

Agility Foundation Class

The purpose of the Agility Foundation Skills class is to provide young and inexperienced dogs a positive introduction to agility. Here, teams are introduced to the “Canine Capers 5Fs” for beginning agility teams. Fundamentals, Flatwork, Focus, Foundation and Fun! These skills are the foundation upon which agility teams are built. The goal of this class is to prepare teams for a future in agility by helping them:

Develop a strong bond

Engage the dog in the learning process and provide it with the tools it needs for agility training

Introduce beginning obstacle skills

For the purpose of this class the 5Fs are defined as follows:

Fundamentals – Fundamentals are the basics used in agility training exercises. They include basic agility training “tools” such as the collar grab, “Get it, bring it, leave it”, tug, target and basic obedience skills such as sit, down and stay.

Flatwork – Flatwork exercises teach the dog the beginning of handling cues. This includes learning where to be in relationship to the handler and beginning to recognize indicators for turns/crosses.

Focus – Focus exercises teach the dog impulse control and drive, as well as to focus on obstacles and ignore distractions.

Foundation – Foundation exercises teach skills used for future obstacle work. These include body awareness exercises, contact position work (such as 2 on 2 off) and the introduction to agility equipment such as tunnels, the chute, the pause table and jumps.

Fun! – The skills covered in this class should be presented in a manner to engage the dog in play. All exercises should be perceived by the dog as a fun adventure. Corrections are not necessary at this point in the dog’s learning process. Handlers should focus on the positive marking of the desired behavior in order to help the dog learn what is expected of it. This should be a lot of fun for both you and your dog!

Class Requirements: Dogs must be at least 4 months old.

Class Expectations: Students should expect to spend no less than two sessions (16 weeks) in the Agility Foundation Skills class. Skills reviewed in class must be practiced at home.

What Students Should Bring to Class: A variety of soft food treats and toys, a clicker, a crate, a towel or mat, water and a hungry dog.

Skills Required for Advancement:

Teams must be happily, confidently and consistently performing the foundation drills before they can advance to the Agility Obstacle Skills class. They must be familiar and comfortable with the following.

Agility fundamentals - Clicker, collar grab, touch, tug, target and basic obedience skills. A steady stay/wait is required.

Flatwork skills – Reward zone, recall to heel, controlled walking, turns on the flat and sends, both forward and lateral.

Focus skills – Obstacle focus, drive and impulse control.

Foundation skills – 2 on/2 off position, tippy board, long board, 2x2 weave entries, chutes, tunnels, jump stanchions, etc.

Dogs must also be at least 12 months old to be promoted to the Agility Obstacle Skills class.