

FREE BONUS

The Family Training Agreement

One word. One signal. One rule. Every person.

Print this and put it on the fridge. Fill it in together – kids included.

. . .

Our puppy's name: _____

The name means: "Look at me – something good is about to happen." **The name is NEVER used to scold.** Signed by everyone below.

. . .

Our cues

Behaviour	The ONE word	The ONE hand signal	The house rule we all follow
Come to me			
Sit			
Lie down			
Stay put			
Get off (couch / people)			
Leave that alone			
Give up what's in your mouth	"Trade"	Point at the floor	Always a swap up, always paid. Never chase, never pry.
Back away from that			
Go to your bed / mat			
Emergency stop			
Go to the toilet			

Suggested starters: Come · Sit · Down · Wait · Stay · Back · Off · Leave · Trade · Place · STOP · Hurry hurry

One word per behaviour – and only one. If two people use two words for the same thing, the puppy learns neither.

Teach the hand signal first, the word second. Get the gesture reliable, then add the word just before it. A signal needs no volume and no confidence – which is exactly why the smallest, quietest person in your family can use it and get the same result you do.

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The three rules that make this work

1. Ask once. We say the word one time, then wait. We never repeat. *Repeating teaches the puppy that the first three times don't count.*

2. Everyone pays. Guests, grandparents, visiting friends – they get the cheat sheet and the treat pouch, or they don't give cues at all.

3. The softest person sets the standard. Whatever the most lenient family member will *actually* do every time – that is our real rule. We aim there.

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What our dog works for

Every dog has a different currency. Ours is:

☐ Food ☐ A ball ☐ A tug rope ☐ Puzzles / problems ☐ Praise & pats ☐ Other: _____

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Who does what

Family member	Their Daily 10 block	Their cue to own this week

. . .

We agree

By signing, each of us promises to use the same words, the same signals, and the same rules – because a puppy taught four different things learns nothing at all.

Name	Signature	Date

Name	Signature	Date

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From **The Whole Family Puppy Training Book** by Michael Petitpas · nsducktoller.com

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The Potty Rota & Potty Log

Making "everyone's responsible" mean "someone specific is on duty right now."

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PART ONE — THE POTTY ROTA

Fill this in and post it. It answers one question all day: whose job is the puppy right now?

Time block	Who's on duty	The job
Wake-up → breakfast		Out immediately · say the potty word · log it
Breakfast → midday		Out after eating, then hourly
Midday → after school		Out after every nap and play session
After school → dinner		Out after the hello, after play
Dinner → bedtime		Out after dinner, after play, last call at bed
Overnight		One quiet trip · no play · straight back

The handoff is spoken. When your block ends, say it out loud: "I'm off – she's just been out – you're up."

Little kids assist, they don't own a block. A child can carry treats, say the potty word, and cheer. An adult or older teen owns the responsibility.

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Remember her plumbing

A puppy can hold it roughly **one hour per month of age**. She almost always needs to go **after sleeping, after eating or drinking, and after play**.

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PART TWO — THE POTTY LOG

Keep this for 14 days. Five seconds per entry. By day four you'll see the pattern – and then you're preventing accidents instead of cleaning them.

Week of: _____ Our potty word: _____

Time	Pee	Poop	In the spot	Accident (where?)	Who was on duty
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		
	☐	☐	☐		

The pattern we spotted this week

Example: "Every accident happened between 4 and 5 p.m." → Now we go out at 3:50.

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The accident protocol — everyone follows this

Caught her mid-accident? Gentle interrupt, hurry her to the spot, let her finish there, reward the finish. **No yelling.**

Found it afterwards? Say nothing. Clean it up. She cannot connect your reaction to something she did two minutes ago.

Always use an enzyme cleaner. Ordinary cleaners leave a scent that calls her back.

The children's only job: calmly come and get an adult. Never scold the puppy.

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The Puppy-Proofing Checklist for a Family Home

Puppy-proofing a house with kids in it is a different job. Here's the whole sweep.

Management isn't cheating. Every behaviour your puppy successfully rehearses gets stronger — so we remove the opportunity while we train the replacement.

