

Applying Temperament Evaluation Scoring To Adoption Placement

Temperament testing gives us a picture of a puppy/dog's emotional view of the world. Some of what we see is genetic and some of it is learned. Some of it can be modified with positive reinforcement training, some of it will always require management. How puppies/dogs score is critical to successful client matchmaking. We want both humans and dogs to be successful – the temperament testing gives us an objective method put puppies/dogs into 3 basic categories. Some puppies/dogs will sit between categories. Usually this means the puppy/dog has some good behaviors and some less easy to live with behaviors, which can be modified with smart management and positive training. But the categories definitely tell us what kind of home environment and training commitment will be needed for this puppy/dog to be successful.

A&B puppies/dogs

“Make it worth my while”

Puppies or dogs with these scores will be assertive, mouthy, and pushy and will need an experienced dog savvy home. A trainer would be best. If mixed with at least 3 or more C's then they will probably be fine in previous dog homes.

If adopters commit to using positive reinforcement & excellent management they turn many of these dogs into successful companions.

***NOTE:** If this A/B puppy's confidence includes being antisocial (not caring how other dogs or people react to them), then this puppy will likely grow to be dangerous. This puppy would very likely be killed by it's pack members in the wild.*

This puppy/dog “wants what he wants when he wants it”. This puppy/dog will take charge whenever given the opportunity - often pushy, obnoxious with no use for humans unless they have something the dog wants. **For this puppy/dog to succeed he will need training to learn to work cooperatively with people.** Needs lots of management, training time, and exercise. This puppy/dog is likely to push younger children around. Will be very destructive if left alone. This is a high maintenance dog.

Mostly A&B scores: adults and 12 up kids- Jumpy/mouthy, will be destructive if left alone. Able to learn and like working with humans who make it worth their while. Adopters must be willing to take training classes (and/or agility). Will need good management till 2-3 years old while learning self-control.

Mostly B&C scores: adults and 6 up kids- May be active, busy, a little mouthy/jumpy, but looking to kids and adults to be petted. Pesky, but wants to be with people. Will take about a year of good management and training and will become an easy to care for dog.

C puppies/dogs

“Whatever you want me to do”

The “whatever you want me to do” dog accepts human leadership naturally. This is the easiest dog to train and to live with. This dog should be successful with children of all ages. This is a low maintenance dog. Puppies with 3 or more C's will fit nicely into most homes.

These are puppies who can live in any situations including children under 5 years old. These dogs have sweet manners. They come readily to all people for attention – they like being touched, but don't get over stimulated. They follow people around, sleep at their feet, and rest comfortably wherever they are. They have self-control and are easily trained. Some of these puppies/dogs may seem “soft” but are not submissive or fearful, they are just letting you know people are in charge.

D & E puppies/dogs

“Lions & tigers & bears, oh no!!”

Fearful puppies/dogs are either extremely shut down/ submissive or fear biters

Fearful puppies, adolescent or adult dogs with fear issues are either:

- Fearfully submissive/shut down and often unresponsive to reinforcement so they are really difficult to retrain
- Fearfully aggressive. Again the fear may be so strong that the dog has no reinforcers that can be used to change their emotional point of view. Sharp/shy dogs are very unpredictable and require 100% management for their whole life.

These dogs can not be placed with children. If these dogs/puppies are placed it should be as a foster to adopt situation with lots of training and behavioral support

When you see a few C and more D's then try to retest within a week to see if it's just socialization. The puppy will generally move one way or another.

Fearfully submissive behavior can be modified to some degree. It is most successfully modified in puppies. The older the dog the more difficult fear behavior is to change.

Puppies with 3 or more E's: Very, very shy – need lots of socialization & and easy hand. These puppies will not thrive in a loud, lively family home. Need a quiet home where he doesn't have to warm up to everyone.

Puppies with 3 or more D's & E's: are on the shyer side & will need TLC and a quiet home with folks willing to spend extra time socializing the puppy. This dog may never like everyone.

Adolescent or adult dogs with D's & E's: Quiet homes, no children. These dogs did not learn to feel safe with people as puppies and will take a tremendous amount of effort to make them less fearful. If they are sharp/shy they will require 100% management for their lifetime.

(Ganley/Lyon 2004)