

Nice or Not?

Nice is intended to be a marker for desired behavior. A marker is using a signal (we use the word “Nice”!) to mark a precise behavior performed by the puppy. The marker pin-points the behavior, and the pup will understand that he is being rewarded for that exact behavior. We have to consistently give our pup a reward **each and every time** the mark is used. Every time we say “Nice!” we have to give the puppy a kibble. Clean handling means you fully complete the word marker “Nice” before moving your hand toward the bait bag! Even if you marked the wrong behavior, that mark should always be followed by a reward. Generally, a marker is used to communicate about a behavior that the dog volunteered (offered), not behavior we manipulate or lure. Once the pup learns that he can influence your rewarding behavior it’s “game on” and learning is fun!

Use Nice for:

Distractions – reward as approaching, reward for ignoring distraction, reward for re-focusing after

Loose leash walking

Collar pressure – releasing & moving toward you

Ground Tether – releasing & moving toward you

Go To Bed (GTB)

Clipping nails – nice after each nail

Do Not Use Nice:

Calm behavior

Foundation exercises (sit, down, stay, stand)

Come or Food Induced Recall (FIR)

Puppy handling

Putting on Gentle Leader or jacket

Good kennel behavior

Do Your Business

More information is available on the Guide Dogs website Forms Page (where the online puppy reports are), under Puppy Development Techniques and Games, **FAQ on using a Marker**.