



Puppy 101: Socialization

Socialization benefits both your new puppy and the two legged members of the family. It is a key element to developing relationships between the puppy and its owner, as well as among a variety of other members in the community.

Related Topics:

- CRATE & TOILET TRAINING
- DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR
- NUTRITION & EXERCISE

Socialization



The first few months of your puppy's life are the most critical for its health & development. A well socialized puppy is one that gets along well with all different types of people, dogs, and other species...ie cats! This takes effort on the part of the owner, to be aware of this need for a well rounded companion. Ideally, this exposure needs to start between 4 - 16 weeks of age, and be maintained throughout the first year of life. While socialization is a lifelong process, the most sensitive and influential period is during the first 16 weeks of life. Take advantage of this special time to enjoy your companion and set your puppy up for a life of successful interactions and long term relationships. The work you invest now, will be rewarded for many years in a well adjusted and loving dog.

Things to Do

- Read your puppy's body language and make each introduction comfortable for your puppy
 - **Comfortable** = Body relaxed, ears up, tail up & wagging.
 - **Uncomfortable** = Hair on back / shoulders up, ears back, tail down / tucked, lips curled displaying teeth.
 - Comfortable introductions extend to objects and experience as well as new people and other dogs.
- Identify your puppy's favored reward;
 - Special Toy / Treat / Petting
- Introduce your puppy to;
 - 5 New people each week for the 16 week period. Upon introduction shake the persons hand, and have the new person offer your puppy a treat. Make sure to include all different types of people to from all ages.
 - Other well mannered healthy, vaccinated pets.
 - New experiences that include (not limited to); Riding in the car, walking in public places (on leash), or any other event your puppy is likely to encounter.
 - For recommendations regarding puppy classes, speak to Dr. Carullo.

Things to Avoid

- Overwhelming your puppy...Puppies, much like human babies need their rest. Be sure to allocate time for rest as well as time for play and socialization.
 - If your puppy exhibits fearful behavior(s), they may have gone too far, too fast. Pull back, and adjust the circumstance to make your puppy more comfortable and try again at another time.
- Physically disciplining your puppy with aggressive measures that might include, hitting, spanking, or rubbing their nose in a stinky mess.
 - Rather than engaging in these interactions, attempt to calmly remove your puppy from the area or activity, and allow them an opportunity (and yourself) to reset. Next time they provide the desired response, offer a positive reward. *Negative reinforcement & discipline may foster a poor response in future relationships with people...important for big & small dogs.*
- Taking your young puppy to high risk disease areas like parks, rest stops, or areas with stray dogs.
- Do not wait until 4 - 6 months of age to begin socializing your puppy...best option is early, often, and positive.

Socialization Checklist

People	Sounds
<input type="checkbox"/> Adults; All ages, sizes, ethnicities & genders	<input type="checkbox"/> Car Engine
<input type="checkbox"/> Kids; All ages, sizes, ethnicities & genders	<input type="checkbox"/> Doorbell / Knocking at the door
<input type="checkbox"/> Babies	<input type="checkbox"/> Fireworks
<input type="checkbox"/> Men with beards or bald heads	<input type="checkbox"/> Wind / Rain / Thunderstorms
<input type="checkbox"/> People wearing coats, hats, and/or sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacuum
<input type="checkbox"/> People walking with crutches , canes, walkers	<input type="checkbox"/> Party
Objects That Move	<input type="checkbox"/> Instruments / Singing
<input type="checkbox"/> Bikes / Skateboards / Scooters, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Gunshots
<input type="checkbox"/> Cars / Trucks / Motorcycles / Buses / Trains / etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sirens
<input type="checkbox"/> Boats (motor / sail / row)	<input type="checkbox"/> Radio / Television
<input type="checkbox"/> Airplanes / Helicopter	Handling
<input type="checkbox"/> Elevator / Escalator (ride them)	<input type="checkbox"/> Leash / Collar / Harness / Muzzle
<input type="checkbox"/> Lawn Mower / Leaf Blower	<input type="checkbox"/> Reaching / Looming over head
<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Control Toy(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Opening mouth / Touching teeth
<input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling Fan	<input type="checkbox"/> Touching tail
<input type="checkbox"/> Garage Door	<input type="checkbox"/> Having ears / eyes cleaned
<input type="checkbox"/> Helium Balloon	<input type="checkbox"/> Having teeth cleaned
Different Walking Surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Having body handled
<input type="checkbox"/> Flooring; Tile / Concrete / Vinyl / Wood	<input type="checkbox"/> Cutting nails
<input type="checkbox"/> Grass	<input type="checkbox"/> Brushes / Clipper / Hair dryer
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Carpet Runner	Places
<input type="checkbox"/> Gravel	<input type="checkbox"/> Shopping Mall / Super Market
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Chips	<input type="checkbox"/> School
<input type="checkbox"/> Leaves	<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant
<input type="checkbox"/> Mud / Puddles	<input type="checkbox"/> Busy Street
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground
Places	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction Site
<input type="checkbox"/> Different kinds of dogs	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Farm animals (horses / goats / pigs / etc.)	Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Rabbits & small pets	<input type="checkbox"/> Rain (with & without an umbrella)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cats	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow
<input type="checkbox"/> Birds	<input type="checkbox"/> Beach / Lake / Riverbank
<input type="checkbox"/> Reptiles	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pool
	<input type="checkbox"/> Forest