

# Aggressive/Bully Puppies

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If at any time while working with your puppy you feel threatened or concerned, contact our practice for a referral to a veterinary behaviourist. *DO NOT TRY TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM ALONE.* There are wonderful professionals who can help you and your puppy.

There are three main things you want to teach your puppy.

1. First, you and not the puppy control all resources.
2. Second, the puppy must learn self-control.
3. Third, you want to build your pet's confidence and desensitize him/her to the "triggers" that may be causing aggressive or bullying behaviour

The following examples of clear guidelines you need to establish between you and your puppy will teach him that you control all resources and help him learn self-control. Be patient because learning self-control is not an easy lesson.

- ***Your puppy does not receive meals until he is sitting quietly***

If your puppy jumps up or nips at you, put the food in the refrigerator or cabinet and walk away. Offer it again when your puppy calms down. Go into the kitchen and get the food bowl. Ask your puppy to "sit." If the inappropriate behaviour continues, repeat the exercise until the bowl can be put on the floor and your puppy waits until you release him to eat. You can use the cue "free dog" as the release, and let him eat his meal.

- ***When you go outside for a walk, ask your puppy to "sit"***

You walk through the door first, and then release him to come outside with you.

- ***When you come back inside from your walk, ask your puppy to "sit"***

You come in the house first, and then release your puppy.

- ***You decide when your puppy receives attention, not your puppy***

This can be a big one for many puppies. When your puppy comes over to you and jumps up, turn and walk away. When your puppy nudges your arm asking to be petted, ignore him and walk away. Whatever you do, **do not pet your puppy when he is demanding your attention.** When your puppy barks at you, ignore him and walk away. These are all attention-seeking behaviours, and your puppy needs to practice self-control. You want him to learn that being quiet, patient, and polite is the only way to get your attention!

- ***You decide who gets to lie where and when***

If your puppy is lying down comfortably in the middle of a room or in the hallway, ask him to move so you can pass. If your puppy does not move, tap him lightly with your foot and ask him to move again. Giving your puppy a cue such as "excuse me" would work well with this. **Do not step over your dog.**

- ***You decide where your puppy gets to sleep, not your puppy***

*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us*