

**Reinforcing Offered Attention & Playing the "Name Game:"**

Work on reinforcing your dog (say "Yes!" feed them a treat) anytime they turn to look at you and "check in" while walking. Marking (saying "Yes!") and feeding for auto check-ins should be done as often as possible to "capture" and reward this behavior so that your dog is "mentally connected" to you, not just physically restrained by the leash or long line.

**\*\*\* [Video example](#) of me reinforcing check-ins and offered focus on a long line walk with my 6 month old puppy Ben:**

You can also prompt your dog to turn and offer attention by saying their name once with some inflection." If you say your dog's name and they turn towards you, mark (by saying "Yes!") and then feed them a treat or several. If they remain distracted/ don't look when you say their name, put the food in front of their nose and still feed them as you turn their head towards you with the treat. Then back up/ add a bit of distance between your dog and whatever trigger/ distraction has their attention to set them up for success; you want to work at the threshold where your dog is capable of turning away from the distraction and looking at you for a treat when prompted with their name.

**\*\*\* [Video example](#) of teaching a dog to offer attention when they hear their name from "FACT Academy" dog training**

**\*\*\* [Video tutorial](#) from trainer Donna Hill on shaping check-ins and offered focus using a clicker**

We want to build a solid reinforcement history of your dog checking in with you so you are more "relevant" to them when they are on leash. The goal is that your dog is mentally connected with you, not just being physically restrained by the leash. Once we have this foundation established, it will be easier to start to work through strategies to reduce your dog's arousal level and excitement around new distractions (people, dogs, cats, squirrels, cars, etc).

