



Pet Partners
Touching Lives, Improving Health

Team Evaluator
Volunteer Orientation Package

Pet Partners
875 124th Avenue NE, Suite 101
Bellevue, WA 98005-2531

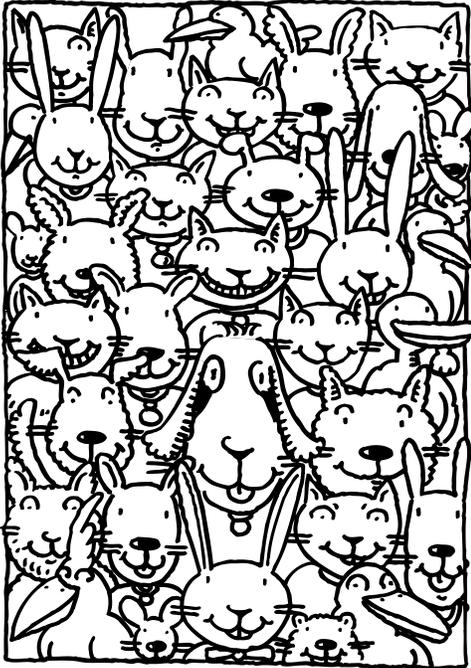
www.petpartners.org
petpartners@deltasociety.org



[New England Pet Partners Inc.](#)

P.O. Box 534
Pelham, NH 03076
603-635-3647
info@nepetpartners.org

Introduction and Welcome



The Pet Partner Teams thank you for volunteering to help with the Pet Partners® Team Evaluation.

The Evaluator running the test will meet with the volunteers before the test. Bring any questions you have about the information in this package or the test.

If you and your animal will be evaluated, make sure you have a safe place to keep the animal while you're volunteering.

This package is given to volunteers assisting with the Pet Partners Team Evaluation. Your comments are invited.

Overview of Tests

The Pet Partners Team Evaluation has two tests:

Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST)

Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT)

The tests are applied to and adapted for all animals.

The two-step process is important to make sure that the animal has the training necessary to ensure that they are controllable with the aptitude necessary to remain predictable and reliable in a variety of situations and settings. The handler must demonstrate social skills and aptitude for working with a variety of people too. In addition, these tests show the “team’s” ability to work well together in visiting animal programs professionally.

Pet Partners Skills Test (PPST)

The PPST makes sure the animal is manageable and the team possesses the basic skills required for AAA/T. Not every team can participate in AAA/T. For example, would you want dogs making visits in your hospital that pull on leash, bark or jump on people without explicit invitation from the handler?

This test is modeled after the American Kennel Club’s Canine Good Citizenship test, with modifications for visiting situations in a variety of environments and with different levels intensity.

Pet Partners Aptitude Test (PPAT)

The PPAT ensures the teams are:

- Reliable
- Predictable
- Inspire confidence with and connection to people being visited
- Suitable to the task (a good match between team, organization, client and level of intensity).

The PPAT also evaluates the handler’s comfort in working in various kinds of visiting situations. **Teamwork** is vital to successful AAA/T interactions.

The PPAT provides evaluators with information about the team’s aptitude for AAA/T. Not every animal wants to participate in AAA/T, regardless of how much the handler wants it too. Some are better one-on-one while others thrive with higher energy levels and activities.

Consistency

With all the different programs that certify teams, there must be consistency in how teams are evaluated to be Pet Partners. The Pet Partners evaluation is based on and consistent with *Pet Partner's Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy*.

Preparing for the Test

Processes and Procedures

The specific processes and procedures to be used for the test will be covered at a meeting before the test or before team evaluations. A sample Pet Partners® Team Evaluation Score Sheet has been included at the end of the document.

