



## **Important Steps for a Happy and Healthy Relationship with your New Pet!**

### **Following House Rules:**

- 🐾 Consistency matters! It is important for your family to discuss your house rules so everyone is on the same page and your new pet isn't confused. This includes whether they are they allowed on the furniture, in your bed, around the dinner table, etc. It's your responsibility to teach your new companion what behaviors are acceptable.
  - If you do not want your new pet on the furniture or in your bed, do not allow them to put their front half up in your lap while you are sitting - the back half will soon follow. To a dog, laying on the couch next to you is basically the same as laying in your lap on the couch.
  - Teach them to lay in their own bed in front of the couch or next to your bed so they are close to you.
  - If the kitchen is off-limits for your pet, you won't have to worry about them sniffing your counters, stove or table for food. Dogs are opportunists! They will help themselves to whatever food smells attract them if they are within reach. Don't set your new pet up for failure by leaving your sandwich on the coffee table when you leave the room.
- 🐾 It is well researched and highly recommended that you never allow your pet to "mouth" or chew on your hands. This can lead to several undesirable behaviors. We commonly see this in puppies because until they are taught this is not allowed, they will chew on you as they did on their siblings.
  - Distract your with a toy - throwing it, putting it in their mouth as they open it, or giving them a rubber chew toy stuffed with something edible will take their mind off of chewing on you.
  - If they insist that your hands, arms, ankles, etc. are the only thing they are interested in at that time, you may need to separate your pet from you. Place them in their crate, behind a gate, etc. with a chew toy. They will soon learn that mouthing is not a rewarded behavior.
  - Try to note when the mouthing happens most often - when they first wake up, in the evening when they get their second wind, etc. Once you discover the most common time of the day it happens, make plans to exercise your pet at that time. Go for a walk, allowing them to smell everything along the way. Play ball with them for 20 – 30 minutes outside if possible.
  - If these techniques still don't diminish the chewing, you may consider *Bitter Apple* spray for your hands, arms, etc. It is alcohol based but once that evaporates the pet will only get the taste of the bitters. Use this as a last resort as this is an aversive training technique.