

A photograph of two puppies, one black and white and one brown, looking at the camera. The image is darkened to serve as a background for the text.

THE NEW PUPPY TOOLKIT

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What we will cover today

Puppy development

Building a bond

Training methods

Toilet training

Socialisation and play

Puppy biting

Recall training

Adolescence

Q&A

Early Development

The prenatal period

- The puppy's experience during pregnancy.
- Can influence later development and behaviour.
- Good to aim for a stress-free pregnancy.

The neonatal period

- From birth – 2 weeks.
- Puppies are mainly reliant on odours and touch to understand the world.
- Can learn simple associations.

The transition period

- About 13-20 days.
- Ear canals open – they can hear.
- Visual system begins maturing.
- Start to engage in social play with littermates.

The socialisation period

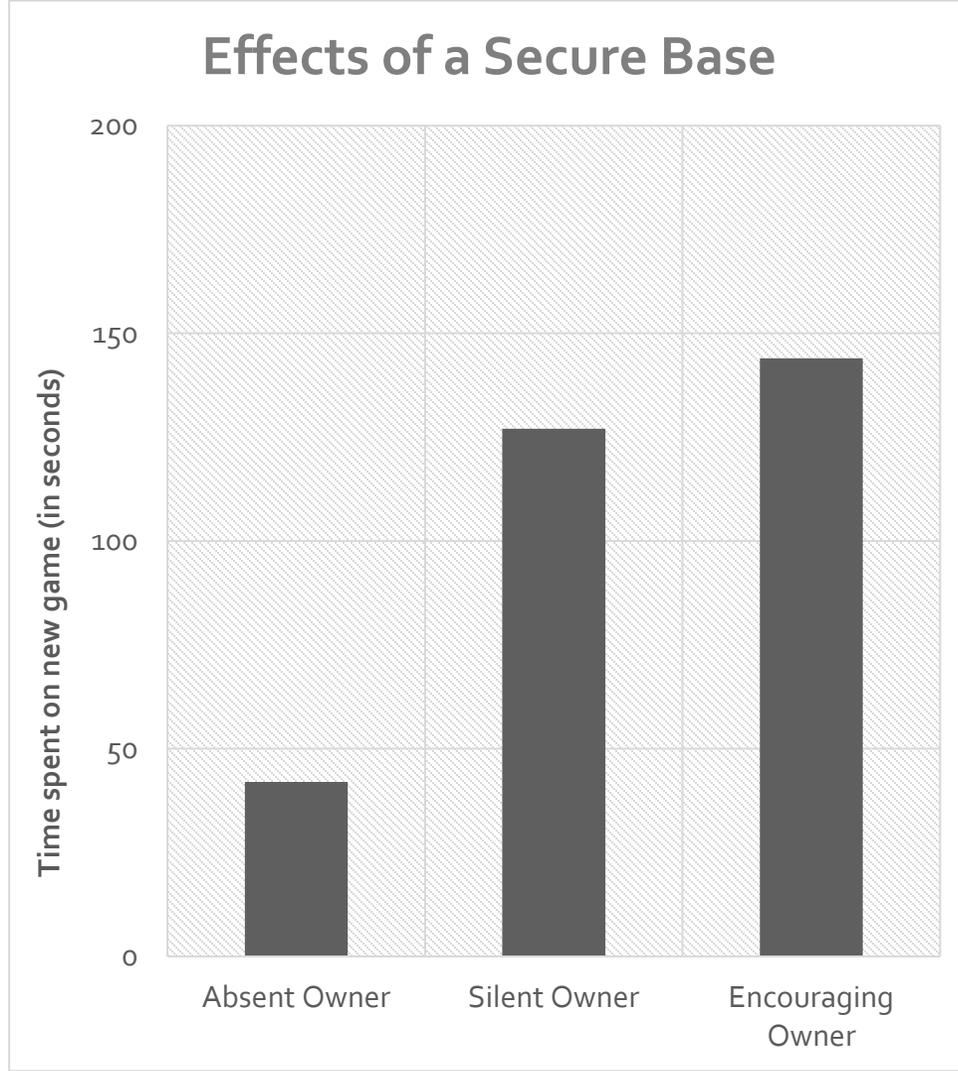
- Around 3-12 weeks.
- Reduced fear response to new things.
- Important for teaching pups people, dogs, handling are okay.





