

Knowing Dogs 201
Staff Training for Pet Care Centers

Group Play
Leader Guide

Robin Bennett, CPDT-KA

Susan Briggs, CKO



Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play
By Robin Bennett, CPDT-KA, and Susan Briggs, CKO

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Bennett, Robin and Briggs, Susan
Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play
Robin Bennett, CPDT-KA
Susan Briggs, CKO
P.cm.

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Program Goals

Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play

Welcome to the Knowing Dogs 201: Dog Group Play, developed and produced by Dream Dog Productions. Information for this staff training program is from the book, Off-Leash Dog Play: A Complete Guide to Safety & Fun, by Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs. The program has been designed so procedures discussed can be customized to your specific pet care center.

The Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play program was developed to keep dogs safe while playing together and provide knowledge to develop skills for pet care providers to properly supervise off-leash play. Dogs have a language that they use to communicate with each other, with humans, and with other animals. When you learn and understand their language you'll recognize warning signs and signals that the dog is not comfortable and understand how to safely manage play for the enjoyment of all dogs in the group.

We want dogs that attend group play to be physically safe and leave the group as emotionally sound as when they arrived to play. The information included in the Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play program helps pet care providers recognize the early warning signs of inappropriate play behaviors and how to take action to keep play fun and safe for each dog. This will result in happier and healthier dogs that make your job easier, and satisfied clients that keep coming back.

We are passionate about providing the information pet care providers need to be successful. Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play, is a key foundation for further study. Dogs have a lot to teach us and we invite you to join us in learning and understanding their behaviors.

Robin & Susan

A **BIG THANK YOU** to our beta test sites for their time, feedback and input that resulted in the final Knowing Dogs staff training product:

- ABC Pet Resort: Houston, TX
- Morris Animal Inn: Morristown, NJ
- Morris K9 Campus: Randolph, NJ
- Pampered Pets Bed & Biscuit: Fort Wayne, IN and Napoleon, OH
- Rover Oaks Pet Resort: Houston and Katy, TX
- Stay N Play Pet Ranch©: Dripping Springs, TX
- Urban Tails LLC: Houston, TX

Table of Contents

Getting Started Leader Checklist Prior to the Start of Knowing Dogs Staff Training	1
Keys to Success	2
Module Information and Leader Tools	5
Pre and Post Course Assessment.....	8
Module 1: Breed Behavior and Stages of Development Leader Tips	13
Module 1: Breed Behavior and Stages of Development Evaluation Answer Key	15
Module 2: Play Behaviors Leader Tips	17
Module 2: Play Behaviors Evaluation Answer Key.....	18
Module 3: Leadership Part 1 Leader Tips	21
Module 3: Leadership Part 1 Evaluation Answer Key	23
Module 4: Leadership Part 2 Evaluation Leader Tips	25
Module 4: Leadership Part 2 Evaluation Answer Key	27
Module 5: Leading Playgroups Leader Tips	29
Module 5: Leading Playgroups Evaluation Answer Key	31
Module 6: Dogs in Stress Leader Tips	35
Module 6: Dogs in Stress Evaluation Answer Key	37
Module 7: Dog-to-Dog Aggression Leader Tips	41
Module 7: Dog-to-Dog Aggression Evaluation Answer Key	43
Module 8: Dog-to-Dog Greetings Leader Tips	47
Module 8: Dog-to-Dog Greetings Evaluation Answer Key	49
Course Completion Leader Tips	53
Handouts and Forms List	55
Reorder Information.....	56

Getting Started

Leader Checklist Prior to the Start of Knowing Dogs Staff Training

	<p>Review each module on the DVD and follow along with a staff workbook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module 1 – Breed Behavior and Stages of Development 201• Module 2 – Play Behaviors• Module 3 – Leadership Part 1• Module 4 – Leadership Part 2• Module 5 – Leading Playgroups• Module 6 – Dogs in Stress• Module 7 – Dog-to-Dog Aggression• Module 8 – Dog-to-Dog Greetings
	<p>Review Handouts for each module. See page 55 for list of handouts by module. The module 7 handout is a resource available on the Association of Pet Dog Trainers website.</p>
	<p>Customize handouts for your pet center. Electronic copies of all handouts are on the CD included with the program. Update information to reflect procedures in your pet center for each topic.</p>
	<p>Review Hands-on Activity in the evaluation section of each module of the staff workbook. Consider how staff can complete the activity in your pet center. Be prepared to provide specific instructions to staff when they start each module with a Hands-on Activity. You should be present to observe some activities and review staff feedback for others. Document staff performance on the Individual Training Worksheet form.</p>
	<p>Review the Shift Tips for each module of the staff workbook. Consider how staff can complete them most effectively in your center. These are extra steps for staff to continue applying knowledge and do not require your observation or grading.</p>
	<p>Have staff complete the pre-course assessment form in their workbook.</p>
	<p>Prepare an Individual Training Progress Worksheet for each staff member starting training. (Handout on the cd.)</p>

