is why he got up, not just because he felt like it.

No
The word NO is used when the puppy is exhibiting an inappropriate behavior. Keep in mind that the word is initially meaningless to the dog; puppies do not inherently understand NO. To teach NO, it must always be followed up with redirection into more appropriate behavior. For many pups, following a stern NO with a removal of attention, (on a tie-down or in another quiet area), or restriction (such as being put on a leash) will quickly teach them that NO means you are displeased.

Be careful that you do not overuse NO; you should not focus on what the puppy is doing wrong. This will cause the puppy to fear
you, rather than respect you. Every NO should be followed by a chance for the puppy to be correct. Baby puppies do not know their behavior is “wrong” and therefore should not be punished harshly; instead, they need to be guided into correct behavior with patience and consistency.

**Let’s Go**

The command LET’S GO indicates to your puppy that you will begin walking together and/or change direction. Consistently using the phrase when you begin moving will help young puppies learn the meaning of the command. LET’S GO is used to begin walking, walking through doors, changing direction (left, right, or pivoting), and up and down stairs.

**LOOSE LEASH WALKING**

Young puppies will benefit from walking on a long line, at first, when appropriate and safe. The value of walking on a long line is that it allows the puppy to learn to stay with the handler while not having tension from a tight leash. Speak to your AC to learn more about walking with long lines.

To start teaching the puppy how to walk nicely on a shorter leash, you can use “collar pressure protocol.” Walk with the puppy until he begins to pull towards a distraction, such as a scent. Shorten the leash and keep a constant tension on the leash. Do not try to pull or steer the puppy; simply keep a constant tension until the puppy looks up at you or at least moves towards you. Immediately mark the behavior with “Yes!,” loosen any remaining tension on the leash, and treat.

Within a few repetitions, the puppy should be starting to turn towards you within seconds of feeling the leash tighten. This usually results in “ping pong” walking, where the puppy surges forward, feels the leash tighten, comes back for a treat, then surges forward again. That’s a good sign; that means the puppy is learning. It also means it is time to move on to the next step.

Once you have achieved “ping pong” walking, start delaying the reward. So the leash tightens and the puppy comes towards you to loosen it. Praise him, direct him to your left side and resume the walk. After a few steps, reward him in position at your left side: bring the treat directly down your left leg and feed him in exactly the right position.

Now the puppy is learning that he gets rewarded only when he walks nicely; the fact that leash tension loosens and the walk continues is also part of the reward.

When the puppy is starting to check in and focus more on you during leash walks, you can introduce the command LET’S GO as you begin the walk. This will become a cue to the puppy to walk on a loose leash and pay attention. During a loose leash walk, the puppy is responsible for being aware of where you go. If he loses attention, stop and wait for him to check in with you again.

As you work on the puppy’s leash manners, focus on walking back and forth over a small area rather than working on long walks. Build a foundation of loose leash manners and attention; this will allow you to gradually increase the intensity and duration of walks with the puppy.
**PAW PAD**

Paw Pad will be introduced during Puppy Kindergarten classes. The goal behavior for Paw Pad is for puppy to maintain a HEEL position (guide dog position) while in STAND, SIT, DOWN positions or in a STAY. The Paw Pad can also be used to help puppy build impulse control in highly distracting environments.

**COLLAR CUES**

A collar cue is an application of light pressure on the leash to move the puppy into a desired position. The purpose of teaching collar cues is to give the handler "power steering" -- the ability to quickly put the puppy in any desired position with the puppy's willing cooperation. Responding to collar cues is a learned behavior, not a natural one. Young puppies learn this quickly as they have not built up a history of pulling against pressure. The prerequisite for introduction of collar cues is that the puppy understands how to release pressure from a ground tether (taught in Puppy Kindergarten). A hand tether is used when teaching collar cues, and it is more difficult to hold fixed pressure with a hand tether than with a ground tether; therefore, the more experience the puppy has with the ground tether, the better. It is important to understand that learning collar cues has very little to do with impulse control. Understanding collar cues doesn't mean that a puppy will not lunge or pull towards a distraction. Impulse control is worked on separately from collar cues. Collar cues should be taught and practiced in low-distraction environments, and immediate response to collar cues should not be expected in real-world situations until the puppy is older and has had significant experience with both collar cues and impulse control.

**TIME-OUT**

A time-out should be used when a puppy makes a mistake or demonstrates unwanted behaviors, such as pulling towards a distraction, scavenging, marking, and demand barking. For time-outs to be effective, the puppy needs to have mastered the skill requested or have had a history of successfully demonstrating knowledge of the skill.

Time-outs are initially taught during Puppy Kindergarten after the puppy has mastered the skills of SIT, DOWN, and STAND on the paw pad. The handler immediately turns away from the puppy, disengages, and becomes silent for 5-10 seconds. Once time has passed, the handler returns to his/her position beside the Paw Pad and reengages with the puppy by cueing the puppy into another position. Puppy must be successful upon re-engagement; therefore, cue an easy position. Session may end once puppy has been successful.

The use of time-outs for older puppies applies the same principle; however, additional movement is used to remove the puppy from the place in which the unwanted behavior has occurred. If the undesired behavior occurred while in a stationary or idle position, the handler disengages from the puppy (no eye contact, no verbal communication) and immediately moves the puppy 5-6 feet away from the current place, keeping a short hold on the leash. This is done in an abrupt manner, but this is not a correction. While there, the handler should keep light upward pressure on the collar. Remain in this position for 10-15 seconds and then relax the tension on the leash, reengage with the puppy, command LET'S GO and return to the original place. Cue an easy position and praise the puppy.

If the undesired behavior occurred while walking, the same disengagement and removal from the distraction as outlined above should occur; then, upon returning towards the area in which the unwanted behavior occurred, mark and reward the puppy as he walks by the distraction without incident. Keep in mind, time-out is just another tool for the tool box, and is not intended to replace any previously learned methods such as tethering.

**IMPULSE CONTROL**

Impulse control is teaching puppy to control their impulses by choosing not to pull on leash when facing mild distractions such as food, scents, natural debris, or people engaging puppy. Impulse control is introduced in Puppy Kindergarten classes. The skills should be practiced throughout your time with the pup. Back to Basics classes are designed for such.
Emergency Lure

The emergency lure is a technique that Southeastern has approved for use in a situation when, as the puppy raiser, you unexpectedly find yourself in a situation that you know your puppy will not be able to navigate successfully without losing focus on you. Some examples of this situation might include the following: a crowd of children completely blocking the sidewalk ahead of you, an excited dog tied to a parking meter on a narrow sidewalk and/or spilled food covering the entire path.

How to Use:

1. Get a handful of treats from your treat bag.
2. Bring your hand close enough to the puppy's mouth to make physical contact with it and make sure your hand stays very close to the puppy's nose until you are past the situation. (If you remove your hand from the puppy's mouth, it will be very likely to engage with the distraction.)
3. Begin "pezzing" your puppy as you move past the distraction. Pezzing is the same treat-delivery technique used when first teaching the Paw Pad (rapid-fire delivery of individual treats, one at a time, with little to no time between each treat). The purpose is to occupy your puppy's mind so completely with the treats that it does not have time to focus on the distraction.
4. Once you are a safe distance past the distracting situation, cue your puppy to perform a known behavior, such as SIT, then mark and reward as usual. This will return your puppy to a productive, working state of mind.

Remember that it is always better to plan an alternate path around distractions at a distance where your puppy is able to maintain handler focus, so that you can mark and reward good decisions. If you have to use an emergency lure, your puppy is not learning anything. The purpose of the emergency lure is to prevent the puppy from self-reinforcing undesirable behaviors by lunging toward a distraction that is too close. The emergency lure should be used only occasionally. If you need to use it more than occasionally, talk to your AC or RM about planning exposures that are more appropriate for your puppy's current level of impulse control.

OUTINGS

How Often?

Outings for the puppy can be determined by age and temperament, as well as if the pup is wearing a bandana or has been granted a coat. It is not about the specific outings that you do, but rather the broad categories of exposures and distractions through which the puppy learns to work.

Keep in mind that a “regular and routine” outing can still have novel stimuli and exposures. So neighborhood walks can look completely different to a puppy when you walk at night, on trash collection day, during holidays, or even simply when there is a slight change in traffic. Familiar grocery stores can seem novel to a puppy at dinner time, during a thunder storm, when food has been spilled, or when he first gets exposed to a shopping cart.
Be aware of outings that are part of the puppy’s normal routine and during which he behaves well; any time you have the puppy on a new or potentially overwhelming outing, it is a good idea to go back to “routine” for a while afterwards.

There is no magic number for outings. The “socialization window” or impressionable period for puppies starts to close at 16 weeks old; most of the puppy’s necessary socialization happens before you receive the puppy. There is no rush to get the puppy out and about; instead, be prepared to move at the puppy’s pace and focus on obedience and behaviors in novel environments (rather than trying to check as many boxes on a list as possible).

What and When?

There are certain categories of exposures that we would like the puppy to have. The primary purpose is so that we know how the puppy reacts. His genetics and early experiences will contribute to his temperament; you can overlay behaviors and manners on top of that inherent temperament, but we still want to know about the puppy’s initial or general reaction. We are not trying to change who the puppy is, but rather to assess him to figure out the best way to train him.

By the time the puppy is 6 months old, the puppy generally should have received the following exposures:

- Adult men and women, children, and groups of people
- Other dogs
- House manners
- People bending over the puppy
- Sudden sharp noises
- Body handling/restraint
- Car rides
- Small “prey” animals (squirrels, rabbits, birds, etc.)
- Equipment going over the puppy’s head (collar, coat, etc.)
- Novel environmental stimuli (trash cans, balloons, fountains, etc.)
- Unpredictable/startling items (umbrella opening, vacuum cleaner running, etc.)

By the time the puppy is 10 months old, the puppy generally should have received all of the above exposures plus the following:

- Shopping mall
- Restaurant
- Night-time walks
- Crying/screaming children
- People with unusual silhouettes (hunched over, wearing a hat, etc.)
- People with unusual gaits (limping, using a walker, wheelchair, etc.)
- Car alarm/siren
- Heavy, noisy traffic
- Public vehicles, such as buses, trains, etc.
- Uneven surfaces (grates, bridges, docks, etc.)
- Closed steps
- Open-backed/metal steps
- Large animals (cows, horses, pigs, etc.)
- Cats
- “Dead smells” (leather store, meat and seafood department, rawhide aisle, etc.)
- Statues/mannequins
- Inclement weather (rain, the sound of thunder, etc.)

By the time of IFT, the puppy generally should have received all of the above exposures plus the following:

- Warehouse type store (Walmart, Costco, etc.)
Each puppy will mature at a different rate. What will be comfortable for one puppy may not be for another—even puppies from the same litter. Start gradually exposing the puppy to new things, and continue as long as he remains confident and happy. Let the puppy accept a new environment or object on his own. NEVER force a puppy! If the pup shies away from something, stop and observe the puppy's reaction when not moving. Try the exposure from a greater distance.

When taking a puppy on an outing, you should consider the ability of the puppy to handle the level of noise or confusion from the puppy’s point of view. Take things slow and easy, and watch the pup for signs of being uncomfortable. Casually leaving a stressful situation will make it much easier to return another day to try again. Don’t draw attention to a puppy’s insecurity by making a big fuss over him shying away from an exposure or object. The puppy will then think that this situation is a big deal and will remember it the next time!

For more information on socializing puppies, please refer to the Blue Cape Journal entries: “Socialization: Quality Over Quantity” (July 2015) and “Socialization: How to Socialize a Cautious Puppy” (August 2015).

Procedures for Outings
The following guidelines should be followed when taking the puppy out:

1. Puppy should be well groomed and bandana/coat should be clean and neat.
2. Raiser must bring busy bags, clean up supplies, and Southeastern ID card; Puppy Raising literature and Puppy Raiser business cards are optional if desired.
3. The puppy should be under control at all times (practice obedience if you need to get the puppy focused). Keep the puppy out of the public’s way.
4. Relieve (BUSY) the puppy before going inside a building (or at least give him the opportunity).
5. Be aware of the puppy’s need for relief. Exposures are exciting for a puppy, and you may need to give him more frequent opportunities to relieve.
6. Be aware if the puppy is hot, tired, thirsty, or needs to relax. Also be aware of the length of outing.
7. Be aware of how the public is treating the puppy. Teasing, pinching, or tail/ear pulling, will make the puppy distrustful of new people. If this ever occurs, tell the people involved that the puppy cannot have attention right now, direct your attention to the puppy, give him a familiar command such as LET’S GO, and remove the puppy from the situation as soon as possible.
8. Do not take the puppy on an outing unless you have time to work with and focus on the puppy. Puppy should remain home to practice enjoying crate time if you are rushed, in a bad mood, or are frustrated.

Experiences that MIGHT be appropriate for older, confident puppies include:
- Low Key Concerts (such as those in a park)
- Small Town Parades
- Movie Theaters
- High School Sporting Events
- Air Travel

Experiences that are NEVER appropriate include:
- Theme Parks
- Exotic Animal Zoos
- Large State Fairs
- Professional Sports Games
- Dog Parks
- Riding Escalators
- Moving Sidewalks
- Revolving Doors
- Theme Park Rides
- Firework Displays
If you have any questions about whether an exposure is appropriate for your puppy, ask your AC and/or RM before taking the puppy. They have the experience and knowledge of your puppy’s temperament to give you the best advice. It is difficult to provide an extensive guideline for exposures that will work for every puppy.

**Doors**
The following are the procedures for going in or out of doors (buildings, your front and back doors at home, car doors, etc.):

1. When you arrive at the door, have the puppy SIT.
2. Open the door. If the puppy moves out of the way of the door, this is okay, but ask the puppy to SIT again.
3. Use LET’S GO to enter and exit.
4. Have the puppy SIT once you have entered or exited; if the puppy proceeds calmly through the door, it is occasionally okay to skip the second SIT, but as soon as the puppy starts to rush the door, go back to the second SIT routine.
5. Give the LET’S GO command to continue on your way.

If the puppy is very young, having a BUSY emergency, nervous about the door, or having a stressful day, it is okay to forgo the SIT at the door. But otherwise, the SIT should be nearly automatic.

Be sure that the door does not hit the puppy. See the SWITCH command in the OBEDIENCE Chapter.

**Cars**
The puppy will be traveling in the car regularly from the time you bring it home from Southeastern. The only acceptable places for the puppy to ride are:

- On the floorboards of the car; on leash or a tie-down
- In a crate

If the puppy is riding with a passenger, then a tie-down is not required as long as the person keeps the puppy on a leash.
Whether traveling with a passenger or not, always have the puppy in a DOWN if riding in the front. With the invention of airbags, it is a potentially dangerous situation should the airbags deploy. Most puppies can ride comfortably in a DOWN in the front, but if the pup is 80 lbs. or larger, it may be best to secure him on the floor in the back seat. The puppy should generally be in coat while traveling in the car, if he can be trusted not to chew the coat.

A permanent tie-down in your car may be helpful but is not required. Every style of car is different, so talk to your AC about the best place to fasten a tie-down. You can also tie the leash in various available places in the car to securely hold the leash, and limit the movements of the puppy. You may need to adjust the loose part of the leash a couple of times to get it the right length. Be careful when shutting the door so you don’t catch any part of the pup.

Never:
- Leave the puppy alone in the car.
- Let the puppy run loose in the vehicle.
- Let the puppy stick its head out of the window of a moving car.
- Allow the puppy to ride on the seats.
- Have the puppy ride in the back of an open truck.
- Allow puppy to ride in a convertible with top down.

Entering a vehicle:
1. Check the temperature of the pavement or asphalt. If it is hot to the touch, rush the puppy into the car without pausing. If it is not too hot, proceed with the next step.
2. Have the puppy SIT before getting into the vehicle.
3. When you are ready, tell the puppy IN and allow the pup to jump onto the floorboards of the car (not the seat).
4. Help younger puppies into the vehicle. Praise the puppy for getting in.
5. Tell the puppy to SIT then DOWN and praise again. Attach the puppy to a tie-down or the passenger can hold the leash. A passenger can now get in with the puppy.

Exiting a Vehicle:
1. Passenger exits first or driver gets out and walks around to other side.
2. Puppy should SIT/STAY until you are ready for him to exit.
3. When you are ready, tell the puppy OUT—have the puppy get out and praise the puppy.
Protocols and Training Concepts

Stairs
It is important for working guide dogs to navigate stairs safely and confidently. Puppies should have regular exposure to stairs from the time they are young with the focus always on making sure that the puppy is not asked to walk on stairs that are beyond their comfort level.

- Begin a very young puppy on the next-to-last step and encourage puppy to follow you up or down the single step.
- Progress gradually to short flights of stairs and building to longer flights.
- Focus on closed stairs with non-slippery surfaces until the puppy can do full flights calmly and confidently. Gradually introduce open stairs and stairs with different under-footings when puppy is comfortable on "simple" stairs.
- As the puppy builds a history of success on stairs, puppy will gain confidence on more complex flights of stairs.
- Puppy should never be rushed on stairs or forced to navigate a staircase that is beyond their comfort level.
- Use the command LET’S GO for ascending and descending the steps. Go slowly and encourage the pup to go one step at a time by using calm, soothing verbal praise.
- Fear of stairs can begin to develop as puppies grow older and stronger on leash. Fear can also develop in a puppy that was formerly confident on stairs if the handler tries to pull the puppy backwards with the leash to keep puppy in a HEEL position. If you feel your puppy is beginning to show signs of being uncomfortable with stairs (either by being fearful when approaching or pulling hard on leash while walking up or down stairs) please let your AC and/or RM know as soon as possible.

Elevators
- Have the puppy SIT while you press the elevator button.
- When you are ready to enter the elevator, use LET’S GO. Walk into the elevator as far back as possible.
- Have the puppy SIT facing the doors. Watch the puppy's paws and tail in a crowded elevator.
- When exiting, use LET’S GO and praise the puppy when he moves forward.

