

# TOY PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

**GOAL:** To learn the dog's preference for different types of toys, in order to set the dog up for success when working with behavior problems related to possessiveness or training retrieve, tug, drop it, etc.

## GENERAL RULES:

When working on retrieve training with a possessive dog, always begin working with low value toys and high value treats. Once the dog regularly retrieves the lowest value toy, start progressively working with higher value toys.

- Tether the dog, or wait to bring the dog to the room until you have set up the training session.
- Put 3-5 toys on the ground, approximately three feet apart from one another. Good toys to consider using are: tennis ball, stuffed squeaky toy, rope toy, and rubber squeaky toy. Position the toys so that, when the dog enters the room, all toys are similarly visible and approximately equidistant from the dog.
- Drop the dog's leash (but leave it attached to the collar), and allow the dog to choose her first toy.
- Trade the toy for a treat, and then put it out of sight and out of reach. This is your highest value toy.
- Repeat until there is only one toy left, or until your dog is not interested in any of the toys. The last toy is your lowest value toy, and is the toy you should begin retrieve training with (with a possessive dog).

