

Skills Checklist for Entering Beginner Agility Foundations

To ensure success and safety in our Beginner Agility Foundations class, your dog must already have the following foundational skills. Please review this checklist carefully before enrolling:

✓ 1. Reliable Sit-Stay

- Your dog must be able to **sit and stay** until released with the **verbal cue such as "OKAY."**
- This behavior should not rely on leash pressure or body blocking.
- Dogs must wait calmly even when distractions are present.

✓ 2. Understanding of Marker Word "YES"

- Your dog should know that **"YES" marks the correct behavior** and is followed by a food reward.
- This helps during agility training when introducing new equipment and skills.

✓ 3. Mat Training Basics

- Your dog must be able to:
 - Go to a mat when cued,
 - **Lie down on the mat automatically,**
 - Remain there until verbally released with **"OKAY."**(Not based on your movement or your proximity to them)

✓ 4. Group Class Focus and Control

- Your dog should be comfortable working around other dogs in a group setting.
- They should **stay focused on you** and not become over-aroused or distracted by other dogs nearby.

✓ 5. Polite Food Manners & Eye Contact

- Your dog must be able to:
 - Offer **eye contact for up to 1-3 second** or more,
 - Wait patiently for the reward to be delivered,
 - Not grab or lunge for food in your hand. Not stare at the hands with food or be overly fixated on reinforcement.

✓ 6. Reliable Verbal Release ("OKAY")

- The release cue must be **verbal only** – your dog should wait until they hear "OKAY" before leaving a position.
- Physical gestures or leash pressure should not be used to signal the release.

✓ 7. Loose Leash Walking & Heel Position

- Your dog should be able to:
 - **Walk politely on leash,**
 - Sit calmly **by your side (heel position),**
 - Maintain **attention on you** while walking or stationary.