

AKC Canine Good Citizen Training

AKC Canine Good Citizen is a certificate that is authorized and maintained by the American Kennel Club. I am an authorized AKC Canine Good Citizen trainer and evaluator. Many of the lessons I have previously taught you and your dog during our in-home training or board and train programs have already prepared you and your dog to take the test.

As an AKC Evaluator, I must follow their guidelines to the letter when evaluating your dog. As a Behavioral Dog Trainer, I can use my methods to help you pass those requirements. Below are the ten AKC Canine Good Citizen requirements you and your dog must complete to receive the certification. Along with each requirement, I have provided my training instructions that can be used to pass each requirement.

You can also review the AKC Canine Good Citizen Program Participant Handbook from the AKC website for additional information. (<https://images.akc.org/pdf/cgc/GK9GC2.pdf>)



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ITEM 1: ACCEPTING A FRIENDLY STRANGER

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler in a natural, everyday situation.

The evaluator walks up to the dog and handler and greets the handler in a friendly manner, ignoring the dog.

The evaluator and handler shake hands and exchange pleasantries. The dog must show no sign of resentment or shyness and must not break position or try to go to the evaluator.

ITEM 1 TRAINING TIP:

The most important thing here is that your dog already trusts you to keep him safe when you and he are out and about, away from home. In order to do this, you must confirm that he is comfortable in meeting new people when you are at home. This is his safe place, and he will never be able to safely and calmly meet new people outside if he can't do it at home.

Identify some friends that your dog does not know. Ask them to come to your home. Have your dog on a leash and have him by your side. When everything is calm, walk your dog around the room. As you are walking, never get too close to your friends. Walk around for several minutes and then return to your spot with your dog (away from your friends). Repeat this several times.

Next, stand up with your dog and go to the middle of the room. Ask one of your friends to slowly approach you in a calm manner. Once he is about three feet in front of you, tell him to stop. If your dog starts to lunge or jump, correct him and walk him away for a moment. Once he is calm, ask your friend to approach again.

Once your friend is about three feet in front of you, have him stop and say anything in a calm and natural voice. Respond to your friend with a calm and natural response. Slowly extend your hand towards your friend and have him slowly extend his hand towards you. Shake hands.

Repeat this process until your dog is calm through the entire process. Repeat this process and then have your friend calmly walk away. Now, invite your next friend to repeat this exercise.

Once your dog is calm with the entire process of your meeting multiple people inside your house, repeat the same process outside your home in a quiet and non-distractive location.

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ITEM 2: SITTING POLITELY FOR PETTING

This test demonstrates that the dog will allow a friendly stranger to touch it while it is out with its handler.

With the dog sitting at the handler's side (either side is permissible) to begin the exercise, the evaluator pets the dog on the head and body only. The handler may talk to his or her dog throughout the exercise. The dog may stand in place once petting begins. The dog must not show shyness or resentment.

ITEM 2 TRAINING TIP:

Like many training sessions, I like to start the process in the home where the dog feels safest and will afford you the most focus and attention.

Have some friends over that aren't completely familiar with your dog. Have your dog on a leash with you at one end of the room while your friends are comfortably disbursed within the room or general area. If you are not standing, stand up and place your dog in a sit. If your dog does not know how to sit, please review the training instructions found in your Client Portal at SIT.

Once your dog is sitting, calmly pet him on his head, neck and upper back. If he shows signs of excitement, jumping, etc., correct him. Walk him around for a moment, place him in a sit, and pet him again. He should be able to be calm while you peacefully pet him.

Once you have established that your dog can be calm when you have petted him, ask a friend to calmly and slowly approach. Have him stop about three feet in front of you. Exchange pleasantries and then ask him to take another step to a position where he can pet your dog without being directly over him.

