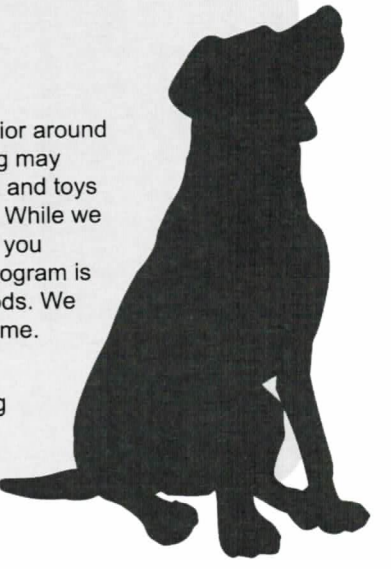
i hold the resources!

ASPCA®

Congratulations!
You have adopted a new family member.



As your adoption counselor discussed with you, your dog displayed some bossy behavior around important resources while in the shelter. **What does this mean?** It means that your dog may be more likely to control resources or attempt to control resources by guarding his food and toys and/or body slamming you and/or rubbing you with his shoulder and then ignoring you. While we conducted a management program with the dog while he was with us, we suggest that you continue this work with the dog when you take him home. The simple premise of the program is that you control the resources in the home using non-confrontation/non-physical methods. We suggest you follow the plan below, beginning the moment your dog comes into your home.

The program requires you to ask the dog to "sit" before he receives anything that is important to him. This can be used on a consistent basis throughout the life of your dog and should be used to manage a dog that needs behavioral intervention.

the plan:

1. Teach the dog the "sit" cue.

- Get dog to stand toe-to-toe with you.
- Place bit of food between thumb and forefinger.
- Bring treat (lure) to dog's nose and get his attention with it. It is okay if he licks or nibbles at it, but do not give him the treat yet.
- Slowly raise the lure up and as the dog follows it with his nose, move it back over his head a few inches.
- As his head tilts back, he is likely to sit.
- As soon as the rear touches the floor, say "yes" and give the dog the treat.
- Practice 6-10 times in quick succession.
- After the dog is anticipating the next move and begins to sit before you move your hand up and back, he is ready to learn the verbal command. Take a piece of food, hold it in your hand at about waist level and when the dog looks like he's ready to offer the behavior, say "sit." When he sits, say "yes" and give him the food.
- Dogs need the opportunity to generalize. In order for him to really know the command, you must practice it in many locations, under various weather conditions, around different levels of distraction, and on different flooring surfaces.

2. You ask your dog to "sit" for the following things to occur:

- Receive his meals
- Play with his favorite toys
- Engage in play with you
- Jump up to lay on the couch or bed
- Go through the door
- Cross the street
- Have his leash put on
- Exit the elevator
- ... Anything he really likes!

By keeping clear rules in your house, your dog will understand that you control important resources. In addition, he'll learn that if he doesn't defer to you, he will not receive items that are valuable to him. You will have better and clearer communication with your dog using non-physical methods, which is the best case scenario for both of you!

If you are unable to do the preceding exercises, we suggest you choose another dog to adopt. While we cannot 100 percent predict the future, research does show that dogs who display anxiety around resources in the shelter are more likely to display the same behaviors in the home. We want you and your dog to create a strong bond early-on post-adoption and for your dog to have the opportunity to be able to work through his issues. Please take the time to ask yourself if you are ready to take on a bit of a project.