



Primary Cues, Behaviors, & Expectations

Primary Cues

“Sit” - While on leash, puppy should be stationed on the handler’s left side (“Heel” Position) and cued with “Sit”. Puppy places bottom on the ground and stays in parallel position until released or given another cue.

“Down” - While on leash, puppy should be stationed on the handler’s left side (“Heel” Position) and cued with “Down”. Puppy lays down parallel to the handler’s left side and remains in position until released or given another cue.

“Place” - Handler should point to the target and cue “Place”. Puppy moves to target (bed/blanket/defined area) and lies down, remaining in position until released.

Recall / “Come” - When given the cue “Come”, puppy should recall to the front of the handler and sit facing the handler. This should not require the “Sit” cue to be given; this is part of the “Come” cue.

“Heel” - Handler should pass the leash to their right hand and cue “Heel” with their left hand. Puppy moves parallel to handler’s left side and remains standing until released or given another cue.

“Kennel” - Handler should point to the crate/kennel and cue “Kennel”. Puppy enters crate/kennel and door is closed. Puppy should quietly rest inside the crate/kennel until the door is opened and the puppy is released with “All Done”.

“Get Dressed” - Puppy’s vest is held in front of the handler and puppy is cued with “Get Dressed”. Puppy shows initiation and acceptance of dressing by moving head through vest and standing calmly while the buckle is fastened.

“Let’s Go” – Signals to the Puppy to begin walking with the handler on leash in the heel position. This can be used while the puppy is sitting, in the down position, or at a threshold on the handler’s left side. If the Puppy is not already in the “Heel” position, the puppy may need to be given the “Heel” cue first.

“All Done” – Release Cue. Handler can give the cue “All Done” to signal to a puppy that they are released from a cue/behavior that they have been maintaining. This cue gives puppies the option to move around freely while still maintaining appropriate manners.



Primary Behaviors & Expectations

LLW - Loose leash walking. Handler should hold the leash in their left hand allowing for just enough slack to make a “J” shape. Puppy walks on a loose leash next to the handler's left side. No additional cues should be given (i.e. leave it, uh oh, no, heel, etc.)

Impulse Control – Puppy can sit calmly while being pet. The puppy does NOT go up to the person. If the puppy is unable to maintain a controlled greeting in a sit position, the handler can ask the puppy for a “Down”. Please make note if this exception is needed.

3 Ds (Distance, Duration, Distraction) – Handlers should be utilizing shaping to work on increasing the distance, duration, and amount of distractions associated with maintaining behaviors and responding to cues. Please note, that when increasing one of the 3 Ds, handlers will initially need to increase the rate of reinforcement. As puppies master increased distances, durations, and distractions, handlers will decrease the rate needed to maintain the behaviors.

Distance – How far away can a puppy be from their handler, distractions, and/or other items of high value while still maintaining a behavior and/or responding to a cue?

Duration – How long can a puppy maintain a certain behavior? Please note that certain cues/behaviors may not have a duration associated with them, such as Recall, and “Get dressed”. However, handlers should utilize shaping to increase the duration of behaviors such as “sit”, “down”, “heel”, “kennel”, “place”, etc.

Distraction - How well can a puppy maintain a cue or behavior while things are happening or changing around them? Distractions could include dropped food, loud noises, toys, other people, other animals, exciting smells, temperature shifts, etc.