

Knowing Dogs 201: Staff Training for Pet Care Centers

Group Play

Robin Bennett, CPDT-KA

Susan Briggs

This staff workbook belongs to:



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

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Bennett, Robin and Briggs, Susan
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Robin Bennett, CPDT-KA
Susan Briggs
P.cm.

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Program Goals

Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play

Welcome to the Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play, developed and produced by Robin Bennett and Susan Briggs. 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.

Knowing Dogs 201: Group Play was developed to keep dogs safe while playing together and provide knowledge to develop skills for pet care providers to properly supervise 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 how to safely respond.

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, appropriate 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 future 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 Services: Morristown, NJ
- Morris K9 Campus: Randolph, NJ
- Paws & Bed & Biscuit: Fort Wayne, IN and Napoleon, OH
- Rover Parks Pet Resort: Houston and Katy, TX
- Stay N Play Pet Ranch©: Dripping Springs, TX
- Urban Tails LLC: Houston, TX



For those who are serious about training their staff in safe off-leash dog play, we invite you to become members of our online community at www.TheDogGurus.com where you can earn badges for using this resource and obtain other exclusive information on how to run a safe off-leash play program.

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Module Information and Tools

The staff workbook is designed to be a resource of material covered in each training session for your ongoing reference. It is intended that you add your own notes to the resource material printed from the teaching presentations. The workbook also provides a summary of your progress in learning the material and developing skills during the training. Finally, the workbook includes evaluation questions and exercises of material learned, activity notes and case study observation results. We anticipate the workbook will get a lot of wear and tear during your adventure in learning dog language and group play. Enjoy the experience!

The following symbols are used in the workbook to alert you to an activity you will complete while watching the teaching sessions: a hand-out customized for your pet care center, a hands-on activity that you will perform after the end of the training session, a shift tip to continue the learning process on-the-job, or a place for you to write down questions you have for your supervisor about applying the material to your job.



This symbol indicates there is an activity for you to complete in your guide during the session.



This symbol indicates you will receive a separate handout from your supervisor of information that is specific to your pet care center.



This symbol indicates that there is a hands-on activity for you to complete in your pet center using the material learned in the module.



This symbol indicates there are suggested shift tips to take on-the-job during your shift to continue the learning from the module.



This symbol indicates the area for you to write down questions you have for your supervisor from this module.

SAMPLE PAGES

Personal Learning Journal

The chart below is a personal learning journal you can use to track your progress as you complete this course. The course is self-paced and each module builds on material presented earlier. It is important that you have a good understanding of the material presented in each module and are able to apply it when working with dogs before you proceed to viewing new material in the next module.

The Personal Learning Journal chart will help you track your progress regarding dates you complete the viewing of each module and hands-on activity. The journal also tracks your Evaluation score from each module with a goal of 80% to be achieved prior to proceeding to the next module. You should also have completed the hands-on activity and received either an *Excellent* or *Satisfactory* score from your supervisor. Finally, you should feel *Good* or *Very Confident* applying the knowledge and skills from the module to your job working with dogs. If you feel like another viewing of the module and more practice time would be helpful, then stop your progress and spend extra time with the material.

Module	Viewing Date	Evaluation Score	Hands-on Activity Date Completed	Hands-on Activity Feedback	Are you able to apply to your job?
1 – Breed Behavior and Stages of Development					
2 – Play Behaviors					
3 – Leadership Part 1					
4 – Leadership Part 2					
5 – Leading Playgroups					
6 – Dogs in Stress					
7 – Dog-to-Dog Aggression					
8 – Dog-to-Dog Interactions					

Module 2: Play Behaviors Study Aids

Play Behaviors and Gestures

- Playbow
- Exaggerated, repetitive movements
- Lateral movements
- Low, slow wagging tail
- Relaxed, loose, curved bodies
- Balanced play



Dog Play Styles

- Chasing



- Neck Biting



- Cat-like



- Body-Slamming



Keys to Success Matching Correct Playstyles



Playstyles are Fluid



In each of the videos indicate one play style and one appropriate play behavior:

Video 1:

Play style: _____ Play behavior: _____

Video 2:




Play style: _____ Play behavior: _____

Video 3:

Play style: _____ Play behavior: _____

Video 4:

Play style: _____ Play behavior: _____

Management Signal	Play Gesture
	Play bow
	Lateral movements
	Exaggerated, repetitive movements
	Low, slow, wagging tail
	Neck biting play
	Cat-like play
	Balanced play
	Chase
	Pinning a dog and quickly releases
	Body-slamming play
	Excessive barking
	Increase in arousal
	Rough play
	Mounting
	Stalking
	Head and chin over shoulders
	Pinning a dog with no release
	High arousal
	Bullying
	Play that is hurting or scaring a dog
	Stalking that scares a dog
	Pushing a dog to submission

Module 2: Play Behaviors Evaluation

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 _____ 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
 - d. 5 minutes
4. Neck biting is a benign play style with lower risk of _____ 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.