Ask him to pet your dog, starting below his head so that both he and your dog can see each other's faces. If your dog starts to show signs of anxiety, nervousness, or excitement, tell your friend to momentarily stop and slowly take a step back. You will now calmly pet your dog for a moment while your friend is still there calmly watching.

Now, have your friend slowly move his hand below your dog's face and pet his neck area. The "pet" should be in a rubbing motion. Do not "pet your dog" like you are beating a drum. Once your friend is petting your dog and your dog is remaining calm, have him slowly move his petting motion to your dog's back and his head.

Have your friend continue to pet your dog for about fifteen seconds and then slowly remove his hand from your dog. Never have his hand block the view between his face and your dog's face. Your friend can now calmly walk away.

Repeat this procedure several times until you can invite all of your friends to pet your dog and he remains calm and happy to be petted. If your dog ever shows signs of fear, excitement, confusion, or aggravation, calmly direct him away and walk him around for a moment or two on the leash. Continue this until he is calm.

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Once your dog is happy being petted in the house, repeat the above exercise outside in a calm, public place with minimal distractions.



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ITEM 3: APPEARANCE AND GROOMING

This practical test demonstrates that the dog will welcome being groomed and examined and will permit someone, such as a veterinarian, groomer or friend of the owner, to do so. It also demonstrates the owner's care, concern and sense of responsibility.

The evaluator inspects the dog to determine if it is clean and groomed. The dog must appear to be in healthy condition (i.e., proper weight, clean, healthy and alert), The handler should supply the comb or brush commonly used on the dog.

The evaluator then softly combs or brushes the dog and, in a natural manner, lightly examines the ears and gently picks up each front foot.

It is not necessary for the dog to hold a specific position during the examination, and the handler may talk to the dog, praise it and give encouragement throughout.

ITEM 3 TRAINING TIP:

This exercise is really an extension of the "Sitting Politely for Petting" requirement reviewed earlier. Instead of having a stranger simply pet the dog, the stranger must be able to groom the dog. Before you start practicing this exercise, your dog should be completely successful in performing the petting exercise.

You will need a brush or comb for this exercise. Since the AKC instructions does not specifically define the type of tool to use, I suggest you use a plastic dog brush with rubber bristles. Although this may not be the most effective grooming tool, you will have almost no chance of hurting or scaring your dog when using it.

Again, I always suggest starting in your home and then proceeding to a public location.

Put your dog in a sit. Place the brush in your hand so the smooth surface (back side of the brush) is facing towards your dog's back. Lightly move the brush over your dog's back, barely touching his skin or fur. Slowly continue this, applying a little more pressure with the brush to your dog's back. If your dog shows agitation, distraction, or fear at any time, decrease the pressure, and slow the movement of the brush.

Once your dog is fine with the brush's smooth back side rubbing his back, turn it over and repeat the process with the bristle (front side). Make one pass with the front side, then the next with the back side, then the front, back, etc. This will slowly introduce your dog to the sensation of the grooming process. Slowly brush with the front side (bristles) more often until you are only brushing your dog with the front (bristle) side of the brush. This is the normal way you would brush or groom your dog.

Once your dog is fine with his back being groomed, begin to move the brush to other parts of his body. Go to his sides and chest. Brush his legs. Continue this until your dog is comfortable with grooming over the extent of his body.

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There is also one more thing you must practice for this requirement. You need to be able to handle your dog's ears and paws. Have your dog sit. Calmly squat down and sit on the floor by his side. Talk to him in a soothing voice as you calmly reach for his ears. Gently rub them.

Move them so that you can see inside. If he starts to flinch or become agitated, back off for a moment and start petting him near his ears as you approach to touch his ears again.

Next, calmly reach for his paws. Tenderly pick them up without squeezing them. He should not think that this is a "play moment". Hold the paw for a moment and then lower it back and place it on the ground. Repeat this for his other paws.

Practice the above process until your dog shows no fear, agitation, or pain when being groomed or inspected by you. Now, call a friend over to repeat the process. You may remain with them and give your dog verbal encouragement as your friend grooms and inspects your dog.

