

Puppy Socialization

Did you know that puppies develop a big part of their adult personality by 16 weeks of age? It's true! This is called the "socialization window" and if you want a happy adult dog that takes life in a joyous stride, start now! The positive (or negative) associations that puppies develop during this critical stage of brain development can last a lifetime.

Handle your puppy – literally!

Make a point to touch your puppy all over. Don't be forceful or push to the point of struggle, just touch and hold gently and reward his acceptance with a high-value treat. You will eventually need to be able to trim nails, clean ears, and brush teeth. If your new puppy learns to enjoy these rituals, life is better for you both.

Introduce your puppy

Introduce your puppy to people of all shapes, sizes, and mannerisms to learn there's nothing to fear from people of all kinds. Introduce children, men and women, people with hats, uniforms, or costumes. Give plenty of treats to make "scary" into fun! Try sitting outside the mall with a bag of treats. Stop by the clinic a few times just for a visit with pats and treats. Take the puppy on errands to see new sights and smell new smells. Make all the places that you go extra special with great treats or repeat the visits until they're so normal that your pup is bored with them.

Play dress-up

If your dog is ever going to need a sweater or coat—or even a bandage—now's the time to teach him about them. Try tying an adult T-shirt around him and let him get used to the feeling (don't forget lots of treats!). Importantly, if you can help your new puppy learn about an E-collar, your veterinary team will appreciate it!

Check out www.DogStarDaily.com for more training info!



A Short Checklist:

Here are some suggestions of things to get your puppy comfortable with:

Balloons, Beach, Bicycles, Cats, Children, Crying baby, Dogs (of all sizes), Doorbell, Flags flapping, Fireworks, Groomer, Hairdryer, Park, Rain noises, Runners, Sirens, Traffic, Uniforms, Vacuum noises, Vet clinic, Wind, Yelling person

Be aware of the different surfaces your pup experiences (be sure to show him gravel, grass, slippery floors, mulch, asphalt, stairs).

Make Noise!

Expose your pup to loud noises and novel objects, like the vacuum cleaner or fireworks. Show that these things aren't harmful (start slowly and gradually make noises louder). Reward her when she's calm. Remove the noise if it's too scary and try again later. Noise phobias are real, and you can do your part to prevent them.