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Every room

☐ Electrical cords tucked, covered, or blocked ☐ Phone chargers and earbuds off the floor and low tables ☐ Houseplants moved up or out (check which ones are toxic) ☐ Wastebaskets lidded or behind a door ☐ Curtain and blind cords tied up out of reach ☐ Anything small enough to swallow, gone from floor level

The kids' zone — the bit most books miss

☐ **"Floor is clear by bedtime"** family rule agreed and posted ☐ A bin by the door for shoes, and everyone actually uses it ☐ LEGO, small figures and craft supplies played with **above floor level** or behind a gate ☐ Backpacks and lunch bags hung up, never dropped by the door ☐ Homework and school papers off low surfaces ☐ A **high shelf** for each child's most precious toy — the one that must never be chewed ☐ Kids taught: **never snatch anything from the puppy's mouth — get an adult**

Kitchen

☐ Bin secured — lidded, latched, or inside a cupboard ☐ Counters cleared at the edges, especially around mealtimes ☐ Cleaning products and dishwasher tablets latched away ☐ **Household rule: nobody feeds from the table. Nobody.** ☐ Food-safety list checked (chocolate, grapes/raisins, xylitol, onion, garlic, cooked bones)

Bathrooms & laundry

☐ Medications up high, never in a bedside drawer ☐ Toilet lids down ☐ Laundry basket lidded or off the floor (socks and underwear are a top surgery cause) ☐ Dryer sheets and detergent pods away

Doors, stairs & thresholds

☐ **Baby gates** at stairs and at any room that needs to stay puppy-free ☐ A gate or barrier that stops a dash at the **front door** ☐ Household rule: **human through the door first, dog released**

one at a time ☐ Everyone — including guests — knows the door rule ☐ **Gates and garden gate checked every single time someone comes or goes**

Yard & outdoors

☐ Fence walked end to end: gaps, loose boards, dig spots under the line ☐ Gate latches self-closing or checked; a sign for visitors if needed ☐ Toxic plants identified and removed ☐ Compost, fertiliser, antifreeze and tools locked away ☐ **Pool: puppy shown how to GET OUT via the stairs**, even if she's never allowed in ☐ Water bowl outside in warm weather

Mud season & the lived-in home

☐ **Mats inside AND outside every door** ☐ **Towels at the door**, within reach, in a basket ☐ **Furniture covers** on the sofas you care about ☐ A paw-wiping routine trained as a calm, rewarded habit — not a nightly fight ☐ Somewhere for a wet dog to dry that isn't the good rug

The crate & rest

☐ Crate correctly sized — stand, turn, lie down, no more ☐ Placed somewhere social, not isolated ☐ **Household law: the crate is the puppy's private room. Nobody goes in. Nobody bothers her there.** ☐ Nothing chewable or strangling left inside

Identification & safety

☐ Collar with ID tag ☐ Microchip registered and contact details **current** ☐ Recent photos of your dog on your phone ☐ Vet number and nearest emergency vet saved by every adult ☐ Everyone knows the emergency cue and what it means

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Jobs for the Kids

Age-by-age: what children can really do — and what keeps everybody safe.

*The secret to a child who successfully trains a dog is a job that's **small and finishable**. "Help train the puppy" fails every time. "Three treats, one cue, class is over when they're gone" works.*

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Ages 3–5 — Supervised helpers

They can: ☐ Say the puppy's name in a happy voice and hand over a treat when she looks ☐ Say the potty word and cheer when she goes ☐ Drop treats into a food puzzle ☐ Help fill the water bowl ☐ Practise "be a tree" — stand still, hands tucked, when the puppy gets excited

They must not: hold the leash · pick the puppy up · go near her while she eats or chews · be alone with her, ever

Safety rule they memorise: *"If the puppy walks away, let her go."*

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Ages 6–9 — Real trainers

They can: ☐ Run a **two-minute block**: three treats, one cue, "when the treats are gone, class is over" ☐ Own one cue for the week and be the household expert on it ☐ Hide the named toy for a **"Where Duck?"** search — choosing the hiding spot is their job ☐ Play the **name-the-toy** game — say the toy's name cheerfully and celebrate the nose-touch find ☐ Do supervised **gentle checks**: one paw, three seconds, treat, "good girl" ☐ Brush the puppy with an adult, always paired with treats ☐ Help fill in the potty log

They must not: walk the puppy alone near roads · break up any squabble · take anything from her mouth

Safety rule they memorise: *"Teeth touch skin, the game stops."*

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Ages 10–13 — Junior handlers