Keep the entire process slow and carefully watch for any signs of agitation from your dog or confusion from your friend. Provide helpful and friendly guidance through the entire process.

Once a friend can groom and inspect your dog in your home, find a quiet public place with no distractions. Repeat the above process; first with yourself and then with your friend.

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ITEM 4: OUT FOR A WALK (WALKING ON A LOOSE LEASH)

This test demonstrates that the handler is in control of the dog. The dog may be on either side of the handler, whichever the handler prefers. (Note: The left-side position is required in AKC competitive obedience events.)

The dog's position should leave no doubt that the dog is attentive to the handler and is responding to the handler's movements and changes of direction. The dog need not be perfectly aligned with the handler and need not sit when the handler stops.

The evaluator may use a pre-plotted course or may direct the handler/dog team by issuing instructions or commands. In either case, there must be a left turn, right turn, and an about turn, with at least one stop in between and one at the end.

The handler may talk to the dog along the way to praise or command it in a normal tone of voice. The handler may also sit the dog at the halt, if desired.

ITEM 4 TRAINING TIP:

Robin and I have a very good Walking Training Program. If "walking" was one of your concerns during our home training program or your dog's board and train experience, you have already been exposed to the process and your dog probably is a good, obedient, and focused walker.

Our detailed instructions are available within your personal Training Support Center Web Site. Go to the Dog Training Instructions Section and review WALK.

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ITEM 5: WALKING THROUGH A CROWD

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places.

The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three). The dog may show some interest in the strangers but should continue to walk with the handler, without evidence of overexuberance, shyness or resentment.

The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise the dog throughout the test. The dog should not be straining at the leash.

ITEM 5 TRAINING TIP:

If your dog has been successfully practicing Items One and Two, he should probably have no issue with walking through a crowd. Remember, you only need to have him walk among three people to pass this section.

I also recommend that you review all the items we had discussed during our training and available on your personal Training Support Center Web Site regarding WALKING.

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ITEM 6: SIT AND DOWN ON COMMAND / STAY IN PLACE

This test demonstrates that the dog has training, will respond to the handler's commands to sit and down and will remain in the place commanded by the handler (sit or down position, whichever the handler prefers).

Prior to this test, the dog's leash is replaced with a 20-ft. line. The handler may take a reasonable amount of time and use more than one command to make the dog sit and then down. The evaluator must determine if the dog has responded to the handler's commands. The handler may not force the dog into either position but may touch the dog to offer gentle guidance.

When instructed by the evaluator, the handler tells the dog to stay and walks forward the length of the line, turns and returns to the dog at a natural pace (the 20-ft. line is not removed). The dog must remain in the place in which it was left (it may change position) until the evaluator instructs the handler to release the dog. The dog may be released from the front or the side.

ITEM 6 TRAINING TIP: (SIT AND DOWN)

Please review our training instructions on your personal Training Support Center Web Site for detailed instructions regarding SIT. Once you can get your dog to sit, you can continue to the down command.

Make sure he is wearing a collar and leash. Hold the leash during the entire process. Place a small treat in your hand. Close your hand so that the treat is visible and "smellable" to your dog, but he can't take it from your hand. Have your dog sit.

After he sits, say "Down". Bring your hand in front of his nose so that he can smell and partially see the treat. Slowly move your hand towards the ground. If needed, pull the leash downward so that his front legs and chest lower to the ground (following the treat). Once he is lying on the ground, give him the treat. Also provide a verbal reward of a high pitched "Good Puppy". Repeat this several times.

Repeat the process of having him sit, giving him the "Down" command, using your hand to direct him to the ground, giving him a treat, and verbalizing "Good Puppy" to the point where you no longer need to pull the leash to direct him down.

Continue the process, but don't give him the treat every time he lies down. Still use your hand movement; just don't have a treat for him. Always verbalize a high pitched "Good Puppy" when he is lying down.