Policies

These are general policies to be aware of and follow:

- The testing of the animal/handler teams starts as they enter the test area and doesn't stop until they leave. Please observe and follow the guidance of your Licensed Team Evaluations.
- If, before or after a handler/animal team has been evaluated, you observe what you feel to be inappropriate or questionable behavior by that handler and/or animal, note which handler/animal and notify the Evaluator as soon as possible.
- The Team Evaluator and the persons s/he designates are responsible for the evaluation of animals for the Pet Partners Program. *The decisions of the Evaluators are final.*

Protecting Yourself, Other People, the Animal being Evaluated, and Other Animals

The processes, procedures, and policies followed during the evaluation provide a high level of protection for everyone involved in the test. This section identifies the steps the evaluator will take and what you can do to help maintain this level of protection.

Basic Precautions

Team Evaluators are trained and certified by Pet Partners and have extensive experience with dogs and other animals. They recognize signs of aggression and potential problems and may be able to prevent problems.

Before testing, the participants sign the necessary forms to release you and Pet Partners from liability.

If an animal or handler exhibits questionable reactions, don't take any chances. Notify the Evaluator.

- For example, some dog breeds may make low, rumbling noises as you pick up their paws or handle them. If you are uncomfortable, don't be intimidated by an owner who says, "He's talking to you."
- If an animal appears shy, aggressive, out of control, overly stressed or fearful, the animal will not be forced to continue the test. The test will be stopped and, as gracefully as possible, the Licensed Evaluator will inform the handler that more practice is needed.
- If a handler acts in an unprofessional or unkind way toward animals or people, notify the Evaluator. When in doubt, the Evaluator makes conservative decisions:

It is much better to make an error on the side of caution than to risk an accident during the test or later in a therapy visit. We are advocates for the animals being tested as much as the handler.

Pet Partners requires owners to present copies of rabies certificates and completion certificate for the Pet Partner's Team Handler's Course. For the safety of all animals and individuals involved in the testing, it is critical that owners show proof before taking the test.

Observing the Animal

The ability to notice the smallest behavioral nuance, discreet changes in posture or expression, and the ability to respond to these signals is the hallmark of safe versus risky evaluations, and adequate versus exceptional Evaluators. Begin to develop a mental checklist to ensure that you note:

- Postural signals/stance – e.g., how the ears and tail are held, where its center of balance is, how erect it is
- Response to sounds – e.g., ignores, startles and recovers, trembles
- Changes in activity level – e.g., high to mid to low
- Piloerection (i.e., hair standing on end) – e.g., which part of its coat is erect, if any
- Eye contact – e.g., avoids, staring, eyes closed, hard not soft
- Facial expression – e.g., tight vs. relaxed mouth, smiling, furrowed brow
- Verbalizations – e.g., whining, barking, sighing, growling (with the exception of growling, some vocalizations happen within the first few minutes of arrive. The team is given the opportunity to breathe and relax while the Evaluator checks paperwork. It should continue throughout the evaluation)

Other Characteristics to Note

- Age – e.g., geriatric, adolescent (it is at the discretion of the Evaluator to determine if a dog who is healthy, but challenged (missing limb, can't sit comfortably) to offer alternatives.
- Sexual status – e.g., intact, neutered/spayed (dogs must not be in heat)
- Health problems – e.g., chronic illness, level of pain, disabilities, managed illness
- Maturity level – e.g., well-socialized vs. not socialized

Postural Signals and Behavior

If an animal exhibits behaviors once or twice, do not assume the animal is stressed, afraid, etc. The animal should exhibit clusters of responses before you can be sure of the animal's condition. The majority of the characteristics that follow apply to dogs.

