



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department Ruff Notes – November 2019

Settling Behavior

We have had a number of dogs dropped from training in recent months for poor behavior on tie-down and when crated. Although the Training Department will work on these behaviors, tie-down and crate behaviors are more challenging to work on in a kennel environment and are necessarily time consuming. These skills are more successfully addressed at a younger age in the puppy raising home. It is imperative that our puppies learn to settle both when left alone and with people at home.

Crate Behavior

Here is a link to a Ruff Notes from a couple of years ago addressing crate behavior:

<https://www.guidedogs.com/uploads/files/Puppy-Raising-Manual/Ruff-Notes-8.17-Crating-Issues.pdf>

Any whining, howling or barking in the crate after the puppy is about four months old is behavior that should be brought to the attention of the CFR. The CFR and leader consulting together can come up with a training plan appropriate to the individual puppy and situation. The CFR may decide to utilize a number of techniques including various R+ training tools such as food-dispensing toys. Once the puppy is settling well in a crate at home, it should be traded around to different home environments to help it generalize good crate behavior. It is essential that practice in the crate continues on almost a daily basis until the puppy is recalled for training. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the puppy is capable of settling in a crate in one part of the home while family activities happen in another part of the home. This practice will help prepare the puppy for the busy kennel environment.

Tie-Down Behavior

Here is a link to the document on introducing the tie-down (and crates, x-pens) from the manual:

<https://www.guidedogs.com/uploads/files/Puppy-Raising-Manual/Confinement.pdf>

Puppies should be relaxed and quiet when tethered in the home, at the office/school and in puppy sitter homes. Gradually the puppy should learn to accept tethering even in busier households/work situations but introduction of challenges/novel situations should be gradual. The raiser should also practice stepping out of sight of the puppy, at first very briefly, then building up to several minutes. At no point should the puppy be left unattended on a tie-down but the raiser listening from another room close by is good preparation for a “real life” work environment.

If a puppy over 4 months old is not settling when tethered (vocalizing, lunging, chewing on cable or on self/other non-approved items) the CFR should be consulted. Again, the CFR and leader consulting together can come up with a training plan appropriate to the individual puppy and situation. The CFR may decide to utilize a number of techniques including various R+ training tools such as food-dispensing toys.

X-Pens

X-pens can be very useful for confining a puppy when someone is home. Guidelines:

<https://www.guidedogs.com/uploads/files/Puppy-Raising-Manual/Confinement.pdf>

The puppy that is able to settle in an x-pen will be more adaptable and should make the transition to a kennel run more easily. X-pens are sometimes used on campus to confine dogs close to work areas where the dogs can watch what is going on and can be supervised by CWTTs.

The ability to settle in a variety of environments is an essential skill for a guide dog candidate. Please be sure to communicate with your CFR if the puppy is having difficulty in this area. Early intervention will enable us to ensure that the puppy learns to be comfortable and relaxed when confined away from its handler.