

SOCIALIZATION is the process of introducing a puppy to the world in a way that will help him be confident and unafraid of people, places and things that he will encounter throughout his life. The most critical socialization window occurs before the age of 12 weeks, and that window is considered to be closing by 5 months. Generally the younger the puppy is when he is socialized, the more quickly and easily he gains confidence. Waiting too long can result in a need for the more difficult process of rehabilitation instead of socialization. Most aggression issues are simply a result of inefficient socialization.

RULES OF SOCIALIZATION:

Each socialization exposure must be fun for your puppy. If he is forced to confront fears he's not ready to handle, the process can backfire and create a fearful/aggressive response. Go at his pace, and at a distance he feels safe. Your puppy should be the one to initiate each approach to something new **and be allowed to retreat when needed to feel safe.**

Socialization includes generalization. Though your puppy may be fine with the toddlers or dogs in your home, that does not mean he is fine with all children and dogs. Even if he is in a class, he will need to meet new and different dogs and people, and in different places, after his classmates and their owners become familiar to him. You need to continue to expose him to new things, places, and contexts to best generalize his confidence with new things.

Pair treats with exposures to make good associations. If your puppy is worried about those children he sees running across the street, it can help if the sight of the children makes cheese suddenly appear. Or if he doesn't like her paws touched, a brief touch followed by a lick of peanut butter from a spoon can make paw touches easier to handle. If he will not take food, that is a good indication that you need to back up and lower the intensity of the exposure with more distance or less pressure.

If your puppy seems to be fearful of certain things and doesn't gain confidence quickly, please see a force-free trainer to help you. Remember that ***socialization is a time-sensitive procedure.***

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Your Puppy Socialization Check List



Puppy Socialization Check List

Visual & Noises		Places		Interacting with people		Meeting People		People Sounds	
Sirens		Veterinarians		Holding puppy		Men with:	Beards	Talking loudly	
Fireworks		Boarding kennels		Touching paws			Hats	Laughing	
Car horns		Daycare		Touching muzzle			Sunglasses	Crying	
Traffic		Pet shop		Touching ears			Jewelry	Shouting	
Thunderstorms		Maneuver & Touch		Touching tail			Helmets	Arguing	
Fairs and festivals		Stairs		Hugging puppy			Cigarettes	Children playing	
Shopping malls		Escalators		Touching collar		Women with:	Hats		
Busy traffic		Tile		Checking teeth			Sunglasses	Meeting Animals	
Crowds of people		Marble		Clipping nails			Jewelry	Puppies	
Airplanes		Asphalt		Brushing teeth			Helmets	Male adult dogs	
Helicopters		concrete		Checking between pads		Children:	0-2 years	Female adult dogs	
Wheelchairs		Grass		Cleaning ears			in strollers	Kittens	
Crutches, canes		Sand		Touching rear legs			2-4 years old	Cats	
Bicycles		Carpet		Brushing, grooming			4-12 years old	Horses	
Skateboards		Wood					13-19 years old	Cow	
Radios		Smell				Adults with	Crutches	Sheep	
loud cars							Canes	Chickens	
Motorbikes							Wheel chairs	Ducks	
Parking lots						Elderly Person	Male		
Door bells							Female		
Knocking on doors									
Trucks									
Trains									



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