



BRAIN GAMES

Physical exercise is a good way to tire your foster puppy out, however, puppies also require mental exercise as well. Giving your foster puppy mental exercise and stimulation is even more beneficial than physical exercise, because it allows them to engage in natural behaviors, builds confidence, and helps them learn to problem solve. In addition, it also helps with boredom, anxiety, and frustration, which means good things for both you and your foster pup! Below are some games you can do with your foster puppy outside of obedience training that will mentally challenge them.

Mealtime Enrichment

These are some great ideas for all puppies, but especially if your foster puppy tends to inhale their food!

- 🐾 Scatter feeding: Feed your foster puppy their meal by scattering it on the ground. If you aren't worried about keeping your floors clean you may do this indoors, but scattering meals outside in the grass is very enriching for them since they have to work to find their food.
- 🐾 Muffin tin slow feeder: Distribute your foster puppy's meal in a muffin tin. If you want to add an extra challenge, place tennis balls over top of each hole so they must move the ball to find their food!
- 🐾 Towel feeding: Lay out a towel and spread your foster puppy's meal evenly across the towel. Roll up the towel horizontally so your foster puppy has to unroll the towel to access the food. As an added challenge, you can also tie the towel in a loose knot so your foster puppy has to work the towel loose before unrolling it.

Linked below are some items that you may purchase if you wish that can enrich your foster puppy's mealtimes:

[Snuffle Mat](#)

[Puzzle Feeder](#)

[Kong Wobbler Dispenser](#)



Scent Work Games

- 🐾 Hide and Seek: This one is an absolute favorite of mine! Pick somewhere for your foster puppy to “wait” (or have someone else hold your foster puppy if they still need practice with “wait”) and leave the room to find somewhere to hide. When you’re in your hiding spot, tell your foster puppy to “come”. When your foster puppy finds you, throw a party for them! If they have a hard time finding you, make a little noise so they can find you, and pick an easier hiding spot next time.
- 🐾 “Find It” Introduction- hand game: Have a good smelling treat in one hand, and offer both closed hands to your foster puppy. You can use the cue “find it” when offering your hands to your foster puppy. When your foster puppy sniffs and/or nudges the hand with the treat in it, give them the treat from your hand and tell them “yes”.
- 🐾 “Find It” Intermediate- cup game: To set up this game, have 2 or 3 plastic cups and poke a hole in the bottom of them with a pen. Place the cups upside down with a smelly, high value treat underneath one of them, and cue your foster puppy to “find it”. Once they indicate which cup the treat is under, lift that cup, give them that treat, and tell them “yes”.
- 🐾 “Find It” Expert- scavenger hunt: Cue your foster puppy to “wait” in and hide a small pile of kibble or a few treats somewhere in the house. When first starting this, have the reward placed in a spot that’s very easy for them to find. Cue your foster puppy to “find it”. Once they find the reward, tell them “yes”. You can gradually make your hiding spots more difficult as you practice!

Fun and Games with a Cardboard Box

Below is a link to a video detailing how to make a brain game for your foster puppy out of something as simple as a cardboard box:

[Fun & Games With a Cardboard Box](#)