RECOGNIZING STRESS
How do you determine whether an outing is appropriate for the puppy you are raising? How do you know when the puppy finds things too stressful? As is usually the case in dog training and puppy raising, it depends on the individual puppy, the current state of the environment, and previous experiences. But there are some general guidelines you can keep in mind to determine if the pup should accompany you or stay home.

Stress in Body Language
There are some common signs to look for when checking to see if a puppy is experiencing stress or arousal. These signs don't necessarily indicate fear, but they do indicate some type of conflict or overstimulation.

- Check the dog’s posture. Is he compressed or lowering himself? Is he puffing himself up and standing taller?
- Check the dog’s tail. Is it higher or lower than usual?
- Check the dog’s stance. Is he balanced squarely on all four feet, or is his weight placed more heavily on either his front or back feet? Is he leaning toward or away from something?
- Check for stress behaviors such as: yawning, squinting, lip licking, scratching, mouthing people or objects, or shaking (as if he were trying to dry off).
Signs of stress may be subtle and vary from dog to dog. When you are raising a puppy, take the time to learn his normal body language when he is at home and around the neighborhood. Notice what is normal for him, and keep that picture in your mind when you are on outings.

The leash can mask the signs of stress; when the option of escape is removed, many dogs will find a way to cope with the stress, either by getting quiet and “shutting down” or by exhibiting active behaviors such as jumping or pulling on leash. It may not be obvious that the stimulus (such as traffic, a loud noise, or a person greeting the puppy) is causing stress from the perspective of the leash handler, so if you’re unsure, have someone watch the dog, film the dog’s reaction, or give the dog a lot of slack in the leash (so a stress reaction will be more obvious).

Describing Behavior

When describing a puppy’s behavior, whether it’s on an evaluation form or being reported to your AC, try to stick to objective and descriptive words, rather than trying to assign feelings or emotions to the behavior. There is no doubt that dogs experience many of the same emotions that we do, but decoding them can be complicated. It is much easier to decipher behavior and come up with a training plan based on descriptions of body language and what the dog is actually doing.

Specific observations to take note of include:

- General decrease in obedience
- Rapid increase in excitement
- Body compression
- Flattening body to the ground
- Tail raised
- Tail lowered or tucked
- Raising hackles
- Barking
- Whining
- Growling
- Leaning away from stimuli
- Leaning toward stimuli
- Ducking or lowering head
- Escape attempts
- Backing up to the end of the leash
- Pulling very strongly on leash
- Pace change
- Frantic quality of movement
- Slowed quality of movement
- Jumping
- Staring
- Yawning or lip licking
- Mouthing (objects or people)
- Rolling onto back
- Popping up from sit or down
- Hesitation

Avoid vocabulary that assigns judgment or emotion to the dog’s behavior, such as the following words:

- Submissive
- Fearful
- Scared
- Nervous
- Dominant
- Aggressive
- Hyper
- Stubborn
- Spiteful
Skill Building

Puppy raising is about skill building. You start laying the basic foundation of training and experiences for the puppy. Then you gradually build on those skills. So if your pup is well-behaved in a small drug store, and has a good established history of walking through the drug store on a loose leash, without scrambling across the linoleum floor or shrinking away at the automatic doors, great! You are ready to try a bigger grocery store!

But what if you get to the grocery store, and it’s the shiny new store with the parking garage, elevators, and a large crowd? Maybe when you get out of the car, the puppy exits slower, without his usual gusto, and he is looking all around the parking garage, then jumps slightly as the automatic doors slide open.

That’s the point at which you want to stop, take note of the puppy’s reaction, and honor it by proceeding slowly. Walk around the parking garage with some treats, working on basic obedience. Go through the sliding doors to the main entrance, and play some fun obedience games. Even if the puppy appears “fine,” that may be a good time to call it quits and go home. The puppy has just had to deal with a lot of stimuli. Try looking at it from his point of view: the parking garage echoes, condenses the sounds and smells of vehicles, and may have dimmer lighting. The puppy is already on alert, and as you shut your car door, it sounds louder than it ever has before. So now maybe he is hyperaware of all of the changes around him. Then you approach an automatic door, and while he’s seen the drug store door, he’s never seen this door, and the smell inside of the store is different than the drug store. Plus, maybe a large family is exiting as you are getting ready to enter.

Making exposures beneficial

The purpose of taking a pup into different environments or introducing him to different stimuli is not to help him get used to it. Socialization really ends at 16 weeks; we complete a lot of socialization in the puppy kennel, with a very carefully designed program. There are times in a puppy’s life (4–6 weeks of age) when they are naturally very curious and have little to no startle/fear response, so we break down the elements of important guide dog exposures and build a reference library for the puppy of sights, smells, sounds, and textures.

So during the age of 10–16 weeks, we’re looking to have raisers do some socialization with people, with household living, and small neighborhood exposures. The puppy can be a little more sensitive and likely to startle during this time, so keeping things positive, light, and fun is extremely important.

Outings are really opportunities to gradually teach the puppy to behave and develop good habits in different environments, as well as to ascertain if the puppy shows any areas of concern. The puppy will be exposed to different stimuli, but the key is to do it gradually and positively. Simply exposing the puppy isn’t enough, as too much exposure can backfire.

Outings for the puppy should be gradual and based on his behavior. It is so important to be focused on the puppy when you are out and about because it is all about him. Bad behaviors can become habits very quickly; we cannot stress enough the importance of foundation behaviors and a good behavior history. It is impossible to expose a guide dog puppy to every single thing that he might encounter as a guide dog. So let’s say you can’t get the puppy you’re raising onto a plane, maybe because you aren’t traveling anywhere that you could bring the puppy. If he has a history of being taught to walk nicely in crowds, focusing in spite of loud metal noises, settling nicely when riding on public transportation, and being obedient even when people try to talk to him, he is very likely going to handle his first airport as a guide dog just fine.

By the same token, if you are raising a puppy who gets overwhelmed by crowds, tucks his tail and startles at loud noises, or is unsettled on bus rides, that doesn’t necessarily mean he is out of the running to be a guide dog. However, that is important information to find out on your outings with the puppy, so the trainers can make an appropriate match later on. If the dog has that information recorded in his puppy history, they will not match him with someone who travels regularly on airplanes.

So “exposures” are really not about making sure the puppy gets around certain stimuli in order to “expose” him; it is actually about teaching him all of the basic behaviors, and also about gathering information.
That is a lot for a puppy to take in, even a very confident and brave puppy! Spend 15 minutes socializing, doing fun obedience, and having a positive experience in the quietest part of the entrance you can find. Send another family member to get any groceries you might need, then go home. (If you don’t have someone with you, plan on not actually shopping on the puppy’s first grocery store outing).

The next time you visit that grocery store, your pup will remember it as a place where some potentially scary things happened, but he had fun! And the scary parts didn’t last that long...so maybe this time, he is ready to try the elevator.

Ideally, a pup should not have an experience if he hasn’t learned the basic elements leading up to it.

OUT AND ABOUT

Socializing with People

One of the most important elements of raising a guide dog is socializing and exposing him to a wide variety of people. In the puppy kennel, all of our puppies receive extensive socialization during Puppy Education. During your puppy’s first weeks home with you, he will still be in a critical, sensitive socialization period. That socialization period runs through 16 weeks of age; the experiences your puppy has during this time will shape his adult temperament, so it is of vital importance to make sure the puppy has positive experiences and is not overwhelmed.

Socializing the puppy can be a balancing act. People will stop you and want to pet the puppy. Coworkers, friends, and strangers alike will want to interact with the puppy. However, it is your job to make sure that the puppy does not get overwhelmed, and also is rewarded for keeping attention on you.

One of the best ways to give your puppy positive early experiences is by having visitors to your home. Set aside some kibble and toys; have visitors sit on the floor and allow them to play with the puppy. If the puppy jumps, the visitors can use the kibble or toys to practice SIT. It is important not to correct the puppy; the priority is socializing with visitors, in the comfort of his familiar home environment. It is his choice to interact, and he is not confined by the leash.

When you take the puppy out on a walk, to a puppy meeting, or anywhere out on a leash, the priority should be rewarding attention on you. Just working on

Socializing tips

If the puppy hesitates, compresses his body, or squats, let them know that the puppy is nervous and not ready to say hello, then move on. Do not force the puppy, and do not allow strangers to rush up onto the puppy. The puppy needs to have the leash length and space available to back up if he chooses. Practice walking past people and give the pup a piece of kibble as he walks past. If he initiates contact, allow the greeter to speak to the pup, but let the puppy warm up in his own time. It may take several outings with no petting for the puppy to get comfortable, but taking that extra time lets the puppy know that you have his back, and that you won’t let people overwhelm him. That will go a long way towards his future social skills.

If the puppy is excited and jumps, gently redirect him to have 4 on the floor by shortening the leash, but do not correct him. The priority is having a positive greeting experience. Keep the greeting brief and then call the puppy back to you for a piece of kibble. Repeating this consistently will be laying the foundation of appropriate greetings, and will keep the puppy from getting too excited by the stranger (because he’s expecting to be called back by you).
Socializing tips

Obedience for kibble around people is a form of socialization. Start early prioritizing attention on you. If someone would like to greet the puppy, allow the puppy to choose whether or not he would like to greet. Have the person kneel a short distance away and invite the puppy to say hello.

Socializing with Other Dogs—On Leash

Puppies should be socialized with a variety of trustworthy dogs. Prior to 16 weeks old, keep them away from unknown dogs or areas where unknown dogs frequent such as pet stores. It is important only to expose the puppy to other dogs that are known to be up-to-date on vaccines.

As with people, the best way to introduce the puppy to another dog is to make sure it is the puppy’s choice to interact. However, it should also be the other dog’s choice to interact. Some dogs will be irritated with puppies and may not appreciate the sharp teeth and high energy level.

Right from the beginning, only allow your puppy to greet another dog after you have gotten the puppy’s attention (and gotten permission from the other handler). So if you are at a puppy meeting, and your puppy and another are straining toward each other, do not allow them to “pull” into the greeting on a tight leash. Adhere to the following protocol:

1. Both handlers should say the puppy’s name and have the puppy sit first. If the pups cannot focus enough to sit, they should be backed away from each other until there is enough distance to help them focus.

2. The puppy can sit in any position in relation to the handler; it does not have to be a heel position. In fact, sitting in front of the handler may help break eye contact with the other dog, which relieves tension.

3. Each puppy can receive a treat while seated; if one of the puppies breaks suddenly and turns around, they should be called back to a sit.

4. When both puppies are sitting patiently, they can be told to BREAK and allowed to greet.

5. Keep the leashes loose during the greeting; allow the pups to circle and sniff.
6. Call the puppies away from each other after about 5 to 10 seconds and reward.

7. The greeting can be immediately repeated or the puppies can move on.

Proceeding with greetings this way teaches the puppy that the focus is still on you, allows the pups to get to know each other in a positive way, and keeps the tension low by making the greetings brief. If it goes well, the puppies can be allowed to interact more or play off the leash, but **on-leash greetings should always be brief**. The focus is supposed to be on the handler when the puppies are leashed, and on-leash greetings tend to involve more tension and risk of a bad experience.

Do not allow the puppy to rush up to another dog uninvited. This creates a bad, and potentially dangerous habit, and could set the puppy up for a very negative experience. Puppies should be restricted from greeting one another during meetings.

**Socializing with Other Dogs—Off Leash**

Regular play dates for the puppy in a safe, enclosed area are a good way for your pup to learn how to play appropriately. You may have a resident dog who will happily entertain your puppy, but it is a good idea to give your dog some exposure to young, friendly, vaccinated pups that have a similar energy level and will enjoy romping. **Do not take the puppy to a dog park.** Instead, arrange play dates with other raisers, or invite a friend over who has a social, easy-going pet dog. Puppies 6 months and older can be sexually mature; therefore play dates should be with the same sex beginning at 6 months of age. Once puppies are spayed or neutered, co-ed play dates can resume.

Healthy play between dogs involves lots of pauses. **It’s a good idea, after the dogs have been playing for several minutes, to have both handlers step in, leash the dogs and calmly praise them. Or, one handler can call the dogs to sit for treats. After a brief break, they can go back to playtime.** This gives the dogs a chance to collect themselves, and gives the handlers a chance to check in and see if one of the dogs is overtired or in need of a longer break. It also keeps dogs from escalating into playing too rough or too intensely.

Some dogs are very vocal during playtime, and others are silent. Some dogs prefer to chase or be chased, while other dogs are very physical and like to wrestle. A dog might show a lot of teeth, raise the hackles on his back, spin in circles, or get the “zoomies.” All of that is normal and okay. You will have to learn the puppy’s play style and temperament.

**When to step in:**

If one puppy is consistently bowled over or “on the bottom”: pull the “top dog” off and see what the “bottom dog” does. If the “bottom dog” comes right back for more, they are fine. Some dogs just tend to roll over. If the “bottom dog” shakes off and walks away, time for a break.

If one puppy yelps or screams, all puppies should be collected and given a break. This helps enforce to all of the dogs that a high-pitched noise from a playmate means play has gone too far, and keeps “pack mentality” from setting in.

If one puppy seems to be consistently bullied or cornered, especially if that puppy is younger than his playmate(s), end playtime. Arrange a playdate with a calm, older dog who will allow the pup to build confidence. Puppies that tend to be bullies can benefit from a “no-nonsense,” experienced older dog that enjoys other dogs, but doesn’t put up with bullish behavior from pups.
EARNING THE COAT

Your Area Coordinator will give you a coat upon successful completion of Puppy Kindergarten. The puppy’s readiness for the coat will be determined by the pup’s behavior, obedience, health, and confidence.

The guidelines for the coat are as follows:

- **Do** have the puppy wear the coat on outings, to events, and in public. Practice obedience both in and out of coat.
- **Always** take the coat off before allowing the pup to socialize with another dog.
- **Always** keep the coat clean and in good condition.
- For puppies **older than 10 months**, **do not** allow petting in-coat. You **may** allow petting in-coat for puppies **younger than 10 months**, but you may discontinue public petting at an earlier age if you feel the puppy is practicing poor greeting behaviors.
- **Do not** allow the puppy to relieve in coat. Working guide dogs are not allowed to relieve in harness, so we condition the puppies for the same behavior. If the puppy starts to relieve in coat, try to interrupt him and redirect him to an appropriate location. If you cannot interrupt, take the coat off, then clean up. **Always** bring cleaning supplies with you.
- **Do not** allow the puppy to drink water while in coat. If you need to give the puppy water, take the coat off first, then put it back on.
- **Do not** deface the puppy coat with any permanent changes or additions. The coat will be re-used.
- **Never** allow another dog, outside of our program, to wear the puppy coat.

The coat is designed to fit the puppy through the entire raising period. Ask your AC if you need assistance with sizing.

OUT AND ABOUT IN COAT

Just because the puppy has his coat does not mean he is ready to go everywhere yet! Start slowly with outings. Think of every outing as a skill-building opportunity. Outings should be about **this** puppy at **this** age; do not just take the puppy along with you everywhere. Instead, have scheduled outings that you are able to cut short if you notice that the puppy is overwhelmed.

Practice obedience every time you get to a new environment. It is going to be more difficult for the puppy to perform “in public” as well as he has been performing at home. Review the basic commands and be prepared to re-teach some of them, or give the puppy extra time to process things.

DISCONTINUING PUBLIC PETTING IN COAT

It is important to not allow the puppy to be petted while in coat by 10 months of age. However, with a very social or sensitive dog, you may find it is beneficial to stop public petting earlier. This begins to define “working behavior” more clearly to the puppy.

If someone asks to pet the puppy while he is in coat, you can simply respond with, “Sorry, but he’s working. He needs to learn not to seek attention.” It can be a good educational opportunity. If you would like to allow someone to pet the puppy, take the puppy’s coat off first.
Sometimes people may ambush you and pet the puppy without asking. Many of the socialization exercises that you worked on, such as having the puppy sit in front of you or practicing a highly-rewarded LET’S GO around distracting people, will have prepared you for this. Ask the puppy to focus on you by saying his name; reward him with food and get him moving past the stranger when you can. It is often easier to train the dog rather than the general public.

**THE 3 “D”S: DISTANCE, DISTRACTION AND DURATION**

When working with a dog in obedience, we build on distance, distraction, and duration throughout their training. Successful dogs will have had focused training for all three aspects of their obedience. Taking the Three Ds into account ensures that you will be able to maintain a better connection with your pup! This connection will be critical in developing a relationship with your pup.

Let’s define the Three Ds so you have a better understanding of what each entails.

- **Duration**: This is the amount of time we ask a puppy to hold a position or do a behavior.
- **Distance**: This has two definitions. First, this is referring to the distance you and your puppy are in relation to a distraction, difficult environment, etc. Second, this can also mean the distance between you and your puppy, such as during a COME training exercise.
- **Distraction**: This is anything that takes your pup’s focus away from you. Each dog will differ in what they find most distracting, but some common high distractions are other dogs, small animals, people, or items blowing/moving.

When working on one of the Three Ds, you will want to make the others easier so that you are successful. For example, if you are working on holding a “sit” near another dog (distraction), then make sure you are only asking for a short **duration** and that your **distance** is not too close to the dog distraction.

One important question you should start asking yourself any time you aren’t sure how to reconnect with your puppy: **“What can I change to make it easier for my puppy to reconnect with me - duration, distance or distraction?”** This question will be the starting point for setting your pup up for success and helping them lead off on the right paw!

For more information on the Three Ds, please refer to the Blue Cape Journal entries: “The Three Ds: Duration” (November 2015), “The Three Ds: Distance” (December 2015), and “The Three Ds: Distraction” (January 2016).

**GENERALIZING OBEDIENCE**

Dogs don’t naturally generalize well; if SIT applies in the living room, he won’t automatically understand that it also applies in the grocery store. Be prepared to “re-teach” a command if necessary. Go back to the basics and be patient.

If obedience is going well, and then it falls apart in the presence of a particular “scary” stimulus (such as a loud truck), remember that the dog might be overwhelmed and need some time to collect himself. Add distance, lessen the distraction, or shorten the duration and see if the pup is able to respond.
RELAXATION

Guide dogs have a lot of down time, followed by periods of focus and work. Switch between the two modes: relaxation and work.