Bringing a puppy home

- Bring familiar smells home from the breeder/rescue
- Ideal if you can drop off a bed with the breeder for the puppy familiarise with.
- Do not leave them alone for the first few days
- Comfort them if they become distressed
- Make sure they have easy access to food, water, beds, puppy pads, and toys
- Prepare for accidents and potential upset stomach
- Do not worry about training
- Get to know them
- Let them initiate affection



Reproduced from Horn, Huber, & Range (2013)

Building a bond

- A secure attachment grows a dog's confidence, especially when in the presence of the owner.
- This will have a protective effect against: fear based aggression, separation anxiety, resource guarding, and much more.
- Build a secure attachment by spending time with your puppy and being sensitive to their needs:
 - Go to them if they are distressed
 - Give reassurance through petting
 - Spend time petting and cuddling
 - Avoid forcing them to do things that cause fear

Creating a sense of safety

Predictability

- Easy way to create predictability:
 - Always giving your puppy some attention if they look into your eyes.
 - Always putting down dinner after you say “dinner”.
 - Consistent training rules and games.

Control

- Easy ways to increase control:
 - Teaching your puppy if they go to their bed they will not be disturbed.
 - Not forcing your puppy to face things they are afraid of until they choose to do so.
 - Knowing you will check on them at night if they become distressed.
 - Give your puppy **choices** – multiple sleeping spaces, multiple toys, autonomy on walks.



Getting enough sleep

- Most puppies need around 16 hours.
- It will not be perfect right away.
- Dogs have evolved as social sleepers
- After a stressful experience, dogs need extra sleep.
- Setting up for good sleep:
 - Big enough space for the puppy to fully stretch out
 - Company from the owner is likely to be supportive
 - Check on your puppy if they wake up – they might be needing toilet, feeling thirsty, or scared.
 - Sleeping in the bedroom, near the owner is the best option as it will help build a stronger attachment.
 - Dogs need to feel safe to sleep well.

Crates?

Advantages:

- Can be a helpful tool with toilet training
- Keep your house and your puppy safe
- Gives your puppy a quiet place to escape to
- Safe and convenient for car travel



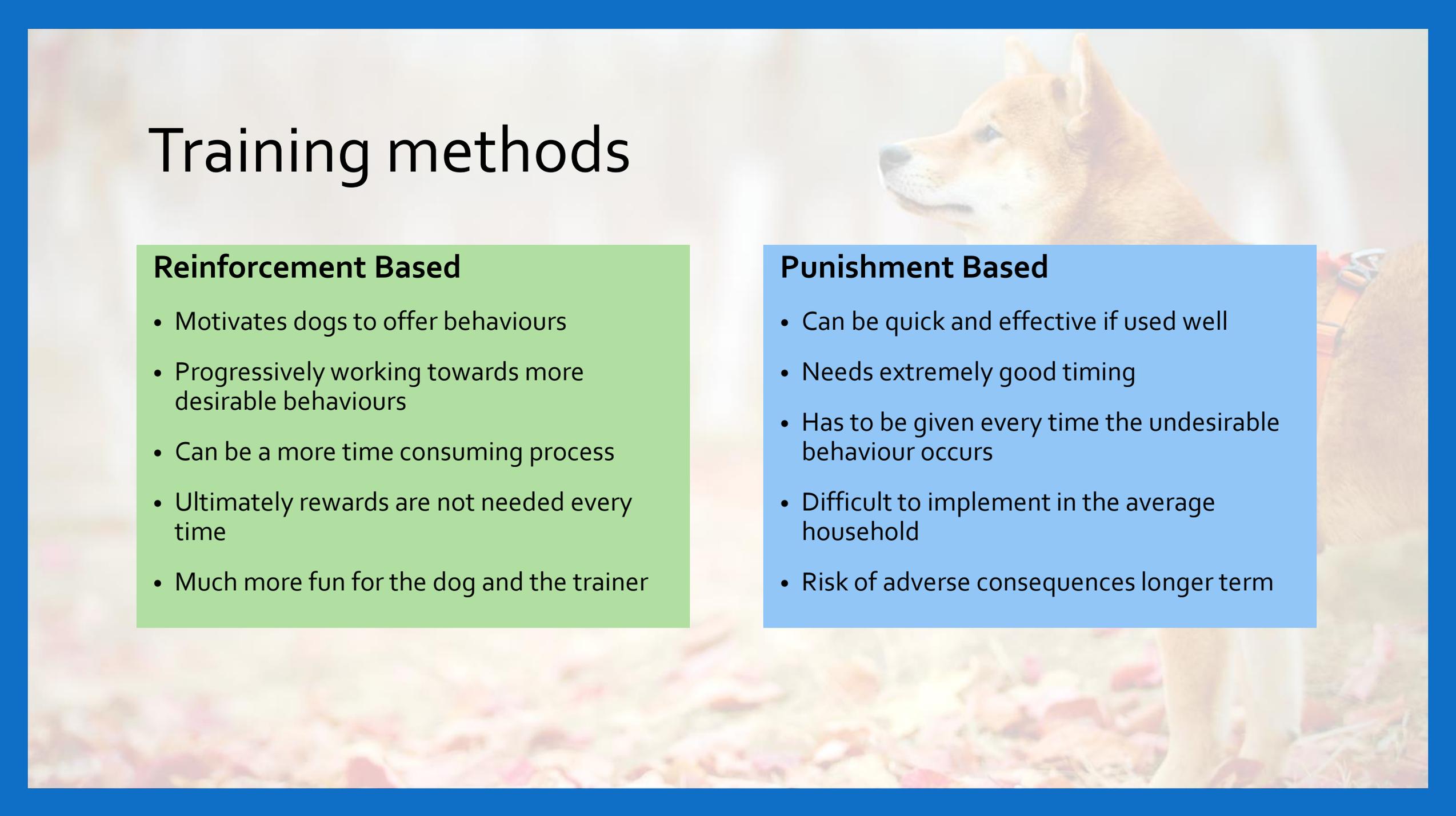
Disadvantages:

