PUPPY TIPS

CRATE TRAINING:

Have a crate before you bring your new puppy home. We almost always recommend a wire crate with a divider. Get the size crate that will be big enough for when he/she is full-grown. You want to use the divider to make the crate as small as possible. The puppy only needs to be able to stand up and turn around in the crate (this will help prevent the puppy from learning to potty in the crate). I recommend not putting anything in the crate for a few weeks (no bedding, toys, etc). Feed the puppy all its meals in the crate (this helps create a positive association with the crate). Have the puppy sleep in the crate. You should also put the puppy in it’s crate throughout the day, even when you’re home. Puppies need naps and this will ‘force’ them to nap. It will also give you a break and get the puppy in a routine. Every time after you take the puppy out of the crate, bring him/her right outside to potty. Never let the puppy out of the crate while he/she is whining/barking. If the whining/barking goes on for more than a few minutes, use a ‘bonker’ (shoe, ball, rolled up washcloth, etc).

POTTY TRAINING:

Puppies need to go out about every 30 minutes during the day (night – time they can go about 3 hours – depending on breed, age, size). Always bring food outside with you and the puppy. When the puppy potties, make a BIG deal about it! Get really excited, telling him/her good boy/girl and immediately reward with their food. The best way to prevent accidents inside, is to always have eyes on the puppy (this gets exhausting which is why the crate really aids in potty training). If you find a potty mess after the fact, there is nothing you can do about it. Just clean it up. If you catch the puppy in the act of pottying inside, you can clap loud and shout “no”. Pick the puppy up and immediately take them outside. Puppies also almost always have to potty after any type of play. Start restricting water after about 6pm. Let him/her have access to water for about an hour after he/she eats dinner. Then pick the water up for the rest of the night. If you find it hard to always keep your eyes on the puppy, we recommend keeping the puppy on a leash and attached to you.

GENERAL TIPS:

-Your puppy needs three things to have a fulfilled life:

 - Physical exercise.

 - Mental Stimulation.

 - Clear communication.

- Do not ever coddle the puppy. If he/she gets frightened about something (vacuum, garbage bag being shaken out, etc), just ignore the puppy and act like nothing happened. You can also help puppies get over most of their fears using food. Example: if the puppy is afraid of a stationary broom, place a line of their food all the way up to the broom. As the puppy eats the line of food, leading to the broom, praise him/her. When the get all the way to the broom, continue placing 1-2 pieces of food on the floor right at the broom.

- Try to get the puppy socialized!!! This is the most important time in a dog’s life and in my opinion, socialization is the most important thing you can do for them. Have him/her meet as many people and appropriate dogs as possible (make sure to stay away from dogs that are aggressive, too rambunctious, or intolerant of puppy behaviors). If there is a local trainer, you could always call and ask about daycare (for socialization purposes), but I would not recommend contacting a facility that strictly does boarding/daycare. Typically those facilities don’t know enough about dog behavior to properly match dogs together for socialization. It’s also important to get the puppy out and about. Take them to dog friendly stores/parks/restaurants with patios, etc. Get the puppy used to different surfaces, sights, sounds, smells, noise, etc.

- Discourage bad behaviors right at the beginning (mouthing, jumping, excessive barking, etc). Some of these behaviors are ‘cute’ when they’re little, but encouraging them in the beginning will bite you in the butt later on down the road.

- Be patient! Puppies do not come pre-programmed with behaviors/commands - we have to teach them everything!

- Get your puppy used to being handled! This is especially important in if you have a breed that will require regular grooming. Start manipulating their paws and carefully trimming their nails immediately. The best way to do this is to create a positive association with this exercise. You can use a peanut butter stuffed Kong (or similar item) while doing this. Do this multiple times per week. Get your puppy used to their ears and mouths being manipulated.

- Get your puppy used to being on a leash right away! We do not recommend harnesses. The best initial options are a cloth Martingale style collar, or a slip collar – these are types of collars that dogs cannot slip out of.

- Get your puppy used to being alone. You can accidentally cause your puppy to develop separation anxiety if they do not get used to being alone. You also want to make sure that you’re not making a big deal out of “goodbyes” and “hellos”. If you make a big production about leaving your puppy, or about coming home, that can also accidentally create separation anxiety.

- Teach your dog to be calm/bored. One of the worst things that we can do to our dogs is give them CONSTANT stimulation.

- Your puppy needs boundaries, leadership, and expectations. If you do not provide your puppy with these items, it can cause behavior problems to develop.

- **TRAINING!!!!** It is never to early to start teaching your puppy!