

Puppies are born and learn to speak dog language. However, when they go to live with people they learn to speak English as a second language. When I say speak I mean body language as well as play bark, warning bark, fearful bark, etc.

If you do not continue to expose your dog to other dogs and animals they will lose their ability to “speak” dog language which may result in issues down the road with other animals.

We as humans must learn how to read “dog” language to insure that our dogs are safe with other animals. This is your responsibility as a dog owner.

Puppies are genetically programmed to learn about and explore their future world up until just over 4 months of age. Everything that they will see as adult dogs should be introduced to them as pups. Puppies have a “window” that closes around 4 months of age and after that window is closed, it can never be opened all the way again. Early socialization to every day things that the dog will encounter in its lifetime is very important. If you get a puppy—this is your job. No excuses. You will pretty much eliminate future behavior problems if you do this properly.

Behaviorists and trainers do not recommend waiting until your puppy has had all its shots. You have a much greater chance of developing severe behavior problems than your puppy getting sick. Your puppy should be protected from Parvo before going out and about in strange places. Use common sense. It is perfectly fine to take your puppy to friends, family members, neighbors, etc to socialize the puppy. It is also perfectly fine for the puppy to be around the same people's pets. It is actually fine to take your puppy into PetSmart and places similar, as owners that don't care about their pets and their health do not frequent these places. I do not advise taking them to dog parks but this is because there can be other animals in the dog parks that can cause issues as well as owners who don't have their dogs trained well. Your puppy is actually more at risk in going to the vet, than the places I have mentioned above because there are sick animals at the vet. Please use caution when going to the vet and carry the puppy when you can when it is very young.

May behaviorists talk about 100 people in 100 days. This many seem like an astronomical number and that it is not an attainable goal. However, taking the puppy to the kids soccer or baseball game, they will certainly encounter a lot of new people. Even a trip around the neighborhood will have pet loving owners coming out of the house to meet your new ball of fluff. These numbers actually add up pretty quickly and it is actually a very realistic goal.

It is really important that you take your cues from your puppy in what they are comfortable with. For example, some pups thrive at a puppy play group and others do not.

Below is a Socialization Checklist.

Hang it up. Use it.

Different Types of People

- Men
- Parties
- People on roller blades
- People of all races
- Bald people

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- People exercising (running, jogging, star jumps, etc)
- Children and babies
- Dancing people
- Busking people
- Joggers
- Wheelchairs
- Heavy people
- Thin people
- Tall people
- Short people
- People costumes
- People in big coats
- People with beards
- People with sunglasses
- People of all races
- Women
- Boys
- Girls
- Shuffling people
- Slouched people
- People with glasses
- People on crutches

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- People with walking sticks
- People with walking frames
- People walking strangely
- Babies
- Parties
- People on roller blades
- People with sunglasses
- People of all race

Note: It is really important that your puppy interacts with kids of different ages. Please go out of your way to find children who will follow direction well and not hurt or scare your pup by accident. Consider having as many new people as you can find give your puppy high value treats. Dogs who like kids, tend to be good with them.

Different surfaces

- Bean bags
- Tile floors
- Wood Floors
- Bubble wrap
- Different walking surfaces
- Wobbly bridges
- Heights
- Agility Equipment
- Gravel
- White floors

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- Child’s plastic sled
- Leaves
- Metal street grates
- Plastic tarp
- Cookie tin
- Walk through a ladder on the ground
- Tippy board
- Mud
- Puddles
- Foot bridge

Note: Be creative here! Your puppy will not need to walk on all of the above.

Good breeders will have already done this. You can pile the treats on different weird surfaces and gently encourage your pup to step on. Never force your puppy to go on something. Help shape the puppy to think that this is their idea.

Water

- Sprinklers
- Hoses
- Being wet by the hose
- The beach
- The bath
- Swimming pools

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- People swimming
- Water feature
- Rain

Note-Just because you got your puppy in the winter does not mean that you don't have to go out of your way to find things that they will see in the summer.

Places

- Airport
- Skate park
- Bus depot
- Bus stop
- Train station
- Shopping malls
- Loud fun places (fairs)
- Football game
- Supermarket
- School
- Coffee shop
- Building site
- Tennis game
- Office
- Place with crowds
- Main roads
- Your place of work

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- Playground

Note- Many large stores like Home Depot and Lowes allow puppies to come and train. Check with your local store before going. This will cover many things on your list. You need to go more than one time!

Moving and making noise

- Lawn mower
- Bikes
- Children playing with various toys
- Shopping carts
- Vaccum cleaner
- Skate boards
- Scooters
- Bus
- Train
- Tractors
- Ride on lawn mowers
- Bob cats
- Cars
- Hammering
- Trucks
- Motorbikes
- Chainsaws
- Fork lift
- Helicopters

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- Sirens
- Hair dryer
- Suit cases
- Remote control cars
- Ceiling fans
- Mirrors
- Glass sliding doors
- Boats
- Automatic doors
- Garage doors
- Dremel

Noises

- Fireworks
- Storms (e.g. thunder and lightning)
- Parties
- Computer dial up
- Musical instruments (piano, guitar, saxophone)
- Gunshot
- Cheering
- Yelling
- Singing
- School bell

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- Sound effects CD and/or on line
- Saucepans
- Radio
- Lawn mower
- Loud noises
- The sound of a carbonated drink opening

Note- Fireworks -please do not take your puppy to fireworks. If you know a holiday is coming like the 4th of July, be ready to make it a positive experience with lots of yummy treats, your jolly voice and a soothing music. If your puppy lives with a noise phobic dog, consider having the pup in a different location during these holidays. You can also find noises on line that you can condition your puppy to. Start at low levels of course.

Situations

- Leash
- Harnesses
- Muzzle
- Collar grabs
- Opening mouth
- Cutting nails
- Grooming (as appropriate to the breed)
- Clippers
- Having ears cleaned
- Having eyes cleared
- Having every part of the body handled
- Being picked up

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- Teeth cleaning
- The vet

Note – Please make arrangements to stop in to your vets several times for some treats and love at times when your puppy does not have an appointment.

Weird things

- Big plastic objects
- Balloons
- Umbrellas
- Thrown things
- Shopping trolleys
- Baby strollers
- Fast movement
- Kids toys
- Wind socks
- Brooms
- The wind
- The wind blowing bushes/trees
- Flags
- Balls and frisbees
- Tents
- Flashlights

Travel

- Ride on Elevators

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- The car

Other animals

- Puppy school
- Big dog
- Little dog
- Shaggy dog
- Smooth dog
- Farm animals
- Cats
- Rabbits
- Birds