Keys to Success

This program is a management tool for training your staff. By using the technical training content you know your team has received consistent information and can assess their comprehension. However, you as their training leader, play a critical role in the successful application of the knowledge learned to their job in the pet center.

This leader guide is designed to maximize the application of staff training to actual job performance. We understand your time is valuable; however, your involvement is essential to the success of this program in your center. The guide provides checklists by module to make it easy for you to prepare and oversee your staff's training. We also include forms and worksheets that you can use as is or customize as handouts, performance aids and to track training results of your team.

The accompanying staff workbook is designed to be a resource of material covered in each training session for your staff's ongoing reference. It is intended that staff will add notes to the workbook as they go through the training. The workbook also provides a summary of their progress in learning the material and developing skills during the training. Finally, the workbook includes evaluation questions, exercises on material learned, activity notes, and case study observation results.

Role of the Training Leader:

1. Prepare the staff for their training by using the leader tips to explain your expectations of how they will apply knowledge to their job.
2. Understand the program content by previewing the DVD and staff workbook content prior to using them to train your staff.
3. Have a plan and schedule for staff to complete the full 8 module program.
4. Be organized for each training session by having handouts ready and a quiet place designated for staff to watch the DVD session without interruption.
5. Plan to have time available at the end of each session to review staff questions for the module and offer input on their shift tip assignments.
6. Score their evaluation quickly and provide constructive feedback on incorrect answers.
7. Reward and celebrate successful completion of the program!

The Knowing Dogs program can be used for training staff members individually, as a small group of staff together, or in guided staff training meetings. Our beta test sites provided feedback that leading a group of 5 staff at one time was a lot of effort so you may want to keep group sizes small. We designed the program to be flexible to meet the varying needs of pet care centers.

Suggested Training Timeline

The Knowing Dogs program is a progressive program of knowledge that builds with each module. It is very important that you validate understanding and comprehension of material through a passing evaluation score and application to the job prior to allowing the staff to continue to the next module. It is fine for staff to repeat a module as the goal is for them to fully understand the material and how to use it working in the pet care center.

Staff training is successful when knowledge learned is applied correctly in assigned job functions. Each module includes shift tips that recommend the application of key concepts from the module to be completed on the job. This is a critical part of the training process and the overall timeline needs to provide for this.

The recommended timeline for completing the course for full-time staff members follows.

Training Timeline	Pros	Cons
Less than 8 days	Not recommended	Does not give time for staff to absorb information presented or apply the shift tips. High risk of knowledge not being applied to job tasks.
8 days	Provides a daily routine of training and application of knowledge. Quick completion.	Pace may be too fast for some staff members.
16 days	Recommended pace for balance of training routine and application of knowledge	None
30 days	Provides most time for staff and leader to accommodate training with other job duties.	Slow pace may result in training not being completed.
More than 30 days	Not recommended	Extended time between sessions makes it harder for staff to connect learning between the modules. Does not demonstrate a priority commitment to staff training.

Each training module is designed to be completed in less than one hour. The DVD portion of the training session is approximately 20 minutes. Staff should also be given quiet time after watching the DVD to complete the evaluation questions for that module.

Our program has been designed to facilitate the application of new concepts onto the job as soon as possible. Several modules include hands-on activities as part of the evaluation. You will provide direction to the staff member on when they should complete these during their work shift. All modules include less formal shift tips that will encourage staff to continue to use the new concepts while working their shift. You are encouraged to ask them in the days following training if these have been done and what was learned in the process.

Reward Success

It is very important to reward and recognize staff that commit to the training program. Remember that each person learns at a different pace and many staff fear “testing”. You must balance the evaluation scoring with your observations of how well each staff member applies knowledge presented on-the-job or in your discussions.