- May be too small – Puppies need to be able to lie out flat to get good sleep
- Puppies are likely to feel less safe when restricted – reduces control
- Can cause distress if introduced badly

Alternatives:

- Puppy proof room – baby gates, puppy fences, cable sleeves
- Larger puppy pen

Training methods



Reinforcement Based

- Motivates dogs to offer behaviours
- Progressively working towards more desirable behaviours
- Can be a more time consuming process
- Ultimately rewards are not needed every time
- Much more fun for the dog and the trainer

Punishment Based

- Can be quick and effective if used well
- Needs extremely good timing
- Has to be given every time the undesirable behaviour occurs
- Difficult to implement in the average household
- Risk of adverse consequences longer term

The fallout of punishment

1. Increased vigilance and over pleasing of the owner.
2. Trying to avoid the owner – poor recall, spending less settled time with owner around the house.
3. Higher cortisol levels – more prone to stress related disease, increased barking, increased mounting, more frequent abnormal behaviour development.
4. Attachment bonds likely to be less secure.
5. Dogs trained with exclusively positive reinforcement have been found to be the most obedient.
6. Greater risk of redirected aggression – towards other dogs, people, or towards the owner.

Dominance?

- Dominance hierarchies can sometimes be observed within groups of dogs. However, this is not something the dogs are consciously aware of, it is simply a reflection of their decision to either defer or not defer to another dog.
- There is no evidence dogs understand the concept of status, and their actions are not an attempt to gain a dominant position in the household, and therefore there is no need to implement harsh dominance reduction training techniques e.g. alpha rolls, as this will most likely confuse your dog.
- Hierarchies are most often seen when resources are limited, which is not typical of the average household.
- Dominant dogs actually tend to show very little aggression to subordinate dogs, and are generally happy to share food and resources in most circumstances.
- **Key message: do not try to dominate your dog, it will not help!**

Toilet training



Look for clues

Look out for signs your puppy may need the toilet: e.g. pacing, just eaten or had a drink, just woken up, whining, just had a play, just been spooked, or not been for a while.



Clean up immediately

If your puppy does have an accident indoors, do not tell them off, just clean it up as quickly as possible so they are not encouraged to go there again. It is best to avoid bleach based cleaners.



Reward toileting outdoors

Whenever your puppy does go to the toilet outdoors, reward them. Try to avoid staring at them when they are going, but as soon as they finish their toilet, be ready to reward them with a treat.

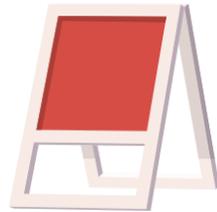
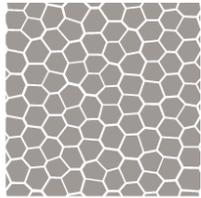
Socialisation – what is it?

