

# MLP PUPPY APTITUDE EVAL PROTOCOL



MY LUXE PUPS  
mini bernese mountain dogs

ITEMS REQUIRED	10 STEP PUPPY HANDLING EXERCISES
1. An object that makes a sudden, unpredictable movement (i.e. umbrella)	Rub on and tug ears
2. Tug Toys	Cover eyes
3. A ball or two that the puppy and cannot swallow	Open mouth and run fingers on gums
4. A popper or other method to make a sound that is not common in their daily curriculum	Rub belly in circular motions
5. An obstacle or two (i.e. wobble board, wobble cushion, tunnel, box etc.)	Run hand down back and back up again then pat on back
6. A stuffed dog that does not look like your dogs (ears up, down, color, tail, etc.)	Tug and twist (circular motion) on tail
7. Puppy Aptitude Card	Touch all paws and push in between pads
8. A trained tester (Train them in advance)	Tap nails
9. A camera	Run fingers around neck and tug on collar
10. Excellent lighting	Touch their nose

## The Process:

- Build trust and rapport first. Wait to add elements until the puppy is relaxed, resting, playing tug, fetch or interacting with the tester. Give them time to calm between each experience. Do not be in a rush!
- When the puppy is stressed do not add more stress. If the puppy exhibits behaviors such as yawning, lip smacking, whale eyes, shaking, avoidance, whining, etc., then slow down the process and destress (play with the puppy). If you can't get the puppy to destress then stop the test and begin another time.
- Customize the test as needed, to help evaluate the specific traits or characteristics. [For example: if you are looking for a diabetic alert dog, you can add a scent detection element, etc.] Think through potential added elements, and what you are hoping to evaluate, before you add new parts to the test.
- Try to be an unbiased evaluator, leaving any preconceived notions about specific puppies at the door. You may see qualities about pups that surprise you. Puppies may not be the "same" when they are not in the safety of the litter.
- Take your time to relax. If things are not going as planned (not in the right head space, the tester is struggling, puppies are not acting like themselves, etc.) then stop and test and run your puppies through it on another day.