

SO what's CPDT-KA and why should that be important to you and your dog?

It's always good to ask questions when faced with choices and decisions. Training your dog should be no different. Making the choice to "formally" train your dog is the first and most important step. Choosing who best to help you with that endeavor can seem a bit overwhelming. Add some unknown letters to the end of any name and the confusion just builds!

The CPDT –KA certification started in 2001 and continues to build strength in the dog training community today. **CPDT-KA stands for Certified Pet Dog Trainer-Knowledge Assessed.** As with any official certification process, there are criteria to meet before receiving certification. CPDTs must have 300+ hours of lead instructor training under their belt, multiple recommendations from clients, associates/professionals in the dog training field as well as references from veterinarians. Additionally, they must pass a certification examination created by a professional committee of dog training experts. There is an independent certifying council that governs the testing and certification process. Once certified, each CPDT is required to complete 12 additional hours of continuing education each year to maintain the credentials.

Why choose a CPDT-KA to help you with training? When it comes to dog training, it's all about finding a good fit for your personality as well as your dogs needs. In order to be successful with your training, you have to enjoy spending time and learning from your individual trainer. A good sense of humor in a trainer goes a long way in helping you learn the ropes and avoid frustration as you learn how best to manage and work with your dog. Learning how your dog "thinks" and seeing the world from their perspective is an important part of building a successful long term relationship and bond with your canine companion. **Choosing the personality of the trainer that suits you best is MOST important for your success.** Many CPDTs have spent enough time in the field to understand how best to work with both your personality as well as your dog's temperament! CPDTs typically have experience with lots of breeds/personalities of dogs and have the "been there, done that" type experience that can be very helpful in making your training experience the best it can be. Additionally, because they are required to do continuing education each year, they can often tailor your learning experience if needed, with some specialized training or behavior work, whether that be with aggression, fear, or other temperament related issues. **Bottom line...choose a trainer you are comfortable with.** There are as many ways to train a dog as there are trainers to teach you. Search until you find a personality and methodology that resonates with you. Keep a good sense of humor! Training is a difficult skill and though your trainer may make things look easy, give yourself a break and know that learning the mechanics takes time and patience from you, your trainer and your dog. **The MOST important part of any good dog training lesson is to be sure both you and your canine companion are HAVING FUN!!!! Life is too short to do it any other way!**

Smile and enjoy your dog!

Best of luck! ~Leslie