You will want to reward effort as well as evaluation scores. It is important to find something positive in the training process to recognize and reward for each staff member. At a minimum we suggest you celebrate the successful completion of the 8 module program. A certificate format is included in the forms section. Additional reward ideas follow that can be used for great questions, shift tips application that exceed your expectations or interim encouragement after a tough module evaluation.

Reward Ideas

- An hour off with pay
- Handwritten note of recognition
- Snacks (candy, soda, etc)
- Lunch
- Gift cards
- Applaud achievement with co-workers present
- Wall of Fame in lobby
- Publicize in client newsletter
- Draw from a box of same value items (snacks, gift cards, etc)

When training is fun it is often most successful.

Module Information and Leader Tools

The first page of each module includes information and tools to assist in successful implementation of the training program. There is also a checklist to help you quickly see handouts and actions required of you as training leader.

Reasons for content – Explains why the information is important and how it will benefit the staff member. This is good to share with the staff before they start the module. When staff can understand and personalize the training there is better learning and comprehension.

Your staff will – Outlines the expectations after the training session is completed. These are the points of focus for the evaluation questions and shift tips. It is recommended that you outline these to the staff before they start each module.

Checklist – A clear summary of your role in the training for that module divided into tasks before the DVD training session and tasks after the DVD training session. The symbols below are used in the leader guide to alert you to actions you need to take in leading staff training.



Handout – A handout is expected to be provided to the staff as they study this module. Many of these are customizable to reflect the procedures for your pet center.



Provide Resource – Module three recommends the staff have access to a hula hoop to practice controlling space in playgroups.



Shift Tips – Copy of the shift tips that are recommended for staff to complete following the study of each module. Be prepared to recommend the best way to implement the suggested tips in your center. It is also good to set an expectation of when they will be completed and how they will report back to you.



Hands-on Activity – In several modules part of the evaluation is a hands-on activity to be completed in the pet center. The checklist outlines for you when you need to participate with the staff for them to complete the activity. We recommend you always review the activity assignment and provide best way to complete it in your center. You should also outline the best timing for them to complete it and how to report back to you when completed. The evaluation scoring charts do not include these activities; you can document separately on the Individual Training Worksheet form. A suggested scoring: Needs Improvement, Good, Great or Exceeded Expectations.



Answer Staff Questions – The staff workbook includes a section in each module to write down questions related to the material and application to their job in your pet center. This is another opportunity for you to reinforce the material and outline your specific expectations.



Evaluation Answer Key and Scoring Chart

- Each answer is either right or wrong; no partial credit!
- The answer key will indicate situations where 1 question counts as more than one response (e.g., matching tables, fill-in-the-blank, etc).
- Case study responses are either pass or fail (pass = one correct answer; fail = incorrect response).
- We recommend that a score of 80% be achieved prior to continuing on to the next module.
- The evaluation is open book as our goal is comprehension of key objectives.
- In the event an evaluation score of less than 50% is achieved we suggest requiring the staff member to repeat that module.

Remember to keep in mind that some staff fear “tests” so in low scoring situations, have a discussion to determine a reason for the low score. Do they understand the material, but confused by the question? (In these instances you may want to verbally discuss the evaluation and adjust the score to reflect their true comprehension.) Was there a distraction while watching to DVD so a key objective was missed? Are they confused by the material? (In

situations where they missed information or are confused, have them watch the DVD again and complete the evaluation a second time.)

The goal of this course is to build understanding of canine body language and to provide specific reasons for your interpretation by describing the signals you do observe. In several questions, staff are asked to look at a photo and decide the appropriate traffic signal color with reasons for their decision. The answer key includes our thoughts on the best answer with our reasons, however, interpreting dog body language is not a black and white decision. When you are scoring the photo responses do consider if the staff member had appropriate reasons for their answer even if it differs from the answer key. Analyzing photos removes the context and environment surrounding the behavior so none of us are 100% certain of the correct answer. Dogs have not read Off-Leash Dog Play and frequently give mixed signals; again this is an important part of learning dog language and provides great discussion and teachable moments in your pet center. Our hope is that your staff realize during this program that dogs always have something new to teach us and working with them is an ongoing learning experience.