Relaxation protocol A video link is also available on the Puppy Raiser Resources webpage.

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**Feed 10-12 treats from your hand and do not place treats on the ground.**
HOUSE MANNERS

One of the most important responsibilities you have as a puppy raiser is to teach the puppy appropriate house manners. As the puppy ages you will be able to give it more unsupervised freedom in the home. However, it is important not to get too comfortable, as the puppy is still a youngster and still has trouble to discover. It is also imperative to continue tie-down usage, even if you feel the puppy does not need it. This not only prevents problems but also keeps the puppy adjusted to being kept on tie-down. When the dogs in training are matched with the visually-impaired students, the tie-down will be used heavily.

Try to focus on the DOs of house manners rather than the DON’Ts.

So try not to think of house manners in this way:

- Don’t take food items off of the counters (“counter surfing”).
- Don’t steal tissues out of the wastebasket.
- Don’t beg for food at the table.
- Don’t steal the remote control and play a game of keep away with it.
- Don’t ingest items (socks, books, towels, dog beds, etc.).
- Don’t bolt out the door.
- Don’t urinate or defecate in the house.

Try to focus on teaching the puppy these behaviors instead:

- DOWN/STAY on your bed when food is being prepared in the kitchen; alternatively, respect the boundary of the kitchen and go settle elsewhere when food is being prepared.
- Choose your toys instead of the wastebasket, which will now be placed in more obvious places during playtime so I can offer immediate feedback.
- DOWN/STAY in a predetermined location during human meal times (can be at your feet if you’re practicing for future restaurant visits; can also be on a dog bed.)
- Trade stolen items for treats or toys; making it a positive thing for a puppy to trade in “forbidden items” prevents guarding, keep away, and swallowing.
- Regularly practice SIT/STAY at doors; sometimes you get to go through them, sometimes not.
- Urinate and defecate outside on command.
Protocols and Training Concepts

PUPPY EVALUATIONS

In the best interest of the developing puppy, Puppy Raising Services has developed evaluation forms to help monitor the progress of the puppy. These evaluations will only be beneficial to you, the puppy, Puppy Raising Services, and the trainers if completed thoroughly and honestly, based on your experience and observations of the pup. Because the staff at the school doesn’t regularly see the puppy once it is in your home, these evaluations help to keep the staff informed about the puppy. For your sake, these evaluations will help to pinpoint any areas that may be troublesome for you. This may help alleviate some frustrations you may be encountering and initiate the help you may need.

On the Southeastern Guide Dogs website on the Puppy Raiser Resources website page, a link to the 8 month and Final evaluations are available for you to complete. The evaluations will cover multiple areas, including health, training, and behavior. Some questions will be repeated on each evaluation in order to track progress. You should complete these evaluations in a timely manner so that you will have a chance to proofread the evaluation and then monitor the puppy on these problem areas.

Strive to be truthful in your descriptions. Ignoring or minimizing problem areas means losing the opportunity to address the pup’s issues early, and does not give the trainers a complete picture of the puppy’s history. You will have plenty of room to expand on any points that require clarification.

In addition to the 8 month and final evaluation prior to Freshman Orientation, your Regional Manager will schedule two Walk and Talks with you and your puppy: one early post placement (3-6 months) and one between 9-12 months. Prior to your appointment, you will need to complete the pre Walk and Talk questionnaire also found on the Puppy Raiser Resources website page.

We want to make this experience fun and rewarding for you. Therefore, we have this system in place to give you the help you may need. No puppy is perfect, and some may need extra attention in certain areas. We will all be there to help you along the way!

PUPPY CAMP

Puppy Camps:
- Occur at least once, if not more, during the raising period
- Begin at 6 months of age
- Last a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of 3 weeks.

Puppy Camp is a pre-planned “vacation” for the puppy you are raising—scheduled by your AC. The recommended age of puppies going to their first camp experience is 6 months; however, there can be occasions in which it is suggested by your AC or the school that camp is deemed necessary at a different age. Over the puppy-raising period, there can be as few as one puppy camp or as many as four requested, usually ranging from 2 to 4 consecutive weeks. A Puppy Camp is basically having a different raiser temporarily provide care for the puppy you are raising.

When the puppy is requested to attend Puppy Camp, you will most likely be requested at the same time to Puppy Camp another raiser’s puppy. Don’t be surprised if the puppy reacts differently. One of the main purposes of camp is to see how the puppy reacts to a set of different situations. Expect a decline in obedience and behavior; treat a puppy you are camping as you would a brand new puppy, regardless of the age of the puppy. You will want to widen your Box of Acceptable Behaviors because the puppy is out of his element. He may not respond to “known” commands or may regress with house manners; this is normal. Plan to re-teach many commands, do not start outings too soon, and gradually help the puppy adjust to his new routines.
Prior to scheduling and swapping, complete the Puppy Camp Preparation Form found on the Puppy Raiser Resources page. Evaluation forms indicating the puppy’s behavior and habits should be completed directly following the camp and forwarded to your AC.

Your AC (or Puppy Raising Services) will make the decision for swapping puppies within the group based on the information provided by puppy behaviors and habits, raisers’ knowledge and skills, environments, and exposure levels. This structured environment allows the puppy to experience different handling styles, voice commands, home environments, family structure (children, cats) and the potential for a variety of different exposures needed to achieve a well-rounded puppy and making the most of this valuable camp time. Circumstances may also dictate that a swap is done with someone outside of your Puppy Raiser group.

At the scheduled time of swap, bring:

- Puppy Coat
- Collars
- Leash
- Food
- Medications
- Special Instructions

Consult with your AC as to how much the puppy host and raiser should communicate during the camp.

During the first few days, remember that the puppy is in a new environment with a different handler and may take time to be comfortable. When the puppy is in a camp home, the handler should complete the Puppy Camp Evaluation (found on the Puppy Raiser Resources page) on the observed behaviors and basic obedience level of the puppy. Keeping daily notes on exposures, stimuli, and reactions can be beneficial for preparing your report. The evaluation is reviewed by the AC and discussed with the Puppy Raiser. The evaluation is then forwarded to Puppy Raising Services.
CHAPTER 5: OBEDIENCE
OBEDIENCE

In preparation to become a future guide or service dog, Southeastern Guide Dogs requires their puppies to know basic obedience commands. These basics will instill polite behavior and be used when teaching more complex guide or service dog commands.

It’s important to go at a steady and appropriate pace for your puppy. Below is a general, recommended list of when to BEGIN teaching behaviors. Each command has three levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Most puppies should spend 2-3 months working through all levels of a command before reaching the “high school level.”

Recommended Ages for Commands

3-6 Months
- Come
- Down
- Drop It
- Harness On
- Heel
- Sit
- Stand
- Close

6-9 Months
- Place
- Stay
- Switch
- Turn

9+ Months
- Down/Under
COME

The COME command is the single most important behavior you will teach your puppy. It is critical to introduce the command in a positive, inviting way, as it is a command that could potentially save your dog’s life some day.

Remember that the hand target for this command is very important. For the future guide dog, a physical contact will allow the handler to know where his dog is, and it helps to clarify the command for the dog. Additionally, it is important that you always place your hand in the collar as you treat the pup to help build a good association of being held by the collar. This will come in handy if your dog were to accidentally escape and you had to lead him back without a leash.

Troubleshooting

- **Puppy doesn’t choose to come back to you when given command.** Do not pull puppy towards you to make him do it. Instead, decrease your distance by stepping closer towards puppy, gathering extra leash in hand as you step closer. Try the command again and, if it doesn’t work, continue to decrease distance between you and puppy until you have a successful COME. Also, decrease distraction when working on COME (i.e. move from your backyard to inside your house).
- **Puppy runs and jumps on you when he recalls back.** As puppy approaches, take a step back and keep your hand with treat low so he doesn’t feel tempted to jump.
- **Puppy jumps at closed fist.** Make sure your hand is low enough that puppy can target it without jumping up.

Tips

- You may begin the Elementary stage of COME as soon as your puppy comes home. Starting early by moving away from the puppy helps encourage his instinct to follow you, which can serve as an additional cue if you find yourself needing your dog to come.
- Start in an environment with a low level of distractions.
- Make sure to never call your pup to COME and then scold him.
- From the beginning, you want to give a consistently strong, clear command. Imagine how you would call your dog if he got away from you; you might have to shout if your dog is a distance away. Be sure to give the command as “[puppy name], COME” early on, instead of a high-pitched and repetitive “COME-COME-COME-COME-COME!” You can still be encouraging with your voice and should praise the dog as he starts to respond to the command, but make sure you don’t repeat the actual command.
- Become a magnet for the puppy; clap your hands, back up a few steps, and verbally encourage him. Moving away from a dog is more inviting than standing still or moving towards him.
- When practicing this command outside, always use a leash. The leash allows you to practice this command in a variety of environments without the puppy having the option to ignore you. A solid history of successful recalls will set your puppy up for reliability on this command.
**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Start with puppy facing you, on leash.
2. Holding a treat in your hand, wave treat in front of pup’s nose.
3. Quickly take two steps backwards.
4. Hold hand with treat in a fist at your thigh.
5. As puppy approaches your hand with treat, gently slip one finger of free hand into puppy’s collar.
6. Give treat to puppy.
7. Praise and release hand from collar.
8. Release with “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a LURE.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Start with puppy facing you, on leash.
2. Quickly step backwards to the end of your leash as you say, “[puppy’s name], COME.”
3. Hold hand in a fist at your thigh.
4. As puppy touches your fist, mark with “YES.”
5. Gently put free hand in puppy’s collar.
6. Give treat to puppy.
7. Praise and release hand from collar.
8. Release with a “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration and distance.

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**HIGH SCHOOL:**

- Because this command is so important, we will ALWAYS provide a REWARD for every repetition.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
DOWN

The DOWN command is one of the basic obedience commands and is very important to teach. You will learn the teaching technique for DOWN during Puppy Kindergarten class. You will also use the Paw Pad to help with teaching DOWN. One important aspect of guide dog work is that the dog is able to relax his mind and rest when his handler is seated and relaxed, then quickly return to “on duty,” working mode when it’s time to go. However, when the DOWN command is given, the puppy should remain in the position until given another command or release phrase.

Similar to SIT, this command can also be used for the puppy to earn things that he wants, such as attention, toys, continuing a walk, food bowl, etc. Use these basic commands to regain the puppy’s focus if he gets too wound up.

Troubleshooting

- **Puppy won’t lie down on floor.** Make sure to keep lure close to puppy’s nose so puppy can follow. Move lure slowly to the ground. He will start to learn that he gets a treat for being in this position and you can transition to formally asking for a DOWN.

- **Puppy paws, licks, or bites at hand holding lure.** Wait for a moment (no matter how small) when pup is not licking, etc. then release treat.

- **Puppy always has to SIT before doing a DOWN.** Mix up the order you are asking for behaviors (use a variety such as SIT, DOWN, STAND, and HEEL) and only mark and reward for perfect repetitions.

Tips

- Make sure that you are not allowing your dog to break commands and slip into a DOWN position. It is more desirable for the default stationary position to be SIT, not DOWN.

- Practice having the dog DOWN from a standing position, or a SIT from a DOWN.

- Keep in mind that if your pup normally obeys the DOWN command agreeably, but suddenly won’t, there may be something in the environment making him uncomfortable.

- Do not ever force or yank the puppy into a DOWN command; you are trying to persuade him and calmly enforce the command, not bully him into a vulnerable position. Forcing him into obeying the DOWN command could damage the trust your puppy has in you.
ELEMENTARY:

1. Start with puppy on your left side or in front. You may kneel or crouch when first teaching this command.
2. With puppy in the SIT position, have multiple pieces of kibble in the hand. Hold in front of puppy’s nose and slowly move hand in a straight line to the floor.
3. As puppy moves/lowers body, reward puppy.
4. When puppy is in DOWN position, give many treats in rapid succession.
5. Praise.

Notes:
• This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

1. Start with puppy on your left side.
2. Hold flat hand, palm down in front of puppy’s nose and lower hand as you say the command (adding in his name), “[puppy’s name], DOWN.”
3. When puppy’s belly touches the ground into a down position, say “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Release with a “BREAK” command.

Notes:
• This stage is using a REWARD.
• Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
• Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
• Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

HIGH SCHOOL:

• At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
• Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
• Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
• Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
• Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
DROP IT

The DROP IT command is defined to the dog as: voluntarily release whatever is in your mouth. In order to teach a reliable DROP IT, first be prepared to teach it through trades: when the puppy picks up an object, use a treat to trade for the object. We want the puppy to willingly relinquish the object when he hears DROP IT, and the best way to teach that is by offering him something he wants more. Young puppies are very agreeable to this, due to their short attention spans.

Troubleshooting

- **Pup chooses item over treat.** Make sure you are using a high value treat for items that are very meaningful to puppy.

- **Pup picks up a dangerous item like a pill or needle and doesn’t have a consistent “DROP IT” yet.** You may sweep the item from the mouth if it is a possible danger to puppy. This will not teach the puppy, but will at least manage the situation.

- **Pup grabs item after taking treat but before you have a chance to pick it up.** Puppies are very quick and many will take your treat and instantly try to grab the item from the ground. If this happens, make sure you are using one hand to treat while the empty hand is ready to pick up the item as soon as puppy releases it.

Tips

- Practice DROP IT with both objects they are allowed to have (their toys) as well as other things puppies tend to pick up, such as socks and leaves.

- Establish a good history of “trades,” ideally before teething kicks into high gear. This will prevent the puppy from becoming head-shy or possessive.

- Praise the pup lavishly when he releases the item, and be prepared to manage the environment if you find yourself having to use the command over and over again (i.e. if there are tiny sticks on the ground that the puppy keeps crunching, sweep away the area as best you can or move to a clearer area).
**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Give puppy item that he will be interested in picking up or chewing on (ideally a toy, in the beginning).
2. As puppy puts item in mouth, place treat in front of puppy’s nose.
3. As puppy releases item to take the treat, give treat to puppy.
4. Praise.
5. Pick up item. If item is something puppy can have, such as a toy, you can give item back. If not, then remove item from environment.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- There is no BREAK for this command.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically remove the item from pup’s mouth unless it’s an emergency.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly and readily dropping items.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Give puppy item that he will be interested in picking up or chewing on (ideally a toy, in the beginning).
2. As puppy puts item in mouth, say “[puppy name], DROP IT.”
3. As puppy releases item, mark with “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Pick up item. If item is something puppy can have, such as a toy, you can give item back. If not, then remove item from environment.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
- There is no BREAK for this command.
- Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Resist the urge to physically remove the item from pup’s mouth unless it’s an emergency.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions.

**HIGH SCHOOL:**

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
HARNESS ON

We want to make sure that the puppy has a positive association with his coat. By working on HARNESS ON, you will teach the puppy to enjoy putting on his coat, and it will prepare him for eventually putting on a guide dog harness.

Troubleshooting

- **Puppy is reluctant or refusing to put head through opening.** Make sure opening is large and roomy enough, especially for puppies who are just beginning to learn the behavior. Consider using something that will hold its opening, such as a buckled belt or wreath or have another person hold the item open and wide while you lure puppy.

- **Puppy is uncomfortable in coat or with other items on body.** Speak with your Area Coordinator. Be prepared to show AC what happens when you put item on dog or submit an electronic video of puppy demonstrating unusual behavior. The AC and your Regional Manager will discuss a plan with you for your puppy.

Tips

- While helping your pup to generalize the command, you can practice with anything that has a large enough opening for your pup’s head—his coat, a t-shirt, an E-collar/cone, a buckled belt, etc.

- Our handlers who are visually impaired or blind may not be able to easily find their pup’s nose, at times. It is very important that you do not move the coat (or other item) over the pup’s head. Instead, your hand that is holding the coat should remain still, allowing the puppy to do the work of placing his head through the opening. This way, the dog will be targeting the opening as you (or his future handler) holds the coat stationary, avoiding any issues of accidentally hitting the dog in the head with buckles, straps, etc.

**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Hold the coat in front of the puppy, so that the neck opening is at the puppy’s eye level.
2. Holding a treat in your hand, put your luring hand through the opening of the coat, showing the puppy your treat.
3. While the hand holding the coat remains stationary, lure the puppy through the opening of the coat by backing out your luring hand slowly through the opening of the coat.
4. When pup’s head comes all the way through the opening, give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Place coat on puppy’s back and buckle.
### Notes:
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- This command has no “BREAK” release word.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL:
1. Hold the coat in front of the puppy, so that the neck opening is at the puppy’s eye level.
2. Holding a treat in your hand, put your luring hand by the opening of the coat, opposite of the side the puppy is standing.
3. While the hand holding the coat remains stationary, wait for the puppy to begin to move towards the opening of the coat and towards your hand.
4. When pup’s head comes all the way through the opening, give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Place coat on puppy’s back and buckle.

### Notes:
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- This command has no “BREAK” release word.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

### HIGH SCHOOL:
1. Hold the coat in front of the puppy, so that the neck opening is at the puppy’s eye level.
2. Holding empty hand on opposite side of coat from puppy and while leaving the hand holding the coat still, say “[pup’s name], HARNESS ON.”
3. As pup moves head through coat, mark with “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Place coat on puppy’s back and buckle.

### Notes:
- At this stage, you are using a REWARD, eventually transitioning to INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Begin to fade holding your hand in front of coat and just present the opening of the coat while asking for the command, verbally.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
Preparing for Puppy Obedience

HEEL

The HEEL position is defined as the dog at the handler’s left side. Guide dog puppies need to think of HEEL as a default position. Commands such as SIT, DOWN, and STAY should be practiced at your left side the majority of the time.

Teaching a puppy a call-to-heel command is a great way to capture the puppy’s attention and to give him a clear expectation of where you would like him to be. So if the puppy is in front of you or otherwise away from your side, you can command him to HEEL and he will learn to move into a standing or seated position at your left side. It is a good way to start an obedience session, to get control when the pup is in a wild mood, and to “reset” the dog if he gets distracted.