Certain postural signals or body language are associated with specific types of behavior. Vocalizations and facial expression (for animals that have this ability) add to the picture of specific behaviors. For example:

Aggression

- Erect hair (Piloerection)
- Deep growling or other low pitched or loud and consistent vocalizations
- Overall body tension
- Direct, fixed stare
- Erect, forward posture
- Tight mouth

Play

- Indirect eye contact
- Ears alert, moving or head moving

- Face alert
- Posture bouncing, head lowered, play bow, circular wagging tail
- High pitched vocalizations

Fear

- Body crouched or hunched, moving away (Distance Increasing Signals – DIS)
- Head down
- No eye contact
- High, singsong vocalizations

Behavior is Fluid and in Context

Behavior does not usually skip from aggression to play to fear and back. Behavior is fluid and postural signals or body language blends like a dance as the animal interacts with the changing environment. Many of these signals are subtle or seem to occur out of context.

Touching the Animal

When the animal is handled, its body communicates its feelings. A relaxed, soft and inviting body is desired. Animals that are tense, have a hard body, a clenched jaw, are trembling or freeze may not be appropriate for AAA/T. If the animal does not enjoy interaction, it would not be fair to the animal.

How to Approach an Animal

Socialization and Manners (SAM) applies to handler, animal, evaluators and volunteers. How you approach an animal (or human) is specific to their culture and species. Being aware of a variety of species and breed specific characters is helpful. At a minimum, follow these recommendations:

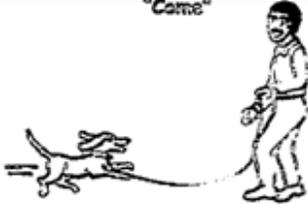
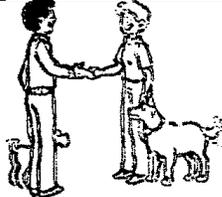
- Posture — Use a natural posture
- Tone of voice — Talk using a tender, singsong, friendly and natural tone of voice
- Angle of approach — Do not walk straight in to the animal. Whenever possible, approach at an angle, in a non-threatening way
- Movements and gestures — Do not use quick movements or stiff gestures
- Clothing — Do not wear dangling items. Wear neutral clothing and a minimum of jewelry, until you get to know this animal.

Volunteering at a Pet Partner's Team Evaluation is an opportunity to learn about a variety of people, cultures, animals and behaviors. Regardless of the amount of experience you have now, there is always room to learn more. If you have questions and/or observe behaviors that need clarification, refer to a Licensed Team Evaluator and/or an experienced volunteer. Do not approach a testing team with this information.

Thank you for making a difference!

Pet Partner's Team Evaluation - Part 1 – PPST Skills Exercises

❖ Indicates exercises used in evaluating **COMPLEX** area placement: must score a 2 for complex rating

<p>Exercise 1 Review Questionnaire, Health From and Certificate of PPHC Completion</p>	<p>Exercise 2 ❖ Accepting a Friendly Stranger</p>	<p>Exercise 3 Accepting Petting</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce assistant(s) • Review questionnaire, note age, stress signals Is there anything I need to know like sensitive spots on animals? Collect: toy, treat, brush • No treats on person? • Describe layout / procedure. • Okay to talk to dog, encourage • Advise Handler to function as they would on a visit, okay to ask for break or stop if they see stress • "Are you ready?" 	<p>Walk up –“Hi, it’s nice to meet you.” Shake Handler’s hand. Make eye contact, ask “what’s your dog/cat’s name?” Back off.</p> <p>**Animal may change position, but remain next to handler</p>	<p>Approach again and circle dog and Handler</p> <p>Pet head and body only</p> <p>**Animal may change position, but remain next to handler</p>
<p>Exercise 4 ❖ Appearance and Grooming</p>	<p>Exercise 5 ❖ Out for a Walk</p>	<p>Exercise 6 ❖ Walk Through a Crowd</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at eyes, ears, coat, nails • Pick up/hold each front foot • Comb/brush once **Animal may change position 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one right turn, one left turn, an about turn • One stop during walk, and one at end • Observe loose lead • Animal’s attention is on handler 	 <p>Assistants walk , mingle with no noise or distractions, Handler can change pace</p>
<p>Exercise 7 Reaction to Distractions</p>	<p>Exercise 8 Sit on Command</p>	<p>Exercise 9 Down on Command</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistants walk as in Exercise 6 • Introduce 2 distractions, one visual in front of animal, one auditory behind animal • Distractions are 10 feet from animal • Crowd may mingle 	<p>Handler can use verbal and/or hand signal to ask dog to sit. Wait s for evaluators’ cue to release Evaluator cues release after no more than 3 seconds</p> <p>Dog may be in front or to side of handler</p>	<p>Handler can use verbal and/or hand signal to ask dog to down. Waits for evaluator’s cue to release Evaluator cues release after no more than 3 seconds</p> <p>Dog may be in front or to side of handler</p>
<p>Exercise 10 ❖ Stay in Place</p>	<p>Exercise 11 Come When Called</p>	
<p>Handler replaces short leash with long one Leaves dog in sit, down or stand Handler cues dog to stay Handler walks 10 feet away Handler pauses 3 seconds and returns</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long line is still attached • Evaluator distracts dog by petting • Evaluator cues Handler to call dog • Reattach leash 	
<p>Exercise 12 Reaction to Neutral Dog</p>		 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant and Handler stop at arm’s length • Pleasantries • 10 second pause • Dog may not cross midline of handler

