



CENTER FOR
Shelter Dogs

A PROGRAM OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON

POSSESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Your new dog has shown possessive behavior while in the shelter or in the previous home. Possessive behavior is very common in dogs. When a dog is possessive, he or she may show teeth, growl, snap or even bite when things that are important to the individual dog are touched or approached. Common things that dogs possess are food, chew treats, resting or sleeping areas (couches and beds), and favorite people. If you follow these guidelines you will be able to have a safe, happy and long-lasting relationship with your new friend.

- Don't touch, pet or disturb your dog when eating from the food bowl, chewing on a toy or sleeping. Only feed dry food. If your dog has a history of growling when resting or sleeping do not allow your dog on your bed or furniture. Give your dog a dog bed.
- When the food bowl is empty, pick it up and put it away. Feed meals instead of leaving the bowl out all day.
- If you need to move your dog while resting or sleeping, don't physically pick up or push. Instead, wake up or get attention with your voice, then call to come. If this doesn't work, toss a **DELICIOUS** treat (like cheese) away from the dog and resting area. When your dog follows the treat **PRAISE**. An alternative is to allow your dog to wear a lightweight leash in the house when you are home. When you want to move your dog, just pick up the leash and lead.
- Don't give delicious chews such as rawhides or pig's ears. If a young dog that needs to chew, give non-edible Nylabones or Boodah Velvets
- If your dog steals something, don't chase or reprimand. Instead, toss a **DELICIOUS** treat away from the dog and stolen item. When your dog drops the stolen item **PRAISE** (Good boy/girl). Pick up the item and give your dog a toy or chew. Again **PRAISE**
- Advise all family members and visitors to follow the same rules. Do not leave food or chews around when visitors are at your house.
- **SAY PLEASE:** Ask your dog to "Sit" before you do anything for your dog: Before petting, before greeting, before leashing, before opening the door, before playing, before putting food bowl down, before giving a treat.