Troubleshooting

• Puppy ends up crooked, with his head in the correct position but his rear facing out or to the side. After you bring your feet together, take a few more steps forward as necessary to get the puppy in a straight position at your side. Reward him when he is straight and pet him in the heel position. You can also practice HEEL standing close to a wall, which will give the pup limited room to swing out his rear. The wall should be on your left side and the pup will be asked for the HEEL on your left side, so as to be between you and the wall.

• Puppy has trouble following the lure, gets lost along the way, or doesn’t want to get up. Make sure you are moving the lure slowly and that the puppy realizes you have a treat in your hand. You can also try putting three treats in your left hand and rewarding different parts of the HEEL to break it down. Take a step back with your left foot and lure the puppy; give the first treat as soon as the pup gets up to start following the lure. Continue luring and give another treat as the pup starts to make the turn towards you. Give the final treat (and say “YES”, etc.) once the puppy arrives in heel. Over the next few repetitions, gradually reduce to two treats and then finally one.

Tips

• Guide dogs are taught what is known as a “horseshoe heel.” In this technique, the dog makes a horseshoe-shaped U-turn (or a backward “J”) at your side in order to position himself at heel. This skill takes some coordination and footwork on the handler’s part.

ELEMENTARY:

1. Face the puppy to get his attention. He can be in a sit position, distracted, or just “hanging out.”
2. Hold treat in left hand, fingers pointing down to ground.
3. Putting treat in front of pup’s nose and luring him towards your left side, leading him back (facing opposite your orientation), then turning him towards you.
Middle School:

1. Start with puppy not on your left side so that you can call him into heel position.
2. Hold open left hand, fingers pointing down to ground, and say, “[puppy name], HEEL.”
3. Using your open hand, lead puppy back (facing opposite your orientation), then turning him towards you.
4. When puppy is in position on your left side, say “YES.”
5. Give treat to puppy.
6. Praise.
7. Release with “BREAK” command.

Notes:
- This stage is using a REWARD and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

High School:

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand or verbal signals.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- You should be able to give this command with no stepping back and with more subtle hand movements.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
SIT

SIT is a very basic command that you will use often with your puppy. You will learn the teaching technique for SIT during Puppy Kindergarten class. You will also use the Paw Pad to help with teaching SIT. After you have begun to teach the command, start applying SIT to daily life. If your puppy would like your attention, have him SIT first. If you are feeding him or taking him outside, have him SIT before putting the food bowl down, or before opening the door. You can also have him SIT before saying hello to a visitor. This method will teach him to “sit and say please” when he wants something, rather than jumping, pawing, or barking. A SIT is always rewarded, while the unwanted behaviors are not.

Troubleshooting

• Puppy jumps up for lure. Do not bring hand up too high or too fast.

Tips

• Initially, you will use treats to help the puppy understand what it is that you want, but it shouldn’t be long before he realizes that the real reward is not the treat. He’s actually performing a SIT to earn a greeting, a walk, or anything else that he wants. These pleasurable events are life rewards, and using them is a great way to make sure your puppy understands that SIT applies to many situations, not just when there is a treat present. This will also help transfer that same rule to other behaviors, as time goes on.
**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Start with puppy in front of you in a STAND position.
2. Hold multiple pieces of kibble in front of puppy’s nose. Slowly move hand forward and slightly above puppy’s head.
3. Feed kibble the entire time puppy is moving into the SIT position.
4. When puppy is in the SIT position, give multiple pieces of kibble.
5. Praise.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Start with puppy on your left side.
2. Hold flat hand, palm up in front of puppy’s nose and raise hand up as you say the command (adding in his name), “[puppy’s name], “SIT.”
3. When puppy tucks his rear into a sit position and rear touches floor, say “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Release with a “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

**HIGH SCHOOL:**

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
STAND

The STAND command will be used the most during grooming, veterinary exams, and when having the puppy get up during outings, so introduce it as a calm, stationary position. One of the primary goals of STAND is to let the puppy know that it is time to be “on duty” again and to wait for further instructions.

Troubleshooting

• *Puppy doesn’t follow lure into STAND.* Make sure you move the lure very slowly so puppy doesn’t lose track of it. Do not pull hand too far away from pup, either. Give puppy at least 5 seconds before asking for the command a 2nd time.

• *Puppy keeps walking and doesn’t STAND in place.* Puppy should stay in one spot after asking for the STAND command. Make sure you mark with “YES” as soon as puppy is on all 4 feet. When using a lure, bring hand with lure to pup’s mouth so puppy doesn’t continue to walk towards your hand for treat.

Tips

• This command should be taught early on so that it can be interchangeably used with SIT and DOWN. Having multiple commands will prevent a dog from patterning behaviors in a specific order.
**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Start with puppy on your left side, in either a SIT or DOWN position.
2. Hold treat in front of puppy’s nose and slowly pull hand straight out in front of puppy, ending a couple of inches away from pup’s nose.
3. When puppy is standing on all four feet, give treat to puppy.
4. Praise.
5. Release with “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Start with puppy on your left side, in either a SIT or DOWN position.
2. Hold hand flat, as though you are shaking someone’s hand, palm towards pup’s nose, and slowly pull hand straight out in front of puppy, ending a couple of inches away from pup’s nose, as you say the command (adding in his name), “[puppy’s name], “STAND.”
3. When puppy is standing on all four feet, say “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. Release with a “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

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**HIGH SCHOOL:**

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
CLOSE

The command of CLOSE is used to have your pup sit between your knees. This is very useful to help keep the pup out of the way of foot traffic in a crowded situation, such as on a bus or other public transport. Your pup will learn DOWN/UNDER, but should first master CLOSE, as a beginning piece of the DOWN/UNDER command.

Troubleshooting

- **Puppy seems to get lost while walking into position, causing pup to move in a full circle or multiple circles.** If this happens, make sure to stop and “reset” the puppy by walking away from the chair, returning after a few moments. Make sure you are very clear where you want the puppy to move by knowing how to maneuver the lure in the beginning stages. Also, gently place hand on pup’s thigh as he moves into place to help guide him a little.

- **Puppy lies down when I get to the center of the circle.** You are holding your lure too low to the ground and prompting the puppy into a DOWN. Try keeping your hand a little higher as you move it.

- **Puppy sits or jumps when I get to the center of the circle.** You are holding your lure too high and prompting the puppy into a SIT or causing pup to jump for treat. Try keeping your hand a little lower as you move it.

- **Pup doesn’t sit straight between my feet.** You are allowing the pup to not finish the half circle motion. Try extending your hand out past your right knee to get the puppy to move his rear end all the way between your knees.

Tips

- **As both you and puppy begin to understand the movement into CLOSE,** practice placing your hand lightly on pup’s thigh as he circles into position. This will help prepare him when his future handler is more tactile when asking for this position and will make your puppy more comfortable with being touched while performing the command. Make sure not to push or force puppy into position with the hand—just use this to keep him “on track” in the positioning.

- **To help visualize where your puppy should move,** imagine a clock is between your knees—12 o’clock is straight out and ahead of you, 9 o’clock is at your left knee, 6 o’clock is closest to your belly button, and 3 o’clock is at your right knee. When luring puppy, start at 9 o’clock, then 6 o’clock, followed by 3 o’clock, and up in the center of the clock to lure into a sitting position.
ELEMENTARY:
1. While you are seated in a chair, start with puppy facing you or out to your left side.
2. Tap your right thigh 3 times.
3. While holding lure to your left knee, slowly bring lure in between your knees, then to your right knee, and up in the center. (Pup should be following lure so that he makes a half circle in between your knees.)
4. Move the lure up, in the “center” of the circle, between your knees, to lure dog into a sit position (do not say “SIT”).
5. Once dog’s rump touches floor, with him facing the same direction you are facing, give treat to puppy.
6. Praise.
7. Release with “BREAK” command.

Notes:
- This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:
1. While you are seated in a chair, start with puppy facing you or out to your left side.
2. Say “[puppy’s name], CLOSE” and tap your right thigh 3 times.
3. If needed, as puppy circles into position, use right hand to prompt dog into a sit position (do not say “SIT”).
4. Once dog’s rump touches floor, with him facing the same direction you are facing, mark with “YES.”
5. Give treat to puppy.
6. Praise.
7. Release with “BREAK” command.

Notes:
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.
- Begin adding the 3Ds by practicing in new locations, with new chairs, adding more duration to the sitting position, etc.

HIGH SCHOOL:
- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals. Fade out the actual hand prompt and use only the tapping of the thigh as your hand signal.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
PLACE

The command of PLACE is used to direct pup to lie down on a mat or bed. This is convenient to keep your puppy from being underfoot. Additionally, it helps give direction to your puppy when you need them to be still for a period of time, such as at work or in a classroom.

Troubleshooting

- *Puppy isn’t going after treats on mat.* Make sure your puppy sees that you have put the treats on the mat. Use higher value treats if puppy isn’t interested in your treats.

- *Puppy isn’t staying in a down position on the mat.* Make sure to build duration very slowly. While your goal is to have pup to be able to relax on mat for a significant amount of time, initial duration should be extremely short of just a couple of seconds and built from there.

Tips

- Your puppy should be in Middle School level for DOWN before beginning PLACE.

- Begin teaching this with the same mat or bed. It’s best to use something that can easily be moved around or taken to different locations. When your puppy has mastered PLACE on that mat/bed, you can begin introducing other mats and beds.

- When using a different mat than normal, you might have to greatly minimize the distance from which you are asking for PLACE. After the pup has been shown the mat several times, they can usually generalize that that is the current “PLACE mat.”

- If your puppy is older or bigger and you are unable to hold the puppy back when first teaching PLACE, then you can put puppy in a SIT/STAY while you place treats on mat. Say “[puppy’s name], PLACE” as you point to treats on mat to prompt puppy to mat. Follow directions from that point.
ELEME NTARY:
1. Start by holding puppy around the chest, with your mat or bed about 1 foot away, and placing 3-4 treats on mat.
2. With one treat in your hand, release puppy.
3. As puppy runs to treats on mat and begins to eat them, place your hand with treat on mat to help lure puppy into a down position (but do not say “DOWN”).
4. When puppy lies down on mat, give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.

Notes:
• This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
• Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:
1. Making sure that you have the puppy’s attention and pup is very close to mat, with one treat in your hand, point one finger onto mat as you say “[puppy’s name], PLACE.”
2. Hold hand with pointed finger on mat and wait for puppy to lie down.
3. When puppy lies down on mat, give treat to puppy.
4. Praise.
5. Release with a “BREAK” command.

Notes:
• This stage is using a LURE.
• Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
• Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration. This includes asking for the command from a longer and longer distance away, varying the mat/bed, moving the mat/bed to other locations, and gradually building on duration.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

HIGH SCHOOL:
• At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
• Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
• Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
• Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
• Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
STAY

When teaching STAY, it is important to set the puppy up for success by progressing gradually and by giving the puppy clear instructions and expectations. To teach STAY, make sure you first have a clear understanding of the 3D’s: Distance, Distraction, and Duration. Begin to work on each element, one at a time, gradually increasing the difficulty and adding combinations. STAY is introduced in Puppy Kindergarten.

The most important first lessons with STAY will focus on duration. As the puppy begins to master duration, you will then introduce distance and distraction.

When teaching STAY, you should not use the command unless you are physically moving away from your dog. This means if you are only standing in place with your dog and ask for a SIT, do not additionally say STAY. But if you take one or more steps away from your pup, then you will add a STAY to the command. The commands SIT, DOWN, and STAND, alone, should have duration built in without having to be reminded to also STAY if you are not moving away from puppy.

Troubleshooting

- **Puppy is getting up as soon as you move away.** Make your movements even smaller—try stepping just one foot to the side while the other stays stationary or even just leaning away without moving your feet. As puppy begins to understand to remain in place, then you can gradually make your movements a little bigger.

- **Puppy remains in a sitting position but turns with you as you practice a STAY that moves around the puppy.** Make your movements smaller. Don’t expect to walk a complete circle around your puppy right away as that requires a long duration and provides a distraction. Instead, try stepping to one side of the pup, then try stepping to the other side, gradually adding more to the circle over time.

- **Puppy moves into a different position during a STAY.** It is common for a puppy to go from a SIT into a DOWN when asked for a STAY, as you move away. Make sure your expectations for duration are appropriate for the situation. Make sure your duration for SIT, in this example, is built up so that the pup can hold the position when you move away. If puppy breaks position, walk back to puppy and ask for behavior again. Adjust your distance and duration if puppy continues to break position.

Tips

- Do not use the pup’s name with the STAY command, as that may cause the puppy to get up before you can even utter, STAY.

- Practice STAY occasionally on your walks.

- At first, work on short, frequent stays in as many environments as possible. Do not focus on the length of time, but rather on the number of short stays you can teach your puppy. He will learn self-control in a variety of environments.

- When you begin introducing distance, simply work on pivoting in front of the puppy or moving your feet. It can be tempting to work on distance too early; focus more on STAY in a variety of environments first.

**ELEMENTARY:**

1. Start with puppy, on leash, on your left side, in either SIT, DOWN, or STAND position.
2. Without holding a treat in your hand, while keeping leash loose, move right hand across your body, palm towards puppy’s nose, and say, “STAY.”
3. Take one step away from pup and quickly return to puppy’s side.
4. Say “YES.”
MIDDLE SCHOOL:

1. Start with puppy, on leash, on your left side, in either SIT, DOWN, or STAND position.
2. Without holding a treat in your hand, while keeping leash loose, move right hand across your body, palm towards puppy’s nose, and say, “STAY.”
3. Take 2-3 steps away from pup and quickly return to puppy’s side.
4. Say “YES.”
5. Give treat to puppy.
6. Praise.
7. Release with “BREAK” command.

Notes:
- This stage is using a REWARD. This command does not have a LURE phase, as a lure in the hand will prompt pup to move.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Work on DISTANCE, only. Begin to slowly build on distance in this level, gradually making your distance longer and longer.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Do not use a tight leash to keep pup in place.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is able to hold position with some duration in all three STAYS of SIT, DOWN, and STAND.

HIGH SCHOOL:

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
- Work on DISTRACTION. Begin to slowly build on distraction in this level, gradually making your distraction more and more difficult for your pup.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word. However, if you do use the word “YES,” you must still give a treat.
- You should always give verbal praise, but you do not need to give a treat every time you praise.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
SWITCH

The purpose of the command SWITCH is to prevent a door from hitting the dog. Build a solid SWITCH now to help your pup prepare to use this with guide dog work. This command does not use a lure at any stage.

Troubleshooting

- *Puppy anticipates the SWITCH before given the command.* Make sure puppy always waits for SWITCH command to be given. Anticipation is good in the sense that it means the puppy is learning and thinking, but this is a command that we really want the puppy to wait for. Bring pup back to your left side. You can either have him SWITCH at that point on command, or you can follow the alternate door procedure. A dog who switches prematurely with a visually-impaired handler can skew the person’s orientation. It is a good idea to practice both methods of proceeding through “switch doors,” so that the puppy cannot predict which one you will choose.

Tips

- SWITCH is used only when you are at a door with a handle or knob on the right and the hinge on the left. Imagine that you are always trying to put yourself between the door and pup to “protect” the pup’s body. This will help you remember when to use SWITCH and when to not use it and keep the pup on your left side.
- This command should ONLY be used with doors—do not use the command while walking, doing obedience, etc.
- Alternatively, there is a second way to go through doors that can be used when your pup doesn’t know SWITCH yet and you are in a hurry or if you have your hands full and are unable to move the leash into your opposite hand.
  1. Have the puppy SIT at your left side and tell him to STAY.
  2. Open the door and put your back to it, so that your body is holding the door open (thus preventing it from hitting the puppy).
  3. Tell the puppy LET’S GO and allow puppy to proceed.
ELEMENTARY:
1. Start with puppy on your left side, in a SIT as you would at any door.
2. Hold your leash in your left hand.
3. Take a step to your left, towards your puppy.
4. As your puppy passes behind your back and to your right side, pass the leash into your right hand (behind your back).
5. When puppy is standing on your right side, say “YES.”
6. Give treat to puppy.
7. Praise.
8. Use “LET’S GO” to move through the door with pup.

Notes:
• This stage is using a REWARD.
• Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
• Begin working on the 3Ds – distance, distraction, duration.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position, including pulling puppy by leash.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, including various doors, and has built up duration.

MIDDLE SCHOOL:
1. Start with puppy on your left side, in a SIT as you would at any door.
2. Hold your leash in your left hand.
3. Say, “[puppy’s name], SWITCH.”
4. As your puppy passes behind your back and to your right side, pass the leash into your right hand (behind your back).
5. When puppy is standing on your right side, say “YES.”
6. Give treat to puppy.
7. Praise.
8. Use “LET’S GO” to move through the door with pup.

Notes:
• This stage is using a REWARD.
• Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
• Begin working on the 3Ds – distance, distraction, duration.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position, including pulling puppy by leash.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, including various doors, and has built up duration.

HIGH SCHOOL:
• At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
• Only use the verbal command “SWITCH” and stop stepping to the left or turning your body to prompt puppy.
• Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
• Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
Obedience

TURN

The TURN command will be used for positioning a pup comfortably at a dining table. When dining out with your pup, he should be facing outward when under the table so that you have good control and awareness of the puppy's head to prevent scavenging (or socializing). It also allows the puppy to see people walking by and avoid being stepped on.

Troubleshooting

• Puppy ends up crooked, with his head in the correct position but his rear facing out or to the side. After you bring your feet together, take a few more steps forward as necessary to get the puppy in a straight position at your side. Reward him when he is straight and pet him in the heel position. You can also practice HEEL standing close to a wall, which will give the pup limited room to swing out his rear. The wall should be on your left side and the pup will be asked for the HEEL on your left side, so as to be between you and the wall.

• Puppy has trouble following the lure, gets lost along the way, or doesn't want to get up. Make sure you are moving the lure slowly and that the puppy realizes you have a treat in your hand. You can also try putting three treats in your left hand and rewarding different parts of the TURN to break it down. Take a step forward with your left foot and lure the puppy; give the first treat as soon as the pup gets up to start following the lure. Continue luring and give another treat as the pup starts to make the turn towards you. Give the final treat (and say “YES”, etc.) once the puppy arrives in the TURN position. Over the next few repetitions, gradually reduce to two treats and then finally one.

