

In-House Behavior Modification Protocol
Resource Guarding – Food Bowl Aggression

Protocol to be used on shelter dogs that exhibit low-medium level food bowl aggression (eating faster, stiffening, whale eye, growling)

Repeat each step until the dog is comfortable and exhibits no signs of guarding before moving to the next step. If, at a given step, the dog demonstrates any guarding behavior go back to the previous step and proceed more slowly.

Step 1 Hand feed the dog his entire meal (one handful at a time) for 3 days. Ask him to sit and then offer the handful of food. This step teaches the dog that his food comes from a human and that the human controls the resource.

The dog should be tethered during the following steps for safety

Step 2 Hold the dog's empty bowl and feed him his meal in handful installments by reaching to get the food out of another bowl on the counter with your other hand. Ask him to sit and wait for him to look at you, then add the handful of food and offer him the bowl (still in your hand). Repeat until all the food is gone.

Step 3 Put the empty bowl down on the floor in front of the dog and then one handful at a time feed him his entire meal. Ask him to sit and wait for him to look at you before giving each handful.

Step 4 Put an empty bowl down in front of the dog and walk away. Walk back, ask him to sit and put a handful of food in it, and retreat. Repeat until the whole meal has been fed.

Step 5 – Approach the dog while he is eating but stop far enough away that you do not trigger any negative response and toss a piece of chicken or other special treat into the dish then retreat. Repeat this until he has completed the bowl of food. Over the course of several sessions, gradually close the distance between yourself and the bowl before you toss the treat. Do this step until you can walk within one feet of the dog while he is eating, and he looks up at you anticipating the chicken when you come close.

Each new person should start at step #1. If you have multiple people working on the protocol this means you may have one person on step 3 and another on step 1.

A person who has not participated in the behavior modification program should re-evaluate the dog to assess the success of the program.