Not Ready Overall - if NR is checked in any Part 1 exercise - Note observations.

- **Clusters** of displacement signs
- Eliminates inside test facility, before or during evaluation
- Mouthing / licking
- Vocalizing excessively
- Jumping up

Pet Partners Program Team Evaluation - Part 2 – PPAT Aptitude Exercises

(NR overall - if NR in Part 2 Exercises A, B or C)

❖ Indicates exercises used in evaluating COMPLEX area placement		
<p>Exercise A Overall Examination</p>	<p>Exercise B ❖ Exuberant and Clumsy Petting</p>	<p>Exercise C ❖ Restraining Hug <i>Hand through collar</i></p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator exposes dog to physical handling to assess animal's reaction • Stroke, poke, palpate squeeze, etc. • Eye contact 	<p>Evaluator simulates handling/petting by someone with limited mobility, poor motor skills Use high pitched voice Vowel sounds Clumsy handling</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye contact • Restraining hug by holding against chest • 15 sec.
<p>Teams are allowed to have 2 "Not Ready (NR) marks in PPAT exercises D through I</p>		
<p>Exercise D Staggering, Gesturing</p>	<p>Exercise E Angry yelling</p>	<p>Exercise F Bumped From Behind</p>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant staggers, moans until 6 ft from team, stop • Assistant calls animal • Continue interacting thru Exercise E 	<p>2 assistants begin yelling as they come alongside the team Yelling is not directed toward animal No closer than 6 feet Assistants stop yelling, become neutral and then one assistant calls animal to see if it will approach</p>	<p>Evaluator bumps the dog with leg or ankle</p>
<p>Exercise G ❖ Crowded and Petting</p>	<p>Exercise H Leave It</p>	<p>Exercise I Offer Treat</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 assistants will approach one-at-a time, one assistant using health care equipment. • All attempt to gain animal's attention • Continue to interact • Assistants can "up" the interaction if dog is in control and enjoying 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toy on same side as animal • Start 10 feet from toy, walk 10 feet after • 18 – 24 inches • Sniffing acceptable 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say you want to give a treat, handler should direct evaluator how to proceed • Handler's option to have animal take treat or not
<p>Exercise J Overall Assessment</p>	<p>The team should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be reliable • Be predictable • Be controllable <p>Does the animal "inspire" confidence in the person with whom it is interacting?</p>	<p>Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipates, maintains control <input type="checkbox"/> Reassures <input type="checkbox"/> Confident, relaxed <input type="checkbox"/> Halter or head halter use <p>If tested while carried, must be carried while visiting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halter • Must be carried • Small Dog
<p>Is the handler proactive or reactive?</p> <p>NR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive • Inactive • Repetitive commands • Stressed 		