



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department

Rewarding Calm Behavior

Focus is on rewarding puppies with food for desired calm, stationary behavior in a variety of environments. No verbal mark (“Nice”) is used. Delivery of food reward is leisurely in demeanor and direct to the puppy’s mouth.

Goal: Puppy exhibits calm, relaxed behavior in a variety of different environments for long periods of time, including those with distractions.

Criteria for Food Rewarding Calm Behavior: All of these conditions should be met before you deliver food to the puppy.

- Puppy is awake.
- Puppy is physically close to you.
- Puppy has all four feet on the floor (sit, down, or stand are all acceptable positions).
- If on leash, the leash is loose with no contact on the puppy’s collar.
- Puppy is choosing to remain with handler and is relaxed.
- Puppy is keeping its paws and tongue to itself.
- Puppy is quiet.
- Puppy is not staring intently at the handler.

How to deliver food reward for calm behavior

1. **Watch** for puppy to be exhibiting calm, relaxed behavior for at least 1 minute.
2. **Leisurely reach** for a kibble.
3. **Calmly deliver** the kibble directly to the puppy’s mouth.
4. **Repeat** following another minute (minimum) of calm behavior.

Notes:

- Why not mark with “Nice”? Here are the reasons we don’t want to mark calm behavior. “Nice” has excited emotions attached to it, which means that marking calm behavior will actually energize the puppy and likely bring them out of the desired calm behavior. Often times a marker word signals to the dog that it is “time to train!” Their body language and energy changes, typically to be less calm and more alert. The opposite of what you are trying to capture.
- **Important.** If even a calm delivery of a food reward excites your puppy and brings them “out of calm” behavior – cease food-rewarding calm behavior and use gentle stroking

and quiet praise to reward calm behavior. If the puppy is still overly excitable or busy in certain situations, see your leader.

		
<p>1. Watch for puppy to exhibit calm, relaxed behavior.</p>	<p>2. Calmly reach into your bait bag and grab a kibble.</p>	<p>3. Deliver kibble directly to the puppy.</p>
		
<p>4. Food should go straight to puppy's mouth.</p>	<p>5. Puppy should remain calm and take food gently.</p>	<p>6. Pup should return to calm, relaxed behavior. Give random rewards after pup has remained calm for at 1 minute or longer.</p>

Reminders

- ✓ You will always need food reward with you! This training technique is for all kinds of environments. You don't want to be caught unprepared.
- ✓ Don't forget that the food rewards should come out of your puppy's daily ration. It is recommended that you put your puppy's meal inside your bait bag; at the end of the day what is left goes in their bowl.