Tips

• If you are at a table where it is impossible for the puppy to be completely turned (such as a booth or high-top), then just have the puppy DOWN as close to you as possible, in a position where his head is easy to control in order to prevent scavenging.

• Your puppy naturally does a “turn” maneuver when he enters his crate and turns around. You can help introduce the command to your puppy before formally working on it by saying “TURN” as puppy circles around to front when going into his crate.

• To visualize how to lure this command, imagine it as being completely opposite from the HEEL command.

ELEMENTARY:

1. Start with puppy on your left side.
2. Hold treat with left hand, putting treat in front of pup’s nose and luring him forward as you step forward with your left foot, keeping right foot in place.
3. With the lure, lead pup into a TURN as you step back with your left foot.
4. As pup turns towards you, bring left foot back to meet right foot again.
5. When puppy is in position on your left side, with his head facing opposite the direction you are facing, give treat to puppy.
7. Praise.
8. Release with “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD and the verbal command is not given.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

1. Start with puppy on your left side.
2. Hold open left hand, fingers pointing down to ground, and say, “[puppy name], TURN.”
3. Using your open hand, lead puppy forward, then turn him towards you.
4. When puppy is in position on your left side, with his head facing opposite the direction you are facing, mark with “YES.”
5. Give treat to puppy.
6. Praise.
7. Release with “BREAK” command.

**Notes:**
- This stage is using a REWARD.
- Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
- Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
- Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- At this stage, you can start to fade moving your left foot forward as you ask for the TURN. It is important to have a loose leash when working on this command, so some dogs may benefit from having the step as an extra clue for awhile.
- Begin to practice TURN while sitting in a chair, with pup ending command beside chair and being asked for a DOWN after he is rewarded for the TURN.
- Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
- Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
- Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

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**HIGH SCHOOL:**

- At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
- Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
- Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
- You should be able to give this command with no stepping forward and with more subtle hand movements.
- Begin practicing TURN with a chair at a table.
- Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
- Continue to release with the “BREAK” command.
DOWN/UNDER

The command DOWN/UNDER is used at chairs or benches to tuck the dog under and keep him out of the way. This command should not be taught until your puppy is at a “Middle School” level for CLOSE as the puppy needs to begin in that position before being asked for the DOWN/UNDER and “Middle School” level for STAND as the pup needs to end the command in that position. This position is handy for times that your chair or bench has an opening at the bottom that allows the puppy to be safely tucked away.

Troubleshooting

- *Puppy doesn't slide back.* If this happens, you may gently put pressure on puppy's chest to guide him backwards.
- *Puppy doesn’t move into the down position.* Make sure puppy is comfortable doing a DOWN in all positions.

Tips

- The puppy should understand that CLOSE means to be in a sitting position between your knees and that DOWN/UNDER is with pup in a down position between your knees. Both commands should practice duration, separately. If your puppy is in a CLOSE and slides into a down position, then you will need to remind your puppy of the CLOSE position and place him back in a sitting position.
- Make sure the chair you are using has an opening to allow pup to scoot his body underneath.
 ELEMENTARY:

1. While sitting in a chair, start with puppy in the CLOSE position, sitting between your knees with his back to you.
2. With treat in hand, lure down to floor, angling hand under pup’s chin and touching his chest.
3. As you gently press treat towards pup’s chest, pup will be encouraged to scoot backwards.
4. Once pup has DOWNED and scooted under the chair, give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. When ready to end, ask for “STAND” command.

Notes:
• This stage is using a LURE and the verbal command is not given.
• Practice in many locations before moving onto the next level.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is quickly moving into position with no hesitation.

 MIDDLE SCHOOL:

1. While sitting in a chair, start with puppy in the CLOSE position, sitting between your knees with his back to you.
2. With empty hand, make a downward scooping motion toward the dog’s chest, as you say “[puppy’s name], DOWN/UNDER.”
3. Once pup has DOWNED and scooted under the chair, mark with “YES.”
4. Give treat to puppy.
5. Praise.
6. When ready to end, ask for “STAND” command.

Notes:
• This stage is using a REWARD.
• Give REWARD every time you ask for the behavior and dog performs.
• Use both verbal and hand signals at all times.
• Begin working on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Resist the urge to physically move puppy into position.
• Puppy is ready to move to next level when pup is consistently performing behavior in various locations, with varied distractions, and has built up duration.

HIGH SCHOOL:

• At this stage, begin INTERMITTENT REINFORCEMENT.
• Alternate between using hand OR verbal signals.
• Begin to fade the use of the “YES” marker word.
• Continue to build on the 3Ds—distance, distraction, duration.
• Make sure you are standing up straight and/or giving more subtle cues and hand signals.
• When ready to end, ask for “STAND” command.
CHAPTER 6: PROBLEM BEHAVIORS
INABILITY TO HOUSEBREAK

Review the Housebreaking section. Is the puppy urinating excessively, increasing the frequency of urination, or drinking a lot of water? Is the stool soft, mushy, or liquid in consistency? These symptoms can indicate a physical problem that needs to be resolved with your veterinarian.

If health issues have been ruled out, then begin keeping a log of your dog’s feeding and elimination schedule. Look for patterns so you can predict when the puppy needs to go outside. With a puppy less than six months of age, take the puppy out frequently to make sure he has a chance to succeed. Remember that the puppy is a baby and does not have good control yet!

Your puppy may be able to hold it while at rest, but during periods of activity, he will have to eliminate a lot more often. Make sure the pup is not allowed unsupervised freedom. Start over consistently for the next two weeks, using leashes and tie-downs (preferably of shorter lengths) to prevent the puppy from wandering away and having an accident. Only give him off-leash freedom if he has successfully eliminated outside and you are actively watching him. If the puppy has an accident, restrict his freedom. Puppies instinctively don’t like to soil where they eat and sleep, so they will often begin to pace and whine on tie-down suddenly when they feel the urge. If you notice this behavior, take the puppy outside for a chance to do his business.

You may see a regression in housebreaking during the puppy’s adolescent months, generally around ten months of age, and especially if the puppy is unspayed or unneutered. Go back to the basics of supervision and confinement as you would with a young puppy. Do not let the puppy urinate or defecate repeatedly on walks or by his choice. Instead, limit opportunities to relieve to specific time periods before and after the walk and on command. This consistent schedule will help remind the puppy to relieve completely when he has the chance.

MARKING

Marking is defined as the puppy purposely releasing small amounts of urine to define its territory and leave a message for other dogs. It may not seem like a problematic behavior, but allowing marking on walks wherever the dog pleases can lead to marking in unwanted locations, such as indoors. Marking does not necessarily have to involve leg lifting; dogs can mark by squatting and releasing small amounts of urine where other dogs have relieved. We don’t want to encourage adolescent pups to relieve on walks; they should relieve at specific opportunities, not sporadically.

To prevent or correct marking, give the puppy a specified amount of time to relieve before starting a walk. Once you have begun the walk, keep the puppy away from vertical outdoor surfaces that other dogs have likely used, such as trees and posts. You won’t be able to avoid them all, but be aware of them on your walks.

Learn and observe the body language that precedes the marking behavior. Often, the puppy will sniff a tree and then take a few steps forward, getting in position, or it may pull over into the grass to follow a scent. Give light tugs with the leash to keep the pup moving as soon as you see this posturing; do not allow him to stop. If he does stop and ends up marking, this is where a firm NO can be applied. Do not drag the dog away if he is still urinating. Simply verbally correct him, clean it up if necessary, and move on.
Preparing for Puppy Problems Behaviors

Be aware of potential for marking when visiting other homes, especially if the home has other dogs. It is a good idea to keep the puppy leashed initially when visiting another house. You can gradually give the pup more freedom, but continue to supervise and be prepared to verbally correct and redirect.

If you have a pup that lifts his leg off-leash when in a fenced-in backyard, return to less freedom and more leash time. Enforce no marking or leg-lifting when on leash or indoors.

DESTRUCTIVENESS

Just as with a human toddler, too much unsupervised freedom leads to destructiveness. Structure the puppy’s surroundings and toys to help him make good choices. Keep the puppy on leash, on tie-down, or in the crate with a variety of approved toys. Teething puppies often prefer toys with a little “give,” which is why they often enjoy shredding tissues, shoes, or furniture. If you are offering a hard plastic toy when he would prefer something soft, he may make the wrong choice. Experiment with rubber toys; they tend to be soft but not easy to destroy.

Make sure you are supervising your puppy when he is with you, especially if he is teething. If you see him chewing on something inappropriate, quickly tell him NO and give him an approved toy. If he continues chewing on the inappropriate item, move him so the item is out of reach and he can only chew on the approved toy.

If you find yourself getting into a game of chase with your puppy, or if the puppy manages to destroy something, he has too much freedom. Restrict his freedom and prevent access to the forbidden items. Chewing is a self-rewarding behavior, and if he continues to have access to your household items, the behavior will not extinguish.

As the puppy gets older and earns more freedom, he may get craftier about when he is destructive. If the puppy continues to chew on furniture, ask your AC for assistance.

If the puppy gets hold of a forbidden item and begins to play keep away, do not engage the puppy in chase, make a big deal, or grab at him suddenly. Instead, calmly follow him and when you can catch your puppy, have him SIT. Then tell the puppy to DROP and take the item out of his mouth.

The time for training is not during a confrontation. If need be, get another toy or a treat to trade for the forbidden item. You can train later; the current need is to get the item out of your dog’s mouth as quickly as possible. If you punish the dog, respond to his game, or make the encounter a negative experience, you teach the puppy to avoid you or to swallow the item quickly. Instead, calmly address the situation and set the puppy up for a training scenario later. For example, if the puppy steals a sock, leave a few socks lying around while the puppy is on leash. If he lunges for the sock, shorten the leash, remove the item, and try again. When he pays attention to you instead of the socks, give him a treat. Use a combination of prevention, redirection, and training set-ups to teach the puppy appropriate house manners.
**FAST EATING**

Labradors in particular have a tendency to inhale their food (although golden retrievers and goldadors can as well). Unless this is causing your pup to regurgitate or choke, there is no need to worry; however, if it is a problem, please consult your AC for advice.

**MOUTHING**

It’s important to remember that mouthing at the age of 12 weeks to 6 months is normal, expected behavior. Your puppy is teething, and he is often very uncomfortable. If your puppy mouths your skin or clothes, he is not being aggressive or dominant; he is mouthing or grabbing due to discomfort or frustration.

To correct mouthing, you can use a verbal correction and/or withdraw your attention and redirect to an appropriate toy. A verbal correction can be a stern, low NO or a high-pitched “ouch.” This correction mimics what they are accustomed to from mom and litter mates.

You can also withdraw all attention as part of a correction. If you’re petting the puppy and he turns around and starts mouthing, stop petting him and ignore him entirely. He can quickly learn that you’ll only continue play and provide attention if he keeps his teeth to himself.

Determined teethers will often be more aggravated by corrections. These puppies tend to start snapping, barking, and generally increasing in intensity. When he starts mouthing or biting your hand, say “ouch” or NO, and then immediately withdraw your attention or walk away.

By removing the temptation of your flesh or clothing, the puppy is free to focus his frustrations on a nearby toy. However, sometimes these determined puppies will bite your legs or feet if you stand up or try to walk away, or will grab the nearest piece of furniture. If the puppy is mouthing and getting overly worked up, quietly deposit him into the crate or tie him down out of your reach, then ignore him for a few minutes. Do not scold him or make a big deal about it, and don’t leave him in for very long. This time is not punishment, but rather a chance for him to calm down. When you bring him out, have a toy available for him so he has a chance to be successful. Sometimes, puppies like this benefit from learning to play tug-of-war; it teaches them to vent their frustrations onto the toy, and they can learn that the game ends if they make contact with human skin. Ask your AC or RM for advice.
After 6 months old, continue to redirect or withdraw attention from any mouthing. Mouthing from a teething puppy is a normal behavior, but it can easily become a habit and you’ll want to discourage mouthing if it is your puppy’s go-to behavior for greetings.

Withdraw all attention as soon as you feel the puppy’s teeth. This withdrawal also applies if you are holding a toy and the puppy accidentally misses the toy; stop all play immediately so that the puppy learns to have control over his mouth.

If the puppy mouths persistently, say NO, and then offer him a more appropriate item to hold (such as a toy). You can also put him on leash to help calm him; enforce several commands to help calm him down and focus. Puppies will be more likely to mouth when they’re full of energy, when their gums are uncomfortable, or if they’re frustrated. You can also always redirect the pup onto a toy; if the pup likes to carry his toys, name them and send him to get them (“Get the Kong, get the bone,” etc.)

If the puppy is greeting someone and begins to mouth, call the puppy to you and use rewards to keep his attention on you (or have the greeter withdraw attention). Dogs that mouth with greetings are usually a little insecure, even as they are happy and social. For puppies like this, it can be beneficial to carry a special toy on outings with you (such as a fleece or soft toy). Hand the puppy the toy to hold before you allow him to greet. This can serve as a “pacifier” and make it more likely to have a successful, four-on-the-floor greeting. The “retriever instinct” can be very pronounced in these dogs, so channeling it rather than trying to squash it is often much more successful. Excessive licking when greeting people should also be redirected.

**JUMPING ON PEOPLE**

**Jumping on Family**

If the puppy jumps on you in the house, turn your back and ignore the puppy (or, if you are seated, simply look away from him, or stand up and ignore him). Begin praising again as soon as all four feet are on the floor, and turn your back if the puppy jumps up again. If you feel the puppy is trying but doesn’t know the right answer, redirect him into a command, such as SIT or DOWN. To eliminate the jumping behavior, all members of the household need to be consistent in not giving the puppy attention for jumping. Give tangible rewards (such as pieces of kibble) for calm behavior.

Some puppies are naturally more “pushy” with their use of space; these dogs will need very clear instructions in order for them to be successful, so be patient.
Jumping on Strangers

When your puppy jumps on strangers who want to greet him, it is often easier to train the dog than to train the people. Many people will tell you that they don’t mind if your puppy jumps, or they’ll be too distracted by saying hello to remember to ignore the pup when he jumps. In that case, allow the puppy to say hello as long as all four paws are on the ground. As soon as he jumps, back up and call his attention to you. Give light tugs on the leash rather than pulling him away. Tell the puppy to SIT; then allow the dog to approach the greeter rather than having the greeter walk towards the puppy. The anticipation of watching someone approach to say hello can be too much for some puppies, so it is better to walk him up to a person. Then if he jumps, you can walk him away.

After he has settled, you can approach again. Many people are understanding of a puppy in training and will realize that a well-behaved greeting may take a few tries. It is worth the extra few minutes of effort to enforce good behavior. When the puppy is greeting appropriately, you can have him SIT or DOWN to continue the greeting. The sit or down posture is the eventual behavior you want during a greeting; however, start with the four on the floor rule, then progress to a command. Some dogs will get excited even with eye contact. In that case, review the Socialization with People section and work on the puppy’s SIT in a heel position. Having the puppy face toward you and receive treats while the greeter pets the puppy’s back often is more successful than a face-to-face greeting. Work on the SIT at front frequently and keep the puppy’s focus on you. After a brief greeting, walk him away from the greeter. This will keep him from leaping towards the person’s face or getting overwhelmed by eye contact.

JUMPING ON FURNITURE

Puppies will often attempt to jump onto furniture while excited, if they see pets that are allowed onto the couch, or when trying to reach people’s faces.

If the puppy tries to get on the furniture, have the puppy drag a leash; you can use a short length of leash if the pup tends to get tangled or chews on it. When the puppy jumps onto the furniture, use the leash to tug the puppy off the furniture while saying NO in a stern voice.

Remember to praise the puppy for resisting temptation. For example, if the puppy solicits attention and suppresses the urge to jump, lavish him with praise and attention. Do not give the puppy attention if he even places a paw onto the furniture; instead, remind him NO and enforce it. If the puppy jumps onto the furniture while playing with other dogs, tell the puppy NO and interrupt any playtime. The puppy will associate furniture jumping with the end of playtime.
Problem Behaviors

PULLING AND LUNGING ON LEASH

When the puppy sees a distraction such as another dog, a friendly person, or a familiar location, he may get excited and start pulling hard. If the puppy pulls too hard on the leash, use fixed collar pressure protocol or you can use directional changes.

As soon as the puppy speeds up his pace, stop all forward movement. When the puppy looks back at you, praise him and give him a treat at your left knee. Begin moving forward again and repeat if the puppy lunges. After a few repetitions, delay the treat until the puppy takes a few steps next to you, rather than immediately treating him.

If he does not want to give you attention when you stop, continue with fixed pressure so pup does not self-reward and reach the desired distraction. You can also start walking in the other direction. Reward him when he begins to follow you, and then turn to head in the original direction you wanted to go. You may spend a lot of time on the same stretch of sidewalk—practicing stopping and directional changes, but that’s okay. Your puppy will learn better by practicing on familiar territory. Plus, he will have already passed those particular sights and scents, so it will be easier to get his attention focused onto you. Novel environments will always be more distracting than an environment you have repeatedly walked past.

Be very consistent about not letting the puppy pull you towards a distraction. He may feel controllable to you at a young age, but your puppy is only going to get bigger and stronger. Only allow access to what your puppy wants if he is under control. If the puppy continues to pull, do not give in. There is no replacement for consistency and training. If the pulling and lunging is creating a safety issue for you, please consult your AC.
SNIFFING

Predisposition for sniffing is a genetically determined behavior. Some dogs will have more natural inclination to see the world through their nose. As a dog approaches puberty, hormones will often intensify the urge to sniff.

Sniffing is generally not a big deal. It becomes a problem when it leads to other behaviors such as lunging on the leash, marking or scavenging. However, if the puppy is sniffing while walking, and is still generally attentive to you, it is not cause for concern.

