

PUPPY LEARNING AND SOCIALIZATION

What is socialization? Socialization is defined with two meanings. First, the positive adjustment a puppy makes to many aspects of his life, whether other dogs, places, people or objects; second, what we do to foster this. The period between 8 and 12 weeks of age is called the socialization period. Before initiating contact with the “outside world” make sure your puppy is healthy and current with all necessary immunizations. To prevent illnesses, do not allow him to interact with dogs of unknown health or vaccination history or sniff other animal feces.

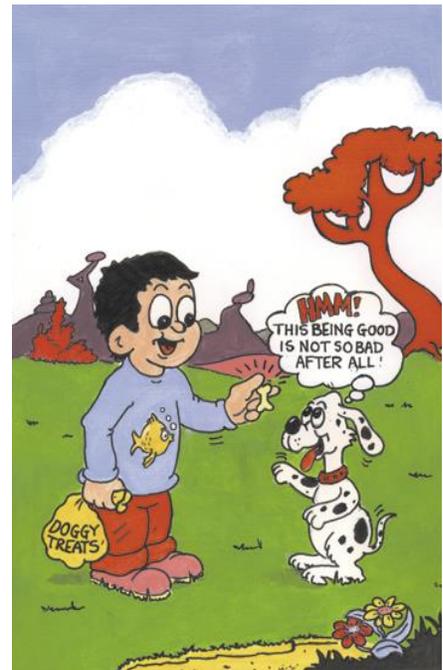
Good experiences with people and other dogs will help foster a lifetime of positive interactions, and minimize the risks of problems with fighting, biting and other problem behaviors. It is of no benefit to the puppy to be left cooped up all day in a kennel room with only a few toys or limited opportunity for play and investigation. There needs to be a balance between the time the puppy is in a kennel and other experiences.

It is essential to take your puppy with you to busy places and introduce him to strangers, children and other pets. It is important to vary environments. During the day your puppy is probably crated due to your busy schedule, so when it is possible take your puppy outside so he can experience the outdoors. This will allow him become interested in new places and mentally stimulate him with new environments.



Even the room where your puppy stays during the day can be made stimulating. A radio can be placed in the room allowing different music to play. Classical music is a good way to allow you puppy to hear different sounds and noises. Periodically blow whistles, clap together wooden blocks, jingle bells, or turn the vacuum cleaner throughout the day. Praise your puppy when they react positively to stimulation with alertness and curiosity. In the outside world dogs must come accustomed to deal with the constant stress of loud noises.

The other thing to teach your puppy at this age is his place in the “pack”. Dogs are pack animals as we explained earlier with the handling exercises. Your puppy will come to see your household members, be they people or other dogs or both, as the members of his pack. The number one rule is to remember that your dog should NEVER be the dominant member of his pack! You are in charge. You decided when it is time for him to eat, to get the nails trimmed or to go to the veterinarian. Your puppy must learn where his place is in the household.



We want to encourage you to devote the necessary time and energy to this project while your puppy is still young, to ensure that you have many wonderful, problem free years with our pet.