- Socialisation refers to **controlled, fear-free** introductions to all the animals, objects, and experiences a puppy will experience throughout the course of their life.
- Generally takes place during the **juvenile period**.
- Facilitates the formation of social bonds with different groups such as children, other dogs, and other animal species.
- Dogs that have been poorly socialised are more likely to show aggression or avoidance behaviour to unfamiliar people, animals, or objects.



The Juvenile Period

- Between 12 weeks and sexual maturity (around 8-12 months).
- Great time for socialisation.
- Stronger fear responses, so socialisation must be done carefully.



How to socialise

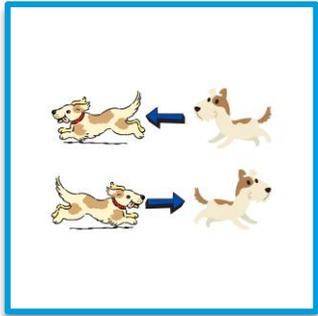
- It should always be voluntary – do not force your puppy do to things they are scared of, as they may not be ready yet.
- Start small – start with meeting one or two new people, or just one other dog. **There is no need to rush!**
- **One good experience is better than ten average experiences.**
- It does not mean running straight up to everything – ignoring stuff is an important skill as well.
- Work up **gradually**, make sure your puppy has had the chance to meet a few other dogs before taking them down the park.
- Reward your puppy with food when they do well.
- Some good things to work on are: people, children, textures/surfaces, walking on the lead, locations, the vet, brushing, other animals (especially those you live with), cars, and other big objects.

The importance of play

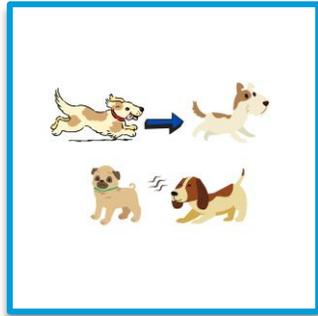


- **Individual play**
 - Inducing a positive emotional state and may contribute to motor skills development.
 - Can reduce stress – but high energy play may increase arousal.
- **Intraspecific play (play with other dogs)**
 - As well as motor skills development, helps dogs improve their social cohesion skills.
 - Improves sociability and reduces fear responses.
 - May prevent separation distress.
- **Interspecific play (play with humans)**
 - Helps with development of both motor skills and social cohesion.
 - Reduces stress, improves bond (attachment), and may reduce aggression.
 - **Low energy play** tends to be the best for reducing stress and bonding. (E.g. gentle tug).

