



# Puppy Development and Socialization Program

## **Neonatal Period (Days 0-14)**

Puppies receive Early Neurological Stimulation (ENS) Days 3 - 16. Their mother does most of the care, but they are handled daily after day 3, and watched carefully.

## **Transitional Period: (Day 14 – 21)**

Puppies are handled daily. Their eyes open, their teeth emerge, and they begin to hear. The mother is providing most of the care at this point. Once the puppies stand up and walk, wood pellets are added to the whelping box. A few days later, the first dog food is offered.

## **Exercise, Enrichment, and Stimulation (3 weeks old)**

Startle/ Recovery exercises are done daily until puppies stop startling at noises. When puppies are large enough, the litter is moved to a small version of their weaning pen where a litter box and bedding area are provided. They come out for play time and individual handling. They start to meet new people and new toys are introduced daily. They also get their first nail trim.

## **Enrichment & Early Communication (4 weeks old)**

As litter box training progresses, their living area is expanded to include more area for play. They are given problem solving tasks, and socialization is continued. They learn to climb over and around increasingly larger obstacles and barriers, use steps, ramps, etc. New sounds, smells, surfaces, motions, etc. are introduced and puppies play with the adventure box and ball pit. Car rides and exposure to safe adult dogs begins.

## **House Training and Learning Lessons (5-7 weeks)**

Once the puppies can take treats, we teach them “The Communication Trinity” from Puppy Culture, which is basically: “Mark, Offer, and Mand.” We charge the clicker for one or two sessions, play the “box” game, and increase the difficulty of challenge for the puppies with obstacles and barriers.

Puppies learn how to use a flexible dog door and go up/down steps. They are spending short periods of time in crates, going on car rides, having individual human time, using “litter” box (actually **wood pellets**) and going outside. They start taking short walks, and continue with routine grooming such as nail trims, baths and brushing.

## **Body Handling and Continued Learning (7-9 weeks)**

Puppies are spending short periods of time in the crates, individually, with the door closed. They are eating in the crates as well as having treats. They continue to meet people, other dogs, go on walks and car rides. They are having individual training/play sessions and going on longer and longer group walks. Temperament testing is done. They go to the vet for their first set of shots, have their nails trimmed, get baths and get their microchips implanted. At the end of all this comes the very best part - **the puppy joins a new family!**