

Guidelines to Socializing Your Puppy

Before you begin... If you just brought your new puppy home wait a couple days before starting to socialize your pup. Give your puppy time to start to bond with you so that when he's out and about and becomes concerned you're there to let him know everything's ok. Also keep in mind that the previous experiences and temperament will influence how easy it is for the puppy to absorb and adapt to novel experiences. I've found that puppies vary greatly with their confidence levels and if you have a puppy that needs a bit more help make sure they get enough exposed to create a relaxed, confident and happy puppy.

When and how you go about socializing your puppy are both very important. Proper socialization will provide a foundation for your puppy to have trust and adaptability in the world in which he resides and there is a limited window of opportunity when it comes to dogs learning about the world and feeling safe. It's though that puppies window of optimum time to process new experiences begins around 6 weeks and ends around 16 weeks. During this period, their brains are like tiny sponges – soaking up everything they experience and filing it away for the future. Be sure the puppy's experiences are positive ones. A negative frightening experience can leave lasting impression on your pup.



Puppies ability to socialize with many different species

Dog's have the unique capacity to bond with two or more species at the same time. The vast majority of animals learn about their own species and no other. Dogs are true social butterflies and can bond with many other species. When socializing your puppy they need to be introduced to a wide variety of people, other animals, sight and sounds.

Socializing your puppy to a wide range of types of people

It is important to socialize your puppy to a wide range of people including men and children. Meeting a variety of people will teach your puppy that people come in a wide range of categories. If not the puppy will form a narrow idea of what a human face looks like and will act fearfully when seeing a "new" human. Puppies that come from puppy mills and pet shops often will have very limited human exposure and be quite fearful. A great place to start introducing new people would be to invite friends and family over to meet the new puppy.

Socializing your puppy to other puppies and dogs

Socializing your puppy to other puppies and dogs will help him gain trust and social skills with other canines. Because we want experiences to be positive, choose carefully who your puppy is introduced to especially with adult dogs. You may want to start out in the safety of your home and expand from there.

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IT'S PUPPY TIME!



Through a Dog's Eyes
by Jennifer Arnold
Recommended book
A wonderful resource!

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As a side note I'd highly recommend that you do not take your puppy to a dog park, pet store or any location where many dogs and puppies have been to previously. You run the risk of your puppy picking up diseases and parasites. This is more of an issue in some parts of the country than others.



Socializing to sights and sounds

In the modern world that your puppy will live they will be exposed to many inventions of man; Dishwasher, motorcycles, vacuum cleaners to name a few. Exposure to a variety of new sights and sounds will help your puppy become comfortable when encountering novel experiences.

Quality of the environment

The general overall environment that a puppy is brought up in is very important. Puppies that are brought up in chaotic unstable environments can fail to assimilate information with which they are assailed, overwhelmed and can grow into anxious dogs. A calm peaceful home will go a long way towards helping your puppy feel safe and relaxed.

Summary

Properly socializing your puppy is so important because it is only through the learning environment of experience that we present to our dogs how to behave with humans and other species. Do not underestimate the significance of providing your puppy with the positive learning experiences in his short window of opportunity. The right exposures can have a profound effect on his long term ability to become the loving compatible companion.



Look deep into the heart of a dog and you will find your own.

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References that may be of interest.

How Dogs Love Us.
Gregory Berns

The Genius of Dogs
Brian Hare Vanessa Woods

Chaser
John W. Pilley

Dog Sense
John Bradshaw

Dog is Love
Clive D. L. Wynne

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