

Puppy Socialization & Training

Socialization is the process of preparing your dog to enjoy interactions with other dogs and be comfortable with other animals, people, places and activities. Socialization should begin during the puppy’s “**sensitive period**” which is between **3 and 14 weeks of age**.

Socialization Tips:

- For all dogs, adapt or create your socialization plan to prepare your dog for his or her life in your household including planned exposure to the species, individuals, environment and activities that will be part of his or her new life at a pace that will encourage calm or playful responses from your dog
- Provide regular positive experiences with these and other diverse experiences to encourage your dog to enjoy new experiences without becoming fearful or aggressive
- Provide praise, play and treats to reward engagement
- Allow the dog to withdraw if he or she is uncomfortable
- Move at a pace appropriate for your dog’s temperament
- Well-managed puppy socialization classes are a good way to begin to socialize a puppy within the sensitive period and to learn more about socialization
- Continue to reward your dog for calm or playful responses to social interactions and new experiences throughout his or her life

<i>The goal is that the puppy has positive experiences, not neutral or bad ones. It's important to watch the puppy's response and note what it is and to also give treats to help ensure the exposure is a success. Here's a checklist that can help you.</i>	<u>Progress</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>Response to the person, object, environment or handling</u>
	Needs Work	1	Overarousal or try to get at: Growl, nip, bark, struggle(for handling), to approach
		2	Avoid: Struggle, hide, try to get away, won't approach, or hesitant to approach
		3	Freeze: Holds still (but not eating), non-exploratory, moving slowly or acting sleepy when they shouldn't be tired
	Going well	4	Calm, relaxed, explores the object or environment, playful, focused on the food
5		Calm, relaxed, explores the object or environment, playful, even without food.	

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Class of Socialization	Score
Handling - check ears and wipe them, check mouth and eyes, touching and holding feet, clipping nails, pinching skin, poking skin with capped pen, grabbing by collar and/or other part of body, wiping body with towel, placing on back and holding there, putting on leash and/or harness	
Unfamiliar People - women, men of different heights, tones of voice or facial hair, elderly, people wearing hats, hoodies, backpacks, or sunglasses, people with canes, teenagers, children standing and playing, toddlers walking and squealing, infants crawling, people running.	
Unfamiliar Dogs - dogs who play well, dogs who will reprimand puppies appropriately, puppies who play well and do not get aroused	
Other animal species - cats, horses, livestock, small mammals or other pets you may have	
New Surfaces - concrete, slippery floors, metal surfaces, wobbly surfaces, stairs, wet grass and mud	
Scary Sounds - thunder, fireworks, babies and children, alarms, dogs barking, doorbell ringing, traffic, construction, vacuums and sirens	
Objects with Wheels - skateboards, rollerblades, garbage cans, shopping carts, wheelchairs, bikes, cars, buses and motorcycles	
Man-Made Objects - pots, pans, brooms, ceiling fans, balloons, umbrellas, bags blowing in wind and sidewalk signs	
New Environments - suburban neighborhood, residential city streets, high traffic streets, shopping mall parking lot, inside buildings, dog friendly events and veterinary clinics.	

For Information on Training & Enrichment for your puppy visit:
indoorpet.osu.edu/pet-owners & cooperativecarecertificate.com