If, however, the sniffing is causing problematic behavior, work with the dog in short segments, applying tension to the leash and rewarding the dog when he releases the tension. Use sniffing as a reward; if the dog walks past a tantalizing patch of grass and chooses to give you attention, take him back to the spot and tell him to BREAK. Rather than trying to fight the sniffing, teach him that there are times when it is acceptable to sniff.

Also make note of when the dog is sniffing. This can be a common displacement behavior, as a result of stress.

PUTTING ON THE BRAKES/RESISTING ON LEASH

At a young age, the puppy may be reluctant to walk and may pull backward on the leash or “put on the brakes.” Remember that the puppy is young and may become overwhelmed or tire easily. Don’t worry about walking long distances yet. Focus on frequent, short, fun walks.

If the puppy plants his feet or pulls back on the lead, don’t back up with him. Stand still, wait a few moments, and then encourage the puppy towards you. Remember, puppies are motivated by praise as a reward. If the puppy comes to you, praise him. If not, you have a few options: you can wait the puppy out (with light tension on the lead) or give light tugs on the leash. When he does walk a few steps, praise your puppy and reward. Then stand still and allow the puppy to rest; it may be time to turn around and go home. Don’t expect too much on your walks and give the puppy some freedom on leash. As the pup matures, he will walk with greater confidence.
Older puppies may show resistance to the leash if you are walking away from something they want or if they are nervous. In either case, your reaction should be similar as with a young puppy. Do not go backward with the puppy. Wait patiently for him to stop strongly resisting, and then quietly encourage him to take a few steps toward you. If he appears to be concerned or fearful of something, don’t force him toward the object of his fear. Instead, reward his response to you by walking away from what is causing him fear. See the section on Fear later in this chapter for how to address this problem.

**NOT RESPONDING TO OBEDIENCE SKILLS**

Go back to basics at home; if the puppy is still not responding to obedience skills at home, reassess what is going on. Could there be a health concern, like the puppy isn’t feeling well? Did you wean off of food rewards too soon? Did the dog have a bad experience from which he has not yet recovered?

Focus on figuring out how to get the puppy to work well for you at home, in a familiar environment, before trying to take him on outings again. If he works well for you at home, reintroduce outings gradually, and focus on very basic skills. Bring high-value rewards and work at a distance from distractions.

You may also have to adjust the puppy’s exercise routine. An active dog may not be getting enough physical and mental stimulation; however, it is also possible to do too much and end up with a dog that is physically and mentally drained (even if he appears to be “acting up”). Experiment with your exercise and obedience routines.

Be sure that the dog finds obedience positive and fun. Sometimes, what we consider a reward is not enjoyable for the dog. A revved-up dog may not enjoy petting as a reward; he may prefer verbal praise only. By contrast, some dogs may prefer quiet, calm petting with little praise. Other dogs may appreciate gentle play with a favorite toy to relieve stress and get some energy out. Try different ways of interacting with the puppy and see what he responds well to, especially when you are away from home or around distractions. It may surprise you.

**FEAR**

It is common for teething puppies to go through a period of fear or sensitivity. In the wild, puppies would just be leaving the den and caution would serve them well. Domesticated dogs often go through a similar period in which they are hesitant or fearful of new things.

The puppy may go through a second fear period as he reaches maturity. Be patient and allow your puppy to observe from a distance the things which frighten him. **Don’t rush the puppy or try to overexpose him.** If the puppy puts on the brakes or tries to back up, simply freeze in place and let the puppy adjust in his own time. Don’t immediately back up with the puppy or allow him to run away; just work on keeping the puppy calm. Do not coddle the puppy, react strongly, or force the puppy to accept the situation. Stop and let the puppy absorb the environment.

If you see him relaxing a bit, then praise your puppy and distract him with light obedience commands. Try to continue walking past the source of the fear or walk wide around it. You can also try to approach from another direction. If the pup is accepting, continue. If not, back off for the time being. Try the exposure another time. When socializing and exposing the puppy, **always** be aware of the puppy’s reaction to potentially scary things.

If your puppy is persistently afraid of something, you can try counter-conditioning. Counter-conditioning involves associating pleasant things—such as treats, toys, or playtime—with gradual exposures to the source of the fear.

Give the puppy a loose leash so he has the option to explore at his own pace. Reward pup as he moves towards “scary item” (in this case, an exam table). Do not “drag” him onto the table; encourage the pup to investigate.
Note that the puppy starts by circling the table and approaching the treat from different angles, but when the raiser asks, “Can you put your front paws onto the table?” the puppy carefully, cautiously succeeds. The raiser did not tease the puppy with the treat; instead, he presented it a few inches over the table and the puppy took the initiative to try the table out. Within a few minutes, the puppy has happily hopped onto the previously “scary” table. Those extra few minutes will make a big difference to this puppy’s future vet visits, as compared to the raiser having just scooped the puppy up.

You may also sit or crouch next to the “scary item” and invite puppy to come explore with you. Do not rush your puppy. If you are afraid of spiders, being thrown into a pit of spiders will not help you get over it. It is the same with puppies. Expose the puppy gradually to what scares him; keep him just under his fear threshold. If he panics, back him off to a distance where he can function. When he is calm, give him his reward—play a game, toss some treats, or work some light obedience. Then take a break and try an exposure again another time.

**THUNDERSTORM FEAR**

It is unfortunately unknown if there is a way to prevent a fear of thunderstorms in dogs. Generally, true storm phobia emerges when the dog is about 18 months of age or older, regardless of previous history or exposure. It generally seems to be less about the sound of thunder and more of a combination of pressure and weather changes, as well as the lightning flashes and booming thunder.

Generally, if the puppy shows fear during a thunderstorm, it is probably a reaction to unknown noise rather than a true storm phobia. Calmly reassure the puppy, turn on a television or radio for background noise, and offer the puppy a high-value treat (such as a stuffed Kong). Associate the thunder noise with pleasant activities, and drown the noise out as much as you can. Although sometimes it is unavoidable, try not to take the puppy out into storms, but do not purposely take the puppy outside when it is thundering.

If the puppy startles and takes a while to recover from a particularly loud clap of thunder, that is normal! We tend to jump and startle too when we hear it; offer the puppy calm reassurance and take him to a location where the thunder is muffled if possible.

**STEALING FOOD**

If your pup tries to steal another dog’s food, put the puppy on leash and enforce a SIT/STAY after the pup is finished eating. Use a leash, tie-down, or crate while people are eating to prevent self-rewarding behavior. Prevention is the most
Problem Behaviors

Preparing for Puppy Problem Behaviors

important teaching tool, so be sure your puppy does not accidentally reward himself. An accidental food reward will make the food-stealing behavior more likely to occur.

Work food distractions into your puppy’s obedience lessons. Enforce that he only gets to eat if you are giving him his meal in a bowl or giving him a treat from your hand. If your puppy is counter surfing, keep the counters clean when you cannot supervise. When you can supervise, have the puppy dragging a leash. Place tempting food on the counter just out of his reach. If you see him attempt to jump up or even think about jumping up, tell him NO and use the leash to direct him out of the kitchen.

When you are preparing food in the kitchen, whether people food or the dog’s meals, have the puppy in a DOWN/STAY or on a tie-down. Reward the dog occasionally for holding the down position. This will help give the dog a positive and constructive behavior that is incompatible with counter surfing.

**POSSESIVENESS/RESOURCE GUARDING**

Many dogs are naturally possessive of highly-valued toys or food. This is normal behavior, even though we consider it undesirable. Resource guarding stems from anxiety or a lack of confidence. It is not “dominance” behavior. Sometimes, puppies will go through a “guard-y” phase while they are in a growth spurt, because they feel hungry all of the time. Be sure that your approach is positive; approach bearing “gifts” such as a bit of food or another toy. You don’t want the puppy fearing your approach or a correction, because his anxiety (and therefore his guarding) may increase.

**Guarding Resources from People**

If you notice signs of possessiveness or guarding of resources exhibited towards you or another person, do not get into a confrontation with your puppy. Signs of possessiveness will be displayed when you approach, and include—in escalating order—suddenly freezing, a hard stare, snarling, growling, or snapping.

If the puppy shows these guarding behaviors, do not attempt to train while the puppy is in active guarding mode. Learning is not occurring at that time, and you do not want to risk getting bitten. Instead, manage the situation by leashing the puppy and removing him, or using food to get the puppy to drop an item.

If the puppy displays possessive behaviors, keep him on leash in the house at all times so that you can quickly diffuse a situation. Contact your AC to assess the situation, as possessiveness towards people is very serious and needs to be carefully addressed. Manage the environment so that the puppy does not have free access to the things it tends to guard. Play the hold-and-give game frequently (see the Games section). Divide the puppy’s meals and place only a few kibbles into the bowl at a time. When the puppy is finished, add more (or even highly valued treats). You want the puppy to associate your presence near the bowl as a good thing.

**Guarding Resources from Other Dogs**

Have the puppy SIT/STAY after feeding and remove all the bowls. Do not allow bowl shopping. Some toys or food may be considered higher value and more likely to set off guarding behavior; remove these strong temptations when other dogs are around. Practice STAY and play hold-and-give with high-value toys.

Set up “safe” scenarios for the puppy to enjoy a highly valued chew (such as a stuffed Kong) around other dogs. Give
each of the dogs a chew toy, then make sure they cannot interfere with each other (using a barrier such as a baby gate or a crate, or have all dogs on a tie-down within sight of each other). We want the puppy to gain confidence that he can have the chew toy all to himself, but also associate getting the special toy with other dogs that are in view.

Again, correcting the dog for guarding will often make it worse. If you notice guarding behavior, contact your AC.

**DISLIKE OF CHILDREN**

It is very important to socialize pups with all ages of children, from babies to teens. Children can feed the puppy, give treats, go for short walks, and sit on the floor to greet the puppy, *only with supervision*. All interactions with children should be monitored and the puppy should *always* have an option to exit.

Always be in control of your puppy and be prepared to step in if the puppy or child appears overwhelmed, or if the puppy begins behaving inappropriately. Be sure that the puppy has a positive experience; do not allow children to mishandle the puppy. Teach children not to interrupt the puppy while the puppy is eating, chewing on a toy, or in his crate. Make sure the puppy has an option for escape and he will have a positive experience with children. Allow the puppy to approach children when he is ready; do not allow children to approach a fearful puppy.

For the best experience, control the situation in large groups of children. Watch for the puppy’s reaction and stop the children from giving attention if you see any signs of shyness. Large groups may overwhelm some puppies, and exposure to children should be taken very slowly. Even if the puppy seems comfortable, instruct children to give the puppy attention one at a time. If the puppy shows marked discomfort around children, reduce the puppy’s exposure to them. Begin exposing him to children again slowly, and only to children who are dog-savvy and responsible.

**EXCESSIVE WHINING/BARKING**

If you have a puppy who whines or barks for your attention, make sure you are not inadvertently rewarding your puppy by petting him, letting him out of the crate, or feeding him when he vocalizes. While there may be times that the dog vocalizes in order to express the need to relieve himself, it is important just to address the relief need. For example, if the puppy wakes up at 4 a.m. and cries to go outside, take the puppy out, allow him to do his business, and then bring him right back into the crate with minimal praise or attention. You do not want the puppy to think that vocalizing will result in playtime.

Otherwise, if your puppy’s needs have been met and he is still vocalizing, ignore him. While you are working through this, do not take him on outings on which ignoring him is not an option; make some progress first. If ignoring does not deter him, calmly but firmly give him a command, such as DOWN or puppy push-ups and enforce it. If necessary, put him on a tie-down to encourage him to calm down. Once he has settled, give him some brief, calm attention, then go back to what you were doing. He will learn that he only gets the attention he wants when he is quiet.

Another method is Time Out. Without saying anything, remove puppy from environment. Make sure puppy does not have leash to sniff around. Count to 10 and return. Give calm praise to pup for remaining quiet. Repeat as necessary.

If you feel that the puppy is vocalizing suspiciously (barking or growling, often paired with raised hackles or a tucked tail), or if you are really struggling to control the barking, talk to your AC.
INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS TOWARD OTHER DOGS

On Leash
Some dogs may get along well with other dogs when they are off leash, but exhibit behaviors such as barking, growling, and raised hackles when encountering other dogs while on leash. Also known as leash reactivity or barrier frustration, this behavior often does not have roots in aggression. Rather, the behavior is either an expression of frustration because the puppy wants to go see the other dog but is restrained by the leash, or is an expression of the fight-or-flight response because the puppy knows the leash would prevent him from escaping, so he reacts offensively.

The best way to work on leash reactivity is with desensitization through exposure. Regularly expose the puppy to other dogs but keep your distance. You want the puppy to notice the other dog, but remain far enough away that he can still focus on and listen to you. Reward your puppy with treats for responding to his name first, then to basic commands such as SIT and HEEL. You want to change his default response so that instead of barking at the other dog, he looks to you for further instruction. Changing his reaction will take many repetitions before it sinks in. Focus on rewarding good behavior and teaching what you do want, ignoring him when he reacts.

If your puppy does react to another dog, keep the puppy moving. When you get past the other dog, have your puppy practice some basic commands for treats in order to calm down. This strategy will help him to refocus on you rather than to keep worrying about the other dog.

Practice with calm dogs at a distance any time you get the chance. Talk to your AC about any concerns you have with the puppy’s behavior around other dogs.

Off Leash
A young puppy may display inappropriate behaviors towards other dogs, whether in your household or out and about. Often, pups get overwhelmed or over stimulated and may exhibit behavior such as snapping, rough play, getting the “zoomies,” mounting, or barking.

If you observe any of these behaviors, take the puppy to another area or put him on leash until he calms down. You can then allow play to resume if your puppy seems to have settled down. The puppy will learn that play will only continue if his behavior is under control. If you are in a puppy meeting playgroup, have all of the handlers call the dogs for a treat to calm the group down.

Watch your puppy’s reactions to other dogs. If the pup is fearful, hesitant, or hiding behind your legs, end the play session. That is your puppy’s way of saying he is overwhelmed and needs a break. If you have access to a well-socialized adult dog, the older dog can often help teach good manners to your puppy. A puppy that bites down too hard or gets too wild will often be corrected or ignored by a skilled adult dog.
If your puppy is over six months of age and—when off leash—displays inappropriate behaviors toward other dogs such as mounting, snapping, or guarding behaviors, remove the puppy from the situation. Keep play sessions brief if the puppy tends to display these behaviors. In general, try to interrupt play with other dogs before it gets too wild or rough.

If the puppy snaps at another dog, take note of the puppy’s body language. If the puppy is hiding behind your legs or another object and has its tail tucked, he is likely overwhelmed by a larger or more boisterous dog. Otherwise, he is either too wound up or may be guarding something. In that case, calmly correct with a NO and give the puppy a time-out.

**HOLE DIGGING/POOR YARD MANNERS**

Digging is usually a sign of boredom, overheating, or frustration. Digging can quickly become a habit, so do not allow it to continue. If the behavior persists, do not let the puppy in the yard unsupervised or off leash. When you observe digging behavior, immediately say NO and redirect the puppy to an appropriate behavior, or remove him from the yard.

Grass eating or “grazing” is common among dogs; if it is not making the puppy sick and there are no pesticides on your lawn, occasional grazing is not an emergency. However, if it has become a problem keep the puppy on leash in the yard for several sessions unless you are actively engaged and playing with him. As soon as the puppy disengages and starts foraging, put him on leash or take him inside.

When you begin letting the puppy off the leash in the yard again, be sure to have a collar on him and bring out some treats. If the puppy starts to forage for yard waste, calmly walk over, take a hold of the puppy’s collar, and tell him to SIT. After he sits, encourage him to walk towards you for a few steps (back up, clap your hands, call the puppy’s name, etc.) and reward him with a treat when he does. If he doesn’t follow you and instead goes back to scavenging, repeat the collar hold, SIT and back up a few steps, encouraging him to head towards you. Be consistent with this technique and the puppy should start responding quickly. Redirect him to an appropriate toy and encourage him to interact with you, rather than grazing. If he returns to grazing, bring him inside.
**VETERINARY VISITS**

You will be responsible for taking the guide dog puppy to the veterinarian for vaccinations and all other vet care required or necessary while you have the puppy. Southeastern Guide Dogs will provide an assigned veterinarian, a medical record and veterinary guidelines when you receive the puppy. Take this medical record, and guidelines sheet to your assigned veterinarian each time you visit. All puppy vaccinations and appointments indicated on the medical record when you received the puppy are pre-authorized. Southeastern Guide Dogs should be billed directly for services provided by the veterinarian. Do not go to a veterinarian to whom you have not been assigned or been approved to see.

Southeastern has a large professional base of veterinarians that donate/discount services. We rely on their professional services and request that you treat them and their staff in the same manner. Please provide all the symptoms and information you can, but let the veterinarian make the diagnoses and recommended treatment.

Pre-authorizations are required for vet visits other than scheduled visits listed on the puppy’s medical record. You need to keep in close contact with your AC for authorization to take the puppy to the vet. This includes, but is not limited to, concerns about: skin, ears, eyes, limping, vomiting, and diarrhea. Unless it is a life-threatening emergency, you must contact your AC prior to taking the puppy to the vet.

**PREVENTATIVES**

Southeastern Guide Dogs supplies monthly heartworm preventative for the puppy you are raising in the puppy packet on pickup. This heartworm preventative is to be given monthly on the first day of each month. You are responsible for keeping the puppy on the proper dosage which is calculated based on the weight of the puppy. Weigh your puppy prior to each meeting and record on the sign-in sheet. If you have questions, ask the veterinarian or your AC. If you are asked to keep the puppy longer and need more heartworm preventative, contact your AC.

**FLEA AND TICK CONTROL**

Raisers are responsible for and required to purchase monthly flea preventative. There are a variety of products available however not all of them are considered safe or effective. There are also different combinations of preventatives; your vet can help you choose which is most appropriate for the puppy you are raising. For example, if you have a pool that the puppy swims in and you do not live in an area with a tick problem, an oral flea preventative may be more appropriate than a topical.