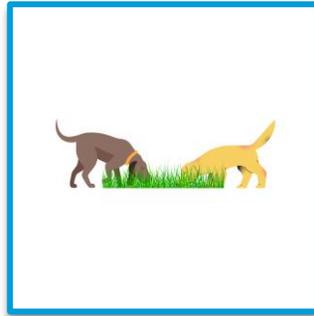
Recognising good inter-dog play



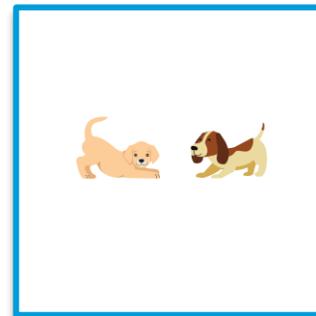
Role reversal



Activity shifts



Small breaks from
the play



Friendly body
language



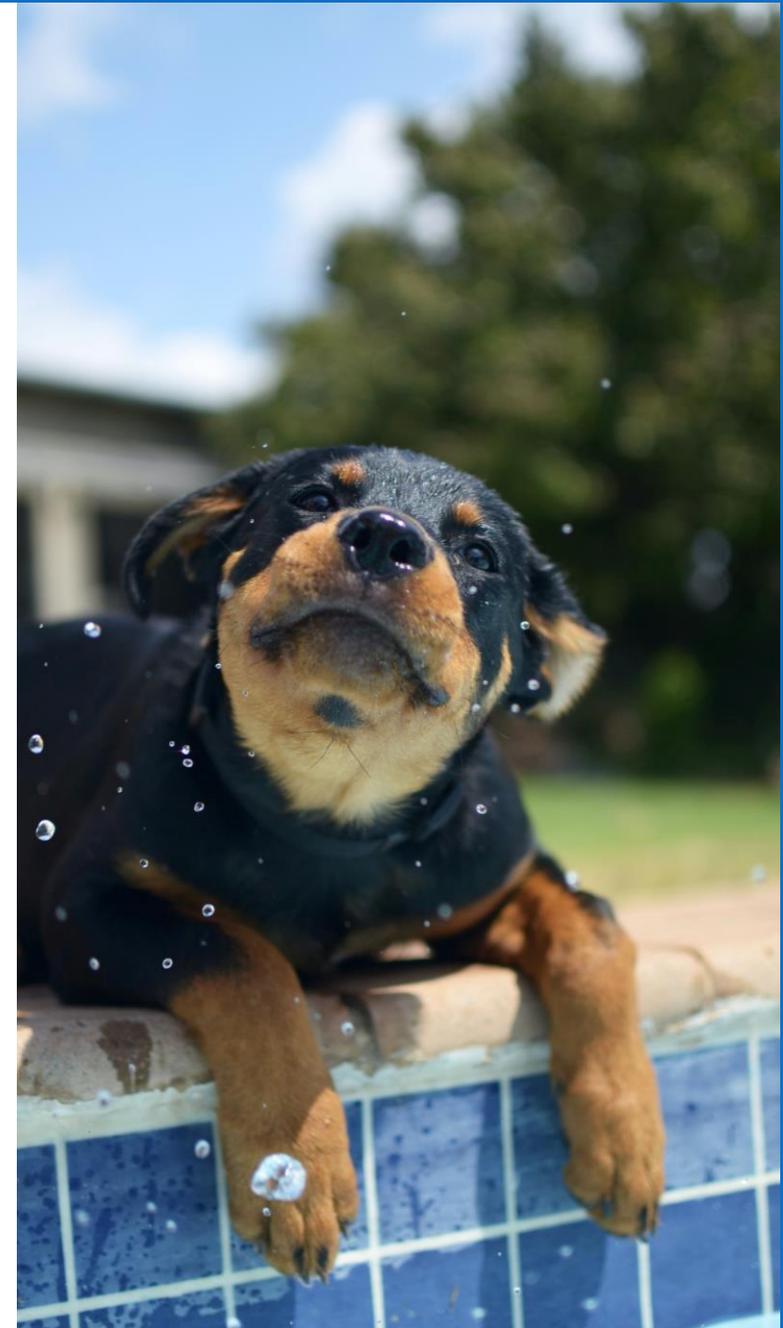
Self-inhibiting

Friendly body language can include:

- Play bows
- Head turning away
- Loose, bouncy posture
- Half closed or blinking eyes
- No staring
- Scent sharing

Puppy biting!

- What causes it?
 - Teething pain, social immaturity, boredom, being overtired
- It is completely normal
- There is no perfect solution.
- It can seem really bad, but it will get better.



Strategies for resolving puppy biting

Make sure you do not reward the behaviour:

- Avoid saying no
- Try not to make a noise
- Yelling “ouch” is unlikely to help
- Remain calm
- Any sort of excited response could make your puppy think you are playing
- Move away or step out of the room if you have to

Catch it early:

- If you see your puppy becoming excited and think they might start biting, be ready with a toy for them to play with.
- Make the toy as exciting as possible, and keep your hands as still as possible.
- This will teach them that using toys to interact with you is a great way to get your attention.

