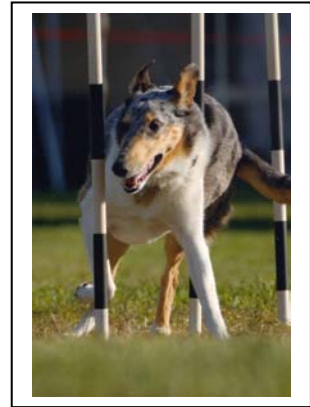


# Dog Agility Pre-School

Cathy Toft  
(530) 759-8637  
cathy@r-plusdogtraining.info  
<http://www.r-plusdogtraining.info>



## Dog Agility Pre-School – Basic Concepts Foundation Behaviors

This is a list of all the foundation behaviors we use in agility training and what that exercise teaches the dog. How to do the exercises may be explained more fully on other handouts.

**Thinking Dog Exercises** These exercises teach your dog to learn, to focus on you as the gateway to all reinforcements, to exert self-control, and to ignore distractions.

1. **Puppy Zen** [Sue Ailsby]: Self-control: Fastest way to the reward is self control. Dog must leave offered treat until given permission to take it.
2. **Crate Game** [Susan Garrett]: Self-control: Dog must stay in crate until released (dog really likes crate, crate is a secondary reinforcer, but stuff outside is reinforcing too).
3. **Temptation** [Cathy Toft]: How to be operant: reinforcement vs. lure: fastest way to the reward is to be operant. Dog is offered a fist full of treats vs. a flat hand for a nose touch.
4. **The Set Up** [aka Rachel Sanders call off's]; fastest way to the reward is to respond to handler. You start this game in a controlled environment by setting your dog up with a distraction. You call the dog off the distraction, reward and then release back to the distraction. Repeat thousands of times.
5. **1-2-3 Game** [Susan Garrett]: self-control under drive. Fastest way to reward is to choose to stand still (among other goals).
6. **Mother May I behaviors** [Nancy Abplanalp, Karen Overall]: self control: you the human control all reinforcements, e.g., eye contact or a sit before you release dog to any coveted primary reinforcer.

**Create powerful secondary reinforcers:** These exercises increase the range of rewards for your dog and the best part is you can take nearly all of them into the competition ring with you. Build value of these by heavy, perpetual reinforcement.

1. Hand touch (or fist): {Lori Drouin}
2. Praise cues [Cathy Toft]: use praise words as a cue. Dogs don't speak English. Choose a limited set of simple praise words or phrases and heavily classically condition them. Have **A** (WOW) and **B** (merely good) rewards coming, e.g., "*perfect!!*" rewarded by steak, "*good boy!*" rewarded by kibble.
3. Any cue: [Karen Pryor]: Any cue for a behavior reinforced highly enough becomes itself a secondary reinforcer (verbal cue, hand touch, etc.).
4. Tug-n-treat or special toy. Save these special toys for a) interacting with you and b) really special reinforcements.
5. YOU: Become the most exciting thing in your dog's universe.
6. WORK: Ditto doing things with you.

**Default behaviors:** Use no cue with these behaviors. Dog offers them in hopes of a reward.

1. Rolled hip or settled down: (handy for when humans stop to blah blah blah).
2. Sit
3. Eye contact.

**Incompatible behaviors:** Axiom: Always tell your dog what TO do, vs. what NOT to do.

1. Bow or down versus jumping up on people. Use a cute cue, e.g., "Be Sweet"
2. Any MMIB or default behavior. A dog asking you for a reinforcement is not finding reinforcers elsewhere.
3. Design any behavior that makes doing an unwanted behavior impossible.