



## **C.A.T. DOG TEMPERAMENT AND PERSONALITY EVALUATION**

The C.A.T. Dog Temperament and Personality Evaluation assesses the dog's temperament and personality, the animal/handler team, how well the handler interprets and manages the animal's behavior and how well the animal responds to the handler. A Certified C.A.T. Evaluator performs the testing. The animal/handler team must show that the animal can be controlled by the handler and will follow basic commands with the distractions that the team may encounter in a therapy situation. The animal/handler team will be assessed on how they interact with the evaluator, the evaluator's assistants, other animals and the surrounding environment.

### **1. Petting & Hugging**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will allow all types of petting. With the dog sitting or standing at the handler's side, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body. The evaluator will engage in exuberant, sudden and clumsy petting & hugging. This will include examining the dog's tail and ears and recording the reaction. The dog must not show shyness or resentment. The dog's paw will be held for about five seconds. Acceptable reaction: calm, relaxed; licks your hand; "shakes" your hand. Questionable reactions: pulls foot and whines. Unacceptable reaction: pulls foot and mouths your hand; attempts to bite; growls, snaps; whines, tries to escape; submissively urinates.

### **2. Reaction to Another Dog**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands, and remain in place for 15 seconds. The dogs should show no more than casual interest in each other. Neither dog should jump on the other dog or its handler. Acceptable reaction: slight curiosity and sniffing are okay. Unacceptable reaction: any dominant or aggressive behavior.

### **3. Reaction to Distraction and Motion Sensitivity**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is comfortable at all times when faced with common distracting situations in a nursing home or hospital. The evaluator will select and present two distractions. Distractions should include rolling a wheel chair or a walker towards the dog, dropping a crutch or cane, and creating loud noises. Acceptable reaction: dog may express natural interest and curiosity and/or may appear slightly startled but should not panic. Unacceptable reaction: tries to run away; shows aggressiveness; or barks. The evaluator will then stand in front of the dog and will wave arms and/or legs in grand gestures over the head and back area of the dog. Acceptable reaction: calm, relaxed; looks, but remain in position; lies or sits down. Unacceptable behavior: flees, growls; bares teeth; urinates, trembles, whines, cries; hackles up.

### **4. Wheelchair Petting**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will remain in place when instructed to do so by the handler. The handler will walk the dog up to a person in a wheelchair. Large dogs need to sit next to the wheel chair during the exercise and small dogs (under 20 lbs) need to sit calmly on the lap of the person in the wheelchair. The handler should ask the dog to stay while being petted and then walk around the dog from one side to the other and behind the chair with the dog remaining in place the whole time. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to stay. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to "stay" or "wait" or they may simply walk around, giving no instructions to the dog. The dog must not show resistance to petting or struggle to get away from the wheelchair.

### **5. Walking Through a Crowd with Walkers and Wheelchairs**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in hospital and nursing home situations. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). One of the three should be walking with a walker. The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk calmly next to the handler without evidence of over-exuberance, shyness or resentment. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not jump on people in the crowd or strain on the leash.

### **6. Leave It and Taking a Treat**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog is trained to leave a high value item on the floor, such as a toy or food. This exercise also demonstrates that the dog is capable of taking a treat gently from the hand of someone other than the owner. The handler will be instructed by the evaluator to lead the dog to the item. The dog may show interest in the item but must not pick the item up, and should easily walk away from it. Handler should instruct the dog to 'leave it' when appropriate. The evaluator will then pick up the treat and offer it to the dog with an outstretched hand, the food in an upturned palm with the fingers open. If possible, a second individual that the dog is not familiar with will do the next treat test. A treat will be offered with the treat between the thumb and forefingers. The dog must demonstrate control in taking a treat and should not take it with too much exuberance. The dog's teeth should not touch the person's hand.



### **7. Contact with Handler**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog will not become “protective” in the event that someone approaches and makes physical contact with the handler. The evaluator will walk up to the handler, shake hands and “hug” the handler. The evaluator will also approach the handler quickly with open arms to “hug” the handler. Acceptable response: dog steps aside; shows that it is uncomfortable but does not show any type of aggression. Unacceptable response: dog lunges; barks; snaps at, or shows any type of aggression.

### **8. Reaction to a Group of Dogs**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog does not become aggressive when allowed to socialize in a group of dogs. The handlers will be instructed to walk around in close proximity to the other handlers and dogs. The behavior and body language of each dog will be observed. Unacceptable behavior: any aggressive behavior including, but not limited to, growls, snaps, bites, mounting, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog.

### **9. Tolerating Eye to Eye Contact**

This exercise demonstrates that the dog does not become aggressive when met at eye level with a human. This is specifically to assure that the dog will not see a child as a threat and become aggressive due to the eye contact. The evaluator will not “stare” at the dog, but merely be at the same eye level.

### **Equipment**

All tests must be performed on 4 or 6ft. non-retractable leash. Dogs should wear well-fitting buckle or slip collars made of leather, metal or fabric. Special training collars such as pinch collars, head halters, etc. are not permitted in the C.A.T. test. The owner/handler can bring a few appropriate treats for their dog.

### **Encouragement**

Owners/handlers may use praise and encouragement throughout the test. The owner may pet the dog between exercises.

### **Failures – Dismissals**

Any dog that eliminates during testing must be marked failed. Any dog that growls, snaps, bites, attacks, or attempts to attack a person or another dog must be dismissed from the test.

### **Exceptions**

Exceptions to the testing requirements are only for dogs that have an injury or disability, which prevents them from physically performing the requirement. This would include items such as loss of limb, physical abnormalities, etc.

### **Evaluation / Trial Period**

New C.A.T. Volunteer teams are required to complete a 30-day trial period consisting of a minimum of 4 visits to a facility. A Certified C.A.T. Evaluator will accompany you on your first visit to the facility. You will then visit the facility on your own for two visits. A Certified C.A.T. Evaluator will again accompany the team on the fourth visit to the facility. Upon completion of this probation period and passing the evaluations, your dog will then be eligible for the Advanced C.A.T. Evaluation to assess its suitability for working with children, special needs and/or physical or occupational therapy.

Canine Assisted Therapy, Inc. reserves the right to revoke volunteer status to any team that does not comply with the Canine Assisted Therapy Guidelines for Dog Assisted Therapy.