

A photograph of two dogs in a grassy field. On the left, a black and white dog is looking down. On the right, a golden retriever is partially visible. The background is a blurred landscape with trees and a path.

**Let's Talk About**

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOGS

**Taking Breaks**



# ALL PLAY AND NO BREAKS LEADS TO SOME TROUBLING BEHAVIORS

Dogs, for the most part, don't actively seek out confrontation on a regular basis. "You do your thing and I'll do mine" is typically the mindset of a well-socialized canine. But, even the most well-intentioned dogs can get themselves into trouble without proper management.

During the daycare experience, many dogs enter the facility as though they're entering the world's greatest amusement park; whining loudly, wiggling over to the attendant, and blasting through the playroom doors looking for their favorite playmates (and even some new ones!) But, this enthusiasm manifests in a way that can be perceived as rude to other dogs; especially ones they haven't met before. So, how do we create a healthy play environment that doesn't promote behaviors that may trigger an unpleasant social experience? **In one word: BREAKS.**

Some dogs need more regulated breaks than others because they're unable to settle themselves down when faced with playmates with the same boundless energy. They sprint and bark and wrestle and growl and sprint and growl and sprint and bark (yikes!) which increases adrenaline exponentially in all dogs participating. This leads to a frenzy that's not only difficult to manage for your daycare attendant, but also puts dogs into situations they may not be comfortable with. One wrong move by any participating dog can lead to disastrous fights that none would have wanted if they were given the opportunity to calm down.

*SOME DOGS NEED A LITTLE HELP UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY NEED TO SETTLE DOWN FOR AWHILE IN ORDER TO HAVE A PLEASANT SOCIAL EXPERIENCE.*



## CANINE BODY LANGUAGE IS AN EXHAUSTING ENDEAVOR DURING DAYCARE

Breaks during play and breaks throughout the day promote healthy observational skills, lowered adrenaline, and overall self-control. It gives dogs the opportunity to reset, calm down, and this isn't just in regards to your high-energy dog. This includes the dogs that are simply watching from the sidelines, doing their best to communicate "I'm not interested in playing right now. I just want to lie down and watch for a bit."

Dogs communicate with each other all the time utilizing canine body language which starts out as subtle cues such as lip-licking, whale eyes (widened eyes), tail position, head position, leg lifts, hackles, overall body position, sitting, laying down, there's so many to name and your dog is performing these all the time! More often than not, the reason why cues are being misread or ignored completely is because the dogs haven't been given the opportunity for a break.

Think about the most talkative person you know. Now, imagine being stuck in a conversation with them for 3+ hours, but your words are being ignored completely. So, you decide to walk away. But, now they're following you. And talking. And now they're grabbing your shirt sleeve in order to keep you with them. You shrug it off, but they grab your shirt again. How do you feel at this point? Frustrated? Trapped? This is exactly how your dog feels when met with another dog that isn't reading their signals.

In canine communication, the next step is to react in a way that ultimately tells the other dog to get away from them RIGHT NOW. They didn't want to react that way and did their best to avoid the confrontation, but because the other dog simply wasn't listening, they did their best to get out of an uncomfortable situation. If the overly enthusiastic dog had been given a break away from the other dogs, if the communicative dog had been given respite,

a reaction would have more than likely been avoided.

Your dog's daycare experience shouldn't be exhausting because they needed to stand up for themselves and it also isn't responsible to lay blame on the well-intentioned, but inappropriate canine. The experience should be one filled with pleasant and polite play where all dogs are communicating effectively with each other while avoiding confrontation as much as possible. Your daycare attendant does their best to match each dog's personality with a group and constantly watches for signs of dogs being over-tired. Each dog has their own threshold which also must come into consideration when deciding how often and how long a dog can stay out with the group.

We ultimately want your dog to come home happy, exhausted, and ready to communicate effectively with their canine friends. Breaks are the key to this success!

## Let's Talk About the Importance of Dogs Taking Breaks

### ALL PLAY AND NO BREAKS LEADS TO SOME TROUBLING BEHAVIORS

Dogs, for the most part, don't actively seek out confrontation on a regular basis. "You do your thing and I'll do mine" is typically the mindset of a well-socialized canine. But, even the most well-intentioned dogs can get themselves into trouble without proper management.

During the daycare experience, many dogs enter the facility as though they're entering the world's greatest amusement park; whining loudly, wiggling over to the attendant, and blasting through the playroom doors looking for their favorite playmates (and even some new ones!) But, this enthusiasm manifests in a way that can be perceived as rude to other dogs; especially ones they haven't met before. So, how do we create a healthy play environment that doesn't promote behaviors that may trigger an unpleasant social experience? In one word: **BREAKS**.

Some dogs need more regulated breaks than others because they're unable to settle themselves down when faced with playmates with the same boundless energy. They sprint and bark and wrestle and growl and sprint and growl and sprint and bark (yikes!) which increases adrenaline exponentially in all dogs participating. This leads to a frenzy that's not only difficult to manage for your daycare attendant, but also puts dogs into situations they may not be comfortable with. One wrong move by any participating dog can lead to disastrous fights that none would have wanted if they were given the opportunity to calm down.

### CANINE BODY LANGUAGE IS AN EXHAUSTING ENDEAVOR DURING DAYCARE

Breaks during play and breaks throughout the day promote healthy observational skills, lowered adrenaline, and overall self-control. It gives dogs the opportunity to reset, calm down, and this isn't just in regards to your high-energy dog. This includes the dogs that are simply watching from the sidelines, doing their best to communicate "I'm not interested in playing right now. I just want to lie down and watch for a bit."

Dogs communicate with each other all the time utilizing canine body language which starts out as subtle cues such as lip-licking, whale eyes (widened eyes), tail position, head position, leg lifts, hackles, overall body position, sitting, laying down, there's so many to name and your dog is performing these all the time! More often than not, the reason why cues are being misread or ignored completely is because the dogs haven't been given the opportunity for a break.

Think about the most talkative person you know. Now, imagine being stuck in a conversation with them for 3+ hours, but your words are being ignored completely. So, you decide to walk away. But, now they're following you. And talking. And now they're grabbing your shirt sleeve in order to keep you with them. You shrug it off, but they grab your shirt again. How do you feel at this point? Frustrated? Trapped? This is exactly how your dog feels when met with another dog that isn't reading their signals.

In canine communication, the next step is to react in a way that ultimately tells the other dog to get away from them **RIGHT NOW**. They didn't want to react that way and did their best to avoid the confrontation, but because the other dog simply wasn't listening, they did their best to get out of an uncomfortable situation. If the overly enthusiastic dog had been given a break away from the other dogs, if the communicative dog had been given respite, a reaction would have more than likely been avoided.

Your dog's daycare experience shouldn't be exhausting because they needed to stand up for themselves and it also isn't responsible to lay blame on the well-intentioned, but inappropriate canine. The experience should be one filled with pleasant and polite play where all dogs are communicating effectively with each other while avoiding confrontation as much as possible. Your daycare attendant does their best to match each dog's personality with a group and constantly watches for signs of dogs being over-tired. Each dog has their own threshold which also must come into consideration when deciding how often and how long a dog can stay out with the group.

We ultimately want your dog to come home happy, exhausted, and ready to communicate effectively with their canine friends. Breaks are the key to this success!