

Skills for NSD Puppies (8 weeks-12 weeks)

Please focus on these skills during the first 12 weeks of your NSD puppy's life.

☐ **Focus/“watch me”**. Dogs must pay eye contact when asked. Dogs that freely offer eye contact should be rewarded with a treat and a “yes” or “nice” affirmation.

☐ **“Sit”**. Puppy must know both the hand signal (palm up, hand open) as well as the verbal command. Place treat above puppy's head and move back towards puppy's tail until puppy sits. Capture the moment with “Yes” and treat.

☐ **“Down”**. Puppy Raiser uses hand signal (palm down, hand open) with treat in between fingers to lure puppy down (bring treat down slowly between puppy's paws to lure down).

☐ **“Settle”**. Puppy Raiser holds puppy in their lap with all four paws facing outwards. Position the puppy's spine against your chest. Speak quietly and softly to the puppy & rub its belly. Once the puppy has settled & calmed down, give the puppy a small treat. Continue to hold it like this for 30 seconds to a minute while it remains calm. If puppy struggles and whines, stop everything and wait (while holding the puppy and looking away). Once puppy submits, begin soothing and affirming the puppy again. Do this often as it will help teach the pup to trust you and abandon all control.

☐ **Gentle “Take it”**. Puppy must learn to inhibit the use of their teeth when taking treats from handler. Food given from the palm of the hand will slow down the take and eat it process, but not enough to detract from the connection of the reward.

☐ **“Leave it”**. Using kibble in palm of closed hand, tell puppy to “leave it”. Once puppy moves head back/away from hand (leaving treat alone), handler treats from the left hand (not the floor). Please note: Puppy must not be permitted to scavenge anything from ground at any time

☐ **Follow**. Starting at 9 weeks while holding leash, handler steps in front of puppy while puppy sits and “watches” handler. While holding treat between knees, handler moves backwards while using the command “come” “come” “come” or “puppy” “puppy” “puppy”. Puppy should follow handler (without jumping). Once handler stops, puppy should sit calmly in front of handler. Be certain to capture the moment with an enthusiastic “YES”.

☐ **“Stay”**. Handler commands puppy to sit/down. Once settled, the handler signals stay (palm and hand open showing “stop” and takes one step backwards and then quickly returns to puppy and acknowledges with a “good stay”. Repeat. Dog should remain planted until handler returns. Duration Goal for skill is 30 seconds.

■ **“Stand”**. Handler places hand (with treat between thumb and 2 fingers) in front of dog’s nose and pulls treat slowly back away from puppy’s nose. When puppy’s bum is off floor, handler affirms action with “yes”. Puppy must not take steps forward but rather “stay” still.

■ **“Down + stay” and sit + stay**. Dog should go into sit/down position because handler uses hand signal. Handler then shows “stay” hand signal (palm forward, fingers spread indicating stop). As puppy learns skills handler can begin to move to the right and left (as a distraction) and puppy must remain in a down stay. Duration Goal for skill is 30 seconds.

■ **Vocalization**. Starting at 9 weeks, the puppy should be discouraged from barking/whining to demand attention. See instructor during class if dog consistently exhibits this barking behaviour.

■ **Handling during Feed**. Starting at 9 weeks, ask the puppy to sit and wait prior to eating of their food. Upon release word of “Ok”, puppy can begin to eat but should also be handled freely by puppy raiser so that they become comfortable with physical touch (touch face, ears, tail, paws)