



# Social Interactions: Dogs and People

Croney Research Group

# There are many types of beneficial interactions between dogs and people

These include:

- Positive Reinforcement Training
- Play
- Petting
- Walking
- Passive interactions such as observation or sitting in proximity
- Low Stress Handling



# Positive-Reinforcement Training

Training using positive reinforcement methods is scientifically supported as the most humane and effective type of training

**Learn More:**

**[At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Skills](#)**

# Dog-Human Play

- Play with humans is beneficial for dogs and has been shown to decrease the stress hormone cortisol
- Specific actions such as a bow or lunge can be used by humans to communicate a playful intent to dogs

# Dog-Human Play

- Dogs play differently with humans than they do with other dogs (e.g., more interactive, less object-possession)
- Well-socialized dogs will often play with unfamiliar people





### **Passive dog-human interactions include:**

- Observing (e.g., during a veterinary examination)
- Proximity (e.g., sitting next to a kennel)

### **Benefits of passive dog-human interactions include:**

- Reduced stress
- Increased play with other dogs



## Low-Stress Handling

- Physical restraint and handling can be stressful
- Practicing handling in a positive way with puppies can help prevent stress responses to handling later in life


**Learn More:**

**[At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Handling](#)**

# Benefits of dog-human interactions

- Minimizes undesirable behaviors (examples: barking, overactivity, pacing, fear, and aggression)
- Increases desirable behaviors (examples: playing, socializing, resting)
- Reduces stress





Make sure  
interactions  
are positive  
and safe for  
all dogs and  
people  
involved

**Learn More: [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Application](#)**



Decoding dog body language can be challenging for humans, but they do well at correctly identifying types of dog barks!

# Learn to Decode Dog Body Language

- ↑ Increase human recognition of fear in dogs
- ↑ Increase the number of physical features used to assess welfare
- ↑ Improve ease and accuracy of assessment of welfare





## 4 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions with People for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

**1** Include positive interactions in your daily caretaking (e.g., feeding, grooming, petting, playing, exercising)

A close-up photograph of a person wearing blue scrubs and a stethoscope, gently holding a husky puppy. The puppy has striking blue eyes and its pink tongue is sticking out. The background is softly blurred, focusing attention on the interaction between the person and the dog.

## 4 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions with People for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

2

Utilize low-stress handling methods

# 4 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions with People for Dogs in Breeding Kennels



3

Utilize positive reinforcement-based training methods

## 4 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions with People for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

4

Provide opportunities for play with people

## FAQ

**Regularly seeing and hearing other dogs and caretakers as a part of normal kennel operations (e.g., feeding times, transitions to outside pens) is not enough to provide adequate social interaction**

- Deliberate efforts must be made to regularly offer experiences where the focus is on social interaction
- For example, play sessions, training sessions, or petting sessions





## Learn More:

- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Application](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Dogs](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Handling](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Skills](#)
- [Quick Tips for Success: Adult Dog Body Handling](#)
- [Adult Dog Body Handling Checklist](#)
- [Body Language Handout](#)
- [The role of caretaker interactions in environmental enrichment for kennel dogs](#)



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