

## Congratulations on Your New Puppy!

Now is the time to start thinking about teaching your new pup some basic manners and to accept handling by you, groomers and veterinary professionals!

### **Practice Physical Exam**

Pay attention to how your veterinarian examines your puppy. You will want to “practice” doing physical exams at home so that your pup does not feel threatened when eyes, ears and mouth are peered into, the tail lifted, and when the belly is touched. Handle the feet and toenails to make future pedicures a bit easier!

### **Nipping – Ouch!**

Nipping is a common complaint of owners of young dogs. As soon as your puppy comes home he/she is old enough to be responsible for where its teeth are. Most nipping occurs when puppies want to initiate or escalate the level of play. Thus, if you feel teeth on your skin or clothing, the game you are playing has to STOP. Ignore the puppy for 15 seconds, then attempt to initiate appropriate play (no teeth!) with a toy. It may help to squeak like an injured pup to let your pup know that contact with teeth hurts. Most puppies will back off and if they do they should be praised for that.

### **Puppy Class**

We strongly recommend enrolling your pup in a puppy class – even if you have other dogs at home, or if you’ve attended a puppy class before with another dog. These classes teach dogs basic manners in a distracting yet controlled environment. Most of these classes allow some time for the puppies to socialize - it is wonderful for them to learn how to interact appropriately with other dogs their age.

### **Nothing in Life is Free!**

This is the name of a program that teaches your pup that you are the kind, benevolent leader of the household, from whom all good things come. It is fairly simple – for everything that the dog perceives as good (food, treats, going outside,

coming back in and affection), the dog must sit and look at you. The result of consistent use of this program is a dog who has learned how to say “Please!”

### **Socialization**

Puppies are the most easily socialized in their first few months of life. Some of the socialization happens with their mother and littermates. It’s up to you to continue their lessons. Try to introduce your puppy to five new experiences a day. This can include meeting different people, experiencing different sounds, different brushes and combs or different rewards are just a few to start with. Reward your pup for calm or curious behavior when introducing something new. If your pup exhibits fearful behavior with the new stimulus, model the behavior you would like your puppy to exhibit - be calm, approach and touch the new object as if you are not afraid. If your pup still does not take cues from you, table that item for another day – and start off the reintroduction from farther away, gradually asking for calm behavior while decreasing the distance to it.

### **Vocal Behavior While Confined**

We recommend crate training as a method for housebreaking your puppy. Not only does this method confine a potential mess, it helps to teach the puppy how to “hold it”. One of the complaints we hear most frequently is that the puppy vocalizes excessively while in the crate. A word of caution: never open the door when the puppy is vocalizing! When the puppy wants to exit the crate, opening of the crate door if the reward and if you open it in the middle of a vocalization the puppy will learn the way to get out is to vocalize and next time they will do it louder and longer. Ideally, if you are practicing “Nothing in Life is Free!” your pup will sit politely to be let out of the crate!