

Socialize that Puppy ! Our Checklist Will Help

THE most important thing you can do for a puppy is introduce them to the world in a positive way.



Puppies are genetically programmed to learn about and explore their future world up until just over 4 months of age. **Everything that they will see as adult dogs should be introduced to them as pups if it is at all possible.** If you get a puppy—this is your job. No excuses. You will pretty much eliminate future behavior problems if you do this properly.

Behaviorists, vets and trainers do not recommend waiting until your puppy has had all it's shots. You have a much greater chance of developing severe behavior problems than your puppy getting sick. Your puppy should be protected from Parvo before going out and about in strange places.

It is really important that you take your cues from your puppy and that you do not over face them. For example, some pups thrive at a puppy play group and others do not.

Below is a Socialization Checklist.
Hang it up. Use it. You're Welcome!

Different Types of People

- Men
- Women
- Boys
- Girls
- Shuffling people
- Slouched people
- People with glasses
- People on crutches
- People with walking sticks
- People with walking frames
- People walking strangely
- Babies
- Parties
- People on roller blades

- Joggers
- Wheelchairs
- Heavy people
- Thin people
- Tall people
- Short people
- People costumes
- People in big coats
- People with beards
- People with sunglasses
- People of all races
- Bald people
- People exercising (running, jogging, star jumps, etc)
- Children and babies
- Dancing people
- Busking people

Note: It is really important that your puppy interacts with kids of different ages. Please go out of your way to find children who will follow direction well and not hurt or scare your pup by accident. Consider having as many new people as you can find give your puppy high value treats. Dogs who like kids, tend to be good with them.

Your puppy needs to meet and interact with at least 100 people before they are 20 weeks old. If you don't have access to that many people, consider hanging out with your puppy at a busy shopping area. You need to do that more than one time. Make field trips fun.

Different surfaces

- Bean bags
- Tile floors
- Wood Floors
- Bubble wrap
- Different walking surfaces
- Wobbly bridges
- Heights
- Agility Equipment
- Gravel
- White floors
- Child's plastic sled
- Leaves
- Metal street grates
- Plastic tarp
- Cookie tin
- Walk through a ladder on the ground
- Tippy board
- Mud

- Puddles
- Foot bridge

Note: Be creative here! Your puppy will not need to walk on all of the above.

Good breeders will have already done this. You can pile the treats on different weird surfaces and gently encourage your pup to step on. Never force your puppy to go on something. Help shape the puppy to think that this is their idea.

Water

- Sprinklers
- Hoses
- Being wet by the hose
- Water
- Shower
- The beach
- The bath
- Swimming pools
- People swimming
- Water feature
- Rain

Note-Just because you got your puppy in the winter does not mean that you don't have to go out of your way to find things that they will see in the summer.

Places

- Airport
- Skate park
- Bus depot
- Bus stop
- Train station
- Shopping malls
- Loud fun places (fairs)
- Football game
- Supermarket
- School
- Coffee shop
- Building site
- The gym
- Tennis game
- Office
- Speed way
- Place with crowds
- Main roads
- Your place of work
- Playground

Note- Many large stores like Home Depot and Lowes allow puppies to come and train. Check with your local store before going. This will cover many things on your list. You need to go more than one time!

Moving and making noise

- Lawn mower
- Bikes
- Children playing with various toys
- Shopping carts
- Vacuum cleaner
- Skate boards
- Scooters
- Bus
- Train
- Tractors
- Ride on lawn mowers
- Bob cats
- Cars
- Hammering
- Trucks
- Motorbikes
- Chainsaws
- Fork lift
- Helicopters
- Aeroplanes
- Sirens
- Hair dryer
- Suit cases
- Go Karts
- Remote control cars
- Ceiling fans
- Mirrors
- Glass sliding doors
- Boats
- Automatic doors
- Garage doors
- Construction sites
- Dremel

Noises

- Fireworks
- Storms (e.g. thunder and lightning)
- Parties
- Computer dial up

- Musical instruments (piano, guitar, saxophone)
- Gunshot
- Cheering
- Yelling
- Singing
- School bell
- Sound effects CD and/or on line
- Saucepans
- Radio
- Lawn mower
- Loud noises
- The sound of a carbonated drink opening

Note- Fireworks -please do not take your puppy to fireworks. If you know a holiday is coming like the 4th of July, be ready to make it a positive experience with lots of yummy treats, your jolly voice and a soothing music. If your puppy lives with a noise phobic dog, consider having the pup in a different location during these holidays. You can also find noises on line that you can condition your puppy to. Start at low levels of course.

Situations

- Leash
- Harnesses
- Muzzle
- Loom overhead
- Collar grabs
- Opening mouth
- Cutting nails
- Grooming (as appropriate to the breed)
- Clippers
- Being tethered
- Having ears cleaned
- Having eyes cleared
- Having every part of the body handled
- Being picked up
- Teeth cleaning
- Being carried on a stretcher
- Being bandaged
- The vet

Note – Please make arrangements to stop in to your vets several times for some treats and love at times when your puppy does not have an appointment.

Weird things

- Big plastic objects
- Plastic bags

- Balloons
- Umbrellas
- Mirrors
- Big balls
- Thrown things
- Shopping trolleys
- Baby strollers
- Fast movement
- Kids toys
- Wind socks
- Brooms
- Vacuum cleaner
- The wind
- The wind blowing bushes/trees
- Flags
- Balls and frisbees
- Tents
- Flashlights

Travel

- Escalators
- Ride on Elevators
- The car
- Planes

Other animals

- Puppy school
- Big dog
- Little dog
- Shaggy dog
- Smooth dog
- Farm animals
- Bull breed dogs
- Rabbits
- Birds



Note – Your dog needs to see a lot of dogs that do not look like him. Bully breeds can be hard to read and without early experience, dogs can think they are being threatened by them.

This post was inspired by a post by [Lee Make Kennels](#)

Happy Training!

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About the author [Nancy Freedman-Smith](#)  

Nancy lives in Portland Maine with her 3 kids, 2 dogs and a revolving door of foster dogs. She owns Gooddogz Training and believes in force free training and having fun with your dogs. Her Mom tells us “Dog” and “horse” were her first words.