SAMPLE

Module 2: Play Behaviors Leader Tips

Reasons for content:


- Recognition of appropriate versus inappropriate play behaviors is the foundation to keeping play safe and fun for all dogs
- Understanding the common traits of play in dogs is important in order to recognize appropriate play

Your staff will:




- Recognize the four basic play styles of dogs: Chasing, Neck biting, Cat-like and Body-slamming
- Determine appropriate play in dogs by understanding the common traits of play

Checklist

Before Training Session:

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe dogs who have a chasing play style. 2. Observe dogs who have a neck biting play style. 3. Which of the four play styles is most common in your center today?
--	--	---

After Training Session:

		<p>Review hands-on activity results. Consider if staff responses match your knowledge of the specific dog or breed and the play situation.</p> <p><i>Observe dogs playing in groups in your center and document instances of body-slamming play and cat-like play. List names and breeds and describe the play.</i></p>
		<p>Answer staff questions.</p>
		<p>Score evaluation (7 questions with 10 responses)</p>

Module 2: Play Behaviors Evaluation Answer Key

1. Which of the following is not a trait of dog play behaviors and gestures:
 - a. Relaxed and curved bodies
 - b. Exaggerated, repetitive movements
 - c. **Forward and backward movements**
 - d. Balanced play
2. When two dogs are neck biting and wrestling you want to see that play is **balanced** between the dogs.
3. To keep play safe a game of chase should be limited to no more than?
 - a. **1 minute**
 - b. 2 minutes
 - c. 3 minutes
4. 5 minutes Neck biting is a benign play style with lower risk of fight breaking out
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
5. Which two play styles have higher risk for over excitement or injuries?
 - a. Chasing and Cat-like
 - b. Neck biting and Cat-like
 - c. **Chasing and Body Slamming**
 - d. Neck biting and Body Slamming
6. Explain why the body-slamming play style requires close monitoring and how you keep this type of play safe.

Wrestling play of larger breeds and dogs knock into one another and wrestle. It is a rough play style and dogs can easily become overstimulated in play. Injuries may also result from the rough play of big strong dogs. Requires frequent intervention and slowing down play so it stays safe.

7. Look at each photo of dogs and indicate their play style:
(4 responses)

a.



Play style: Body Slamming

b.



Play style: Chasing

c.



Play style: Neck Biting

d.



Play style: Body Slamming



Leader Scoring Charts

Question #	# Responses
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	4
Total	10

# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%
10	100	8	80	6	60	Under 5	Redo		
9	90	7	70	5	50				

Module 8: Dog-to-Dog Greetings Leader Tips

Reasons for content:



- Understanding polite and rude greeting behaviors will allow you to recognize appropriate greetings or intervene prior to an incident happening
- Screening dogs for playgroups is a proactive step to keep play safe and make your job easier
- Set dogs up for success and only approve for play when it is a good fit so all dogs enjoy play and groups are easier to manage
- Recommending appropriate alternatives to owners of dogs that fail is a win for the dog, owner, your facility and other dogs in playgroup

Your staff will:



- Identify polite and rude greeting behaviors
- Recognize appropriate and inappropriate dog-to-dog greetings
- Understand that there are multiple goals when screening a dog for group play
- Some dogs are a higher risk in the environment and some dogs are not appropriate
- Know the attributes to quickly prescreen a dog for playgroup
- Understand the options for dogs that it is determined playgroup or daycare are not a good fit

Checklist

Before Training Session:

		Options for Dogs not Suitable for Play Groups
		<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask to observe the next 3 temperament assessments2. Observe greeting behaviors of dogs entering playgroup, especially those entering for the first time

After Training Session:

		Answer staff questions
		Score evaluation (7 questions with 12 responses) 3 case studies

SAMPLE

Module 8: Dog-to-Dog Greetings Evaluation Answer Key

1. From the list below, select the rude greeting behavior.
 - a. Averted eyes
 - b. Gently wagging tail
 - c. Muzzle-to-face greeting
 - d. Stiff-legged posture**
 - e. None of the above
2. Which of the following is **not** a goal of temperament testing dogs for play group?
 - a. Evaluate the dog's communication skills
 - b. Assess a dog's play style
 - c. Determine if the dog will exhibit an aggressive display**
 - d. Understand reasons owners want daycare or group play
3. Which are "red-flag" responses when screening applicant dogs for group play?
 - a. Ad adult dog coming for socialization
 - b. Plays in dog parks
 - c. Has never played with other dogs
 - d. A and C**
 - e. B and C
4. Which of the following is a reason a dog may fail the temperament test?
 - a. Shy and overwhelmed by group play
 - b. Over confident and does not listen to other dogs
 - c. Growls and snarls once during the test
 - d. A and B**
 - e. All of the above
5. If a dog fails the temperament test there is never an option to meet the socialization goals of the owner for their dog
 - a. True
 - b. False**

6. Review photos of dogs greeting below and indicate if the greeting is polite or rude. Provide an explanation for your answer.