They can: ☐ Own a full **Daily 10 block** (usually Block 1 — Fun) ☐ Walk the puppy **with an adult holding a backup leash** ☐ Practise sit, down, wait and place, with proofing ☐ Run puzzle and enrichment sessions ☐ Do the **60-Second Check** — mouth, ears, paws, belly ☐ Take a turn on the potty rota during daytime blocks ☐ Help teach visitors the house rules

They must not: be the only handler near traffic · be responsible for emergency recall practice

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Ages 14+ — Full members of the committee

They can: ☐ Own a Daily 10 block including **Block 2 (Obedience)** ☐ Walk the dog independently in safe areas ☐ Take an overnight or early-morning potty block ☐ Run long-line recall practice in open, safe spaces ☐ Handle the threshold protocol at doors and the car ☐ Take genuine ownership of one training goal from start to finish

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The rules every child learns, whatever their age

- 1. **If the puppy walks away, let her go.** Choice is what builds a brave dog.
- 2. **Teeth touch skin — the game stops.** Stand up, fold arms, turn away.
- 3. **Never disturb a dog who is eating, chewing, or asleep in her crate.**
- 4. **Never chase her** if she's stolen something. Get an adult.
- 5. **Ask once.** Then wait. Never repeat the word.
- 6. **Say "yes!" the second she gets it right,** then give the treat.
- 7. **If anything goes wrong, come and get an adult.** You are never in trouble for that.

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Our family's jobs this week

Child	Their cue this week	Their Daily 10 block	Their game

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The Family Puppy Gear List

What I actually use, and why. Buy once, buy properly, and the daily routine runs itself.

A plan and the right equipment are what turn chaotic trips into manageable ones. None of this is fancy – it's just chosen deliberately.

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Feeding

Item	Why
Raised feeding station	Better posture, less mess, easier on the neck and joints
Slow-feeder bowl	Stops a puppy inhaling her food; adds a little thinking to every meal
Stainless steel water bowl	Durable, easy to sanitise, doesn't scratch or hold odours the way plastic does
Separate feeding spots	In a multi-dog home, everyone eats apart. Food is never a contest

Training

Item	Why
Treat pouch	Keeps rewards <i>behind</i> you, not in your cue hand – the fix for "she only listens when I have a treat"
High-value treats	Small, soft, fast to eat. Save the best for recall
A toy she'll work for	For some dogs the toy beats food entirely. Find your dog's currency
Puzzle toys	Ten minutes of thinking tires a smart dog more than an hour of running

Walking & the car

Item	Why
Well-fitted harness	Comfortable, safe, no pressure on the throat

Item	Why
Standard fixed-length leash	Consistent length teaches loose-leash walking
Long line, 15–30 ft	Real freedom with a safety connection — how you build a recall you can trust
Car harness with the seatbelt threaded through	Keeps dogs secured in the back seat
Dog stairs for the vehicle	No uncontrolled leaps in or out — and a beat of control at the moment excitement peaks

Skip retractable leashes. They teach a dog that pulling extends the leash, they give you almost no control, and near a road they are genuinely dangerous.

The home

Item	Why
Crate, correctly sized	Stand, turn around, lie down — no bigger. A den, never a punishment
Baby gates	The same "wait to be released" logic running through the whole house
Mats inside AND outside every door	Mud season starts at the threshold
Towels at the door, in a basket	Wet dog, handled in ten seconds
Furniture covers	Stop resenting your dog for existing on your sofa
Enzyme cleaner	Ordinary cleaners leave a scent that calls a puppy back to the same spot

Grooming & health

Item	Why
Dog toothbrush & dog toothpaste	Daily brushing is the highest-return minute you'll spend on your dog's health. Never human toothpaste
Brush for the coat	Always paired with treats and praise, until she looks forward to it

Item	Why
Nail clippers or grinder	Introduced early, with the daily paw handling
Towels for the beach and the ocean	Salt water, sand, and a happy wet retriever

Out and about — the every-walk kit

☐ Water for both of you ☐ Treats (your recall currency travels with you) ☐ Doggie bags ☐ Check the weather **before** you leave

Heat, ice, and road salt all matter for paws. A prepared handler stays in control, and control is what keeps dogs safe.

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Track it all

Keeping health records, appointments, and walks in one place makes the routine easier to share across a family:

- **EmberPaws** — privacy-first dog health app: health tracking, appointment reminders, vet report generation, and family/sitter sharing. emberpaws.ca
- **CrosbyTrails** — your dog's trail journal: GPS-track walks, save favourite trails, and log every adventure. crosbytrails.com

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