**VACCINATIONS**

At the time of puppy pickup, you will receive a vaccine sheet detailing the appropriate schedule for vaccines. The puppy will receive vaccines for Bordetella, DHLPP (Distemper, Hepatatis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus) Rabies, and Canine Influenza. Your veterinarian will complete the vaccine sheet each time a vaccination is given. Once complete, retain a copy for your records and either fax or mail a copy to the school. Remember to complete the Vet Visit Summary form found on the Puppy Raiser Resources page.
EMERGENCIES

In cases of life-threatening emergencies, you should call your vet and AC. In emergencies, the AC has the authority to make decisions and has access to Southeastern Guide Dogs for help. You must make phone contact by at least leaving a message with your AC or Southeastern Guide Dogs in Palmetto in order for the emergency expenses to be covered by Southeastern Guide Dogs.

Emergencies include:

- Trauma injury
- Breathing problems
- Bleeding
- Broken bones
- Some bites accompanied by fast swelling (like snake bites and bee stings)
- Vomiting or diarrhea that will not stop and is causing dehydration and lethargy
- Bloody stools
- White, blue or purple gums
- Temperatures over 103 degrees

You should contact your AC at the first sign of illness. ACs are very knowledgeable and can help determine how serious a situation is and what you should do. If the puppy becomes ill, write down the symptoms, times you noticed the problems, and anything you have used to treat the puppy. Take the puppy’s temperature if you are comfortable doing so, and record the last time the pup ate and drank. See Common Ailments: Symptoms and Treatments in this chapter on handling specific concerns.

Learn to recognize the first signs of illness:

1. Loss of appetite
2. Listlessness (not active as normal)
3. Vomiting
4. Diarrhea
5. Fever (normal temperature is 100.5 – 102.5 degrees)

If your puppy has severe symptoms or a combination of the above symptoms, notify your AC immediately. Always try the AC first and at least leave a message. If you can’t reach your AC during the business day, you can reach Southeastern Guide Dogs 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The switchboard will get someone to help.

It’s a good idea to take and record the puppy’s temperature with a thermometer, inserted rectally, lubricated with petroleum jelly at the onset of your concern. It is a good measure of health and often of the state of recuperation. Note: temperature will normally be elevated after exercise or play. Insert up to half the length of the thermometer into the anal opening and hold in place for one minute. You may need someone to help you. When you call the AC and vet, they will want to know the symptoms and temperature.

Puppies periodically have intestinal upsets because of something they ingested. It’s not uncommon for a puppy to gag, vomit, or have diarrhea occasionally. You need only be concerned if it persists, if you notice blood, or if it is combined with one of the other symptoms listed previously.
COMMON AILMENTS:
SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENTS

Eyes/Ears
Excessive discharge, yellow or green discharge, excessive blinking, squinting, or any swelling around the eyes may indicate injury or infection and should be seen by a vet. If there is only minor, colorless, watery discharge, wash eyes by using a sterile ophthalmic saline. Sometimes pups, because they are so low to the ground, get an irritant that can be flushed out. If discharge persists for more than a few days, or if discharge is yellow or green, contact your AC. If the puppy is squinting, has a swollen lid or eye socket, or has an unknown injury, contact your AC immediately.

Persistent head shaking, large amounts of wax, or a foul odor in the ear are signs of an ear infection. If you did not clean the pup’s ears each week during the first month (see Grooming section in Chapter 2) and the ear discharge is minor to moderate, try cleaning them several times a week for up to two weeks. Be sure to use the proper cleaning solution. If the irritation persists or is extensive, call your AC for vet visit authorization.

Respiratory System
Coughing that sounds like gagging could be a sign that something is caught in the pup’s throat. Open the pup’s mouth and look inside. Offer the pup some liquid to drink and allow him to rest. If the cough is frequent and sounds like “honking,” it can indicate an irritated trachea or a respiratory infection. If coughing or gagging persists or the dog is in distress, call your AC and the vet. Please do not use over-the-counter ear wax solutions that are made for people, as these may not be safe for dogs.

Digestive System

Puppy Raiser Diarrhea Protocol
Diarrhea is common in puppies. There are many causes including but not limited to parasites, viruses, bacteria, stress, diet changes or dietary indiscretion. If the diarrhea does not persist more than a few hours there is little cause for worry. Remember, frequent changes in food, access to human foods, new treats, or not properly transitioning dogs to new diets are the most frequent causes of diarrhea. The first few days after the puppy arrives is very stressful as a change in their routine and environment and can cause soft stools or diarrhea.

Contact your AC and then your Veterinarian if:
1. No eating or drinking in 8 hours after being home
2. Puppy’s temperature goes above 103 degrees
3. Vomiting accompanies diarrhea for more than 2 hours
4. Blood is present in the stool
5. Diarrhea persists more than 24 hours or if the puppy shows other signs such as lethargy or abdominal pain

Note: After diarrhea is under control it is common to not see any bowel movements for up to 48 hours. If you need to see your Veterinarian for this problem, they will help to diagnose and treat the condition. We discourage puppy diet changes initially. If your Veterinarian is recommending a diet change, contact your AC or Puppy Raising Services first before picking up the new food. This will encourage a conversation between our Veterinary staff and your Veterinarian and require approval from Southeastern Guide Dogs.
Vomiting
It is not unusual for puppies to vomit occasionally. Often times they eat too fast and causes regurgitation. Vomiting once or twice within an hour without any other sign of illness is probably not serious. **Call your AC if prolonged vomiting or vomiting is accompanied by other signs including:**

- Lethargy
- Bloated abdomen
- Painful abdomen
- Blood in vomit
- Blood in stool
- Gagging or Choking without producing anything

**Treatment:**
1. Record what the puppy ate last, how much and when.
2. Take the puppy's temperature
3. Withhold food and water for 3 hours
4. If continues to vomit, provide famotidine (Pepcid) at the dose of 10 mg per 40 lb of body weight every 12 hours
5. If no more vomiting, offer water after 3 hours in small increments. Do not allow the puppy to drink too much at one time to prevent vomiting from returning. Start by providing only 1/4 cup OR counting licks of 10-15 licks and then pick up bowl, wait 15 minutes and allow 15-20 licks. Wait another 15 minutes to allow 20-30 licks and so on until puppy is satisfied to leave some water in the bowl.
6. Once they are comfortable keeping water down, offer small amounts of their own puppy food, 1/4 of their normal feeding at a time. It helps to moisten this food with warm water. Do not change the diet or offer a bland diet at this time.
7. If they are unwilling to eat after 6-8 hours, contact your AC for further instructions.

Urinary Tract Infections/Puppy Vaginitis
Urinary tract infections are most common in female puppies. Symptoms include: excessive urination, straining to urinate, pink or bloody urine and excessive thirst. Notify your AC if any of these symptoms occur. Urinary infections can occur because the puppy is being confined too much and not given regular relief, or because of too much water restriction. Holding urine can lead to bacteria multiplying in the bladder and causing urinary infections. Be sure not to require a puppy to hold its urine too long; keep the puppy on a regular relief schedule.

Puppy vaginitis is a sticky, cloudy, white or yellowish vaginal discharge. Puppy vaginitis usually occurs in puppies that are six weeks to about eight months of age with what is called an inverted vulva. Episodes can occur intermittently, and can last for weeks to months. Signs can include discharge, frequent urination, persistent licking of the vulva, hair loss, and irritation. Basic puppy vaginitis is more an annoyance than a medical concern. The important thing is to enlist the assistance of your veterinarian to differentiate between puppy vaginitis and a urinary tract problem.

Treatment of puppy vaginitis is mainly time and patience. You can remove discharge with a wet baby wipe to keep the vulvar area clean. Antibiotics or a lot of diagnostics are **not appropriate** for a puppy that has no symptoms other than discharge. Puppy vaginitis usually goes away on its own, once the dog reaches puberty. Frequently, the recommendation is made to allow a female dog who has experienced puppy vaginitis to go through her first heat cycle as this frequently resolves the problem.
Skin

Itching
A puppy may itch for many reasons: stress, boredom, allergies, dry skin, or parasites (see: Grooming, Fleas and Ticks in Chapter 2). If the puppy only seems itchy on outings or at meetings, it is probably stress or temperament related. Be sure that the puppy has stress-relieving breaks and that he isn’t feeling too much pressure (either from drilling in obedience or people crowded close around him).

Allergies can range from mild to severe. If the puppy seems itchy, bathe him in an oatmeal-based shampoo as often as once a week, and use pet wipes to keep pollen and other allergens off of his coat and feet after he comes in from outside. If that doesn’t help, talk to your veterinarian about options for relieving the itching. Food-based allergies are uncommon in our puppies; environmental allergies do occasionally come into play however, especially at certain times of the year.

Hot Spots
“Hot spots,” also known as acute moist dermatitis, occur when moisture and bacteria get trapped under a dog’s fur. This results in a large, raw wound, usually on a dog’s face, neck, or tail. Hot spots are itchy, painful, and progress very rapidly. It is important to have any suspected hot spot seen by a veterinarian to have it treated.

Stings/Bites
Swelling and facial thickness can occur rapidly with a bee or wasp sting, and should be treated with Benadryl (Diphenhydramine). For an allergic reaction, it’s a good idea to give Benadryl quickly. Give 1-2 mg per pound of body weight every 6-8 hours. Over the counter, you can get Benadryl in 25mg tablets or capsules, and syrup containing 12.5 or 25 mg per teaspoon (5 ml). If using liquid diphenhydramine (usually easier than tablets for smaller dogs), you can use the following formulas to calculate the proper dosage:

Concentration: 12.5 mg/5 ml
- dog’s weight (in pounds) _____ / 2.5 = _____ ml
Example: Dog’s weight 50 pounds / 2.5 = 20 ml

Concentration: 25 mg/5 ml
- dog’s weight (in pounds) _____ / 5.0 = _____ ml
Example: Dog’s weight 50 pounds / 5.0 = 10 ml

With snake and spider bites, rapid swelling will occur. Snake bites can be a major emergency. Try to identify the snake or spider. If feasible, take the snake to the vet.
Aches, Pains, Limping

It is not unusual for a puppy to limp with minor soft tissue injuries such as a strain or sprain. If the puppy limps, call your AC. Most minor trauma twists, pulls, or sprains will get better with a little bit of time and rest. Some puppies may also experience “growing pains.” You must contact your AC or Southeastern Guide Dogs for authorization for a vet visit for a lame or limping puppy, so keep in contact with your AC to evaluate the symptoms and severity.

The first thing to do is to confine the puppy to its crate, and not allow it to play with other dogs, go on walks, swim, or chase play toys—this defines complete rest. Often, this requires several days or weeks of leash confinement. Running and playing can irritate the problem. If the symptoms persist after two weeks of complete rest or if the pup will not put weight on the leg or foot, x-rays may be needed. Contact your AC if rest does not seem to help.

If pain relief is needed, it should be given on a veterinarian’s recommendation. Consult with your AC to see if a vet visit is in order. DO NOT USE: Tylenol, Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, Nuprin, Aleve or Naprosyn) or enteric coated aspirin such as Ecotrin. DANGER: these will cause organ failure. Do not give any pain medicine without veterinary instruction.

Overheating

Heat can be a problem in the southern climate. It is important to make sure the puppy’s temperature is regulated. Don’t allow the puppy to overheat on walks or while in the car. Signs of overheating include excessive panting, enlarged and reddened tongue, lethargy, and gasping for breath. If the puppy starts to overheat, cool him down quickly by applying cool, but not cold water. Get the puppy out of the sun and into a cooler place. Apply water and offer cool water. If possible, place a cool towel on the puppy for a minute at a time, then replace with another cool towel.

The pads of a puppy’s feet absorb heat easily. Be aware of the surfaces on which you are taking the pup. If you cannot hold your hand on the pavement for five seconds, for example, it is too hot for the pup.

NEVER leave a dog alone in the car.

Carsickness

Infrequently, a puppy may experience car or motion sickness. If the puppy shows symptoms (drooling, vomiting, etc.), try the following techniques:

1. Withhold water 2 hours prior to travel and withhold food 4 hours before any travel.
2. Do NOT make a huge fuss or scold the puppy if it becomes sick in the car.
3. Begin a routine of getting the puppy used to the car.
   • Feed the puppy meals in the car. If the puppy is very resistant to getting in the car, start the meals next to the car and gradually move them into the floorboard.
   • Sit in the motionless car with the puppy for a few minutes.
   • Gradually increase the time the puppy spends in the motionless car. Praise and encourage the puppy when in the car and when it is not sick. Show the puppy that the car is fun. Give him a stuffed Kong or special treat.
   • Sit in the car with the puppy while the motor is running.
   • Gradually increase the time spent in the car with the motor running.
   • Begin “travel” by simply backing down the driveway.
   • Gradually increase your “travel” (up and down the driveway, around the block, etc.). Increase distance gradually. With patience and persistence, you can usually overcome the problem of carsickness. In extreme cases, the vet can prescribe medicine that may alleviate the symptoms and break the cycle of nausea.
**Retained Baby Teeth**

The normal process of growing and losing baby (deciduous) teeth is very similar to that in humans. A deciduous tooth becomes retained when the adult tooth fails to push it out of the mouth. This usually occurs with the incisors or upper canine teeth. It is important to be aware of retained baby teeth because food, debris and hair can get trapped between the retained deciduous tooth and the permanent tooth, which could cause early tooth decay. Any time a baby tooth is present at the same time as its corresponding adult tooth, notify your AC as a visit to the veterinarian is warranted. Inform your AC if you see retained baby teeth.

**Female Heat Cycle**

The “heat” cycle of a female dog is the period during which ovulation or releasing eggs takes place. Female dogs in heat can be bred by male dogs and have the ability to produce puppies. A spayed female cannot go into heat. **A total heat cycle lasts around three weeks, but can last longer. Keep the female safely confined to the house and never allow her to be outside unsupervised during this time. Do not take her on outings or out into public.**

A female dog will come into “heat” between the ages of 6 to 24 months, and typically will then have subsequent heat cycles once or twice a year. Signs that a female has gone into heat include swelling of the vulvar area, mucous or bloody vaginal discharge, and possible changes in behavior like neediness, restlessness, and possible decreased tolerance of other dogs.

The bloody discharge can start out dark brown or bright red. It is important to thoroughly check a female suspected of coming into heat, as most dogs are very good at cleaning themselves. This can be done by taking a clean white cotton ball or tissue and gently wiping the vulva. There are “sanitary pants” available at pet stores to help keep the dog and your home clean while the puppy is in heat.

Over the next week or so, the discharge has the potential to become heavier. As time progresses, the discharge usually lightens in flow and lightens in color. Around this time, 10 to 14 days after the start of heat, the vulva also softens and the swelling goes down. It may appear the female is headed out of heat; however, this is typically the point in the cycle when the female is most fertile. Extra caution is needed during this period to prevent unintentional pregnancies! Sperm released from a male dog have the potential to fertilize eggs up to seven days after a mating, so one “accidental” moment can lead to an unintentional pregnancy. Be very cautious when going on neighborhood walks with a female in heat and do not leave her untended in the yard for even a few moments; male dogs can be voracious.

It is important to remember that there are always exceptions to the rule in identifying heat cycles. Timing, patterns, and identifying markers are different for each individual female dog. Raisers should always be observant in watching their puppies for signs that the puppy is coming into, in the middle of, or heading out of heat.

Dogs are unique in that their hormonal changes following a heat cycle almost always progress as if the dog is pregnant, whether she is or is not. The significance of these hormonal changes is that female dogs occasionally go through what is called a “false pregnancy.” In false pregnancies, the dog has behavioral changes consistent with being pregnant, such as nesting, and carrying or “babying” stuffed toys or animals. These dogs will also have physical changes mimicking those of a pregnant dog, primarily enlargement of mammary glands and even production of milk. The behavioral and physical changes associated with a false pregnancy will generally pass once the dog passes the period of time during which birth of pups normally would have occurred.

Please advise your AC as soon as your puppy begins her heat cycle.
Infection of Foreign Materials

Avoid allowing your puppy to chew on non-approved toys or on anything that you don’t definitely know is non-toxic. Swallowing of foreign material can be life threatening and frequently results in anesthesia and possible surgery for retrieval. Many medications that humans take routinely can be toxic to dogs so your AC or the ASPCA Pet Poison Control Hotline should be contacted if your puppy accidentally swallows human medication. Some plants are also toxic and even cause death if eaten. Such plants include, but are not limited to, Oleanders, Sago Palms and Cardboard Palms.

Bufo toads also exist in the Southeastern United States. The toxin that these toads produce can cause life threatening abnormal heart rhythms in dogs if the toad was licked or held in a dog’s mouth.
CHAPTER 8:
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
MORE ON SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS

Students
Our visually impaired clients are diverse. They include doctors, attorneys, social workers, teachers, secretaries, tax advisors, policy makers, writers, homemakers, mothers, fathers, grandparents, foster parents, and retirees. Any legally or totally blind person at least 15 years of age may apply for a guide dog and training. There is no maximum age limit. The applicants are from all over the United States with a concentration in the South. The men and women that we serve may commute by walking or public transportation; they may travel frequently locally, nationally or internationally. Southeastern Guide Dogs is able to offer dogs that are comfortable with the southern climate and can easily acclimate to all other climates. The dogs are competent city travelers who are also trained in off-curb travel (where no sidewalks exist).

Applicants complete an extensive application process and undergo an in-home visit and test walk. They must submit medical information and references from their orientation and mobility instructors and friends. Each class comes to the school for a residential training course. Students are again evaluated for the dog match. These matches are based on temperament, energy level, natural speed of walking, and living environment.

Dogs
Most of the dogs in the program are bred by Southeastern Guide Dogs and all are raised by volunteer Puppy Raisers. We use retrievers: Labrador, Golden and Goldadors (Labrador and Golden cross). All breeding dogs, guide dog puppies, and completely trained guide dogs must be confident and reliable. Males and females do equally well as guide dogs.

