

GOTCHA

The following information has been adapted from Dr. Brenda Griffin's [Playing Games with Shelter Dogs](#)



This game is not actually physical play, but it is a skame (skill-game). However, it can be played with dogs that are new to your facility, before engaging them in physical play. This game communicates to them that if someone reaches out towards them, it's all good! Few things are more important than being able to reach for a dog's collar without inducing fear. This is an important skame for all dogs and can be especially helpful for shy and fearful dogs.

What to do:

The goal is for the dog to welcome you to reach for him and take him by the collar. He associates your reach with good things happening!

- 1) With one hand, reach out and gently touch the dog's neck as though to take him by the collar and say GOTCHA.
- 2) At precisely the same time, use your other hand to give him a treat—just feed it right to him—pop it right in his mouth!
- 3) Once he is comfortable, do this from various positions—sitting, standing, and walking.

This is a great skame to play with any dog – and has many foundational applications.