



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

## Puppy Raising Department Ruff Notes – May 2019

### Puppy Behaviors to Report to the Leader

Recognizing and addressing inappropriate behaviors promptly is an important part of puppy raising. The sooner we can intervene, the more impact we can have on a puppy's behavior. Indeed, some self-rewarding behaviors, such as counter-surfing and getting into trash, can be challenging to extinguish after just a few successful repetitions.

(See also: <https://www.guidedogs.com/uploads/files/Puppy-Raising-Manual/Recognizing-and-Reporting-Negative-Behaviors.pdf> )

#### **Vocalizing**

All puppies will whine or bark sometimes but inappropriate or excessive vocalizations can be a sign the puppy is developing a behavior issue. Contact the leader if:

- Barking or whining in the crate or on tie down continues past the first week or two of the puppy being in the home
- Barking or whining happens when the pup is left alone or persists when raisers are home but the pup is confined away from them
- Woofing/growling/barking at noises/dogs/people objects from the home/car/in public (including in response to doorbell/knocking)
- Growling in response to being handled/touched

#### **Resisting Control and/or Avoiding Touch**

- Avoiding body handling/grooming by pulling away
- Mouthing on hands/arms/clothing/the leash
- Pawing/flailing with feet and legs
- Ducking away from touch/petting
- Refusing food rewards when being handled

#### **Distraction**

- Intense interest in moving objects such as balls/wheeled objects/leaves
- More than mild curiosity toward birds and small mammals
- Persistent scavenging for food or food-like items on the ground

## Fearful Behavior

- Behaviors that may indicate fear/lack of confidence include cowering; trembling; hard panting; wet mouth; hackling (see <https://www.guidedogs.com/uploads/files/Puppy-Raising-Manual/Puppies-with-Sensitive-Temperaments.pdf> for full list and explanations of fearful body language)
- Avoidance of/discomfort with surfaces/people/objects/noises
- Rushing through doors or on stairs

## Concerning Behaviors Around Other Dogs

- Excessive dog interest, which may start with keying on dogs in public and looking back at dogs that have passed by. Lunging/whining/barking at dogs needs prompt intervention
- Reluctance to take food rewards in the presence of other dogs
- Vocalizing toward other dogs (except in play when allowed), Hackling, lunging
- Fearful behavior around dogs including avoiding/lowered body language
- Rough play including mounting/body slamming/biting/ not heeding other dog's signals
- Fence fighting in the yard
- Notify leader if puppy has an altercation with another dog involving physical contact or if pup is affected emotionally by approach of other dog even if no physical contact

## Leash Behavior

- Pulling, lack of response to collar cues, balking

## Vehicles

- Reluctance to approach/ get in/out of vehicle
- Inability to settle when riding/trembling/panting/drooling/vomiting

## House Behavior

- Persistent chewing/destructive behavior
- Counter-surfing (one or two successful incidents can create a serious problem)
- Inability to settle
- Over-excited behavior at the door/ with guests
- Persistent scavenging for food or seeking out objects
- More than once incident of getting into trash
- Keep away
- Ingestion of non-food items (must be reported immediately)

## Guarding/Possessive Behavior

Guarding food or items from other dogs and/or people is very serious but can often have a positive outcome if addressed quickly. *Immediately* report to leader (who will then inform the CFR):

- Stiffening/becoming very still/hunkering over food or an item
- Growling/snarling (lip curling)
- Digging the head further into the food bowl and eating more quickly
- Reluctance to relinquish an item

## **Body Sensitivity**

- Avoidance of equipment
- Scratching or rubbing at head collar or jacket (including rubbing on floor/raiser/walls etc.)
- Shutting down (depressed behavior) when wearing equipment

## **Relieving**

- Continued accidents in the home after 4-5 months of age
- Accidents in public/on outings after 6 months of age
- Indicating a need to relieve on walks
- Reluctance to relieve away from home/on hard surface/for different handlers

## **Filth Eating**

- Any tendency to filth eat (coprophagia) should be reported.

Please help us make our puppies successful by accurately filling out monthly reports and checking in with leaders promptly regarding concerning behaviors in our puppies!