



Legend Acres GAMES



Playing with your puppy every day will build a bond that will last a lifetime. Simple games stimulate your puppy's mind and they teach problem-solving skills. And, they're fun for both your puppy and you! Subscribe to our Youtube page for examples of games!

- 1. "Find it!"** Sit on the floor. When your puppy is close to you, show the puppy a toy, then hide it behind your back, under one of your hands on the floor, or under your leg. Tell the puppy, "Find it!" When the puppy gets the toy, use lavish praise in an enthusiastic voice. For very young puppies, you may need to make the game simple to start. Show the puppy the toy and cover only a portion of it with your hand. You'll eventually get to where you can hide the toy behind your back or for older dogs, somewhere in the room, and they'll find it. Kongs and toys you can hide treats in work well for this game as your puppy grows. When I clean the house and pick up all the toys I hide a few of them around the house and send the dogs on a scavenger hunt. This game can also be played with treats by placing them around the room, under cones, or under cups!
- 2. "Fetch!"** Start with a ball (for larger dogs) or toy. In the beginning, throw it a short distance only a few feet away. Tell the puppy, "Fetch." When the puppy gets the toy, call the puppy back to you. You can clap your hands and use encouragement to call the puppy. Give lavish praise, hugs, treats, and pets when the puppy brings the toy. This game helps reinforce the fetch and come commands with puppies.
- 3. Nothing like a good massage** Petting, holding young and small dogs in your arms, and a gentle massage are all good activities for bonding. Start at the head and ears, gently massaging your puppy. Work your way down the body. Some puppy's will resist having their legs or feet touched, or they won't want you touching their ears. If your puppy squirms, tries to get away, or tries to bite, you'll know you've identified a target behavior that you need to work on. This exercise reinforces puppy gentling.
- 4. Hide and Seek** To play hide and seek, when the puppy is distracted, you can go out of sight not far away and call, "Find me." When the puppy comes and finds you, praise the puppy. For older dogs, you can go to a different room in the house and call the dog to find you. You'll eventually want to teach the command, "Stay," so the puppy does not learn to try to find you every time you leave the room. Make sure that you go out of sight sometimes and don't call the puppy.
- 5. Scheduling a Play Date** Young puppies learn through play while they are still in the litter. Chances to play with other puppies in safe, controlled situations can teach your puppy canine social skills. Puppy 101 Classes are a good way for puppies to learn in a group and get group play. When attending group classes we encourage the class to arrive 15 minutes early and

allow the dogs to play on leash or off leash in the dog park.

6. Pass the Puppy Young puppies learn through gentling that people are in charge. Suspend the puppy in the air at eye level, make eye contact, the puppy will look away, pull puppy to your chest and pet the puppy from nose to tail, when they settle or gentle pass to the next person and repeat. Pass the puppy will reinforce that people are in control and when they allow people to be in control they are rewarded. This exercise will also introduce your puppy to new people and learn that all people are friendly and there is no reason to fear them.

7. Recall Game Recall or coming when called can be strengthened in play! Stand or sit in a large circle, where everyone in the game has a handful of treats. One person starts the game by saying the dogs name and saying come, when the dog arrives feed a treat, then the next person calls and so on. If the dog comes to someone that did not call they do not get a treat. The more upbeat and fun you make the game the more fun recall becomes. The idea is to encourage the dog the wait at the center to be called! Videos on our youtube page show how to set up this game!

8. Here Game Recall or coming when called can be strengthened in play! Call dog to you from a short distance away and feed treats for 10-30 seconds while praising(5 Treats Jackpotting). Then repeat from distances farther and farther away progressing to a long distance recall. Do not ask the dog to do anything upon arriving, just both hands in and lots of treats!

9. Seeking Game A dog's nose dominates his brain; in fact the part of the brain dedicated to scent is forty times greater in a dog than in a human. The dog's brain is literally built around the information it gets from scent and as smell is so closely linked to emotions, this provides even more evidence that the dog's emotional experience might be even greater than we could ever imagine. The seeking game can be played at any time and when entering a new area. Let the dog follow their nose and encourage them to find things such as looking at a pinecone, what is that there, and so on while keeping the leash loose. This exercise only takes a few minutes and the goal is 10-15 minutes prior to training, exercise, or play to reduce anxiety and familiarize with a new place.

10. Kibble Trail Game Very similar to the seeking game but done in a small area that has been staged with the dogs favorite treats, place treats along circular or curved patterns and let the dog follow their nose and encourage them to find it while keeping the leash loose. This exercise only takes a few minutes and the goal is 5 minutes prior to training, exercise, or play to reduce anxiety and familiarize with a new place.

11. Choices giving choices teaching dogs to problem solve while strengthening bonding.

Yes/No: Using a high value treat ask the dog if they want a yummy treat while putting out an open hand and saying yes while encouraging them to look, nose bump, or paw the open. Start adding in an open hand for yes and an open hand for no.

Name Game: Take two objects and show the dog each item 3 times and then ask them to choose one, then you can add in a new object and ask to identify the new object through elimination.

Color Game: Take two different colored objects and tell them the color of each one three times and ask to pick a color. Then you can add in a third color and ask to identify the new color through elimination.