

Getting Started with Match-Up II® Behavior Evaluation Checklist

Getting Started

When to do the evaluation

The evaluation should be conducted at each of the following times: 2 to 3 days after a dog enters the shelter, each month the dog remains in the shelter, any time there are significant changes in a dog's behavior, and whenever a dog is returned to the shelter by an adopter. The evaluation can be delayed by a week or more if the dog appears particularly stressed or fearful. When dogs show signs of significant stress on the evaluation (frequent panting, yawning, failure to engage with evaluators, lack of interest in food or pig's ear, etc.), the test should be discontinued and the dog re-evaluated in 3 to 4 days. If the dog seems to acclimate to the shelter in less than 2 days (in other words, shows no signs of stress), the evaluation can be performed earlier. The evaluation should be done at a standardized time relative to feeding schedule, preferably after the dog receives the first meal of the day and at least 1 hour after feeding.

It is recommended that the dog is at least four months old before conducting the evaluation.

Where to do the evaluation

The behavior evaluation should be conducted in a quiet area, at least 8 feet by 8 feet. (The run and freeze sub-test requires at least 10 feet. This can be done in another location or outside if necessary). The room should be as free as possible from equipment or food that will interrupt or distract the dog.

People needed to do the evaluation

The Match-Up II Behavior Evaluation requires at least two people – a HANDLER and a RECORDER. The HANDLER performs the initial parts of the test (obedience, handling, response to toys, run and freeze, food and possession aggression), and holds the leash during the toddler doll, stranger, and dog introduction sub-tests. The RECORDER is responsible for recording the dog's behavior on the evaluation form. The RECORDER also carries and manipulates the toddler doll, acts as the stranger, and holds the leash of the other dog during the dog-to-dog interaction sub-test. If a third person is available, that person can replace the RECORDER to manipulate the toddler doll, act as the 'stranger,' and hold the other dog during the dog-to-dog interaction sub-test.

The presence of two evaluators enables a more accurate recording of behaviors as one person, due to their position, may be unable to see some behaviors. The presence of two people also enables the detection of potentially dangerous behaviors so that the evaluators can either choose to discontinue a sub-test or the entire evaluation, making Match-Up II safer. Volunteers can easily be trained to be a recorder or handler if staff members are not available.

Things you need to do the evaluation

- Dog's intake (behavioral history information if available)
- Notes on dog's behavior observations in the shelter
- A quiet room, at least 8 feet by 8 feet. (The run and freeze sub-test requires at least 10 feet. This can be done outdoors if necessary)
- Dog should wear flat collar or martingale-style collar
- Leash about 6 feet in length
- Ordinary treats (semi-moist treats, e.g., jerky)
- More delicious higher value treats if needed (e.g. cheese or hot dogs)
- Canned dog food
- Dried pig's ear
- Food bowl
- Rubber hand on a stick (may be ordered on websites such as amazon.com under the 'Halloween' or 'Gags' or search for terms such as "'Suprising arm."); Connect arm to a 4' wooden broom stick which extends to the middle finger of the arm.
- Non-slippery mat approximately 3' x 4'
- Lifelike doll approximately 3' high (e.g., My Size Barbie™, Wispy Walker, Patti Paypal)
- Knee-length rain/trench coat
- Sunglasses
- Hat with a brim, longer than 3", but not longer than 6"
- Cane
- Tennis ball
- Plush squeaky toy
- Tug rope
- A computer with internet access or MUII printed worksheets