**PUPPY BASICS**

**Feeding**

* Until 6 Months of Age - Feed your pup 3 times a day (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
* 6 Months to Adult - 2 times per day (breakfast and dinner)
* For suggestions on high-quality food options, please talk with your breeder or veterinarian.

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**Water**

Pups should have **unrestricted access to water** from morning until about 7:00 pm. Limiting water in the evening will help limit your pups need to toilet in the night.

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**Containment**

For the safety of your pup, and to assist in house training, it is important to consider some form of containment! In some countries, it is common to train puppies to be content in a crate.   In other countries, it is not only uncommon, but can be illegal.  If a crate is not used, it is common to contain the pup in room or part of a larger room (i.e. a kitchen) with indoor fencing.  We encourage you to discuss containment with your breeder.  It is believed by some that crate training appeals to a dog's natural instincts as a den animal.  However, if a crate is not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. Never use the crate as a punishment. Puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time except at night. They can't control their bladders and bowels for that long.

**Training**

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**Housebreaking**

House training can be one of the most difficult and important parts of training your dog. It can be frustrating and definitely demands a lot of effort. Although it is possible to avoid accidents in the house at a young age through extreme diligence on the part of the family, full house training takes several months. A young pup can’t be expected to hold their need to toilet for long, so if you aren’t paying attention, don’t be surprised to find a mess in the house.

**Respectful Interaction**

Puppies and dogs deserve to be treated with respect. They are not stuffed animals but living creatures with their own desire for affection and respect. Puppies should not be carried around excessively but should be allowed to walk freely or, if they are to be restricted, on a leash. Puppies should not be restrained or forced to sit with someone they don’t want to. Puppies should be invited to interact. If they accept the invitation, they should be handled gently and respectfully. If they decline the invitation, their refusal should be respected.

**Normal Puppy Behaviors**

Your puppy is a baby. Just as we don’t expect babies to behave like adolescents or adolescents to behave like adults, it is important you keep your expectations reasonable. Jumping, nipping or biting, chewing, toileting accidents, limited attention span, grabbing objects and running off, not listening, etc., are all normal puppy behaviors. It is our job to teach our puppies how to live in our world, according to our rules, in a gentle and positive way. If you and your pup are struggling with some of these behaviors, please check out some of the resources noted below for tips on how to address them.

**Behavioral Issues**

Obedience issues and behavioral issues are not the same thing. Sometimes our pups need more one-on-one focused effort to address behavioral issues. Often the best way to deal with behavioral issues is to hire a trainer or behaviorist to come to your home for a one-on-one consult. We recommend trainers that use positive training methods.

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Balanced trainers use a combination of positive and aversive training methods. As an intelligent, trainable breed, Labradoodles do not respond well to strong aversive training. Positive reinforcement and clicker training are far more successful and fun for Labradoodles.

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**Physical Exercise**

Puppies have lots of energy and need to exercise. The most common cause of behavior issues is a lack of exercise and mental stimulation.

**Mental Exercise**

Mental exercise is as important as physical exercise. This means challenging your pup to use its brain! A dog’s most sensitive sense is its nose, and challenging its nose is one the best ways to use its brain.

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Training and sports (obedience, agility, fly ball, etc.) are also great ways to challenge your dog mentally. There are many puzzles and games available for your dog.