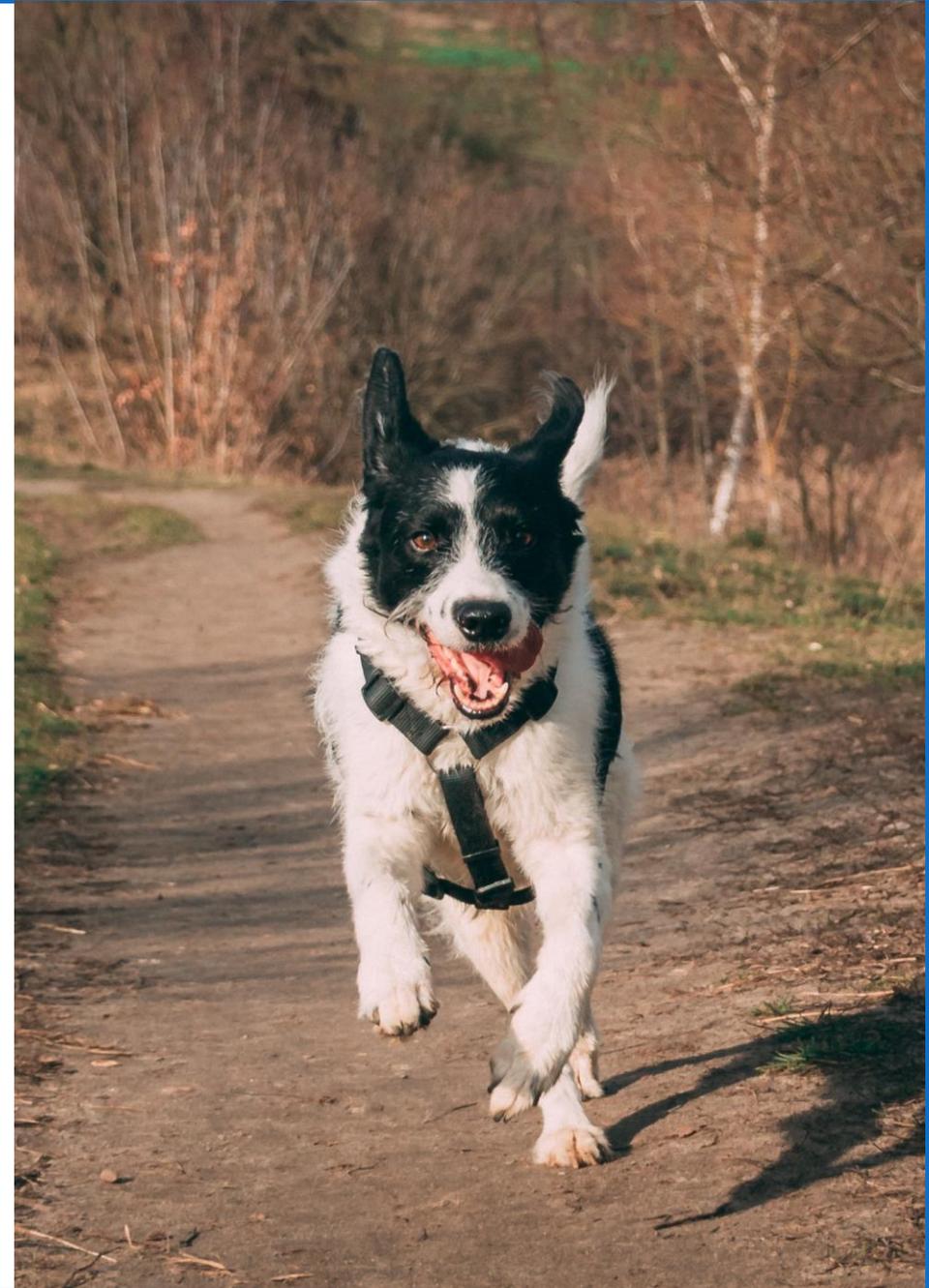
Set up alternative activities:

- Frozen kongs and healthy chews are a great way to calm puppies down and provide teething relief.
- Puzzle toys and training games will redirect your puppy’s focus.
- Encouraging a nap if you think your puppy is overtired (remember the 16 hours goal).

Recall training



- Have a specific recall cue e.g. “here”.
- Associate “here” with a special, high value, treat.
- Start practicing around the home.
- Start practicing in the presence of some minor distractions e.g. quiet park.
- Use a long training line for the first sessions for extra security.
- Start increasing the difficulties e.g. busier park, new locations.
- A 1-2-1 session with a trainer can support you with this.



Tools and equipment

Harness – for bigger dogs, front clip is ideal

Walking lead

Long 5m+ training line

Collar with name tag and phone number (legal requirement)

Treat bag – quick access to treats on walks, faster reinforcement

Portable water bowl and water – especially for warmer days



Takes place between
8 and 24 months
approximately



Changes in the stress
response. Both
excitement and fear-
based stress tends to
last longer.



Changes in learning and
memory – emotional
learning tends to be
faster and last longer.



