

## **LIFE SKILLS 1**

This class is targeted towards young dogs between 6 months and 12 months of age or older. Most canine behaviorists agree that the young puppy or dog can learn obedience skills easily - and with a great deal of enjoyment - providing the methods used are gentle, fun, patient, and non-regimented. The socialization provided in this class helps these young dogs adjust with less stress to strangers, other dogs, and new experiences as well as different environments, sounds, and smells. Life Skills 1 class is designed to mold and shape the behaviors of the young dog so he becomes sociable, gentle, and mannerly.

The approach we have developed encourages you to teach your dog what is acceptable and desirable while developing a working relationship in which he learns to love and respect you. New skills are introduced in a way that promotes understanding for the dog in a non-threatening, controlled manner. Taking the time to teach the dog the understanding of each skill before we introduce corrections provides a solid basis for his trust and respect towards you. Lessons are structured to fit the shorter attention span of the younger puppies along with the adult dog while still providing the basic obedience skills that will help shape the dog to be social and mannerly. These classes also start building on the skills required to pass the Canine Good Citizen test .

Training sessions should be kept short so the older puppy or young dog is an eager and willing worker. Be sure your dog is rested and has been outside to eliminate prior to starting a training session. Starting out with a five -to-ten minute session done 2 to 3 times a day will be the most successful. As your dog matures, you can slowly increase the time spent in each training session as your dog's attention span increases. These training sessions will help establish you as the pack leader and will help build a working bond between you and your dog.

You should bring soft, easy to chew treats to class each week. A favorite toy that is reserved only for training may also be useful. We will be showing you how to use food and toys to motivate and reward your dog for his efforts. Do not feed your dog an evening meal prior to coming to class or, at least, cut the meal in half. Your dog will be more eager to focus on you and will learn more quickly when it is hungry. (Remember to consider the treats used for training as a part of the total daily food allotment.)

You are encouraged to read your lesson plans before class each week. Although we will demonstrate and explain lessons, your book will serve as a good reference if you experience difficulty with an exercise. The lesson plan also includes training tips, information on crate training, housebreaking, chewing, jumping, etc.