(4 responses)



- a. **Polite** or Rude? Why? **Arc approach, neutral body postures**



- b. Polite or **Rude**? Why? **Too much arousal, stiff legged posture (not reading discomfort of other dog)**



- c. **Polite** or Rude? Why? **Arc approach, soft squinting eyes, relaxed posture**



d. Polite or Rude? Why? **Direct head-on approach, stiff legged posture, direct staring, stiff tail carriage**

7. Review each case study and answer the questions that follow. Indicate if you think the dog should pass the temperament evaluation. Why or why not? What would you recommend on introducing the dog to the group or watch for during play group?

(3 responses)

Case Study 1:

You are helping with the test of Sophie, an 8 year old westie. You observe Sophie lip licking and sniffing the floor around the room. She does not have an interest in engaging with any of the humans. You introduce Sophie to 3 dogs from your playgroups and she greets politely and tolerates the interactions, but shows no interest in play. She continues to exhibit stress signals and watches the door.

- a. If Sophie comes to playgroup what would you watch for during play group? **Stress signals and body posture and level of interaction with other dogs. If she is only tolerating group after a couple of hours and displaying stress, would recommend pulling her out of playgroup.**
- b. If Sophie does not plan to come to playgroup what option do you recommend to the owner? **Slowly expand Sophie's social exposure to other dogs through walks in neighborhood and introduction to one playmate friend. If these cause her stress then continue her current routine. If boarding is needed recommend solo boarding with activities she enjoys (e.g., walks, cuddletime, playtimes, etc).**

Case Study 2:

You are helping with the test of Ben, a 4 year old beagle. The owner wants socialization for Ben and decided to try daycare rather than the dog park. When you introduce the existing dogs to Ben, you observe snarls from him to other male dogs. All the greetings are very brief and you observe that the existing dogs tend to ignore him. You do not observe obvious signs of stress from Ben, but there is no engagement after initial greetings with the other dogs.

- a. If Ben comes to playgroup– what would you watch for during play group?
Escalation of his warnings and stress signals. How do the other dogs react to him? If they all continue to ignore and respect his space, and his body posture does not relax then would recommend pulling him out of playgroup.
- b. If Ben does not plan to come to playgroup – what option do you recommend to the owner for socialization? **Work with a trainer or behaviorist to slowly introduce him to other dogs at a distance and with dogs that respect his signals.**

Case Study 3:

You are helping with the test of Obie, a 2 year old lab mix, that has not played with other dogs. During greetings with your group of dogs, Obie displays rude behaviors and gets many corrections from the dogs. You observe that he does begin to listen to their corrections.

- a. If Obie comes to playgroup – what would you watch for during play group? **His rude behavior and reactions from other dogs – does he continue to listen and modify his greeting approach. If he does, then he will probably succeed in playgroup.**
- b. If Obie does not plan to come to playgroup – what option do you recommend to the owner? **Work with a trainer or behaviorist to slowly introduce him to other dogs that they know will give appropriate corrections to his rude behaviors. Slowly let him learn how to politely greet other dogs.**






Leader Scoring Charts

Question #	# Responses
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
5	1
6	4
7	3
Total	12

# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%	# Correct	%
12	100	10	83	8	67	6	50		
11	92	9	75	7	58	Under 6	Redo		

Course Completion Leader Tips

Checklist

		Score post-course evaluation (see pre-course assessment answer key) Calculate score improvement
		Certificate of Completion
		Celebrate and Share the Achievement – see reward ideas in Keys to Success

SAMPLE

Handouts and Forms List

Name	Location	Module
Individual Training Worksheet	CD	Pre Course
Certificate of Completion	CD	Post Course
Dunbar Bite Level Assessment Chart (see full link below Handout chart list)	www.apdt.com	201-7
Fight Policy	CD	201-7
Incident Report	CD	201-7
Leader Role and Dividing Time Chart	CD	201-4
Leader Skills Improvement Plan	CD	201-4
Managing Stress	CD	201-6
Options for Dogs not Suitable for Play group	CD	201-8
Play Management Tools	CD	201-5
Standard Obedience Cues	CD	201-3

