

behavior modification protocols

One of a series of ASPCA® Behavior Modification Protocols modified by Emily Weiss, Ph.D., CAAB (Original program developed by Dee Ganley, CPDT)



inappropriate play – body slamming, moderate mouthing, etc.

The goal of this program is for the dog to play in a less physical and more appropriate manner with humans.

identifying dogs for the program:

- The dog is SAFER™ “1” or “2” on all parts of the assessment other than the Tag item.
- During the Tag item, the dog remained loose with mouth open and soft eyes during the body slamming, mounting/masturbating, and/or moderate mouthing. (Note: This protocol is not appropriate for dogs who mount with a stiff body and hard eye.)

before you begin:

- Provide extra kennel enrichment for the dog in the program.
- Provide daily walks with staff members and volunteers who are skilled in ignoring inappropriate behavior and rewarding appropriate behavior.
- Choose a non-reward marker (NRM), such as “oops” or “too bad,” to use in a voice of dismay (do not yell or use an aggressive voice) when the dog chooses an incorrect behavior in regards to play. The NRM will immediately precede him being removed from play and returned to his crate or kennel.

program instructions:

1. Move an appropriately sized crate into a large outdoor or indoor space where the behavior modification will take place.
2. Engage the dog in a polite (not rough and tumble) game of tug or chase. The moment the dog engages in physical play with you by moderately mouthing, mounting/masturbating, or body slamming use your NRM in a tone of dismay and gently place the dog into his crate and ignore him.
3. After 1–2 minutes allow him to exit the kennel and re-engage in play with you.
4. Repeat the sequence for 10–20 minutes 2 times per day.
5. Once you see a significant and consistent reduction in inappropriate play, practice in another location with another person prior to placing in adoption.
6. Daily behavior logs must be kept for each b-mod dog in the program.

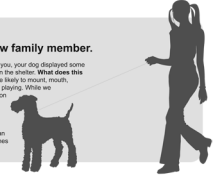
Note: The same protocol can be used for inappropriate play with other dogs. Instead of having a human engage in play with the dog, a social/polite dog can engage the dog in play after a smooth introduction. The dog is placed in the kennel proceeding the NRM when he uses inappropriate physical play.

when the dog is adopted: Review the “Inappropriate Play” instructions with the adopter, which can be found in the Reproducible Forms and Templates section. Remember to follow-up with the adopter at three days, three weeks and three months post-adoption.

program for inappropriate play ASPCA®

Congratulations!
You have adopted a new family member.

As your adoption counselor discussed with you, your dog displayed some inappropriate physical play behavior while in the shelter. What does this mean? It means that your dog may be more likely to mount, mouth, and body slam you and/or other dogs while playing. While we conducted a successful behavior modification program with the dog while he was with us, we suggest that you continue this work with the dog when you take him home. Inappropriate play is both treatable and manageable. We suggest you follow the plan below, beginning the moment your dog comes into your home.



the plan:

- **Avoid rough and tumble games with your dog.** Although you would both likely have a great time with the game, it encourages your dog to begin playing in inappropriate and physical ways.
- **Be sure to have an appropriately sized crate** or a small room in your house that you can use to put your dog into during “time-outs” when he plays too physically.
- **When your dog mounts, mouths, or body slams you or another dog,** in a neutral voice say “oops” or “too bad,” and put him into the designated room or crate for a 12 minute “time-out.” After the time out, he can exit the kennel and re-engage in play as long as he is appropriate.

If you are unable to do the preceding exercises, we suggest you choose another dog to adopt. While we cannot 100 percent predict the future, research does show that dogs who display inappropriate play in the shelter are more likely to display the same behaviors in the home. We want you and your dog to create a strong bond early on post-adoption and for your dog to have the opportunity to be able to work through his issues. Please take the time to ask yourself if you are ready to take on a bit of a project.