



## ***APDT Professional Dog Trainers' Advice for the New "First Dog"***

*The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT), the largest educational and professional association for dog trainers in the world, congratulates the President and his family on their new canine addition. We asked our members to provide their top tips for training and living with a dog in the White House (or any house!)*

Greenville, SC - April 13, 2009 – The Association of Pet Dog Trainers promotes positive, dog-friendly training based on humane, scientific methods. All dogs, whether the “First Dog” or dogs who live on “Main Street,” require training and socialization to become happy, harmonious residents in a family’s household. Learning should be fun and exciting for humans and dogs alike, and all family members should become actively involved in the training process.

We queried our members about what they would teach the new “First Dog” if they became the White House dog trainer. A detailed listing of their advice is on our web site, [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com). Some highlights include:

- 1) **Use Positive Training Techniques** – The APDT recommends that you use training methods based on positive reinforcement and the latest scientific understandings of dog behavior. This will motivate your dog to choose to follow your commands, rather than doing them out of fear or avoidance. Teaching your dog with the enduring power of love, kindness and respect will create a deeper bond with your dog and family and will provide a profound example for all dog owners in the U.S. The APDT has provided an article on how to find a humane, professional trainer on the APDT’s web site at [http://www.apdt.com/po/ts/choose\\_trainer.aspx](http://www.apdt.com/po/ts/choose_trainer.aspx).
- 2) **Teach proper greeting behavior** - Since the “First Dog” will encounter many new people, places and things, socializing to a variety of people, places and experiences on a regular basis and pairing this with positive reinforcement will ensure that he will be a good “ambassador” for all dogs in the U.S.
- 3) **Involve the family and staff in training** – Dogs learn through consistency and repetition; everyone who encounters the dog should be “on the same page” as to how to greet him, what verbal commands and hand signals to use, and what behaviors to reinforce.
- 4) **Use games and play in training** – Using games can be a wonderful way, for children in particular, to train a dog to basic thru advanced obedience commands in a positive and fun atmosphere.
- 5) **Provide appropriate chew toys** – All dogs, particularly young and adolescent dogs, need to chew. If young dogs are not given proper chewing outlets, they will easily find the wrong ones!

Keep the White House furnishings secure by providing the “First Dog” with food-filled chew toys to exercise his mouth and his mind.

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The APDT is a professional educational organization of trainers who are committed to becoming better trainers through using positive, dog friendly methods based on sound scientific principles. With over 5,000 members worldwide, the APDT provides professional dog trainers with a respected and concerted voice. The APDT promotes caring relationships between dogs and people and works to increase public awareness of dog-friendly training techniques. For more information, visit the web site at [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com).