

# UNDERSTANDING STRESS SIGNALS

'Calming signals' is a term coined by Norwegian dog trainer Turid Rugaas to group a large number of behaviour patterns that she says dogs use to avoid conflict, to prevent aggression, to calm other dogs down and to communicate information to other dogs and people.

Calming Signals are meant to clearly communicate meaning- When it comes to understanding our puppies it's really important that we learn to interpret the rich tapestry of visual signals our puppies display depending on how they're feeling. As they can't speak to us in human language we need to interpret the signals they are giving to be able to keep them safe and happy. It's important to look at your puppy as a whole, rather than focus on one specific aspect though as no single behaviour is a perfect barometer of how they are feeling.

As a new puppy parent, it's important to know and recognise calming signals in your puppy. Recognising a calming signal is the best way to help de-escalate a situation for your puppy before they become even more uncomfortable.

A Puppy uses calming signals to say "I'm stressed out, can we go now?"

Calming signals are meant to clearly communicate meaning; unfortunately some parents miss their puppy's cry for help until it escalates into something more vocal. Some signals can serve as a stress release, such as the shake off.

## EXAMPLES OF CALMING SIGNALS

- Lip Licking
- Shake off
- Paw lift
- Stretching
- Look Away
- Pacing
- Sniffing
- Scratching
- Big Yawn
- Blinking
- Lowering tail
- Sneezing

ALL DOGS SHOULD HAVE A SAFE PLACE, A PLACE THEY CAN GO TO WHEN THEY WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.

