

Welcome to our Cherry Lane Labradoodles LIVE puppy cams—*Puppy Reality TV at Its Cutest!* We are happy to share this glimpse into the birth, growth and development of our puppies. Our puppy cams are usually turned on once mama dog has delivered her first puppy, so you can watch the miracle of birth with us. Our goal is transparency, so, except for brief periods when we are cleaning, rearranging areas, or have visitors, we leave the puppy cams on 24/7 until the puppies leave us.

Please enjoy ***The Doodle Show!***

Newborn:

Mama typically manages the birthing process with very little intervention from us. However, if mama needs a little help, we are very close by monitoring the process to assist removing the sac or stimulating a puppy to breathe. When mama has finished her clean up, we remove puppy for a quick weight, add an ID collar, and treat the umbilical stump with a disinfectant. Then back to mama for the first vital nursing of mama's colostrum where puppy receives the maternal antibodies that will protect it until its own immune system wakes up in 8-16 weeks.

For the first few days after birth, we practically have to drag mama away from her babies to get her to go out to potty. She won't leave them to eat or drink, so we offer her food and water while she is nursing her puppies—often hand feeding her. After the first few days, mama begins to leave the puppies for brief periods of time—usually she lies just outside the box on the cool floor—she needs an occasional break from the higher temperature that is so necessary for her babies. Since puppies are unable to regulate their own body temperature for several weeks, you'll see them snuggled closely into mama or moving in and out of puppy piles as they share their body warmth or want to cool down. We also have a heating pad area the puppies can choose to move to if they need more warmth when mama is away. Puppies are little heat seeking missiles—they have heat sensors on the sides of their noses. When you see them swinging their heads side to side as they “swim” around their area, they are in fact searching for a heat source. This heat seeking instinct guides them to mama to nurse, to each other to puppy pile and to warm areas in their nest.

The twitching, jerking and popping you see the puppies doing in their sleep is called “activated sleep.” It is nature's way of building muscle, since the puppies will begin trying to walk in the next week or so. On days three

through sixteen, we perform Early Neural Stimulation (ENS) exercises to add very slight neural stress. These exercises are designed to gently stimulate specific functions of the nervous system to benefit puppy for life by increasing puppy's tolerance to stress, resistance to disease, creating a stronger heart rate and heart beat and creating a more responsive adrenal system. We also add one additional step by presenting the puppies with a new scent stimulation daily. This series of brief, specific exercises we perform are in addition to our normal daily handling of the puppies as we weight them, trim toenails, move them to clean their area, etc. To see more information about ENS, please follow this link for a [summary of ENS](#) or this link to read Dr. Carmen Battaglia's [full article](#).

One Week Old:

The puppies continue to spend all their time nursing or sleeping. During this week, we give them their first toenail trim and continue to weigh each puppy two-three times a day. We monitor weight gain carefully, since that is our first indication that a puppy might need a little extra boost of supplemental formula. Puppies generally double their weight in their first week of life!

In case you are wondering about the white rail around the perimeter of the whelping box—it's called a "pig rail" and is for the safety of the puppies. (These rails originated on farms to protect piglets—hence the name pig rail.) Puppies often gravitate to the outer edges of the box and wedge themselves down in a corner. Since mama is spending most of her time in the box with her babies all around her, she often leans back against the walls and falls deeply asleep as she recovers from her labor and delivery. The rail stops her from crushing or smothering a baby that has burrowed in behind her along the edge. We remove the rails when the puppies are about three weeks old and are strong enough to raise a ruckus if they get trapped.

Towards the end of the first week, we see their eyelids begin to become more defined and separate, and their eyelashes grow longer. By the beginning of the second week, the eyes are starting to open in the inner corner and working to the outer corner of the eyes. By 10-14 days old, their eyes will be open.

Two Weeks Old:

The puppies eyes are all open now and their ears will be opening in the next few days. When we notice the first “startle/recovery” from a loud noise, we know their ears are open and we begin purposefully making loud noises, such as slamming a door, dropping a pan or book, clapping hands, etc. At this age puppies do not experience fear, so the startle is not fear driven. In these next few weeks before they begin experiencing fear around 4-5 weeks of age, we will mildly stress them with noises to build their recovery response. We are carefully watching the intensity of the startle and the speed of recovery—our goal is to elicit a very mild startle followed by a rapid recovery. By repeating the noise several times in a row, the startle response will diminish and go away and the recovery will become immediate. As they become adept at the startle/recovery response, we will gradually increase the intensity of the noises we make. This will help the puppies be stable to new sounds and experiences as they grow into adult dogs.

The puppies continue to gain weight at a remarkable rate—often several ounces a day. Mama is still stimulating puppies to potty and cleaning up completely after—she keeps the nest fastidiously clean.

Three Weeks Old

During their third week, the puppy start walking with more confidence and control, they begin actively exploring and challenging the borders of their whelping box, and begin licking one another’s faces. Their awareness of their surroundings is awakening.

We start enriching their environment during this week—we generally remove the whelping box at this point to give them more room to explore, adding soft toys to give texture to their area. During this week we notice puppies begin to potty on their own away from their sleeping area—their natural instinct is to keep their sleeping area clean and potty in a place away from their nest, but they aren’t particular about what part of the box they use to potty. We place potty pads at the back of their area for the beginning of potty training, and we help define that potty area by adding sleeping beds, changing the bedding in the main area of their pen several times a day and leaving the soiled pads in the potty area. The puppies will gradually begin to follow the scent to the specific potty area, and in a matter of weeks they will regularly go to the designated potty area to eliminate.

Four-Six Weeks Old:

During this week we continue to add enrichment items to their area and also expand their area as they show signs of needing more room to move and explore. The puppies become more stable on the legs and start to interact with one another, play bowing, barking at one another, and noticing us. We have continued the weekly toenail trims and daily handling—touching paws, ears, body. At this time we increase our interactions with the puppies and spend more individual time with them. As the puppies continue to wake up and become more aware over the next several weeks, we will start our clicker training exercises, following our *Puppy Culture* protocols. We work on clicker training the puppies to sit to ask for attention—which is called “manding”—continue to direct puppies to the potty area, and introduce crates to their living space.

Although the puppies are still nursing, during this time they are introduced to food. We start them with puppy formula, gradually adding in raw lamb and baby rice cereal, then softened kibble and diminishing the formula. Mama dog is usually tired of sharp teeth nursing and she pushes the puppies to weaning. She no longer lies down to nurse and only spends brief times in the pen with them cleaning them and checking on them—then out she jumps to lie just out of reach, keeping an eye on things, but no longer feeling as protective. At this point, she is fine to let the other older dogs interact with her babies, and she happily rejoins her guardian family once her puppies are eating solid food on their own.

Seven-Eight Weeks Old:

Weather permitting, puppies are introduced to the outside area through the doggy door and discover a whole new world of running, larger toys and obstacles, wind, sun, rain, the chickens, etc. Such fun times they have outside! They become proficient at diving through the doggy door, in and out all day. In the warmer months, we have a wading pool for them to play in, in fall and winter, they chase leaves, dodge rain drops, and play in rain puddles.

We continue working with puppies individually and as a litter teaching them to control the strength of their bite, allow us to handle their ears/feet/mouths/tails, sit politely for attention, and wait for their food. We welcome visitors once the puppies are six weeks old, and the puppies love meeting children, teens, and adults.

At around seven weeks of age we do our temperament evaluations and at eight weeks we do structure evaluations. The big day arrives all too quickly that we make puppy **allocations** and our puppies head off to new horizons, adventures and wonderful lives with **YOU!**