

Follow the Food

OBJECTIVE

You'd think that puppies came learning to eat food from the hand, and they DO seem to pick it up quickly, but this is a simple behavior I want to remember to address. There's nothing formal about this, and there's no determinant of "success"; I just want my puppy to be able to follow my hand when I have food in it (yes, I lure, eek!), and I also want my puppy to be able to visually track a piece of food I've thrown.

I just use kibble for this - at this stage, my puppy is getting all of her food from my hand or from a food puzzle (kong), and so right now, she thinks that kibble is the best treat ever! With any luck, she'll continue with that belief, and be a raptor for kibble, as are all the rest of my dogs :)

What to do

- Hold a piece of food or two in your hand and move your hand in front of your puppy's face, slowly enough that your puppy can follow it, first with just her head, and then with her whole body, taking a few steps after it
- Hold a piece of food, make sure the puppy can SEE it, and toss it, just a few inches. Make a show of tossing it, not too quickly, so the puppy sees it being tossed, sees it landing, and moves toward it to eat it.

Tips to remember

Make sure you're using food the puppy wants to eat, AND make sure the food is easily spotted both in your hand, in the air, and on the ground! Keep the distance you toss the cookie short - just a few inches! And, don't go overboard, just a few cookies is fine (less than TEN!).



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