



Knowing Dogs 201 Module 2

This transcript is provided for those who might benefit from reading rather than listening to the slideshow/video for Knowing Dogs 201. It is not meant to be a stand alone document. The transcript supplements the material contained on the slides and in the staff workbook. You will need both the Knowing Dogs teaching videos and the staff workbook to use this transcript.

Welcome back to Knowing Dogs 201 on Group Play. This is Module 2.

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The focus of this module is to recognize appropriate versus inappropriate play behaviors.

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In this session you will learn to recognize the four basic playstyles of dog play. You'll determine the appropriate play in dogs by understanding the common traits of play behaviors. You'll be able to follow along with this lesson in your workbook and are encouraged to take notes as we go through the material.

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Play Behaviors and Gestures. There are some common easily recognizable behaviors that are most frequently seen as signs of play. A play bow is a solicitation of play from one dog to another. In this posture the dog has his shoulders and front-end down towards the ground and his rear in the air as you see in this picture.

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The best play consists of exaggerated repetitive movements. In this photo look at the crazy way the hound has his neck and the wild flaying legs of the husky. These would be useless body positions if the dog were actually going to fight. They are big and exaggerated and those types of movements are usually playful.

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Most play between dogs consists of lateral movements. This means the dogs will jump to the left and jump to the right, they might also spin a time or two. All of these are more playful than the dog that comes in frontally and in a straight line and then backs out again in a straight line.

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Good play generally consists of low, slow wagging tails. If you recall from Knowing Dogs 101, full wags are more friendly. They are also more playful. Curves in the dog's body also indicate play. And you can't get much more curvy than the Golden Retriever on the ground in this photo. Balanced play between dogs means that they take turns in whatever roles they are playing. So they might take turns pinning one another on the ground briefly, or take turns standing over one another, or even take turns chasing each other. That's what we mean by balanced play.

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So let's look at what some of these behaviors would look like in real life on this video.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO

Appropriate play consists of play bows and spins. Watch as the golden puppy solicits play from the older dog with some play bows. He also does some spinning.

This Doberman shows a great example of loose, wiggly body language.

Good play is typically exaggerated motions and a lot of left and right movement rather than forward and back. Again, watch the puppy. As you see in slow motion you'll see how his jumps are exaggerated as he leaps left and right.

Watch this White Shepherd who displays a more adult version of the same behavior. In slow motion you can see the White Shepherd as she jumps left and right and her behaviors are exaggerated with jumping and lifting of her legs.

Ideally, dogs in play should switch position in balanced play. If one's chasing, they switch roles. If one's pinning the other, they'll switch in who's pinning the other. So here you'll see the Golden Retriever on the bottom, in just a few minutes you'll see they'll switch roles and the other dog will be on the bottom.

Good play is repetitive. The dogs will do some behavior over and over. Here the Curly Coat repeats lateral movements as he tries to make friends with the other dog. He also does a playbow. Watch again in slow motion. Here he does a left lateral movement and then another one.

In this clip, watch as the Cavalier repeatedly jumps in the air and paws at the Beagle's head.

Here you'll see the behaviors are loose, exaggerated, lateral and repetitive.

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With the chasing playstyle you really want a dog that likes to be chased and one that enjoys chasing. The biggest problem with this playstyle is the dogs can get very excited and become

overly aroused. So you really want to make sure that the dogs don't get too revved up during this type of game.

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The neck biting form of play is a wrestling type of game where dogs grab each other by the neck. You'll often see this when they start wrestling, flop onto the ground and continue rolling around grabbing each other's ears, head and necks. This can be an alarming playstyle to watch because you'll often see teeth, but it's usually a benign playstyle. If the dogs are actually going to fight, they would have to get up first.

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Here you see some examples of the teeth display and neck biting of this type of playstyle. Notice the loose bodies of the dogs even though you can see teeth and open mouths.

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The cat-like play is common in the smaller breeds. This is a style where the dogs want to bat each other around gently with their front paws or spin in little motions around one another without really making any body contact. Dogs that have this cat-like playstyle are best matched with either small chasing dogs or with other small dogs that like cat-like play.

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Again, here are some examples of dogs gently pawing other dogs and a guinea pig in an effort to play.

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Body-slamming is a very physical playstyle and it's the playstyle of choice for most of the sporting breeds such as Labrador Retrievers. There are sometimes wrestling involved and it might turn into neck biting, but only after some rough and tumble slamming around. Dogs with this style can actually damage the walls of your facility by running into them or hurt other dogs if they are playing too rough.

