

# PUPPY LOVE

He is in your hands, that soft and cuddly little creature who wants nothing more than to lick your chin. Through your care he can grow into a fine example of man's best friend. However, without proper care and training, that innocent pup can develop into a noisy and destructive nuisance. He can even become dangerous to you, your family and ultimately to himself. His future is in your hands. Your puppy's greatest danger is not parvo, heartworm or getting hit by a car. Although those things are threats, the greatest killer is lack of training. Millions of dogs are put to death because owners failed to train them. Protect your new friend by positively shaping his character from the day you bring him home.

A child does not begin formal schooling until he is five, but he learns a lot about manners before that. Likewise, don't rob a puppy of his puppyhood by rigid training, but do expect good manners early. It is best not to even try to teach the pup "sit", "down", or "stay" unless you say the command only once and gently place his body into that position. Repeating commands teaches your dog to ignore and disobey you. Do teach him "come" by giving the command and pulling in his string until he is right in front of you. Praise and release. Most puppies come when called until they are 3 to 4 months old. After that, never call him unless you have the string in your hand and can reel him in, or you will be laying a foundation for disobedience. Dogs are creatures of habit, and everything they do teaches them real life behavior, both good and bad. It is always easier to correct a bad behavior while they are puppies, than break a bad habit later. Teach him good habits. He is looking to you to be his leader. Dogs are pack animals, born to follow and respect the pack leader. If you don't take the leadership role, he will, and you will have an unmanageable, potentially dangerous dog. Never let him play bite or growl at you. Quickly snatch him up and give him a brief, firm muzzle squeeze and direct eye contact. Lovingly give your dog the best of care but never let him dictate to you.

His formal education can begin at 6 months-1 year. Scotch Pines Dog Training, Specializing in On and Off-Leash Obedience, offers a course educating your dog from kindergarten to graduation in nine weeks. Scotch Pines is the largest dog training school in Idaho, has recently expanded to Alaska, and is one of the largest in the nation. The results are amazing. See our website at [www.spdogtraining.com](http://www.spdogtraining.com). You may also contact your trainers, Stephanie and Belle, for details.