Repeat the process until the treat is no longer needed.

ITEM 6 TRAINING TIP: (STAY IN PLACE)

We have an excellent training exercise for the Stay command that covers everything needed for the AKC requirement and much more. Please review our training instructions on your personal Training Support Center Web Site for detailed instructions regarding STAY.

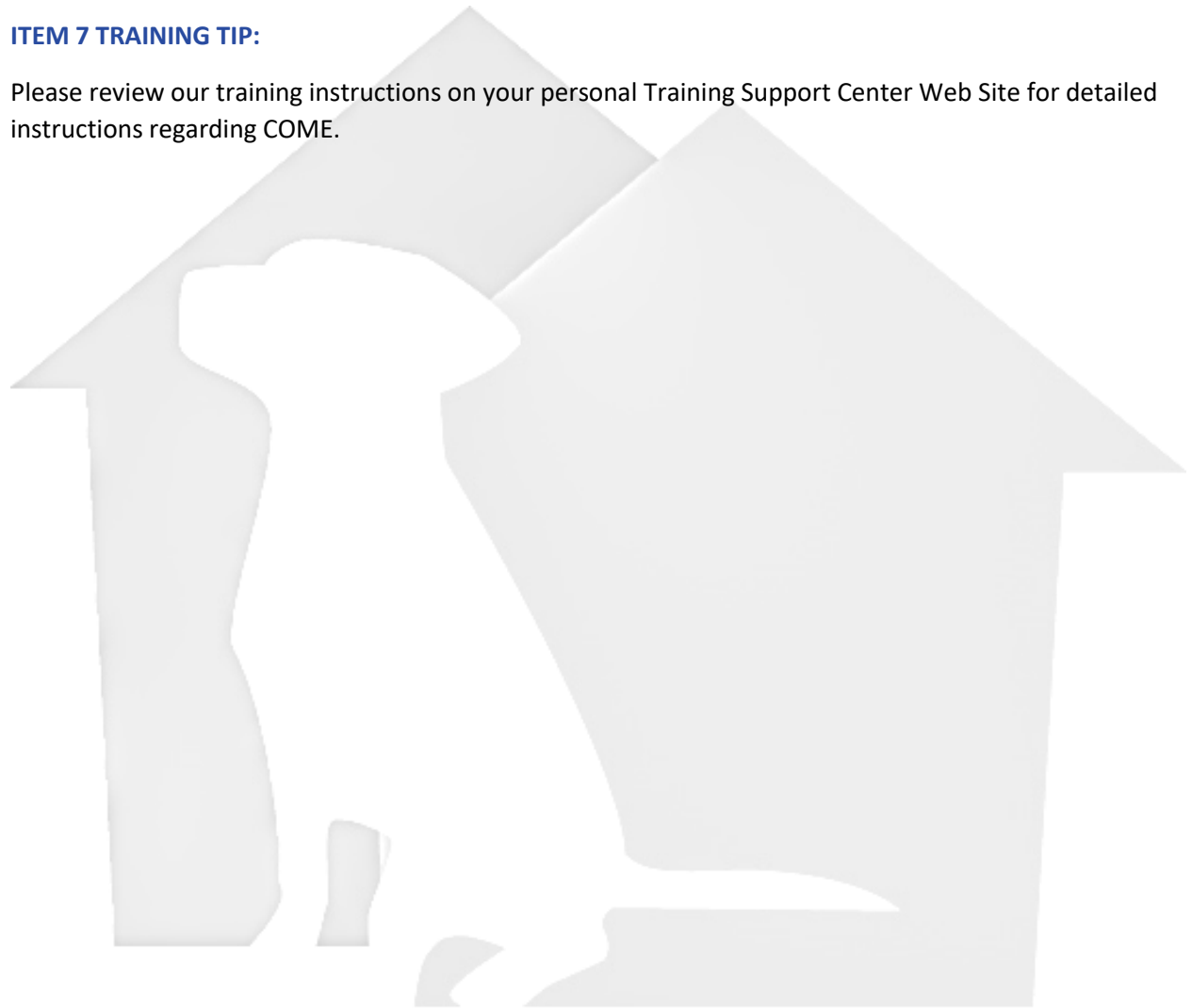
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ITEM 7: COMING WHEN CALLED

