

How To Implement The Puppy Evaluation Ganley/Lyon

Personnel:

To test, you should have at least two people: one who will be the scribe and then the person doing the testing. The tester will be describing to the scribe what she is feeling and seeing as she works with each puppy. It is helpful if there is a third person, who brings the puppy into the room and then leaves.

Evaluation Space:

You will need a room that the puppy has not been in before and has two different floor surfaces. (If it is only wood or tile then bring in a piece of carpet.) I usually have papers down so if the puppy needs to go to the bathroom I can see if it's paper-trained. (Note: we work on this from the moment they come into the shelter by providing a clean place with bedding to sleep and newspapers laid into a pool or crate pan so the puppy will seek out papers)

Evaluation equipment:

- Some tasty treats within reach of where the tester will be sitting on the floor
- A metal pan or umbrella
- A variety of toys that are puppy sized
- Some squashed up pieces of paper towel to chase
- A tug toy made out of an old sock or a long thin piece of fleece.
- Third neutral person to bring puppies into the room and leave quietly

The Evaluation process:

The scribe should be sitting behind a barrier if possible so the puppy doesn't know he/she is in the room, but if you can't do that then the scribe should be completely neutral to the puppy even if it comes over to say hi.

The Evaluator should be sitting on the floor with a copy of the evaluation sheet available to look at so they are sure to evaluate each puppy in the right order. (Or have the scribe softly say what comes next.) Have all the toys and food near at hand so you won't have to get up to get something. When the evaluator is ready if you have a third person they can bring the puppy into the room set it down and then leave it. If you don't have three people, then the third person brings the puppy in and then walks away from it and sits on the floor near your stuff that you will need to evaluate the puppy.

This is where the evaluation begins. It's at this point you want to watch and see what the puppy does. Be quietly observant - trying not to give opinions just facts. If the puppy is shutting down, I would make an encouraging smoochy sound so it knows it's not alone and I'm around I might even lie down on my back to see if it will help the puppy come visit me. Try and work with each puppy in the same way - you will find your groove after about the 10th litter that you have worked with. It should become automatic and you won't need the cheat sheet any longer.

Please remember this is an evaluation and not a TEST! You should be helping the puppy if needed. You are looking for a way to help the puppy feel safe in responding to you. This will let the puppy leave happy and more adjusted than when it first came into the room. Don't continue with the rest of the evaluation if the puppy shuts down and can't do anything. Just try and have fun for a few minutes and re-evaluate this puppy later at another time. You have learned a lot if the puppy shuts down. You know that this puppy is environmentally afraid and unable to overcome this fear at this time. This puppy will need some individual time within a foster home or an employee's office for a few days. Then try again. Always try food to see if it can overcome whatever it's afraid of. Don't become rigid. Be quietly, calmly natural and friendly. THIS IS NOT A TEST!!!! You just want to see who this puppy is.