

PUPPY SOCIALIZATION



Socializing your puppy is one of the most important things you can do to avoid behavior problems and ensure that your pet is well-adjusted. Socialization is hugely important for helping your dog acclimate to being around other people, animals, and various environments. **The critical time to socialize your puppy is during the first 3 – 4 months of life.**

Before beginning the socialization process, you will need to make sure your puppy is properly vaccinated before introducing them to unknown dogs. You can make play dates with other dogs that are known to you and known to be properly vaccinated.

Puppies can develop a fear of things they don't know. The more people, places, and things you can expose your puppy to, the less likely they are to become fearful. Have your puppy meet the mailman, the UPS driver, and the little girl or boy who lives next door. While out for a walk, let them engage with other people (not animals until fully vaccinated), take them in the car for a quick drive and always have treats on hand so new people can give them to your puppy. Reinforcing good behaviors is very important.

PUPPY TRAINING CLASSES: YES OR NO?

YES!! All puppies should have puppy training. Most puppy kindergarten classes also include some "puppy play time." This play time is essential for socialization. Other puppies can help your puppy learn not to play too hard, or that nipping isn't appreciated.

Going to puppy training classes will also create a bond between you and your puppy. Everyone in your household needs to attend puppy training so everyone is on the same page when it comes to training and what commands to use.

TOUCH SOCIALIZATION

Your puppy also needs to be socialized to touch. When you bring them to the veterinarian for their annual visit, the doctor will touch their paws, ears, lips, nose, back, tummy and tail. Your puppy should be used to these types of touches because you have been doing them at home.

- In order to clip your puppy's nails, you will need to touch their paws.
- If you are brushing their teeth, you will need to touch their lips and mouth.
- When they come in from the rain and you want to towel-dry them, you will be touching them all over.

Your puppy will get used to these touches as long as you socialize them. Again, you will want to have treats ready to reinforce good behavior. Any time you are introducing them to someone or something new, you should encourage and reward to make the experience more positive.