



Out N' About
dog training



PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

In technical terms, socialization is the developmental process whereby puppies and adolescent dogs familiarize themselves with their constantly changing surroundings. Essentially it means that puppies have to encounter and be comfortable with all of the things you want them to accept gracefully as adults. That means all kinds of people, other dogs, other animals, noises and sights, etc. Once they reach a certain age—around 4 to 6 months—their ability to easily accept new experiences begins to wane. If they have not been well socialized by that time there is a much greater risk of developing all sorts of behavioral problems stemming from fear—aggression, agoraphobia, reactivity towards certain people, animals, or situations, etc.

It's our job to help our puppies make positive associations with the things in their environment. Teaching your puppy that the world is safe will help prevent behavior problems in the future. Remember, while now is a crucial time to socialize your puppy, the need to see and experience new things will continue throughout your puppy's life.

Think about the things your puppy will see every week as an adult and make sure you visit those places, see those people, or experience those things now. Help him form positive associations by cheering and praising him when he encounters something new and when possible offer a treat, too. If he seems even a little bit nervous move a little distance away, give him treats, and then move on—anything he's unsure about should be encountered in short bursts. Walk away from whatever it is and then walk back. As he sees or hears the "scary thing" start your cheerful happy talk praise and break out the treats. When you move away from it, go quiet and stop the treats. We want your puppy to learn that the presence of the scary thing is what makes you give him the food. He begins to associate the food with the new experience and realizes that "Hey, that new thing really isn't so bad after all."

Puppy Socialization Checklist

Record your puppy's reaction to the new things he sees on your checklist. Using the chart and scoring system below, focus first on any areas where your puppy receives a one. Then work on the two's until your socialization checklist is full of 3's—he's seen it all and he loves it all.

1 – Hates It (fearful, avoids it, backs-away, growls)

2 – Deals With It (ignores it or walks away)

3 – Two Paws Up - Loves It! (approaches it willingly, wags tail, wiggles)

PEOPLE	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Seniors						
Adults						
Teens						
Children						
Pre-schoolers						
Toddlers						
Babies						
Adult Males						
Adult Females						
Different Ethnicities						

PEOPLE WEARING..	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Hats						
Sunglasses						
Beards						
Helmets						
Gloves						
Medical Uniform						
Mail Uniforms						
Meter Readers in Uniform						

PEOPLE WITH...	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Canes						
Crutches						
Walkers						
Wheelchair						
Scooter						
Baby Stroller						
Backpack						
Grocery Bags						
Shopping Cart						
Luggage						
Gardening Equipment						
Brooms						
Umbrella						

ANIMALS	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Adult Dogs						
Puppies						
Cats						
Livestock (cows, etc.)						
Horses						
Birds						
Small Pets						

THINGS THAT MOVE	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Joggers						
Bicycles						
Skateboards						
Roller Blades / Skates						
Scooters						
Motorcycles						
Trucks						
Buses						
Boats						

NEW PLACES	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Riding in the Car						
Hiking Trails						
Beach						
Pet Supply Store						
The Office						
Downtown						
Outdoor Café						
Vet's Office						
Friends' Homes						
Grooming Salon						
Park						
School Yard						
Party						

NOISES	8-10 Wks	10-12 Wks	12-16 Wks	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
Hair Dryer						
Vacuum						
Kitchen Appliances						
Loud Music						
Loud TV						
Doorbell						
Truck Backing Up						
Garbage Truck						