It's important to keep your knees bent when you're supervising this type of play so that you don't topple over if the dogs accidentally slam into you. The biggest issue with this type of play is making sure the arousal level of the room doesn't get too high. You want to intervene frequently and slow down the play.

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Here you see some of the rough action associated with body-slamming playstyle. It's best to match the body-slammers with dogs of similar weight and size so you don't end up with injuries.

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Now let's watch and see what some of these look like on video.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO

Here's an example of dogs chasing one another. You can see why this behavior can get a room full of dogs revved up. It's good to interrupt this kind of game if it goes longer than 30 to 60 seconds.

Notice here how the dogs are grabbing one another's necks and ears. They're using their teeth but showing great bite inhibition since they aren't actually hurting one another. Neck biting is usually a benign playstyle.

Cat-like play usually consists of using paws and lots of quick spins. It's common in smaller breeds. Notice in this video the Cavalier is using cat-like play, the Beagle is a little less animated and sometimes just pushes the Cavalier around. It's a mild version of body-slamming that only works because the dogs are roughly the same size.

Here you see the same type of animated cat-like play.

Watch these dogs as they body-slam one another. You'll have mouthing and neck biting with body-slamming but the main difference is the physical nature of the play. Dogs will ram into each other, go up in the air and just play in a very physical manner.

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It's important to match the right playstyles to have success in your groups. Remember there is no right or wrong playstyle. The important thing is to match appropriate playstyles together with dogs who are similar in size. The styles will generally overlap. For instance, body-slamming may turn into neck biting or cat-like play may turn into a chase. Most dogs use one as a primary style but can often play in other ways as well.

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Playstyles are often fluid as you can see in this photo. Remember dogs have unique playstyles and they need to figure out the best playmates for them. So in this photo the black Lab is doing a little bit of cat-like pawing behavior. The Great Dane looks like he's about ready to body-slam the Husky, and the Husky is a little bit undecided. He may be getting ready to body-slam with the Great Dane. Your job is to supervise the dogs and determine which playstyles will work out best together.

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Now let's practice. We're going to show a video. You'll see the video in both fast and slow motion. Afterwards you're going to write down at least one playstyle and one appropriate play behavior that you see in the dogs playing on the video.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO 1

In this first video the playstyle was chasing and some of the appropriate play behaviors you should have listed included exaggerated and lateral movements.

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So what about this one? Watch this video - you're going to see the clip twice and write down at least one playstyle and one appropriate play behavior you see in the dogs playing.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO 2

The playstyle you saw was neck biting and the behaviors that were appropriate that you could have written down included balanced play or loose body language.

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What about this one? You'll see this video again in fast motion as well as slow motion. Write down at least one playstyle and one appropriate play behavior you see in the dogs playing.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO 3

In this video the playstyle was cat-like play, although right at the end it did turn into a bit of a chase. Some of the appropriate play behavior included lateral body language, loose body language and spinning.

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So what about the fourth video? Watch the video that you're going to see in both fast and slow motion. Write down at least one playstyle and one appropriate play behavior you see while the dogs play.

THE DOG GURUS VIDEO 4

Playstyles in this clip included body-slamming and neck biting. And some of the appropriate play behaviors you saw were lateral movements and exaggerated movements.

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As you've seen with other behaviors and gestures, you can identify the play behaviors with the traffic management signal chart. All of the signs of good play are listed in the green area. Also in the green area are two of the playstyles: cat-like play and neck biting play. The other two playstyles are found in the yellow area. That's where you'll see chasing and body-slamming. These two styles are in the yellow mainly due to the potential for the arousal level to increase in the room and get out of hand. Remember to intervene and help give the dogs breaks if they are not giving themselves breaks on their own.

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The other behavior shown on the play gestures chart fall into a more inappropriate behavior category and we're going to learn about these in a future module. For now, just focus on the green categories and the yellow playstyles.

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In this module you've learned what appropriate play looks like and how to begin to classify the different playstyles. You'll use this information to keep the dogs safe and be able to understand how to use the play behaviors to match dogs with other safe playmates.

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You can now turn off the recording and take time to complete the module evaluation. Then return to your supervisor who will give you with feedback and provide you with opportunities to practice what you have learned.