

# Better Together Guide

## The McCann Method



### Column A Enrichments

Enrichments from this section are things that will enhance our relationships with our dogs. They are used to either teach something or enjoy time together. Use of enrichments from this column can be unlimited as they benefit our training, our relationship and they will tire your dog both mentally and physically.

**Shaping Games\*\*** - shaping is our game of hot and cold. Our dogs learn to GUESS at what we want and build on success with hints of 'hot (right = reward)' and 'cold (wrong = no reward)'. The mutual benefit of shaping is huge! Dogs learn to read you and work for you through shaping.

**Trick Training\*\*** - Tricks are great fun to train! In addition to stimulating your dog's brain, they aid in opening up the lines of communication with our dogs.

**Skill Training\*\*** - Teaching your dog any skill will help to open that window and let understanding and communication flood in. Training skills not only enriches your dog mentally, but it helps to build understanding of our expectations.

\*\* We've Got a Workshop for That!  
Visit: <https://mccanndogs.link/Workshops>

**Tug Games** - Tug is a GREAT way of establishing good manners in play, good bite inhibition and it's a GREAT reward to have for other activities. Playing tug will help you to establish a good on and off switch. I always have a few consistent rules in place, like starting and ending the game on my cue and absolutely NO snatching or grabbing at the toy until I've started the game.

**Retrieving Games** - This is a great way to interact with your dog. Some dogs are great natural retrievers. For those dogs, you become the outlet for that great fun game they love. You = Fun! That will enhance your relationship and make your dog look to you for that joy. Dogs who are not natural retrievers will learn to love the game as well and you'll have the added benefit of enhancing your communication skills by teaching the retrieve.

**Mutual Play** - any kind of play that is mutually enjoyable by you both is TOP of the list for enhancing relationship. Shared games and play are an excellent way to enjoy your dog and to increase your worth in their eyes. Even better is that it will do the same for you!

**Scenting Games** - scenting games played right will have your dog using their nose to work for you in no time! Teaching your dog to scent does not take a lot of time commitment. It will pay off much more than the effort that's needed to teach it. It's also an AMAZINGLY efficient way of tiring our dogs out mentally and physically. Teach your dog to search for a scent and when they locate it, the reward for finding it should come from you.

### Column B Enrichments

Enrichments from this section should be used sparingly unless there is a specific purpose related to learning or behaviour rehabilitation. Used too much as 'entertainment', these types of enrichments can actually damage your relationship as they leave you out of the equation and they teach your dog to seek reinforcement and fulfillment for their needs from external sources.

**Snuffle Mat** - A snuffle mat is not without its purpose. It can be used to slow down a dog who inhales their food. It can be used to teach a dog to use their nose efficiently. It can be used to excite your dog's seeking system and build confidence. In everyday situations, this can be used in conjunction with other enrichments games, but it will not aid your relationship or provide any training value for your average dog.

**Ball Pits and similar** - Ball pits can be good confidence builders for some dogs. For others, they are just fun! There's nothing wrong with visiting Disney World and having a party, but living there is not realistic. Think of these types of enrichment as the 'vacation reward' for working hard at the rest of life! Outside of a few specific applications or occasions, this type of enrichment will work against your relationship with your dog as it teaches your dog to look elsewhere for their fun and reinforcement

**Daycare** - Dog Daycare is a very modern invention. We lived without this for a very long time and we can continue to do so. If you choose to use a daycare, pick one that provides your dog with structure through the day. We've written extensively about what to look for in staff, facility, price and methodologies here: <https://mccanndogs.com/blog-page/274-how-to-pick-a-doggie-daycare>. Dogs who spend their days at traditional daycare with free-for-all dog play all day long are typically hyperactive about every dog they see and they lack the ability to focus on anything else. That's because so many of their needs are met through play with other dogs. This leave you carrying the leash and not part of the equation.

**Dog Parks** - for all of the reasons that daycare should be used with caution PLUS a whole bunch of other caveats about health, welfare and aggression. This is another topic we've discussed at length and we don't advocate the traditional use of. Read more about why here: <https://mccanndogs.com/blog-page/211-the-truth-about-dog-parks>



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