

The Name Game

This game is a wonderful way to teach a puppy or adopted adult dog its name.

This simple exercise will help your dog develop polite eye contact with people, good communication with you and build a foundation for more advanced skills later.

To start the Name Game your dog should be off-leash and in a safe, controlled location. Make sure that the area is clear of loose items on the floor and is not a slippery surface. A room in the house or small portion of a yard is a good place to start.

Play this game at least twice each day for about 5 minutes. If your furkid gets distracted, cut the session short and/or move to another location.

TO BEGIN: Measure a portion of your dog's dinner into a cup that way you'll be sure you don't over feed him / her. (Yup, your furkid will be learning and getting a meal at the same time – what a deal.)

- 1) Hold several pieces of kibble in both hands. Let your dog know you have something yummy that he/she might be interested in.
- 2) When the dog looks up at you, say his / her name in a Happy Voice (one time only). Then SLOWLY toss one kibble to the side of your body, only a few feet away. Make sure the dog can track the movement of your hand and see the kibble hitting the floor.
- 3) As the dog is eating the food, get your other hand ready to repeat the toss in the opposite direction. When the furkid looks at your face, say his/her name in a Happy Voice (again, one time only) and toss the kibble SLOWLY a few feet away.
- 4) Repeat these steps, switching hands and tossing the food in opposite directions. Encourage your dog to look at your face after each piece of kibble. Always say his/her name when the dog makes eye contact. Keep the activity happy and fun.
- 5) When you have only one piece of kibble left, call the furkid to you and give the food when he/she is sitting or standing politely in front of you, looking at your face.
- 6) Say your release word and move away from the dog. The game is done.

Words of Caution:

- Keep in mind that your dog's name should be associated with positive things. This will help greatly when you start to work on Recalls (ask 'come') and in more distracting locations.
- Please do not go overboard and make this game too difficult for the dog to receive a reward (food). Remember, this exercise is about reinforcing eye contact with people and responding to his/her name. High success rate means your dog is learning.

VIDEO: The Name Game with Ester – Teach Your Dog to Love Its Name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLCBy3p2Nhs&feature=youtu.be>

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