<http://www.apdt.com/veterinary/assets/pdf/Ian%20Dunbar%20Dog%20Bite%20Scale.pdf>

Reorder Information

To reorder additional DVD sets or individual staff workbooks for Knowing Dogs 101 or Knowing Dogs 201, contact Dream Dog Productions at:

www.dreamdogproductions.com

Other resources available through Dream Dog Productions include:

- Off Leash Dog Play by Robin Bennett & Susan Briggs
- Off Leash Dog Play Pocket Guide
- Off Leash Dog Play Poster Set (red, green and yellow traffic signal photos)
- Family Dog Cheatsheet
- Dog Behavior Continuum Poster
- Kids & Dogs: A Professional Guide to Helping Families by Colleen Pelar
- Customizable Bookmarks on Meeting a Dog
- Customizable Bookmarks on Canine Stress Signals

Also check out resources available at Crystal Canine at:

www.crystalcanine.com

including: Counting Noses: Accounting and Financial Management Guidelines for the Pet Services Industry.



Robin Bennett

Robin Bennett is an author and consultant for pet care facilities on the subjects of dog daycare, training and off-leash dog play. She has been involved in the pet care business for over 18 years as a dog trainer and dog daycare expert. She founded All About Dogs, the largest dog training company in Virginia grew it from a sole proprietorship to a Corporation that boasts over ten instructors teaching private lessons as well as numerous group classes and behavior modification lessons for shy, fearful and aggressive dogs. Robin is passionate about helping others learn how to start a pet care business. She has an excellent working relationship with local veterinarians as well as the Prince William Animal Control Bureau. She is regularly recommended by both groups to evaluate potentially dangerous dogs.

Robin successfully owned and operated her own dog daycare business for many years. Her book All About Dog Daycare: A Blueprint for Success is the number one reference on how to start a dog daycare, and her newest book, Off-Leash Dog Play, is the key reference on supervising dogs in playgroups. Robin is a highly sought-after speaker on numerous dog daycare business and playgroup topics around the country.

She is an active member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) and has a B.A. degree from Roanoke College. Robin regularly attends dog training seminars, has earned Level 1 certification through the Certification Council for Pet Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the first national certification for dog trainers. Robin is a Colonel in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and is married with two children.

Robin's expertise is regularly tapped by the media. Recent press includes a articles in the Washington Post, the Potomac News, BARK Magazine, Dogs USA Magazine and Training Secrets for Rottweilers Magazine.

robin@dreamdogproductions.com
www.dreamdogproductions.com



Susan Briggs

Susan Briggs is founder of Crystal Canine, a consulting and resource business for the pet care industry and co-founder of Urban Tails, a multi-service pet care center in Houston, TX. With over 10 years experience operating a large dog daycare, boarding, grooming and training center, Susan is a recognized leader in the industry working to establish quality care standards and sharing her knowledge with others. In 2007 she co-wrote *Off-Leash Dog Play: A Complete Guide to Safety & Fun* with Robin Bennett. In 2009 her second book, *Counting Noses*, was published as the only industry specific accounting and financial management resource available. Susan has been a frequent speaker in the pet industry with seminars about getting started successfully in the pet care industry, financial management, dog daycare and dog body language. She has partnered with other pet industry experts to organize *Pet Care Business Basics*, a seminar for anyone looking to get started in the pet care industry.

Susan has been a very active volunteer with pet industry trade associations sharing her passion for safe dog daycare operations and an overall better understanding of dogs in our care. Her goal with Crystal Canine is to make information more easily available to the pet industry through articles, presentations and hands-on seminars.

The pet care industry is her new passion, but her professional career began as an auditor for Ernst & Young. Susan has a Masters of Accountancy from Truman University in her home state of Missouri and passed the CPA exam in 1984. She has converted to become a Texan and lives in Houston with partner Bill Kamps and two dogs, Sheppy and Archie. Her dogs continue to provide lessons on the complexity of canine health and behaviors that has led her to expand her studies into natural and holistic pet care. She is a reiki master and uses many holistic care modalities in the care of her pets including natural diets, acupuncture, massage, homeopathy, aromatherapy, essences, color, crystals, EFT, and animal communication.

susan@crystalcanine.com

713-582-8520

www.crystalcanine.com