



# Puppy Raiser Job Duties, Safety Guidelines and Expectations

## Job Duties

- **General Welfare-** All puppy raisers are expected to provide program puppies love and support during the raising process. Raisers will also ensure the program puppy is provided with fresh water daily, feeding the correct brand of food and appropriate amount set by a DBL staff member, receiving age-appropriate amounts of exercise, receiving enrichment, and are being well maintained and groomed.
- **Health and Safety-** Puppy raisers are to provide the program puppy a safe and loving home environment. Raisers will ensure the program puppy receives routine medical care, vaccinations are kept up to date, the program puppy receives their monthly flea, tick, and heartworm preventative, and will notify their DBL representative in the event of an illness or emergency.
- **Training-** All puppy raisers are expected to follow DBL's training guidelines using positive reinforcement. They will also attend classes regularly whether it is a DBL class, or another puppy class outside of Dogs for Better Lives. If taking classes outside of DBL, raisers will need to attend two sets of classes: Puppy/Beginner and Intermediate. When selecting outside classes, ensure the instructor uses positive reinforcement training methods. Puppy raisers will be expected to continue to apply what they learn in the classes by practicing with the program puppy daily. When age appropriate, raisers will commit to taking the program puppy on a public outing two to three times a week with at least one of those outings being a new environment to the program puppy. Puppy raisers will also fill out monthly reports and communicate any issues they may have with their DBL representative.
- **Grooming-** Puppy raisers will ensure that program puppies are groomed regularly. This includes trimming nails and bathing monthly. While also brushing the coat, cleaning the ears, and brushing their teeth weekly.
- **Role Model-** As a puppy raiser you are an extension of Dogs for Better Lives and our mission. It is important to maintain a professional and positive image when working with DBL staff, volunteers, clients, donors, and the public.

## Puppy Raiser Goals

Your ultimate goal is for the program puppy to graduate from the Puppy Program. To graduate, the program puppy will return to a DBL campus for formal assistance dog training with the goal of eventual placement with a client. What does DBL look for in their future assistance dogs?

- A program puppy who is well rounded and can remain calm and confident in all manner of situations, both in public and at home.
- A program puppy who is calm and comfortable being left at home while in their crate.
- A program puppy who is calm and comfortable around all manner of people of different ages, ethnicities, in different types of clothing, etc.
- A program puppy who walks calmly while on leash.

- A program puppy who is calm and relaxed while being handled by anyone. As well as being comfortable while being groomed and looked over.
- A program puppy who can focus on their handler and respond to commands despite distractions in their environment.
- A program puppy who can settle in any environment despite any distractions.

## Safety Guidelines & Expectations

As a puppy raiser, you will be expected to follow the guidelines stated below for both the safety of the program puppy as well as others.

- Program puppies are to always remain on leash unless they are in a secured/fenced off area. It only takes a split second for a program puppy to potentially run off, not return, or become severely injured.
  - If you are doing an activity such as hiking and would like for the program puppy to have more freedom, you may utilize a 20' long line. Do not use a retractable leash as these can cause harm to both handler and program puppy.
  - If you are doing an activity such as camping and would prefer not to hold on to a leash, you may utilize a tie down or x-pen so long as the program puppy is securely restrained and remains in your sight.
  - If the program puppy is loose in a secured area but that area includes an easily accessible body of water like a pond, pool, and hot tub, those areas will need to be securely blocked off, or the program must be closely monitored.
  - This excludes dog parks- DBL does not allow program puppies to visit dog parks as they can pose as a safety risk to the puppy. There are too many variables such as unfriendly dogs, parasites and diseases that can potentially harm the program puppy.
- Program puppies need to be placed in their crate when left alone or at night. Never leave the puppy loose unattended as this can pose a potential safety risk as well as potentially lead to unwanted behaviors. For example, program puppies left unattended in the back yard could pick up a small item such as a stick or rock and choke, or if bored, they could potentially start digging or barking. The exception to this rule is if while in the home you need to leave the room for a short period of time (no longer than 20 minutes), you can utilize an x-pen or baby gate off a section of the home that is safe for the program puppy to be.
  - Do not leave the program puppy alone with babies, toddlers, or small children. Never allow the children to tease, hit, or harass the program puppy.
  - Program puppies under the age of four months old need to be crated when traveling in a vehicle. Never put the program puppy in the back of an open truck or any vehicle with an open window. If a raiser was to get into an accident, the program puppy could easily be thrown from the vehicle which could result in injury or even death. When program puppies are old enough to ride free in a vehicle, they need to be placed into a sit or down on the back seat or back seat floorboards.
    - Do not allow the program puppy to stick their head out the window. Debris may fly into the program puppy's eye and result in injury.
    - **NEVER** leave the program puppy alone in the vehicle. If you are running errands and you are going somewhere where the program puppy will be denied access, leave the program puppy at home.
- Program puppies are never to be up on the furniture. This includes couches, people's beds, chairs, benches, hammocks, beanbags, etc.
- Program puppies are not to be allowed to jump up at or on people, or from high distances to the ground. Not only is jumping an inappropriate behavior, jumping from high distances can cause injury to their joints that are growing and forming.

- Program puppies are never to get on moving walkways or escalators. Their toenails could potentially get stuck resulting in an injury. Always take the stairs or elevator.
- Program puppies do not have access rights. If you encounter a store or area that denies you and the program puppy access, thank them for letting you know and leave. Should you encounter one of these places, let your DBL representative know so they may alert other puppy raisers to respect that business or area. We want to ensure that we maintain a positive image in the communities we work in and serve.
- DBL does not allow program puppies to be left at boarding or daycare facilities. Similar to dog parks, there are too many risks and variables. They can pick up unwanted behaviors as well as illnesses or have an experience that could negatively affect their training. If you are away from home during the day for long periods of time it is recommended that you have friends or family that can watch the program puppy or hire an in-home puppy sitter.

Planes, trains, and boats oh my! Riding a plane, train, bus, boat, or other mode of transportation can be excellent exposure for an older program puppy. However, if not done correctly it can negatively impact the program puppy's training and potentially their future as an assistance dog. For example, if you get on a plane with a program puppy and they start having a negative reaction to being on the plane, you will be unable to quickly exit the plane and allow the puppy to recover. Instead, you will be stuck on that plane until you arrive at your destination which at that point has caused the puppy to potentially remain in a stressed state for long periods of time. If you are considering taking a trip with the program puppy via one of the modes of transportation mentioned above, check in with your DBL representative first. They will need to ensure the program puppy will be able to handle that type of situation. Program puppies will also need to be at least 10 months of age before being approved.

If at any time a puppy raiser feels they are no longer able to care for a program puppy, or DBL deems that it is in the best interest of the program puppy, Dogs for Better Lives will retrieve the program puppy and place them in a new raiser home. Our number one priority is to ensure that each program puppy is healthy and well cared for no matter what.