

TREAT BUCKETS - REWARDING CALM BEHAVIOR

GOAL: The purpose of the treat buckets is to create positive associations with people and to reward desirable behavior from outside the kennel.

INSTRUCTIONS (SETTING UP THE BUCKETS):

1. Buy small buckets that are disinfectable, and you can hang outside the dog's kennel. (View an example pail we recommend)
2. Hang the buckets outside each dog's kennel.
3. Create a sign to introduce the treat buckets to visitors. (View example of sign)
4. Place a reward in the buckets that the dogs enjoy eating, but is not perishable and doesn't upset their stomachs; their dry kibble works, for many dogs.
5. Staff or volunteers must check the buckets on a regular basis, and refill them with treats when necessary.
6. Staff or volunteers must disinfect the buckets on a regular basis, a minimum of once weekly.

INSTRUCTIONS (USING THE BUCKETS):

1. With dogs that are new to the shelter, four feet on the floor (not jumping up) results in praise and treat.
2. Once dog reliably keeps four feet on the floor, begin to ask for a sit, which earns praise and treat.
3. Once dog reliably sits on cue, do not say sit. Approach the dog's kennel and praise/treat as soon as the dog provides an 'automatic sit'.
4. Do NOT ever reward the dog when it is barking, jumping or behaving aggressively. Wait for good behavior, and then reward good behavior! Dogs that are anxious, aggressive, or extremely fearful may not eat dog kibble and should be offered high value treats (and not dog food) such as jerky treats or freeze-dried liver.

*Consistency is very important. All shelter staff and volunteers must learn how to reward good behavior and ignore unwanted behavior.