



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Puppy Raising Department Verbal Cues

kennel – to enter a crate, vehicle or other small space

Do Your Business – cue to relieve both urination and defecation

Let's Go – walk on a loose leash in 'heel' position

Sit – tuck rear legs under and lower rump to the ground

Down – lie down

Stand – stand on all four feet

Wait – stay still briefly; to be followed by release “OK” or another cue (typically used at doorways, in and out of vehicles etc.)

Stay – hold position until released or given another cue (of longer duration than the momentary “wait”)

OK – release cue

Come – come toward handler close enough to be touched

That's Enough – to end *allowable* behavior e.g. tug games, playing with another dog

Go to Bed – go to a designated bed or mat and lie down

These are the only verbal cues to be taught to program puppies. Phrases such as “leave it” and “drop it” are not approved.

The verbal marker “**Nice!**” is used when teaching a behavior. It allows precise timing and lets the puppy know exactly the behavior we are rewarding with food. “Nice!” is always followed by a food reward.

A verbal interrupter to stop undesirable behavior in the home is allowable so long as the puppy is being managed to set it up for success/rewarded for desirable behavior the majority of the time. A suggested verbal interrupter is a sharp “Ay!” along with a quick hand clap. We prefer that raisers do not use “No” as it is used in specific circumstances by the Training Department later in the dog's development. Verbal interrupters used in public can lead to poor public perception of our program and handling of puppies; they should be reserved for use in the home.

Verbal praise is different from the marker. Eventually guide dogs work mainly for secondary reinforcers such as verbal praise and petting. General verbal praise such as “Good dog!” can be used frequently to let the puppy know the handler is pleased with it. Pairing verbal praise with petting is even more effective in letting the pup know it is doing the right thing.