

## Why Hire a Professional Dog Trainer?

With the plethora of options available to us, finding the right dog trainer can almost feel like searching for a needle in a haystack. From self-proclaimed “experts” to one-on-one private consults vs group classes or online coaching, the choices can sometimes feel overwhelming. Let’s dive into the key reasons why working with a personal dog trainer has a much stronger and more positive impact on your dog. We also touch base on the essential qualifications to keep in mind when searching for a dog trainer. Together, we’ll help you make a more informed decision that will help better the well-being of your dog.

As you evaluate options, keep in mind that the dog training industry is unregulated. Anyone with or without a specific canine education can give out any type of advice. You can find endless advice online, allowing more space for the possibility of being inhumane, unethical, and unsafe. When seeking a dog trainer, be wary of these red flags:

- Vocabulary such as: "Balanced", "Alpha", "Dominance", "Corrections", "Pack"
- Use of aversive equipment or techniques such as choke chains, shock collars (sometimes referred to as "E-collars"), prong collars, spray bottles, throwing discs
- Anyone that says "We do not use treats"
- Secretive or does not disclose training techniques and methods used
- Guaranteeing results, especially if they indicate they’ll fix it "where others have failed"
- Pictures on the trainer's website that include dogs with stressed body language or dogs that are wearing aversive equipment such as shock, choke, or prong collars

One of the stand out benefits to in-person coaching is the personalized attention you and your dog will receive. Working with a dog trainer in person allows them to assess your dog's unique needs and behaviors in real time. Dogs learn through consistency and the timely reinforcement or interruption of behavior is essential for effective learning. A physical presence allows trainers to provide hands-on guidance, demonstrate techniques and assist owners in executing them correctly. You will benefit from immediate feedback, which will in turn foster better communication between you and your dog. Working alongside a professional trainer will allow individual lessons to occur at your pace and help facilitate additional questions you may have that may be unrelated to your original goal.

There are additional advantages to having the dog trainer collaborate with a dog daycare facility, such as ours. This scenario enables you to foster a well-rounded environment for your dog by combining structured training sessions with socialization opportunities. At Fur Get Me Not, we offer “On Demand” training services that work hand in hand with daycare. While attending dog daycare, a trainer will retrieve your dog from the group and work with them privately one on one. Or if the behavior is related specifically to playgroup behaviors, the trainer can work with your dog while they are in group. If the daycare environment isn’t a good fit for your dog, the same On Demand approach can take place at your home. Similar to how our trainers work with our daycare team on-site, our training team can work with our dog walkers at your home to ensure a management plan is executed consistently.

On Demand training is a unique, flexible alternative where the trainer works directly with your dog which is different from private dog training where the focus is on the trainer teaching you skills to train your own dog and provide feedback as you do.

A group class can afford the same purpose, allowing you to learn and practice skills while obtaining feedback in real time from the trainer teaching the course. When choosing a group class, take note of how many students are enrolled in the class and how many instructors have credentials vs those learning on the job. A good rule of thumb is 1:6 ratio of trainer to dogs. At Fur-Get Me Not, our standard class size is typically 6 dogs. Our classes are only taught by lead instructors (with certifications) in addition to an assistant and possibly a third person that may be apprenticing and shadowing our lead trainer for learning purposes. It is also a good idea to ask questions about the space where the group class will meet.

- Is there enough room for the students?
- How are the trainers able to leverage the space to allow dogs who may be distracted to also participate?
- Does the space give back-up plans to ensure all students can have a positive learning environment?

The role of an dog trainer can not be beat! A skilled professional dog trainer will provide personalized guidance, tailored strategies, and real time feedback that is crucial to fostering a strong relationship between you and your dog.

So what are all those initials after a dog trainer's name and what do they mean? There are many **schools** that teach people how to become a dog trainer, there are **organizations** that dog trainers can join as a member, and there are independent organizations that offer **standardized testing** of dog trainers in order to determine if the trainer has met the standard of the profession and is qualified to teach animals. It is important to distinguish between a school (or class) a dog trainer completed vs industry accepted certifications that demonstrate proficiency. Attaining a certification requires hands-on experience along with understanding learning theory concepts.

Below are a list of abbreviated titles we recommend:

- CPDT-KA
- CPDT-KSA
- CBCC-KA
- IAABC CDBC
- IAABC ADBC
- KPA CTP
- IACP-CDT
- IACP-CDTA
- CAAB
- CATCH
- COAPE
- CBATI
- CCUI



- VSPDT
- PPG/PPAB
- Fear Free
- IAABC
- CTC

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of assessing the credentials of any professional dog trainer for whom you wish to work with. Ultimately you are investing in their background education, their knowledge of value-added resources that will aid in your training goals, and their proven history of experience working with dogs and their parents.

At Fur-Get Me Not we have several certified professional dog trainers ready and eager to help you with anything from puppy manners and socialization to reactive and anxiety related behaviors. If you have any questions or are unsure where to start, [drop us an email](#) and we'd be happy to help!