

# HIGHLY EXUBERANT DOGS (Jumpy Mouthy Dogs)

Congratulations on adopting your new family member!

As your adoption counselor explained to you, your new dog has a lot of wonderful energy! He or she has been jumping up on people and/or putting his or her mouth on them in a friendly way. Dogs who jump up and mouth are either trying to play, saying hello, or trying to get attention. They are usually adolescent dogs who have not been trained to have good manners.

If you follow the recommendations below, you will be able to teach your new canine family member not to jump on people and mouth them. It's pretty simple! Encourage your dog to play and greet politely and discourage the unacceptable behaviors of jumping up and mouthing.

**ENCOURAGE** your dog to play and greet politely. Make sure you praise your dog each time he or she does what you ask.

- Teach your new dog to play fetch with either a ball or a plush toy (see our [retrieve training handout](#)). Praise for picking up the toy. Praise for bringing it to you.
- Teach your dog that you will not greet him unless he sits. Praise your dog for sitting. (See ["Say Please" handout](#).)
- Whenever you do things that bring on jumping or mouthing (petting, leashing), offer your dog a favorite toy. To make the toy come "alive", toss it away from your dog.
- Make sure your dog gets plenty of exercise. An easy way to do this is to set up play times with other dogs. A game of fetch or tug is also a good way for your dog to burn off energy. See our [handout on safe ways to play tug](#).

**DISCOURAGE** unacceptable jumping up and mouthing behavior.

- Let the dog clearly know that you are not interested in this form of play by:
  - Turning your back on your dog and becoming a "statue" (stand still, cross arms, and close eyes).
  - If your dog does not get the idea, give him a three- to five-minute time out. Either walk out of the room, crate/tether the dog, or put him in a quiet room alone.
- Avoid wrestling games with your dog. Although both of you may like this kind of game, it encourages your dog to play roughly with people.

**NOTE:** Some frequently recommended methods to stop jumpy/mouthy behavior such as "kneeing", grasping the dog's feet and squeezing, grasping the dog's muzzle or scruff, often make matters worse. Many dogs misinterpret these behaviors as play and think that they are fun. As a result, the jumpy/mouthy behavior gets worse instead of better.

If your dog's exuberant behavior continues to be a problem, PLEASE CALL your adoption counselor. He or she will be able to direct you to a person who can help you.