

## THE NAME GAME

### Name game, why teach it?

It's important for your dog to understand that when he hears his name, he should orientate to you and give you attention - even when distracted!



### What you'll do:

1. Gather your food rewards and head to a quiet area.
2. Wait until he looks away.
3. Say his name in a clear happy tone one time. "Fido"
  - *Only say his name once. If you repeat his name several times, that is what he will learn!*
4. As soon as he starts to turn toward you, praise him and then give him a reward.
  - *If he needs help (doesn't look at you), you can use some helper noises like clicks, smooches, but if you're doing this every time you say his name, you either need a quieter environment or better reinforcement (or both!).*

### Adding distractions

It's important to start with many repetitions of the name game in a quiet environment before incrementally adding in distractions. This will help your dog be successful and truly learn that his name means look towards you for more information.

### **Set-ups: Set-up training means that you have chosen a specific distraction to practice that you can control.**

For example, one family member could work on the name game while another family member quietly walks through the room. If your dog does well (he snaps his head back quickly), you could increase the distraction level by having your family member walk faster or holding a toy (not a favorite toy) in his or her hand.



### **When opportunity knocks: Playing the name game when a distraction occurs in the environment.**

For example, let's say you're on a walk with your dog and another person is walking on the other side of the street. Wait for your dog to look at the person walking down the street. Say his name, then praise right as he looks back at you and give him several tasty treats.



**Bottom line with distractions: Only play the name game when you think your dog can be successful and gradually add in distractions.** If you try and play it when your dog is too distracted, they will just learn that "Fido" means "Blah, blah, blah." And not "Oh, mom has something to tell me, I better look towards her for more info." The speed of adding distractions will depend on your individual dog.