7. Look at each photo of dogs and indicate their play style:

a.



Play style: _____

b.



Play style: _____

c.



Play style: _____

d.



Play style: _____



Observe dogs playing in groups in your center and document instances of the following situations and your observations:

Play Situation	Dog Names and Breeds	Describe the Play
Body-slamming play		
Cat-like play		



Questions:



Shift Tips:

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?

Update your progress in your Personal Learning Journal

SAMPLE PAGE

Module 8: Dog to Dog Greetings Study Aids

Dog Greeting Behaviors

Polite	Rude
Indirect arcing approach	Direct head-on approach
Relaxed body posture	Stiff-legged posture
Gently wagging tail	Stiff straight tail carriage
Averted eyes (soft or squinting)	Direct staring
Muzzle-to-face greeting, moving down body	Muzzle over shoulders initially holds
Nose to rear circling	Not allowing rear sniffing
Equalizing body postures	Jump on dog Immediately barking in face

For each photo discussed during the teaching session, take notes below.



How's the Greeting? _____

Body Language: _____



How's the Greeting? _____

Body Language: _____



How's the Greeting? _____

Body Language: _____



For each photo below indicate how the dog-to-dog greeting is going and explain the canine body language that supports your answer.



How's the Greeting? _____

Body language: _____



How's the Greeting? _____

Body Language: _____

Leader's Response to Greetings

- Watch for polite and rude greeting behaviors
- Watch for body language
 - Is it appropriate, loose and polite?
 - Is it inappropriate, stiff and rude?
- Be prepared to pull the dogs away, split or redirect them as needed (even if they have met and played together before)



For each video indicate whether you would allow the greeting to continue & list any behaviors or body language you observe that concerns you.

Video	Would you allow greeting to continue?	Behaviors or body language that concerns you?
1		
2		
3		
4		

Temperament Test Goals

- Determine safety for staff and other dogs
- Assess greeting behavior and play style
- Determine suitability for off-leash playgroups

Red Flag Answers

Screening Question	Answer
Why are you bringing your dog to playgroup?	Socialization
How old is your dog?	6 months to 2 years
Has your dog played with other dogs?	No or Same ones since puppyhood
What does your dog do when upset?	Gets grumpy

After Testing

- Document test results
- Recommend introduction to daycare and playgroup assignment
- Notate key behavior and play information



Indicate the risk level of each dog pictured from low to high in regard to their risk in an off-leash playgroup by circling your answer. Low indicates they would play well with other dogs and enjoy it. High indicates they may not play well or enjoy group play.



8 month Dalmatian – Low or High



8 year old Shepherd Mix – Low or High



3 year Cane Corso – Low or High



4 month Chihuahua Mix – Low or High

When Playgroups Don't Work

- Group play is not right for every dog
- Dogs may not be suitable for several reasons
 - Shy and overwhelmed by group play
 - Uncomfortable in a group of dogs
 - Over confident and does not listen to other dogs
 - Not a good fit for your playgroups
 - Aggressive behaviors

Communicating with Owners

- Clearly communicate that it is the environment that is inappropriate
- The dog is a great pet

Offer Alternatives

- Private play sessions with staff
- Behavior training
- Private field trips
- Another facility
- Dog walking
- Pet sitting



You will receive a hand-out of your pet care center's options for dogs that don't work out for group play.

Module 8: Dog-to-Dog Greetings Evaluation



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. Coming for socialization
 - b. Plays in dog parks
 - c. Has never played with other dogs
 - d. A & C
 - e. B & C
4. Which of the following is a reason a dog may fail the temperament test?
 - a. Shy overwhelmed by group play
 - b. Over confident and does not listen to other dogs
 - c. Growls and snarls once during the test
 - d. A & 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.



a. Polite or Rude? Why?



b. Polite or Rude? Why?



c. Polite or Rude? Why?



d. Polite or hostile? Why?

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?

Case Study 1:

You are helping with the test of Sophie, an 8 year old weenie. 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.

- If Sophie comes to playgroup what would you watch for during play group?
- If Sophie does not plan to come to playgroup what option do you recommend to the owner?

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.

- If Ben comes to playgroup– what would you watch for during play group?
- If Ben does not plan to come to playgroup – what option do you recommend to the owner for socialization?

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?
- b. If Obie does not plan to come to playgroup – what option do you recommend to the owner?



Questions:



Shift Tips:

1. Ask to observe the next 3 temperament assessments
2. Observe greeting behaviors of dogs entering playgroup, especially those entering for the first time

Update your progress in your Personal Learning Journal

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed the study and evaluation portions of Knowing Dogs: 201. After your supervisor reviews this module go on and take the post-course assessment. We hope you are pleased with the improvement in your score!