

Best Paw Forward Inc. PuppyLove graduates and longtime approved older social pups and dogs have access to monitored play times on our 10 acres in Osteen, Fla., for safer screened play groups.



Dog Park Pros and Cons

The Association of Professional Dog Trainers is an organization that was created to educate its members, the public, and other pet-care related industries in the proper management of pet dogs. A dog park can be an asset or a detriment to a community. The goal of this document is to provide, in outline format, a compilation of the advantages, disadvantages, and things to think about for communities and/or the individuals to consider regarding dog park development.

Advantages:

- Dog Socialization Advantages
 - Excellent source of dog-dog social interaction
 - Excellent source of dog-people social interaction
- People Socialization Advantages
 - Excellent source of people-people social interaction
 - Dog-oriented people can meet and interact
 - Doggy play dates can be arranged
- Physical and Mental Stimulation Advantages
 - Excellent source of off-leash exercise for active dogs
 - Dog parks allow dogs to get adequate physical and mental exercise, thereby lessening destructive and annoying behaviors in general which can benefit society as a whole
- Educational Advantages
 - Good opportunity for owners to learn about dogs through observation and provides the opportunity to learn from more experienced owners

- Opportunity for well-mannered-dog advocates to demonstrate how they turned their dog into a well-mannered dog
- Community Advantages
 - Dog parks which are designed for dogs only, lessen the chance of owners letting their dogs off-leash in on-leash parks
 - No cars, rollerbladers, skateboarders, bikes, etc. likely to be encountered
 - More likely to encounter people who enjoy dogs
 - Could provide location for community dog activities

Disadvantages:

- For People
 - Potential of danger from aggressive dogs
 - Potential of danger of physical injury from dog-related hazards
 - Potential of lawsuits arising from dog fights
 - Potential for parasites
- For Dogs
 - Potential of danger from aggressive dogs
 - Intact dogs may create problems
 - Potential for parasites and disease
 - Potential for lack of impulse control and over-excitement
 - Not appropriate for small and large dogs at the same time
 - Potential for injury
- For the Community
 - Some people will not understand the concept and will abuse the park
 - Won't pick up after their dog
 - May leave dog unattended
 - Allow their dog to indulge in inappropriate behavior

- Some people will not be educated enough about their dogs to know if a dog park is appropriate for their dog
- Potential for noise
- Potential liability issues

Things to consider:

- City, County or Municipality Sponsored Park
 - Responsible Pet Ownership – Who will maintain the park?
 - Will maintenance cost more than for other community parks?
 - Will there be rules and regulations?
 - Will there be any type of overseer or park personnel to enforce regulations
 - Is there the possibility of a core group of volunteers who will maintain the park and enforce rules & regulations?
- Private Park
 - Knowledgeable person/business could charge for admission and establish rules and regulations
- Small Dogs
 - Separate hours exclusively for dogs under 20 lbs.
 - A separate, fenced area of the park for dogs under 20 lbs
- Costs
 - A city, county or municipality sponsored park could have special interest areas dedicated to dogs as is now done with soccer fields, swimming pools or tennis courts
 - The park could charge a nominal fee to take care of maintenance costs
- Consider having parks monitored by a core group of park goers to save the city funds
- Physical design also plays a big part. Separating big dogs from little and providing several gathering spots for humans (tables, shelters etc) and visual barriers helps direct the flow of the dogs.

- A written and posted set of rules with an 'if....then you must leave' clause is important
- Bringing treats or toys into a park can result in problems (Some dogs will attempt to protect valued resources. An owner with treats or toys can be a very valuable resource so fights could occur over such objects of desire)
- A park with several long fenced runs where owners could practice obedience, play frisbee, throw a ball etc undisturbed might be a practical idea. The owner could take all of their dogs or one and if they wanted a play date with others they would meet there or mutually agree. This park would have timers on the runs and each person or group would get 15 minutes and then it would be the next persons turn if there was someone waiting. The timer might require money to unlock the gate.