



5. Human-dog interaction

- Handler:
 - It is recommended that one person be responsible for the dog: the handler (Schöberl et al. 2016).
 - A good human-dog relationship is based on trust and not forced obedience.
 - Focus on a safe and good relationship with the dog (De Keuster et al. 2015).
 - A puppy's first weeks are crucial for developing a good relationship with the handler (Topal et al. 2005).
 - The handler is a "safe haven" for the puppy and the starting point for exploring new environments (Palmer and Custance, 2008).
 - For these reasons it is important that the handler:
 - Is reliable and consistent in his or her reactions (Konok et al., 2015).
 - Has, as far as possible, positive interactions with the dog. This improves the dog's level of sociability (Bergamasco et al., 2010).
 - Encourages play and affiliative behaviour in the dog (lowers cortisol levels) (Horvath, 2008).
 - Does not use threatening body language with the dog:
 - Turn sideways instead of walking directly towards the dog (Herron & Schreyer, 2014);
 - Avoid long and direct eye contact (Herron & Schreyer, 2014);
 - Do not lean over the dog (Herron & Schreyer, 2014);
 - Use subtle and flowing movements (Herron & Schreyer, 2014);
 - Let the dog sniff the palm of your hand when he or she approaches (Herron & Schreyer, 2014);
 - If necessary, use food (dog treats) to encourage the dog to come to you (Herron & Schreyer, 2014) so that he or she learns to associate his or her handler with something positive.