

## PUPPY RAISING TOY POLICY

### Guide Dogs for the Blind

Toys are an important part of a puppy's development. Appropriate toys provide mental stimulation, an outlet for normal chewing drive, and provide a positive alternative to destructive chewing of personal property.

A stimulating variety of toys keeps the puppy occupied. Puppies, like children, become bored with the same toys; it is highly recommended that types of toys are rotated frequently. Puppies should have a number of toys to choose from at all times; not only does this help keep the pup engaged but also reduces the chances of him ultimately becoming protective of his toys.

Not all toys currently on the market are safe for the ages, size or breeds of puppies in our program. In addition, some toys and activities are counterproductive to developing a working guide. Remember, a guide must willingly work past common distractions such as balls, Frisbees or other toys encountered in everyday life.

Toys can be an effective tool in reducing attention seeking behaviors such as 'keep away'. Puppies pick up unacceptable items and 'parade' them to get raisers' attention; praising and admiring the pup that parades his toys will make him less likely to steal household items. A pup that brings his toys to the raiser is to be encouraged, but under no circumstances should raisers throw toys for a pup or participate in retrieve games.

Even the best toys experience normal wear and tear. Toys should be routinely checked for any damage, splintering or wear. Special attention should be paid to ensure the toy has not become worn to the point of becoming too small, thus posing a choking or ingesting hazard. Some dogs are voracious chewers and will destroy even the strongest, safest toys. Observe your puppy and use toys with caution with strong chewers.

In special circumstances CFRs may recommend a food stuffed Kong. *Only the CFR, may recommend food in a toy.* Soaked kibble, frozen in the Kong is the only allowed food.

The toys in the list below have been carefully researched by GDB staff; *these are the only toys that may be accessed by a program puppy.* Be sure to stay with the brand names listed below as not all toys are of good quality material.

#### List of Approved Toys:

General use toys (these toys can be left readily available for a pup to play with at will):

- Kong brand: black original and Ultra Kong 6" Black Kongs are stronger than red ones. Only the original Kong shape is approved; no balls, Frisbees, chews etc.
- Galileo 5" or 6" by Nylabone, also now packaged as 'Dino Bones'
- Nylabone products: Nyla Wishbone, Nyla Ring, Nyla Knot, Dinosaur, any Nylabone (original hard material) that is appropriately robust enough for the size of puppy. The products will be packaged as "BIG Chews", Dura Chews and Dental Chews. Note: No chew products with any sort of rubber/plastic/fabric are approved.
- Sterilized Bones: at least 4" long (No smoked or meaty bones)
- Goughnuts ring or stick; green for most puppies and black for extremely hard chewers

With Supervision only:

- Rubber ring and rubber Figure 8 tug toy
- Combat Extreme Bone by Bamboo Pet – tug toy
- Knotted rope toys: large, with no attachments
- Jollyball (no handle) with a rope through the middle, sold as Romp-N-Roll. Toss 'n' Floss is a similar large ball with rope through it, also approved.
- Gallon sized or larger plastic bottles: Thoroughly rinsed, lids labels and tops removed (**sturdy** plastic orange juice or detergent bottles only)

Tug toys should be put up, away from the puppy, after the game to maintain a balanced relationship. All of the above toys may be used as interactive toys. Puppies must be directly observed while playing with any of the above toys as there is a possibility that they may shred and ingest these toys.

Restricted, for young puppies only (up to 4 months):

- Flexi Chew products and Dental Chew products by Nylabone (not any with fabric/rubber/plastic as part of the toy)
- Flat, unstuffed faux fleece toys: no squeakers
- Nylabone products labeled "Puppy Chews" are **not** approved due to the variation in durability; these include the keys, pacifier and rings.

Unacceptable toys:

- Edible toys: cornstarch bones, rawhide chews/toys, pigs ears, cow hooves
- Balls
- Frisbees
- Retrieving toys
- Raw bones
- Sticks
- Personal items: socks, children's toys etc.
- Anything not on the approved list

# PUPPY RAISING PLAY POLICY

## Guide Dogs for the Blind

### Acceptable Types of Play

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- Tug games with one person or hide-and-seek games with two people (See game procedures in *3: Caring for your puppy* section. Please use the proper methods of playing these games).
- "Hanging out" together
- Stroking the puppy
- Placing a Nylabone or Kong on the floor for limited periods of chewing
- Supervised gentle play outside with other dogs
- Supervised swimming within a fenced area or on leash
- Walks on leash

### Unacceptable Types of Play

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- Retrieving or fetch with any kind of toy or object -- anytime or anywhere
- Pushing, shoving, wrestling or any form of rough-housing
- Keep away, tag or other forms of chase games
- Tug games with other pets
- Rough play with other pets
- Running through the house
- Swinging your puppy off the ground while playing tug games (helicopter dog)
- Play that includes growling with hackling (lifting of hair along the backbone and shoulders)