

The Role of the Human in Raising a Just Behaving Puppy: A Parental Guide

Your Role as a Parent, Not a Friend

Raising a Golden Retriever puppy in the Just Behaving philosophy means stepping into the role of a parent - a calm, structured guide - not an entertainer, playmate, or source of constant praise. In the natural world, whether among mammals, birds, or even fish, young are raised through correction, structure, and observation, not indulgence and excitement.

Puppies thrive when they are given boundaries, leadership, and mental space to develop. Your responsibility is to prevent unwanted behaviors from arising and immediately correct them when they do, ensuring that your puppy matures into a well-mannered, emotionally stable, and adaptable companion.

This document will provide a detailed, step-by-step guide on how to take on the role of a parental figure in your puppy's life, ensuring they "just behave" naturally - without the need for excessive training, treats, or force.

1. Prevention First: Never Ask for Unwanted Behaviors

The best way to handle problem behaviors is to never allow them to develop in the first place. Most behavioral issues - jumping, mouth play, excessive barking, neediness - are human-created because they are unknowingly encouraged or tolerated in puppyhood.

Your Role as a Parent in Prevention:

1. Never Encourage a Behavior You Don't Want as an Adult Dog

- If you play wrestle with a puppy, they will bite hands as an adult.
- If you allow a puppy to jump for attention, they will continue doing so when they weigh 70 lbs.
- If you allow a puppy to bark for food, they will believe this is how to communicate.

2. Set Boundaries Early and Always Enforce Them

- Do not let a puppy enter certain areas of the house unless invited.
- Do not allow free access to furniture or laps - these are privileges.
- Do not respond to whining, barking, or pawing for attention.

3. Do Not Ask for Unwanted Behaviors

- Do not engage in excited, high-energy play.
- Do not roughhouse or encourage hyperactivity.
- Do not provide constant attention - this creates dependence.

If the puppy does not learn a behavior exists, they will not try it. This prevention-first approach is the key to raising a dog that naturally behaves without needing constant correction later.

2. Immediate Correction, Not Ignoring

Many modern training methods suggest ignoring bad behavior and only rewarding good behavior. This is not how any mammal raises their young, nor how a puppy would learn from its mother or an adult dog.

In nature, unwanted behaviors are immediately confronted and corrected so they do not become habits.

Your Role in Correction:

- Correction must be immediate and calm - a puppy should feel the shift in energy but not fear.
- Corrections should be meaningful but not overly emotional - no yelling, chasing, or frustration.
- Physical and spatial corrections are natural - mothers use body pressure, movement, and gentle restraint.

Common Unwanted Behaviors & How to Correct Them:

Behavior	Correction	Prevention Strategy
Jumping on people	Immediately step into their space, use body pressure to move them back, and do not give attention. No touching, no speaking - just firm presence.	Do not allow excited greetings. Ignore until calm.
Mouthing/Biting	A firm, immediate stop - hold their mouth closed gently and say "no." Then disengage and ignore.	Do not engage in games that involve their mouth (e.g., wrestling, tug-of-war).

Demand Barking	Correct immediately with a firm “quiet” and a presence shift (walk into them, make them step back).	Never reward barking with attention, food, or action.
Pulling on Leash	Stop moving instantly. Do not allow progress forward until they are beside you.	Walk calmly, never in an excited state. Never let them lead.
Over-Excitement Around Guests	Keep the puppy behind a barrier, crate, or on a leash until they are calm. Only allow interaction when they are still.	Do not allow guests to excite the puppy.

Ignoring bad behavior does not teach a puppy what is correct. Correction is teaching.

3. Nurturing Through Peace, Not Play

Puppies do not need excessive play or entertainment. In fact, too much play creates over-arousal, impatience, and an inability to self-regulate.

Nurturing a puppy does not come from exciting them, but from providing calmness.

How to Nurture Your Puppy Correctly:

- Give them time to observe rather than always participate.
- Allow them to self-regulate rather than stimulating them.
- Encourage calmness through gentle, quiet presence rather than exciting interaction.
- Reward stillness, patience, and relaxation with companionship.

A puppy raised in a peaceful environment will naturally grow into a calm, stable dog.

4. Mental Space & Problem-Solving: Let Them Figure It Out

A key mistake many owners make is over-managing their puppies, preventing them from learning through natural problem-solving.

Your Role as an Observer, Not an Entertainer:

- **Resist the urge to intervene immediately.**
 - If a puppy is struggling to find a way out of a situation, let them try for a moment before assisting.

- If they hesitate at a new experience, let them work through it instead of pulling them along.
- **Teach them to process, not react.**
 - If they are startled, pause - do not immediately comfort. Let them observe and recover naturally.
 - If they encounter something new, allow them to examine it rather than rushing them past.

Puppies who learn to process and problem-solve on their own become confident, adaptable adult dogs.

5. Observation Over Participation

A mother dog does not entertain or overly engage with her puppies - she watches, provides structure, and steps in only when needed.

Your Role in Raising a Self-Sufficient Puppy:

- **Watch more than you engage.**
 - Let them explore without constant interaction.
 - Do not react to every small whine, movement, or look.
- **Provide guidance, not over-involvement.**
 - When correction is needed, do it swiftly and move on.
 - Allow them to learn through natural experiences rather than constant direction.

A dog that learns to follow their human's lead, not demand engagement, is a stable and respectful companion.

6. The Just Behaving Puppy: A Summary

Raising a Just Behaving Golden Retriever is not about constant training - it is about correct parental leadership.

Key Principles to Follow:

- ✓ **Prevent behaviors you don't want.**
- ✓ **Correct immediately when needed.**
- ✓ **Nurture through calmness, not play.**

✓ **Give them mental space to process and learn.**

✓ **Observe and guide rather than entertain.**

By embracing this natural, structured approach, your puppy will mature into a naturally well-mannered, confident, and well-adjusted adult dog - without treats, excessive play, or artificial training methods.

Just Behaving isn't just a name - it's a philosophy for raising the perfect family companion.