behavior modification protocols One of a series of ASPCA® Behavior Modification Protocols developed by Emily Weiss, Ph.D., CAAB

i hold the resources
The goal of this program is to manage a bossy or anxious dog using predictable, non-physical methods.

Any dog would benefit from this program; however, dogs that feel they need to control resources in the home and guard them from humans do quite well. Other behaviors such as body slamming, shoulder rubbing, and body blocking indicate a dog that would benefit from this program. The basis of the program is that the dog must do something, such as “sit,” before he receives anything of value to him.

identifying dogs for the program:
• The dog scores a “3,” “4,” or “5” on the Food Behavior item (only if he body blocks, places paws in bowl or bites the bowl) and the Toy Behavior item, and your behavior team chooses behavioral intervention for the dog.
• The dog exhibits body slamming, shoulder rubbing, and/or tall body posture throughout the assessment. (Note: For safety reasons, the dog should have a loose body and soft eye while exhibiting these behaviors.)

before you begin:

teach the dog the “sit” cue.
• Get dog to stand toe-to-toe with you.
• Place bit of tasty, stinky food (hot dogs or cheese) between thumb and forefinger.
• Bring treat (lure) to dog’s nose and get his attention with it. It is okay if he licks or nibbles at it, but do not give him the treat yet.
• Slowly raise the lure up and as the dog follows it with his nose, move it back over his head a few inches.
• As his head tilts back, he is likely to sit.
• As soon as the rear touches the floor, say “yes” and give the dog the treat.
• Practice 6-10 times in quick succession.
• After the dog is anticipating the next move and begins to sit before you move your hand up and back, he is ready to learn the verbal command. Take a piece of food, hold it in your hand at about waist level and when the dog looks like he’s ready to offer the behavior, say “sit.” When he sits, say “yes” and give him the food.
• Dogs need the opportunity to generalize. In order for him to really know the cue, you must practice it in many locations, under various weather conditions, around different levels of distraction, and on different flooring surfaces.
behavior modification and management protocols

program instructions:
The program requires you to ask the dog to “sit” before he receives anything that is important to him. This can be used on a consistent basis for all of the dogs in your facility and should be used to manage dogs that are in a behavior modification program prior to adoption. The dog should “sit” for the following things to occur:

- Receive his meals
- Receive toys or treats
- Have a person enter his kennel
- Exit his kennel
- Go through a door
- Receive attention
- Have his leash put on
- Anything he really likes!

By keeping clear rules in your kennels, your dogs will understand that you control important resources. In addition, they’ll learn that if they don’t defer to you, they will not receive items that they perceive to be valuable. You will have better and clearer communication with the dogs using non-physical methods. Your adopters will see the dogs’ manners and will be more likely to take a dog home!

when the dog is adopted:
Review the “I hold the resources!” instructions with the adopter which can be found in the Reproducible Forms and Templates section. Remember to follow-up with the adopter at three days, three weeks and three months post-adoption.

i hold the resources!

Congratulations!
You have adopted a new family member.

As soon as you take the dog home, it’s time to introduce your family to the “I hold the resources!” instructions. This will help you and your family control the dog’s access to resources like food, toys, and attention, which can help prevent problematic behaviors. By following these instructions, your dog will learn that it is up to you to make decisions about what it can do and when. This helps prevent the dog from making decisions for itself, which can often lead to bad behavior. It also helps your dog understand that if it does what you ask, it will get what it wants.

1. Teach the dog the “sit” command:
   - Gate the dog in a room with you
   - Place a piece of food between your thumb and forefinger
   - Bring the treat to the dog’s nose and get its attention
   - Say “sit” and move your hand around your dog’s body
   - When the dog looks at your hand, say “sit” and give the treat
   - Repeat this process until the dog looks at your hand on its own

   By keeping clear rules in your house, your dog will understand that you control important resources. In addition, the dog will learn that if it doesn’t do as you ask, it will not receive the resource. You will have better and clearer communication with your dog using non-physical methods, which is the best way to teach your dog to do what you want.

   If you are unable to do the preceding exercises, we suggest you choose another dog to adopt. While we cannot predict what the future will bring, we do know that dogs are very adaptable and can be trained to do what you want. If you are unable to do the preceding exercises, we suggest you choose another dog to adopt. While we cannot predict what the future will bring, we do know that dogs are very adaptable and can be trained to do what you want.

ASPCA

be the one to ask yourself if you are ready to take on a new project.