CANINE ENRICHMENT

ENRICHMENT GAMES

THE NAME OF THE GAME: This game is great for teaching name recognition for a puppy or recently adopted dog and is also great for helping to teach your dog to respond when their name is called. Simply say your dog's name and if they look at you respond with a "yes" and treat or click and treat. If the dog does not respond, show them that you have treats and once you have their attention, say their name, and then mark and reward for them looking at you when you say it. Do not repeatedly say your dog's name if they are not paying attention or responding. This can cause their name to lose meaning and they may be less responsive to it.
For more information: https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/TheNameGame-1.pdf

TUG GAME: Tug-of-war can be a really great game to play with your dog, as long as it is structured. The rules to tug are that the dog must drop the item with prompted with a learned cue, treat, or another toy, and that they must sit and wait for you to say take the toy before they take the toy to begin tug. See the following website/handout for more in depth rules and hints on how to troubleshoot: https://centerforshelterdogs.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/4.0.4b_Tug-Game-and-Training-1.pdf

FETCH GAME: The fetch game is innate to some dogs, while others have a more difficult time learning to bring the toy back and drop it. For a dog that enjoys chasing toys, throw a toy and when they retrieve they toy, show them that you have another toy ready to throw. Once they drop they toy they are holding, throw the other toy. Repeat this until the dog is reliably dropping the other toy when coming back. Next you can begin adding a sit before the toy is thrown so that the dog must retrieve the toy, drop the toy, and sit for the next toy to be thrown. You can also use a treat to trade the dog for ropping the toy if this works better for your dog.

COME GAME: This game is great for making a recall reliable. Remember to start this game in minimally distracting environments first before adding distractions. Begin by asking your dog to come when in a low distracting situation. Lavishly reward your dog when they do come. Continue to practice and reward your dog for coming when cued. As the dog becomes more reliable in low distractions situations, add distractions and continue to rewardlavishly for the dog coming to you. This will teach your dog to come when cued and to check in with you on your own. Remember that if you cue your dog and they don't listen, not to continue cuing and to reduce environmental distractions and/or increase your reward. See the following video for a fun and amusing demonstration on how to do this: https://youtu.be/1T1a3_1ouqY

FIND IT / NOSEWORK GAME: Simply ask your dog to sit and place a treat on the ground several feet away, but in view. Ask your dog to then "find it" and motion toward the treat. Reward the dog with praise once they find the treat. Repeat this step several times until the dog is readily going to the treat. Then add some more distance. Once the dog is reliably finding the treat with this step, begin hiding the treat in an easy to find place that is just out of sight. Continue to add more difficulty as your dog gets better with this exercise.

HIDE AND SEEK: This game is super simple, but often very fun for your dog. If your dog is engaged with an item, simply leave the room, hide, and then call your dog's name. Reward them with praise, a treat, or a quick game of tug/fetch when they find you.