behavior modification protocols

One of a series of ASPCA® Behavior Modification Protocols
modified by Emily Weiss, Ph.D., CAAB (Original program
developed by Dee Ganley, CPDT)

inappropriate play – body slamming, moderate mouthing, etc.
The goal of this program is for the dog to play in a less physical and more appropriate manner with humans.

identifying dogs for the program:

• The dog is SAFER™ “1” or “2” on all parts of the assessment other than the Tag item.

• During the Tag item, the dog remained loose with mouth open and soft eyes during the body slamming, mounting/masturbating, and/or moderate mouthing. (Note: This protocol is not appropriate for dogs who mount with a stiff body and hard eye.)

before you begin:

• Provide extra kennel enrichment for the dog in the program.

• Provide daily walks with staff members and volunteers who are skilled in ignoring inappropriate behavior and rewarding appropriate behavior.

• Choose a non-reward marker (NRM), such as “oops” or “too bad,” to use in a voice of dismay (do not yell or use an aggressive voice) when the dog chooses an incorrect behavior in regards to play. The NRM will immediately precede him being removed from play and returned to his crate or kennel.

program instructions:

1. Move an appropriately sized crate into a large outdoor or indoor space where the behavior modification will take place.

2. Engage the dog in a polite (not rough and tumble) game of tug or chase. The moment the dog engages in physical play with you by moderately mouthing, mounting/masturbating, or body slamming use your NRM in a tone of dismay and gently place the dog into his crate and ignore him.

3. After 1–2 minutes allow him to exit the kennel and re-engage in play with you.

4. Repeat the sequence for 10–20 minutes 2 times per day.

5. Once you see a significant and consistent reduction in inappropriate play, practice in another location with another person prior to placing in adoption.

6. Daily behavior logs must be kept for each b-mod dog in the program.

Note: The same protocol can be used for inappropriate play with other dogs. Instead of having a human engage in play with the dog, a social/polite dog can engage the dog in play after a smooth introduction.

The dog is placed in the kennel proceeding the NRM when he uses inappropriate physical play.

when the dog is adopted: Review the “Inappropriate Play” 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.