



INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR NEW DOG OWNERS

PUPPY SOCIALISATION



The socialisation window for puppies is between 3-12 weeks of age. This is the time when your puppy is learning what things are safe and what things should be avoided. Whether your puppy has good or bad experiences, or no experiences, within this window, can have a big impact on whether your puppy grows up to be a confident or an anxious dog. You should try to introduce your puppy to as many new experiences as possible in this time frame, in a positive and fun way. Reputable breeders should have already started this process!

When you get your puppy at 8 weeks old they will not be fully vaccinated and will be unable to walk outside, but this doesn't mean you can't continue the socialisation process!

Here are some things you can do to socialise your puppy before they are allowed to go on walks outside:

- Introduce them to other friendly, well behaved, calm and fully vaccinated dogs in a secure and private garden.
- Get them used to being left alone for short periods – a crate is great for this! Try feeding your puppy in their crate and making it a super cosy place for them to be so they enjoy hanging out in it when they're tired. Slowly build up the time you leave them in the crate for.
- Introduce them to any cats /rabbits/guinea pigs within the home.
- Get them used to being handled, especially things like looking in their mouth or ears and touching their paws and tail.
- Get them used to scary noises like fireworks / thunder / loud household appliances / crying babies. You can do this by playing these noises in the background from a CD or online streaming service.

- Carry your puppy outside and have them sit on your lap on a bench in the park or carry them around the shops so they can watch the world around them and gets used to crowds and noises.
- Get them used to riding in the car, start with short trips initially and ensure they are safely secured in a crate or with a harness and seatbelt.
- Get them used to wearing a collar and/or their lead and harness before you take them outside for the first time.

It is natural for puppies to be a bit nervous of new things and people initially but they should quickly overcome this and be keen to investigate. Some shy puppies may take a little longer and it's important not to overwhelm them as this can have negative consequences. If your puppy is showing signs of being overwhelmed or stressed remove them from the situation.

To avoid your puppy becoming overwhelmed or having a negative experience never force them into an interaction or situation if they seem worried and never tell your puppy off for having a fearful reaction. Try distracting them with their favourite treat or toy and trying again when they are calmer or on a different day. Let your puppy choose if they want to interact with someone new by getting the person to ignore your puppy and wait for your puppy to come to them.

Once your puppy has had all their vaccines and waited a week they will be able to continue their socialisation outside.

- Allow your puppy to play and interact with many different types of people and dogs but in a controlled way. Always ask if another dog is friendly before letting your puppy interact with them and keep a close eye on play to ensure neither dog is becoming anxious or worried.
- It is also important to teach your dog to ignore other people and dogs and they will not be able to say hello to every dog and person they meet. Try take them to the park for training sessions and teaching them to sit and focus on you while other people and dogs are walking past
- Get your dog used to traffic. This can be started by sitting on a park bench and watching traffic from a distance then slowly moving closer until your puppy is happy walking down the pavement with the cars going past. Motorbikes and lorries are often a lot scarier than cars so be sure to introduce your puppy to all types of vehicles.
- Get them used to different animals – livestock, cats, birds, squirrels - and get them to focus on you instead of the other animals, this will help prevent them chasing these animals in the future.

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