

I can't believe we are talking about 7 1/2 week old puppies. They are growing up so quickly. This last week we went on another field trip. We went to the vet's office. I like the puppies to go to the office without having to be poked and prodded. The vet's office already has many scary sights and smells. The dogs that are there are extremely agitated and nervous. There are plenty of smells like fear and sickness. Bringing the puppies to this place helps to calm down their own anxiety. Everyone there was able to hold a puppy, after using hand sanitizer of course. It brought smiles to both the staff and the customers who were there. Every puppy was loved, hugged and kissed. No puppy exhibited any type of shyness or fear. It was such a good experience.

I am very excited about an opportunity my puppies will receive a week from Friday. We will all go and be part of a therapy animal demonstration at a local Elementary School. Each class will have about 15 minutes to hold puppies and ask questions. It is a wonderful opportunity for both puppies and children to experience something brand new. I will be sure to take lots of pictures when that happens.

Our new exercise this week is leash training. I train leash in a slightly different way than most people. I put a collar and leash on several puppies and allow them to drag the leash around. Other puppies will pick up the leash and play with it. At first the leashed puppy will fight and tug, but soon he/she realizes that walking towards the pulling lessens the pull on it's neck. Puppies don't associate people with scary pulling and tugging which minimizes leash anxiety. Puppies are very forgiving of sibling tugs and pulls and puts leash training as another interesting game to play.

Pali's true personality is starting to appear. She used to be the hard headed strong will bossy girl, but she is changing. She is starting to be much more sweet and people oriented. She still enjoys bullying Dolly and Star, but Coco has put her in her place so many times, that she has begun to mellow. She really liked the leash exercise and happily grabbed Coco's leash and dragged her

around. I think it was a bit of Karma.  When it was her turn to have the leash on she grabbed it herself and played with it.

Coco has decided that she is the new Queen of the hill. As the biggest female, she all of a sudden developed the biggest attitude. She routinely puts Dolly, Pali and Star in their places. Since she is heavier than any of those three, she rolls them and sits on them. Pali is resigned to her reign. Star and Dolly growl and bark at her; however she is still much bigger and puts them in their place. She is the last puppy to come inside. I usually have to go get her. She loves to run the other direction when I call her. Neige is still her best buddy and you can find them playing together or curled up asleep in the crate.

Dolly is watching all of this pecking order nonsense and is not pleased with it. While Pali was Queen of the hill, Dolly was 2nd in command. Now she is pushed down to 3rd and she is fighting it. She runs and tries to knock Coco over, but she is just too little. She usually gets the bum end of it. Dolly did very well with her leash training. She thought it was a great fun dragging the leash around and chewing on it. She wasn't frightened at all when others tugged on it. She just ran over and jumped on the puppy chewing on it.

Star is a little pup with a big personality. He is sick and tired of being the butt of his sisters' jokes. He holds his own and growls like a big dog, it's just his sisters don't care. He is the first dog to use his "big boy voice", or his bark. When he barks it does cause his sisters to pause just a bit before jumping on him, but he still ends up on the bottom of the pile. Leash training is the great equalizer. He was very happy to drag a sister or two around with the leash. The sisters thought it great fun and would jump and tug with him. He wasn't too upset when the leash was on his own neck. He just went with the flow.

Neige is my big guy who thinks he is just a tiny little lamb. He is very happy that his big sister Coco is there to protect him from all the scary stuff. He is learning that he can do things on his own. It is difficult for him, but to see his confidence growing is amazing. We are working on individual crate training. He does not like being in the crate by himself so he would whine and howl. This would in turn cause his siblings to whine and howl. It became a circular problem. Now Neige goes into a dark room at the end of the house. He can't hear his siblings so he settles right down and takes a good nap. He is quiet for about 2 hours. I am very proud of him. Neige wasn't as pleased with the leash training method. His siblings grabbed his leash and he had a fit. Since he is the largest puppy, all he had to do is pull backwards to yank the leash out of a sibling's mouth. He then went and hid under the couch for the rest of the exercise. When I took the leash off, he went into a crate, had a fit and fell in it. Everyone piled in to play, and he just turned away. It was hilarious. We will continue to work with him. He is just a big gentle giant.

I am pleased with every one's progress. I crate everyone for a couple of hours in the morning to nap. Everyone is generally dry. It takes a while to calm everyone down, but eventually I can get them to be quiet for about 2 hours. I only crate after everyone has pottied and had a really good long exercise. A tired puppy is a good puppy.