Inhibition, planning,
problem solving
systems not fully
developed

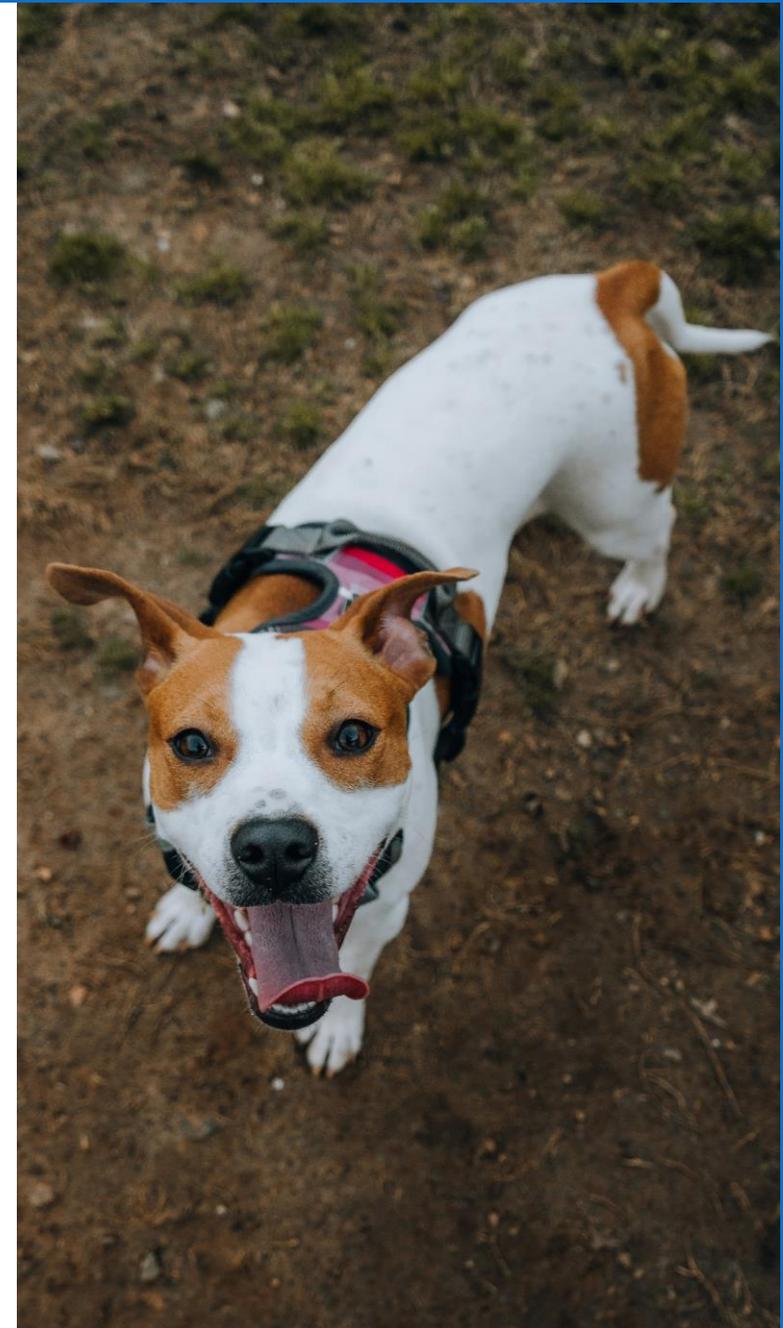


Increased risk taking
behaviours

Canine adolescence

How do we manage it?

- Keep expectations low
- Avoid over-stimulating your dog, as it will take them a long time to calm down. Instead try:
 - Scent games
 - Puzzle toys
 - Sniffing walks
 - Play with just one or two friends
- Predict and prevent things going wrong
 - Back to the training line in busy areas
 - Teen-proof your house
 - Watch them carefully – be aware they might be more likely spooked and more likely to react badly





For dog or cat behaviour support or training just visit our website:

<https://animalbehaviourkent.co.uk/>

And if you enjoyed the presentation, it would be great if you could leave us a google review:

<https://g.page/DogBehaviouristKent/review?rc>

Thank you for listening
Any Questions?



Great puppy resources!

- Companion Animal Psychology – Blog
(<https://www.companionanimalpsychology.com/>)
- Dog Training by Kikopup – YouTube Channel
(<https://www.youtube.com/user/kikopup>)
- Social, Civil, and Savvy: Training & Socializing Puppies to Become the Best Possible Dogs – Book
(<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34637691-social-civil-and-savvy>)
- Doggie Language – Book
(<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/50999387-doggie-language>)
- Canine Enrichment for the Real World: Making It a Part of Your Dog's Daily Life – Book
(<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/48588210-canine-enrichment-for-the-real-world>)

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