

# How to select the right trainer

If your dog has behavior issues you may have been told by your vet or someone you know that you need to see a trainer, behaviorist, behavior specialist, or vet behaviorist. But what does all that mean? Are all of these types of professions done by one person? Who should I call and how do I find out what they do?

The following information will explain the certifications that each type of training professional receives. When you are looking for someone to help you with your pet's behavior it is up to you to take the first steps in finding the right person with the right skill set to help you with your pet.

## Trainers

A dog trainer does more than train dogs – they train people too. Whether you are talking to a trainer, a dog trainer, a clicker trainer or a certified professional trainer, you should look for the following credentials and certifications to know that the professional you have chosen to work with has received the education and experience to help you teach you and your dog.

Trainers help people and their pets learn obedience and puppy socialization. Some trainers work in group class sessions, some do private lessons and many do both. Trainers should also be able to educate their clients on animal care and husbandry. Some trainers may have additional specialty skills. Many professionals that work with animal behavior have received some sort of dog training certification as well as additional certifications and education.

## KPA-CTP

Karen Pryor Academy Clicker Training Professional  
[www.karenpryoracademy.com](http://www.karenpryoracademy.com) and [www.clickertraining.com](http://www.clickertraining.com)  
Graduates of Karen Pryor Academy's Dog Training Professional Academy where excellent technical knowledge and hands-on skills have been demonstrated. Students must complete a series of coursework and training completed with one dog throughout the entire program from start to finish. Graduates must continue their education post-graduation. Graduates are not required to re-certify.



## Additional Resources

This is not an exhaustive list of training certifications that are available but it is a good general guide on where to start.

For more information on training and behavior, visit our site.

[www.sPCA.org/petuniversity](http://www.sPCA.org/petuniversity)

[PetU@sPCA.org](mailto:PetU@sPCA.org)

214-461-5169

### **CPDT-KA/CPDT-KSA**

Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge Assessed, Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Knowledge and Skills Assessed

[www.CCPDT.org](http://www.CCPDT.org)

Certification recipients have submitted logs documenting hundreds of hours of training which can include training pets privately, in group lessons, dogs in shelters, and behavior modification work. The recipient will also be required to pass an exam over animal behavior, husbandry, instruction skills, ethology, equipment and learning theory. Recipients are also required to complete Continuing Education annually and recertify every 3 years.

Applications require reference letters from 3 professionals including a current CPDT-KA recipient, a veterinarian and a client and a signed commitment to uphold the code of ethics.

Recipients of the CPDT-KSA credentials will be required to submit videos of training sessions to be reviewed before receiving this title.

### **ABCDT/ABCDT-L2**

Animal Behavior College Dog Trainer, Animal Behavior College Dog Trainer – Level 2

[www.animalbehaviorcollege.com](http://www.animalbehaviorcollege.com)

Certification recipients have submitted logs documenting hundreds of hours of training which can include training pets privately, in group lessons, dogs in shelters, and behavior modification work. The recipient will also be required to pass an exam and following certification are required to receive Continuing Education annually.

Applications require reference letters from 4 professionals including a client, a colleague, a veterinarian, and a shelter and a signed Code of Ethics.

### **CTC**

Certified Trainer and Counselor from Jean Donaldson's Academy for Dog Trainers.

<https://www.academyfordogtrainers.com/>

Certification recipients are required to complete rigorous coursework and a 6 hour exam on dog training and behavior.

### **Behavior specialist**

A behavior specialist may also be a dog trainer but they have also demonstrated a knowledge in modifying problem behavior such as aggression, anxiety, and fearfulness.

### **CDBC/ACDBC**

Certified Dog Behavior Consultant, Associate Certified Dog Behavior Consultant

[www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)

### **CBCC-KA/CBCC-KSA**

Certified Behavior Consultant Canine – Knowledge Assessed, Certified Behavior Consultant Canine – Knowledge and Skills Assessed

[www.iaabc.org](http://www.iaabc.org)

## **Behaviorist**

A behaviorist has studied extensively and received a board certification in Applied Animal Behavior.

### **CAAB/ACAAB**

Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Associate Certified Applied Behaviorist.

[www.animalbehaviorsociety.org](http://www.animalbehaviorsociety.org)

## **Veterinary Behaviorist**

A Veterinary Behaviorist is a professional that is a veterinarian but has also has additional practice and board certification in animal behavior.

### **DACVB**

Diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Behavior

[www.davcb.org](http://www.davcb.org)