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler. The handler will walk 10 feet from the dog, turn to face the dog, and call the dog. The handler may use encouragement to get the dog to come. Handlers may choose to tell dogs to “stay” or “wait” or they may simply walk away, giving no instructions to the dog as the evaluator provides mild distractions (e.g., petting).

ITEM 7 TRAINING TIP:

Please review our training instructions on your personal Training Support Center Web Site for detailed instructions regarding COME.



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ITEM 8: REACTION TO ANOTHER DOG

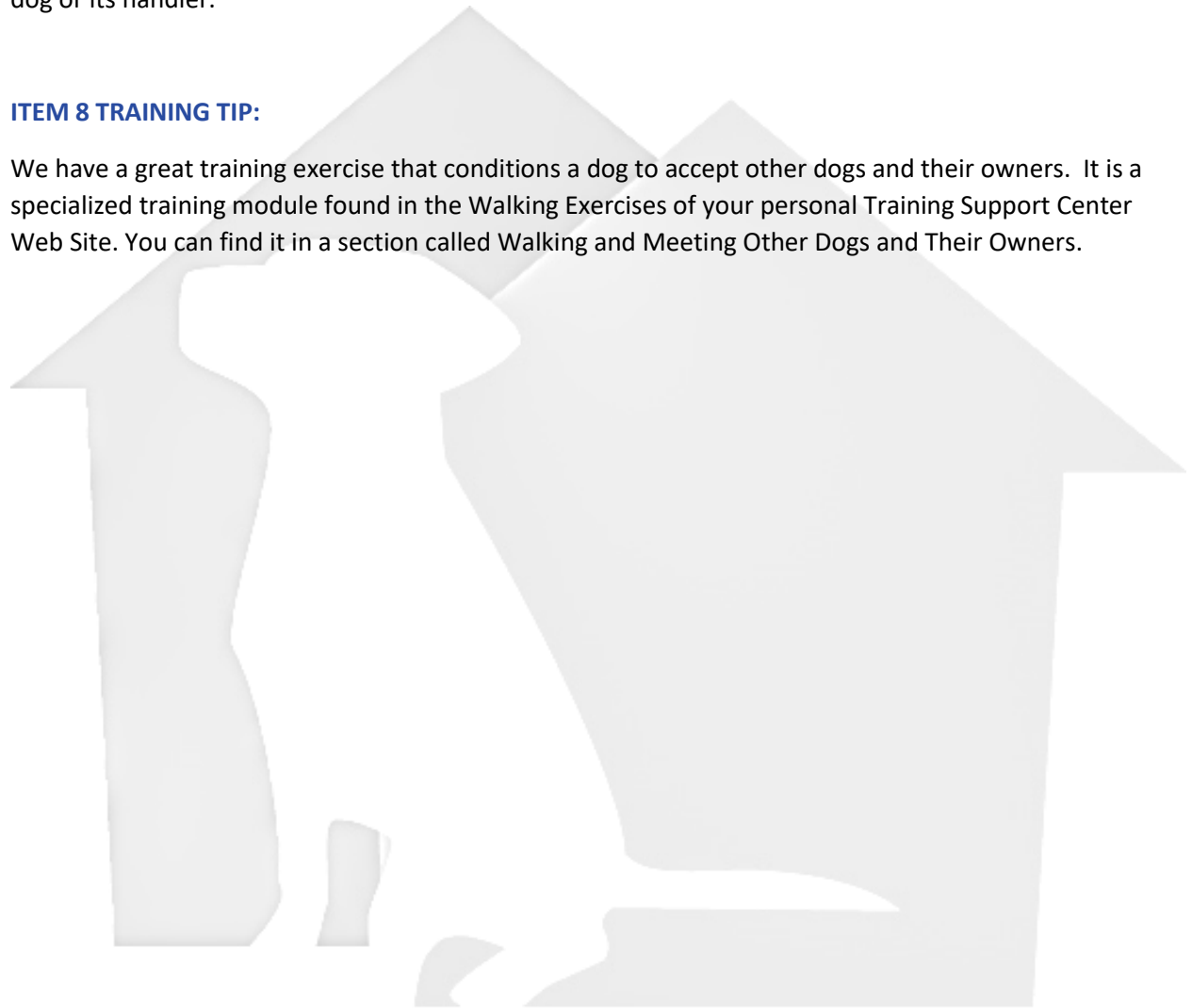
This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs.

Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 15 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries, and continue on.

The dogs should show no more than a casual interest in each other. Neither dog should go to the other dog or its handler.

ITEM 8 TRAINING TIP:

We have a great training exercise that conditions a dog to accept other dogs and their owners. It is a specialized training module found in the Walking Exercises of your personal Training Support Center Web Site. You can find it in a section called Walking and Meeting Other Dogs and Their Owners.



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ITEM 9: REACTION TO DISTRACTIONS

This test demonstrates that the dog is confident at all times when faced with common distracting situations.

The evaluator will select only two of the following:

(Note: Since some dogs are sensitive to sound and others to visual distractions, it is preferable to choose one sound and one visual distraction).

- A person using crutches, a wheelchair, or a walker ('ft. away)
- A sudden opening or closing of a door.
- Dropping a pan, folded chair, etc. no closer than 5-ft. from the dog.
- A jogger running in front of the dog.
- A person pushing a cart or crate doily passing no closer than 5-jt. away,
- A person on a bike no closer than 10-ft. away.

The dog may express a natural interest and curiosity and/or appear slightly startled but should not panic, try to run away, show aggressiveness or bark. The handler may talk to the dog and encourage or praise it throughout the exercise.

ITEM 9 TRAINING TIP:

This exercise assures that your dog is not skittish. Place your dog's collar and leash on him before you begin. Walk around the room, giving him slight tugs on the leash so that he gives you focus and displays a calm demeanor. You and he can sit down as you have another person take a broom into a far end of the house.

The person should drop the broom so that it will make a "wooden thing falling on the ground" noise. If your dog shows any sign of nervousness, walk him around for a minute while talking to him in a muted, low tone. Sit down again while having him focus on you and have the person drop the broom again.

Once your dog remains calm and does not react to the sound, ask the other person to start to move closer and drop the broom. Follow the above steps to calm him, if needed. Once the person is in the room with you and within ten to fifteen feet, you are done.

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ITEM 10: SUPERVISED SEPARATION

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person, if necessary, and will maintain its training and good manners. Evaluators are encouraged to say something like, “Would you like for me to watch your dog?” You will give the leash to the evaluator and go out of sight for 3-minutes. You may tell your dog to stay if it already has a down or sit-stay. The dog does not have to stay in position, but it cannot continually bark, whine, or pace unnecessarily, or show anything stronger than mild agitation or nervousness.

ITEM 10 TRAINING TIP:

You should be able to easily practice this on a daily basis. Put your dog’s collar and leash on when you have friends over. Hand the leash to any of them while you are in the room and then take the leash back. Make the “hand off” of the leash a non-event.

Every once in a while, when you hand off the leash to a friend, leave the room for a moment. Do not make it a big deal, just walk out for a moment and then return.

Ask the friend to keep your dogs attention focused on them. Perform this with several friends so that your dog will feel comfortable with “anyone” when you have left for a moment.