TEACHING “LEAVE IT”

■ This technique works best using a head collar and leash.

■ To facilitate learning, start with low value items that the dog will willingly walk away from.

■ With the dog wearing a head collar and an adult holding the leash, the dog is walked toward an item he may wish to pick up such as a ball or chew toy.

■ As the dog reaches for the item, calmly say, “leave it” and turn the dog’s head using the head collar and quickly offer a food reward and “good dog” as the head comes toward you.

■ Repeat several times with low value items.

■ As the dog learns the meaning of the phrase, he will begin to turn his head prior to the pull of the leash. Immediately reward that behavior.

■ Progress to more valued items and gradually phase out food rewards while retaining verbal praise.

■ Once the dog knows the command well, you can try letting him drag the leash and see if he can be called away from an item with a verbal prompt.

   -If the dog does not comply, use the leash to turn his head and reward him.