



Leader Skills Improvement

Objective: Assist staff in improving their existing leadership skills.

Content: A summary of key leader skills from our existing tools is listed with activities or discussion points to use as refresher training. Your focus during your lunch meeting will vary based on the experience level of your team. Review our list and select 2 -3 leader skills you want to review during your lunch n learn. This is perfect timing to expand your leadership discussion to other skills if you are participating in The Daycare Games.

Basic Leadership Skills

- Posture – have two staff members demonstrate leader posture and walking (e.g. royalty) versus victim posture and walking. Discuss impact to dogs in playgroups when leader posture and walking with purpose are not utilized. Ask staff why movement is an important focus while supervising play.
- Body Blocking – ask staff to name a dog in daycare today that is challenging to manage at the gate. Demonstrate at a gate or doorway how to effectively body block using the challenging dog. Ask staff to name other situations when they should use body blocking to manage dogs during play.
- Engaged Leaders – ask staff members to describe what an engaged leader looks like during group supervision. Follow-up by asking them to list key events that need extra attention from the leader and tools they can use to manage them. (e.g., dogs arriving into group, a stranger passing by, etc.)
- Obedience Cues – hand-out your list of standard cues and review with staff members. Ask them to share which cue would be best to manage the following behaviors or situations:
 - Dog moving toward fresh poop
 - New dog to group that is pacing at gate
 - Dog that is humping another dog
- Praise – give a blank piece of paper to each staff member for a short brainstorming session. Ask them to list as many dog behaviors as they can that happen in group play that deserves praise. Have each person share a behavior from their list that is not a repeat to see how many are possible. Discuss the different types of praise and rewards that can be used safely in group and challenge staff to double their current rate of praise over the next week.

Advanced Leadership Skills

- Recall – challenge each staff member to set a goal to achieve in the Daycare Games or to exceed their top performance
- Group Sit – challenge each staff member to set a goal to achieve in the Daycare Games or to exceed their top performance

- Gate Boundary - challenge each staff member to set a goal to achieve in the Daycare Games or to exceed their top performance
- Loose Leash Walking – ask staff to name a dog in daycare today that is challenging to walk on a loose leash. Demonstrate using that dog tips to achieving loose leash walking. Talk about the importance of consistency and going at the dog's pace. Remind staff to also be aware of small dogs and not walking too fast.
- Dividing Time – divide staff into teams of three and ask each team to come up with a new activity that could be used during group play. Have each team share their idea and agree on how each one can be implemented into your daily schedule. What benefit will adding this activity have for the dogs and staff?

Supporting Education Articles/Tools: The article listed and linked below provide additional information on the lunch n learn topic that can be introduced or refreshed as part of your training.

Daycare Games (<https://www.thedoggurus.com/the-daycare-games/>)

What Benevolent Leadership Looks Like & Leadership Exercises PDF

<https://www.thedoggurus.com/benevolent-leadership-looks-like/>

Is Daycare Counselor the Right Job for You & Daycare Counselor Performance Checklist (new & existing employee versions)

<https://www.thedoggurus.com/daycare-counselor-right-job/>

The Dog Guru Course Supporting Lessons: Lessons from our books or courses that relate to the lunch n learn topic that can be used as refresher training.

Knowing Dogs 201, Module 3 – Leader Skills Assessment Activity (workbook page 1)

Knowing Dogs 201, Module 4 & Leadership Skills Improvement Plan Handout

Off-Leash Dog Play: A Complete Guide to Safety & Fun, Chapter 7