

What's A Kid To Do?

Make it fun for kids to interact safely with a puppy. Empower them with an action plan. Here are 3 games that can help. Everyone gains worthwhile skills while moving and playing together! As always be sure to supervise all interactions between kids + puppy.



Tips for Success

- Kids should practice the moves without the puppy first. Think dress rehearsal.
- Pre-cut treats and lay them out for the kids so they have easy access.
- Use the recommended treat and prop for each game.
- Keep play time under 10 minutes to start. Putting a short time limit on the game will help prevent pup from getting over excited, jumping and biting.
- Pre-count treats. For example count out 15 treats. When the treats are done, that game is done.



Up! Up!

Objective: Teach your puppy to hop up on a platform. Later this can be transferred to rocks and logs when exploring outside. You'll need soft treats, or a homemade target stick (wooden spoon works), and a couch cushion. Place a treat against the pup's nose so he smells it, or you could use a wooden spoon with a bit of cheese smeared on it for the puppy to follow. Lure the pup on to the cushion and let him have the treat or lick the spoon. Lure off the cushion.

Repeat. As the puppy starts to get the hang of it, add the cue 'up up', as he hops up on the cushion. Add the cue 'off' as he hops off.

DIY project with the kids - make your own platform

Use the correct sized cardboard box stuffed VERY full (so it's firm) of balled-up newspaper, tape up tight with lots of duct tape and add a no slip mat to the top. The box could be anywhere from 3 to 6 inches high. And the right size for him to stand on and turn around on comfortably. Find the right dimensions by folding a towel and having the pup stand on it.



Chase a treat!

Objective: Fun for kids to toss treats, fun for puppy to chase them. Plus the kids can practice calling the puppy to *come*, getting in those important daily recall repetitions. You'll need hard treats and a yoga mat.

Place a treat against the pup's nose so he smells it. Gently and underhand, as the pup is watching your hand, toss the treat away about a foot or 2, and say '*get it!*'

If the puppy misses the treat, move towards it and tap the floor beside the treat and cue him to '*find it!*' Repeat. As everyone progresses start to toss the treat in different directions. For example, to your right and then to your left. Or, through your legs as the pup come towards you.

Variation - add the word '*come*' as the puppy heads back towards you. Treat on the floor in front of you, then repeat with another treat toss.

treats delivered on the ground prevents jumping up



Plate Race

Objective: This game is useful and fun. Use it to practice recall, teach a pup to keep 4 on the floor, walk alongside your child, or just get some puppy and kid energy out! To get started you'll need soft treats and 2 or more plates, bowls or plastic lids.

Put a treat on plate 1, repeat a few times. Walk to the next plate and put a treat on it, repeat using all the plates. You can move back and forth from plate 1 and 2, or get more elaborate with your formations. As everyone gets the hang of it run from plate to plate and call puppy to come.

Kids, please draw you and your puppy playing a game

Objective: The kids get to be creative, while parents and puppy get a rest :-)

