

Hey, You!!

The Name Game

"Chester, No!" "Naughty Puppy," "Hey, Hey, Hey," or "Chester, Chester, Chester." All puppies learn what we say to get their attention. The problem is that sometimes they don't learn their name—they learn the other things we shout at them instead!

There is an easy game you can play to make your pup's name both attention-getting and fun to respond to. You want your pup to stop an activity and look at you when you call their name. So you need to set up situations where they can do this easily and be rewarded for it, as explained below.

We should also reduce the number of times we say the puppy's name with NO real expectation of the correct response. Don't bother calling the name if they are completely absorbed in an activity like playing with another puppy or chasing a butterfly or ball. Only use the name when you can *reasonably* expect the puppy to stop what they are doing and look at you.



STEP 1

During a quiet time inside the house, have a dish of small treats nearby. Say the pup's name clearly, and if they turn and look at you, toss a cookie. If they don't look, be quiet and wait until they do, or wait another minute and try again.

STEP 2

Make sure that you only say the name once and that no other commands are given. The eye contact your pup gives you is all the response you need to toss the treat. The quick reward to them is what tells them they have done the right thing.

STEP 3

Once your puppy is consistently responding to their name in a calm indoor setting, make the game more challenging. Work on it during calm times outdoors and slightly more active times inside.

All family members should take part in the game.

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