

# Socializing Your Puppy

Socializing puppies is more than just meeting people and dogs directly. Support your puppy's emotional well-being by exposing them to stimuli at a distance where they are most comfortable. Be your dog's advocate and avoid overwhelming your puppy. If you notice your puppy is showing that he is uncomfortable towards a stimulus, make sure to increase the distance between your dog and the stimuli. You can still create positive associations at a distance your pup is showing that he is comfortable.

It's not just about meeting other people and dogs. There's more stimulus in your dog's everyday environment that he will come across in his lifetime. Here are some tips on how to socialize your puppy:

## Meeting Other Dogs

Dogs learn to communicate with each other through body language. Playing and wrestling while responding to cues when to stop play. They also learn to read when a dog does not want to play anymore. Socializing with other dogs can also be dangerous if not fatal. Learning how to read canine body language and understanding what proper puppy play looks like is important before socializing. A traumatic event, like a dog attack, can have lifelong negative associations.



## Meeting People

Socializing your dog with other people doesn't mean you have to pass your puppy around to everyone. Remember all new people are strangers to your puppy and they can feel uncomfortable at times. Be your dog's advocate and prevent overwhelming situations. Socializing with people slowly and at your dog's own pace. Allow the dog to approach first. Do not force interactions on to your pup.

Also, socializing with people doesn't need to be direct in order to make a positive association. Give your dog a few tasty treats at a distance your puppy is feeling relaxed while visually engaging towards others.

Play dress up at home. Put on a big hat, winter clothes, work attire or uniform or even a costume while playing with your puppy. Get creative to costume ideas that you think your dog might run into. This game shouldn't be frightening. Your goal is to create positive associations and not to scare.





### **Handling and Touch**

We want to be sure your puppy is comfortable with all kinds of touch. Having their paws held, ears touched, eyes opened, teeth checked. You can desensitize your puppy at home while touching different body parts while licking some peanut butter out of a bowl or getting a few tasty treats. These associations will give your puppy a foundation of great handling. Avoid touching areas with current infections or injuries. Dogs may react by biting, in painful situations.



### **Different Surfaces**

We want to be sure your puppy is exposed to a variety of walking surfaces to prevent phobias. Your puppy should feel comfortable walking on carpet, wood, tile, linoleum, cement and grates. When out for a walk toss a few treats on or towards these surfaces and encourage your puppy to explore. Avoid pushing or shoving, this can increase the fear your puppy has towards these areas. At home you can set up certain obstacles that mimic walking upstairs, climbing into a kiddie pool or even a puddle of water.



### **Moving Objects**

Many dogs have a natural fear of moving objects like bicycles, strollers, skateboards, vacuum, or brooms. Even some dogs are bred to chase objects that move. If you ever come across these objects on a walk or in your home, have your puppy at a distance where you can grasp their attention and feed a handful of small tasty treats. If your puppy stops accepting treats, this is a point of fear or stress. Try increasing the distance between that object. Create a controlled environment at home where you can expose your puppy to these objects during movement with association these events with something they enjoy like treats or a game of play in the background.



### **Sounds**

There are many soundtracks available that replicate the same sounds your puppy may experience outside. Construction noises, other animal noises, kids playing, car keys, vacuum, hair dryer or traffic are all examples of sounds your dog may be exposed to in their lifetime. Exposing your dog to these noises will make them no big deal when coming across them in a real situation. Start by playing these sounds at a level that is barely audible and your pup shows no reaction to. Play these sounds during feeding times, play times or even enjoying a chew toy or bone. Slowly increase the level of sound over time. Make sure to pay attention to your dog's body language and stress signals. If you hit a point your pup is uncomfortable go back to a level where there's no reaction.



# SOCIALIZATION CHECKLIST



Socialize your puppy to a new item EVERYDAY



## PEOPLE

- Babies
- Toddlers
- Pre-teen
- Female
- Male
- Teens
- Men of all sizes
- Men of all ages
- Women of all sizes
- Women of all ages
- People of Different Races
- People Wearing Hats
- Post man
- Garbage man
- Fireman
- Policeman
- People in wheelchairs
- People with canes
- People with head scarfs
- People in costumes
- Vet/Vet Techs
- People in Scrubs

## BEING TOUCHED

- Back
- Belly
- Collar or Neck
- Face
- Ears
- Mouth/Gums
- Front Legs
- Hind Legs
- Holding / Hugging
- Paws / Nails
- Tail / Rear

## PUBLIC EVENTS

- Sporting Event
- Birthday Party
- Holiday Celebration
- School Gathering
- Street Fair
- Seminar
- Picnic/Camping
- Beach
- Park
- Sports Field
- Pond/Lake
- Restaurant
- Coffee Patio

## GROOMING

- Bath/ Shower
- Brushing
- Blow Dryer
- Combing
- Ear Clean
- Eye Cleaning
- Nose Cleaning
- Teeth Cleaning
- Nail Filing
- Paws and Between Toes
- Towel Dry

## EXPERIENCES

- Being left alone
- 5 minutes left alone
- 10 minutes left alone
- 30 minutes left alone
- 1 hour left alone
- 4 hours left alone
- Car rides
- Crossing Over Bridge
- Crossing a Street
- Doggy Play date
- Elevator or Lift
- Going Thru a Tunnel
- Rail-Road Crossing
- Going up and Down Stairs
- Taking a Walk
- Kiddy Pool
- Water Sprinklers

## PLACES

- Vet Office
- Sporting Fields
- Pet Store
- Bowling Alley
- Skating Rink
- Drive In Theater
- Farm
- Boat
- Bus
- Soccer Field
- Coffee Shop
- Outdoor Patio
- Hardware Store
- Parking Lot

## SOUNDS

- Thunder
- Fireworks
- Gun Shots
- Barking dogs
- Diesel Engines
- Loud Music
- Burning Wood
- Crying Babies
- Hunting Calls
- Banging of Pots and Pans
- Lawnmower
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Washing Machine
- Garage Door
- Doorbell
- Knocking
- Smoke Alarm

## SMELLS

- Pizza
- BBQ/ Grilling
- Food Court
- Exhaust fumes
- Grass
- Paint
- Rubbing Alcohol
- Frying Egg
- Other Dog Food
- Gasoline (at a distance)
- Pool
- Beach

## OBJECTS

- Balloon
- Broom
- Vacuum
- Moving Objects
- Flags
- Home Robot
- Hula Hoop
- Kids toys
- Mirrors
- Paper and Plastic bags
- Wire crate
- Plastic crate
- Shopping cart
- Baby Stroller
- Bicycles
- Skateboard
- Scooter
- Surfboard
- Kayak
- Paddle Board
- Baseball Bat
- Gym Equipment
- Backpacks
- Suitcases
- Ice
- Surf boards
- Camera
- Phones
- Fence

## Surfaces

- Dirt
- Grass
- Wet Grass
- Gravel, loose and packed
- Sand
- Tile
- Concrete
- Granite/ Marble
- Slippery surfaces
- Metal
- Carpet
- Man Holes
- Wood Chips
- Puddles
- Moving
- Cold
- Mud

