

# Dog Agility Pre-School

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## Susan Garrett's 1-2-3 game

### Exercise goals:

- Dog builds drive to work
- Dog finds a thrown toy or tug-n-treat really reinforcing
- Dog learns to control anticipation and impulsive behaviors
- Dog learns to focus
- You find a way to get your dog's attention under high distractions (hearing "threEEEEEE" will rivet their attention to you)

### Progression for this week:

#### Step 1:

##### Goals:

- Get the dog REALLY excited about this toy and chasing & tugging with it, or targeting to a thrown tug-n-treat and getting the treat.
- Teach the dog this is a really really fun game.
- Teach the dog to stand still voluntarily under high drive and anticipation
- Teach the dog your release cue

\*\*\* For this step, let's use a clicker. We will click the "stand still" behavior and immediately release the dog to the toy, using your chosen release word. You might want to release on an action/movement cue, like GO instead of your "at ease" release word. The reasons are two. First the click is a release to most beginning clicker dogs. Second, we want to pair a cue with running head of you after the toy. "Go" is perfect for that.

\*\*\* First get your dog really excited. Play keep-away with the coveted toy. Don't try to restrain your dog's movement in any way. This is important because in step 1 we are reinforcing the dog's CHOICE to stand still. So making her stand still is not going to accomplish that.

\*\*\* The instant the dog stands still (eventually he will), click, say GO, throw, run after, try to get to the toy first and steal it, if that happens, offer the toy to the dog and tug. Let the dog win at least half the time. Make it appear that you just LOVE this toy and you and your dog will have a great time sharing it.

\*\*\* Work on this step only this week. You may need to have your dog on a long-line so that you don't have to chase down the dog who wants to play keep-away with you.

\*\*\* Keep your sessions short and intense.

\*\*\* You may build a little "duration". This is operant training jargon for the dog stands still a little *longer* before the release. But this week, I want duration to be short intentionally. You may find your dog does just stand there nicely for a long time while you go "1-2-3". That's bad. We want the beginning dog to want this game so badly that he can stand still for barely a second or two before he breaks.

\*\*\*Keep success rate, i.e., reinforcement rate, high (over 90%) but let your dog make a few mistakes to impress her that standing still is what you are clicking.

\*\*\*Step 1 then builds the reinforcement value of the game. Making the dog wait too long is counterproductive to this step. Step 1 begins to teach the dog that the gateway to all this fun is standing still for a second or two. You may start to add a cue "EEEE" for the dog standing still now but resist saying more than that. In fact, don't worry about the EEEEE until you get your dog just wild about this game.