

How to Find a Qualified Trainer

Dog training is an unregulated industry, which means that anyone can call themselves a dog trainer! We recommend that dog parents choose their trainers and behavior consultants wisely.



Seek Out

1. Trainers who practice science-based methods that utilize food rewards.
2. Trainers who ask about your dog's history and work with your dog as an individual.
3. Trainers who want to include you in the training.
4. Trainers who provide references.
5. Trainers who are certified by CCPDT, IAABC, or KPA.

(See next page for more information and databases of certified trainers)

Avoid

1. Trainers who talk about dominance or being a pack leader.
2. Trainers who use techniques like alpha rolls, leash pops, or any physical manipulation.
3. Trainers who use tools like prong, shock, or choke collars.
4. Trainers who take your dog away from you to train them.
5. Trainers who guarantee behavior change.

Words from Jean Donaldson, Academy of Dog Trainers, author of "The Culture Clash":

BE A SMART DOG TRAINING CONSUMER.



- ASK:**
1. What exactly will happen to my dog if my dog gets it right?
 2. What exactly will happen to my dog if my dog gets it wrong?
 3. Are there less invasive/aversive alternatives to what you propose?

If you don't get clear, concrete answers or are at all uncomfortable, keep shopping.

illustration by Lili Chin doggiedrawings.net

What Do All Those Letters Mean?

Use the guide below to find certified trainers in your area. For more resources, check out <https://sfhumanesociety.org/behavior-library/>

Accreditation Boards

CCPDT - Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers

- CPDT-KA® (Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge Assessed) indicates that a dog trainer has passed a comprehensive exam and has at least 300 hours of dog training experience.
- CPDT-KSA® (Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge and Skills Assessed) indicates that a dog trainer has passed a comprehensive exam and an objective skills-based assessment, along with at least 300 hours of dog training experience.
- CBCC-KA® (Certified Behavior Consultant Canine - Knowledge Assessed) indicates that a dog behavior consultant has passed a comprehensive exam on behavior modification and has at least 300 hours of dog behavior consulting experience.

IAABC - International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants

- Certified Members have completed a rigorous application process, including evaluation by a panel of dog training and behavior experts who have determined the trainer's ability to handle more complex behavior cases. Additionally, they have completed at least 500 hours of experience in animal behavior consulting with a client present.
- Associate Certified Members have at least 300 hours of client experience and have submitted two case studies for review by a panel of dog training and behavior experts who have determined the trainer's ability to handle more complex behavior cases.

Schools

KPA - Karen Pryor Academy

- KPA CTP (Certified Training Partner) indicates that a dog trainer has graduated from the Karen Pryor Academy. They have demonstrated a high level of technical knowledge in both training and teaching and have passed several rigorous exams on the science and practice of animal training, client teaching, and animal behavior problem-solving.

For more information on what to look for in a trainer, check out the links below:

[Choosing a Dog Trainer](#)

[How to Choose a Dog Trainer](#)