Puppy Education
Our Puppy Education Program was developed to give the puppies an enriched environment in which to grow up and to prepare them for their future career as guide dogs. It begins in the nursery and continues until the puppy leaves our campus to the home of a raiser. Staff and volunteers follow a carefully designed program, which gradually exposes the puppies to a variety of stimuli. The program is designed to give the puppies a well-rounded worldview in their most critical learning period. When puppies are given a “reference library” at this prime age, they are better prepared for the world ahead.

Guide Dog and Service Dogs Trainers
Southeastern Guide Dogs Trainers undergo a three-year apprenticeship under the supervision of a qualified instructor. Trainers often have a background in working with animals or social services; they share a love for dogs and people, and are committed to helping others. They also have to work as Canine Care Technicians in the kennels in order to be considered for the Apprentice Trainee position. The trainers learn animal husbandry and how to care for dogs in a kennel environment. Within a four-to six-month period, the Trainers prepare their dogs in training to the point that the dogs are ready to be matched with a visually impaired person. During the residential class, Trainers spend time living with the students and dogs on campus. They instruct during the entire residential class and teach the students the skills necessary to navigate successfully with the dogs. Trainers also follow up with the students after they return home with their new guide dogs.
Admissions and Alumni Services
Southeastern Guide Dogs is committed to providing a lifetime of support to our graduates and their dogs. Our Admissions and Alumni Services Department processes incoming applications as well as coordinates follow-up with the graduates when they go home—including phone and physical visitations. The staff is committed to safe, happy placements for our dogs, and works hard to ensure that the prospective student is prepared to care for a dog.

Veterinary Services
The Veterinary Services team is responsible for the health of all dogs on campus, as well as caring for the Southeastern puppies that live with their raisers locally.

The department conducts examinations, surgeries such as spays and neuters, genetics and reproduction procedures, as well as coordinates exams by medical veterinary specialists such as ophthalmologists and cardiologists.

Marketing
The Marketing Department’s role is to increase visibility of the organization and its mission. This includes advertising, e-mail communications and mailed communications such as newsletters and calendars. Additionally, this department manages most of the organization’s online presence (both website and social media), and all public relations activities. The department is also responsible for events such as graduations.

Philanthropy
The Development Department’s role is to increase the organization’s support base among individuals, corporations and charitable foundations. They manage giving through our “Donor Circle” program, sponsorships including “Naming a Puppy,” legacy gifts, and Walkathon events. This department also coordinates third-party fundraising activities.

HURRICANES AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS
Since the majority of raisers live in the Southeast, there is a great chance that we may, at some point, have to evacuate our homes because of hurricanes or tropical storms. We are constantly reminded to have a plan, be prepared, and know where to go. Your plans must now include making arrangements for the puppy.

Your AC will ask you to complete a Hurricane Preparedness form prior to a weather emergency. While emergency shelters for humans do have to allow admittance of working guide dogs with their handlers, guide dog puppies and household pets are not allowed access, so you will have to make other plans for them. Decide early on (as soon as possible) what you will do with the puppy. Transportation may be a critical factor in getting the puppy to an area of safety. When you are leaving your home and returning after an evacuation, please notify your AC or Southeastern so we know that you and the puppy are safe.

If possible, take the puppy with you if you evacuate or have a safe place in mind where you can leave the puppy. If you plan to stay in a hotel, check to see if it will allow a guide dog puppy.

When packing, be sure to take plenty of food and water, a leash, vaccination records, collars, toys, crate, busy bags, paper towels, and be sure that the Southeastern ID tag (supplied by the school) is on the puppy’s collar.

If you are having difficulty finding a safe place for the puppy, do not leave him behind – call your AC or Southeastern, and we will do everything possible to help. Often raisers in other areas offer to take puppies in emergency situations such as this.

After the disaster, inspect your home and yard for dangers before allowing your family or pets to enter. Also, review your disaster plan and make any modifications for next time.
PUPPY SITTING

Puppy sitting is when the Puppy Raiser goes away or is unable to watch the puppy for a few days and the puppy is staying with someone else.

Puppy Sitting Guidelines for the Raiser

The best possible place for the puppy would be with someone who has puppy raising experience. Ask your AC; he or she may know of potential puppy sitters, but it is ultimately your responsibility to make the arrangements. Some options to consider when searching for a puppy sitter:

- Current raisers (who could manage a second puppy)
- Approved sitters
- Previous raisers in your area
- Breeder host homes (that have raising experience)

Once you have found a puppy sitter or made plans for the puppy, let your AC know the details as to the dates and a contact name with phone numbers. Inform the puppy sitter that the AC may call to see how the puppy is doing.

If you have difficulty securing a puppy sitter using the above means or in the case of a family emergency in which you don’t have the time to search for a puppy sitter, contact your AC to help make immediate arrangements.

Complete the Puppy Camp Preparation Form (available online under Puppy Raiser Resources) and the Puppy Sitter Information Sheet/Packing List to prepare for the puppy’s departure. These two information sheets, along with the Puppy Camp Evaluation (also available online) should be given to the puppy sitter.

Note: When you notify your AC with the puppy sitter information, the AC will make the decision as to whether or not the sitter should be supplied with the puppy’s coat. If the person is not familiar with the puppy raising program, the sitter will not be able to take the puppy on outings.

IN FOR TRAINING (IFT) / FRESHMAN ORIENTATION

Freshman Orientation, or In-For-Training day, is similar to young people entering college as a freshman—the dog you have puppy-raised will return to campus for evaluation and formal harness training. This celebration is held on Saturday morning and typically includes: photos with IFT dogs and their puppy-raising families, meet-and-greets with other raisers, a send-off of dogs to the Freshman Dorms (Canine Assessment Center), Blindfold Walks, self guided tour of the dog’s new home, and refreshments. There are also brief presentations by Puppy Raising Services staff, trainers, and graduates.

You will be notified by your AC 4-6 weeks prior to your dog’s Freshman Orientation date. At that time you will then receive an email from Puppy Raising Services with an agenda and instructions for what will be needed. You will also receive links for both the Final Evaluation as well as an important
informational survey that we ask you to complete. This information will be used by both PRS and the assessment and training teams later so please be sure to give us as much detail as possible.

Please note that your dog may be called back to campus anytime after it turns a year old so please make note of the Freshman Orientation dates that are listed on the Raiser Resources page of the website that fall on or after that time and hold those dates on your calendar so that you do not have any scheduling conflicts. Due to operational protocols, we can only accept dogs on that Saturday or possibly the day before, under no circumstances can we accept a dog after.

The dogs that are returning to campus for formal harness training initially stay in the Assessment Center. They will be in quarantine for two weeks and will be closely monitored to see how they are handling the transition. They will learn the feeding and kennel routines and meet many new staff members. They will be housed in single or double “dorm rooms.” They will also undergo a temperament assessment, a medical evaluation, have inoculations updated, and have their hips and elbows x-rayed, and eyes examined. You will be notified of the dog’s medical results in about a month—usually this notification comes in the form of an email from your AC. Your pup will also enjoy a conditioning program with Dr. Conrad and his staff. Some dogs will be selected for the Breeding Program (see Breeding Program section later in this chapter). If a dog is released after the medical evaluation or because he is not adjusting or unhappy in the kennel, you will be contacted by phone. Don’t worry! Ninety-nine percent of the dogs In For Training adjust quickly and easily to college life. Actually, they adjust much better than many of their puppy raisers!

Following the quarantine period, the Trainers will introduce themselves to the dog. They will play, feed, take the dog on fun walks around campus, and practice the obedience skills the dog already knows and introduce targeting. After a couple of sessions of bonding, the harness will be introduced to the dog and formal harness training will commence. Please see the Phases of Training document on the Puppy Raiser Resources page for specifics.

The trainer will work the dog for several sessions each week. Depending on the lesson and need, the session could be a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum
Advice for raisers with college freshmen dogs

The time from when you turn the dog in for formal training and when you receive notice concerning the status (and career path) of the dog can be a time of great anticipation for you. Our advice is to be patient! You will receive notification immediately of any status change. Waiting is the hard part as you can expect the dog to be in the training kennel anywhere from four to twelve months. The dog you raised may be ready for class but may not be the right match for the current applicants. Southeastern Guide Dogs wants the match to be right for both dog and human!

PUPPY RAISER DAY/DINNER

The culmination of all the raiser’s dedication is Puppy Raiser Day or Dinner for our dogs placed with Veterans. It is like a graduation day only better! This day is for the Puppy Raisers whose dog has completed guide dog or service dog training and has been matched with a visually impaired individual or veteran. The meeting of Puppy Raiser and student is a way for the students as well as for Southeastern to say “thank you” for the raiser’s gift of time, commitment, love, and hard work.

After a match is made, the AC is notified and will, in turn, notify the Puppy Raiser. Puppy Raiser Day/Dinner is by invitation and reservation only. Raisers who raised the dogs in class will be invited, provided they are in good standing with Southeastern. For the comfort and success of the student who is learning to work his/her new guide dog, the guest list is limited to immediate family only. Puppy Raising Services must approve any exception to this.

On Puppy Raiser Day/Dinner, the Puppy Raiser(s) are invited to Southeastern to observe the dog they raised learning to work together with his new handler (guide only), meet the individual who was matched with the guide/service dog they raised, and say hello to the dog. The raiser and student will spend time together, have a photo taken together and have brunch/dinner together. Both are very special events that all of us wait and hope for as Puppy Raisers and staff.

It is important that Puppy Raisers who have an In-For-Training dog that has been at Southeastern for four months to note the dates of the upcoming Puppy Raiser Day (listed on the Puppy Raiser Resources section of the website). There will only be about ten to fourteen days notice when a match is made for a guide and just a couple of days when a match is made for a service dog.

Note: If raising another puppy, you should not bring the current puppy to Puppy Raiser Day. If you are unable to make other plans for the puppy, contact your AC for help.
Additional Information

**Dog Switches**
Occasionally, a dog switch is made in class. This means the dog you raised could be removed from class or be put in class if he wasn’t already. If this happens, the raiser is notified immediately. If the dog you raised is taken out of class, you will be advised that he is back in training or is released from the program. A dog being returned to training is generally due to the match not being compatible.

**Raiser Unable to Attend**
If, because of time or distance, a raiser is unable to attend Puppy Raiser Day, staff will arrange a phone call between the raiser and the student in class.

**IN-HOME PLACEMENTS (IHP)**
Sometimes Southeastern does an in-home placement when the student does not attend a residential class. Instead, a trainer travels to the student’s home and conducts the match and training in the student’s home area.

If the dog you raised is matched in an in-home placement, Southeastern will arrange a phone call between the Puppy Raiser and student. The Puppy Raiser will also receive a photo of the team and a bio of the recipient. It is Southeastern’s option to approve a visit between the raiser and student. This visit, if allowed, would be on a weekday during the second week of training with the Trainer present. Southeastern does try to accommodate requests from Puppy Raisers for a Trainer-supervised visit; however, Southeastern retains this option on a case-by-case basis.

**RETURN FROM FIELD (RFF)**
A guide/service dog may be “Returned From the Field” (RFF) for several reasons, including a change in the circumstances of the visually-impaired graduate or veteran. When a guide/service dog is returned, Southeastern will evaluate the dog for placement as a guide/service dog for another applicant or for another career. If the dog is released from our programs, the Puppy Raiser will be notified.

**BREEDING PROGRAM**
Raising guide dog puppies would not be possible without the dogs participating in the Breeding Program. The dogs selected for the Breeding Program possess particular traits that we want to pass on to future generations. The dog’s physical structure, mental soundness, resilience, and behavior are considered when selecting a breeding dog.

Generally, all of the dogs that are raised in the Puppy Program are breeding candidates and will remain intact (will not be spayed or neutered). The Genetics and Reproduction Department needs to assess the dogs as adults in order to make a decision. Occasionally, the Genetics and Reproduction Department will be able to identify a litter that is too closely related to the current breeding colony, has a temperament or health problem present in the lines, or that does not meet the current needs of the colony. In that case, the Genetics and Reproduction Department will alert Puppy Raising Services, and some or all of the puppies in the litter will receive spay or neuter notices.

It is important that raisers do not spay or neuter the puppy without receiving notice to do so.

Breeding candidates come in for training and are evaluated at that time. The evaluation and selection time varies and can take from 1-3 months for the evaluation and selection process to be completed. As selections are made, the Puppy Raisers will be contacted with the status of the dog they raised. It is very important that all dogs be raised in accordance with all puppy protocols and guidelines because, if not chosen for breeding dogs, they will continue the process to be a guide dog.
When a dog is selected for the Breeding Program, he or she is then matched with a Breeder Host with which to live. The Breeder Host keeps the dog, tending to proper nutrition and exercise to keep the dog fit for breeding. The Host lives within 75 miles of the Southeastern campus and transports the dog to and from Southeastern frequently while the dog participates in the Breeding Program. This can be up to a seven-year commitment. Puppy Raisers who have submitted a Breeder Host Application (available online on our website) prior to IFT, live within 75 miles of the Southeastern campus, and are in good standing with Southeastern, will likely be asked if they are interested in participating as a Breeder Host for the dog they raised. At that time, the Host and Breeder will be under the direction of the Genetics and Reproduction Department and not Puppy Raising Services.

Raisers who become Breeder Hosts are still permitted to puppy raise, but the puppy must be of the same sex as the Breeder and may not be one of the Breeder’s offspring.

Breeding dogs are welcome to attend Southeastern public events such as Walkathon. Breeder dogs sometimes participate in public relations and fund-raising events, but no longer attend Puppy Raiser meetings unless it is by special invitation. Breeder dogs do not receive coats, and, unlike guide dog puppies, are not eligible for public outings and exposures. It is a rewarding experience to keep a happy, safe, and healthy breeding dog and to know that one breeding dog can produce many guide dogs for visually impaired individuals.

**TRANSFER DOGS**

A Transfer dog is one that, for one reason or another, has been released from the guide dog program. While it can be very disappointing for a Puppy Raiser when the guide dog puppy he/she raised does not complete the program and is unable to be placed as a guide dog, there are several reasons this decision is made with the best interests of the dog being foremost.

- Basic temperament not suited for guide dog work, making the dog unhappy or unreliable. This includes dogs that are shy, unsound, or reactive.
- Medical problems.
- Dogs that do not enjoy guide dog work. Being a guide dog requires the dog to take a large amount of initiative and responsibility, and some dogs find this stressful.
- Dogs that don’t kennel well. Most dogs adjust well to kennel life, but it would be unfair to keep an unhappy dog in a kennel.

Southeastern will always advise the Puppy Raiser when and why the dog was released. Sometimes it may be surprising when a puppy that seemed so promising is released from the program. Remember that puppy temperament can be very different from the final adult temperament that the dog matures into; it is difficult to predict who the puppy will grow up to be. Occasionally, Puppy Raising Services will transfer a puppy before it gets called back in on the basis of a health or temperament problem.

When a dog is transferred out of the guide dog program, he is assessed to see if he is suitable for any other programs. There are very specific types of dogs that these programs require; certain temperament or health characteristics may make a dog ineligible for these programs. Assessments take time, as the staff works with the dog to see if he has the skills needed for another career. Each of these careers is important and provides great value to people in need.
Additional Information

**Service Dogs**
Service dogs shift the focus from triggers and trauma to the calm, steady presence of a highly trained dog. Specific commands such as watch, block, hug, and others mitigate symptoms of PTSD, mobility assistance, seizure response and hearing alert.

**Facility Therapy Dogs**
Facility therapy dogs live with military staff members and provide therapeutic services to veterans and families being treated in military medical facilities across the nation.

**Emotional Support Dogs and Gold Star Family Dogs**
Emotional support dogs provide therapeutic comfort to veterans. These gentle dogs create calm, provide companionship, and create opportunities for exercise and routine.

**Gold Star Family Dogs**
Well-trained Gold Star Family dogs offer loving companionship to military families who have lost a loved one in service to the nation, delivering comfort in the midst of difficult times.

**Kids Companion Dogs**
Gentle dogs are selected for this program to be companions for visually-impaired children ages 10-17. Living with, loving, and caring for the dog equips the child one day to travel with a guide dog.

**Public Service Dogs**
Dogs identified for this program have specific aptitudes for careers in search and rescue, bomb and arson detection, or drug detection.

**Ambassador Dogs**
These well-behaved dogs are placed with active volunteers providing outreach, education, and comfort to those in hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, and schools.

**RAISER ADOPTION**
If the dog is released from the guide dog program, the raiser will be contacted. If the Training and Career Change staff assesses the dog and determine that he is not a fit for one of our other programs, he will likely be offered back to the raiser for adoption.

Sometimes raisers feel that they have failed or are concerned that Southeastern will not allow them to raise another puppy if one they raised was released. Southeastern knows that each puppy is an individual and may be released for various reasons out of both the raiser’s and Southeastern’s control. If raisers follow the guidelines of the Puppy Raising Program and are in good standing with Southeastern, they can apply to raise another puppy.

If the dog was released because of a temperament problem that might affect a puppy (such as aggressive behavior towards other dogs), Puppy Raising Services may decide that a puppy cannot be raised in the home if the dog is adopted back.
PUBLIC ADOPTION

It is both Southeastern’s and the Puppy Raiser’s hope that the dog becomes a guide dog for a visually impaired person. If not, Southeastern has suitable homes and cares about who adopts the dog. Puppy Raisers should not think that they have to adopt a dog to ensure it a good home. Remember that the puppy came from Southeastern, has remained under Southeastern’s supervision while entrusted to the Puppy Raiser, and the dog’s best interest is in mind always.

Southeastern has historically had a long list of applicants who are waiting to adopt a Transferred dog from the program. There is an application process to adopt a Southeastern dog as well as a cost recovery fee. Whatever home we choose, you can be sure each has been carefully screened and selected for the individual dog to ensure the dog will receive the best of care for its physical and emotional well-being. The adoption is private and there is no release of information between the adopter and the raiser until after a 90-day waiting period. In addition, both parties must agree to have information exchanged before this is done.

RAISING ANOTHER PUPPY

The experience of raising a puppy is so rewarding that the majority of people raise numerous times. If you would like to raise another guide dog puppy, you will need to complete a Repeat Puppy Raiser Application. Please indicate on the application a timeframe in which you would like to raise again—if not immediately.