

Shelter Dog Nosework Program

Nosework is an enrichment strategy to engage the dog's sense of smell and desire to seek and find. It is an easy program to develop and a wonderful enrichment strategy for the dogs.

Teaching a dog the game

Bring the dog to the nosework room and follow the below steps.

These steps will only need to be performed one time for each dog. Once you go through these steps the dog will know how to play the game for the future.

Step 1 – toss a treat on the floor and say: “find it”. Repeat several times.

This step teaches the dog that when you say “find it” there will be a treat to find

Step 2 – put a box down and toss a treat inside and say: “find it”. Repeat several times.

This step teaches the dog that the treat will now be inside a box.

Step 3 – put a 2nd box down but only toss a treat into one of them. Say: “find it”.

This step teaches the dogs that the treat will only be in one box.

Step 4 – put a 3rd box down but only toss a treat into one of them. Say: “find it”.

This step continues to teach the dog that there will only be a treat in one box.

Step 5 – keep adding boxes (2-3 at a time) until you have 12-15 boxes.

The dog will now know that there is only one treat in one of many boxes.

Conducting Nosework Sessions

Set up your nosework room with 12-15 boxes. Place a treat inside one of the boxes. Go to the kennels and get a dog who has gone through the above training and bring him/her to the room. Take off his/her leash and tell the dog to “find it” and let the dog run around checking all of the boxes until he/she finds the one hidden treat. You can then remove the dog from the room for a second and hide another treat in another box. Do 3-4 rounds with this dog and then return him/her to the kennels and get another dog.