

# PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO MASTERING YOUR PUPPY'S MOST  
IMPRESSIONABLE STAGE OF LIFE



**FREE EBOOK!**





# PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

## CREATING A BLUEPRINT

Build up your puppy's experiences of the world around them in a careful manner to ensure that they develop a relaxed and confident outlook on life and the world around them.

Early experiences shape your puppy's emotional blueprint so it's important to set them up for success from the very beginning.





# WHAT IS SOCIALIZATION?

Socialization is a term you've likely heard before, But what exactly does it mean and why is it so important?

## BUILDING A BLUEPRINT

Socialization is the process whereby our puppies learn how to interact with the world around them. They learn social skills with dogs, people and other animals, as well as building an understanding of how things work in the world around them.

They learn what is safe and enjoyable as well as what is scary and should be avoided. In order to help our puppies to develop into confident, resilient adult dogs, we need to ensure that we are careful with how we introduce them to new experiences.

## WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The goal of socialization is to ensure our puppies are well-adjusted and feel confident with everything they will likely experience throughout their life.

We are looking for them to be calm and relaxed, not easily startled by things and certainly not obsessive or over excited by the world around them.

It's really important that as well as allowing our puppies to interact with people and dogs, we also teach them the art of watching at a distance. while having fun with you instead.

This will help a lot when it comes to getting your puppy's focus or calling them back to you when they're off the lead.

1

Build positive associations

2

Allow your puppy to watch from a distance

3

Don't force your puppy to confront their fears

## LESS IS MORE

It is really tempting to allow our puppies to meet as many dogs and people as possible during their development.

However if we allow our puppies to interact with everyone there are 2 common issues that arise:

1. Our puppy becomes over excited whenever they see another dog or person. They know seeing people and dogs is really fun and they become excited and desperate to get to them. This will lead to problems with focus on us and could result in our puppy ignoring calls to come back when off lead.
2. Our puppy becomes overwhelmed. Some puppies are wary of new people and if we don't know what signs to watch for when they are uncomfortable, it's really easy to create a negative association with strangers. This can lead to fear, growling and barking at unfamiliar people.



## "BE YOUR PUPPY'S ADVOCATE"

Rather than focusing on the number of interactions, it's more important to ensure the quality of the interactions our puppies do have.

If your puppy holds back or moves away allow them the choice not to interact. Prevent people and dogs from forcing our puppy to engage as this will build up their trust and confidence far more than overwhelming them will.

Allow your puppy the chance to approach a dog or person in their own time. Have the stranger crouch and offer their hand out to the side of their body, away from your puppy. If your puppy chooses to approach, make sure the person doesn't grab them. Be your puppy's advocate and prevent bad experiences by standing up for what's in their best interest.

If your puppy seeks contact, keep interactions short and enjoyable before encouraging your puppy to move away with you again.

## "GIVE YOUR PUPPY THE CHOICE TO INTERACT OR NOT"





# ***TOP 6 EXERCISES***

## **FOR PUPPY SOCIALIZATION**

### **01 New Objects**

Create a confidence course with unfamiliar objects for your puppy to investigate. Praise them and drop treats as they investigate. Stay close for support and remember never to lure your puppy into a situation where they're scared. Allow them time to explore at their own pace.

### **02 Sounds**

There are lots of sounds which will be unfamiliar to a puppy living in lockdown, E.g. crowd noise, children playing, busy traffic, building site noise. Play these noises while your puppy enjoys a stuffed Kong. Start with a low volume and increase gradually. Make sure your puppy is relaxed throughout.

### **03 Dress Up**

Yourself not your puppy! Get creative with fancy dress. Include sunglasses, hats, walking sticks, wigs, hi-viz jackets, gloves, bulky clothes, masks and PPE. Let your puppy sniff the items before putting them on slowly. Praise and treat your puppy throughout.

### **04 The Doorbell**

Practice pushing the bell and scattering treats for your puppy to make a good association. Also practice having a family member stand outside and knock on the door while you praise and treat your puppy.

### **05 Observe**

Sit with your puppy in their pen outside the front of your house. Watch the world go by while your puppy enjoys a Kong or other food puzzle. You will be getting your puppy used to the sounds, sights and smells of your neighborhood while not making everything overexciting

### **06 Handling**

With routine vet visits and grooming sessions on hold it is up to us to prepare our puppies for these experiences. Practice lifting your puppy onto a table with a piece of non slip matting on. Feel over their back, legs, tail, ears, neck, muzzle, eyes. Go slow and reward your puppy lots.



# SOCIALIZATION CHECKLIST

## PEOPLE

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Teenager
- ☐ Elderly
- ☐ Toddler
- ☐ Baby
- ☐ Uniform
- ☐ Crutches
- ☐ Wheelchair
- ☐ Walking Stick
- ☐ Jogger
- ☐ Hats
- ☐ Beards
- ☐ Masks
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Glasses
- ☐ High Vis
- ☐ Jewellery
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Helmets
- ☐ Fancy Dress
- ☐ Bulky Clothes

## PLACES

- ☐ Town
- ☐ Woodland
- ☐ Beach
- ☐ Moor
- ☐ Field

## SURFACES

- ☐ Concrete
- ☐ Wood
- ☐ Tiles
- ☐ Grass
- ☐ Lino
- ☐ Marble
- ☐ Carpet
- ☐ Rubber
- ☐ Ice
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Metal Drains
- ☐ Wobbly (with care)
- ☐ Uneven
- ☐ Gravel
- ☐ Tarmac
- ☐ Sand
- ☐ Wood
- ☐ Stairs (in moderation)

## ANIMALS

- ☐ Puppies
- ☐ Large Dogs
- ☐ Small Dogs
- ☐ Cats
- ☐ Horses
- ☐ Sheep
- ☐ Cows
- ☐ Deer
- ☐ Chickens

## VEHICLES

- ☐ Cars
- ☐ Buses
- ☐ Lorries
- ☐ Motorbikes
- ☐ Trains
- ☐ Emergency Vehicles
- ☐ Skateboards
- ☐ Bikes
- ☐ Rollerblades
- ☐ Wheelchairs
- ☐ Mobility Scooters
- ☐ Planes
- ☐ Helicopters
- ☐ Pushchairs
- ☐ Bin Lorries

## SCARY STUFF

- ☐ Floating bags
- ☐ Wheelie Bins
- ☐ Balloons
- ☐ Vacuum Cleaners
- ☐ Brooms
- ☐ Automatic Doors
- ☐ Lifts
- ☐ Umbrellas
- ☐ Hairdryers
- ☐ Shopping Trolleys
- ☐ Kites
- ☐ Masks

## SOUNDS

- ☐ Talking Loudly
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Laughing
- ☐ Shouting
- ☐ Coughing
- ☐ Children Playing
- ☐ Arguing
- ☐ Doorbells
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Sirens
- ☐ Washing Machine
- ☐ Blender
- ☐ Metal Crate Door
- ☐ Car Horns
- ☐ Traffic Noise
- ☐ Thunderstorms
- ☐ Heavy Rain
- ☐ Strong Wind
- ☐ Gunshots
- ☐ Fire alarm
- ☐ Oven Timer
- ☐ Crowd Noise
- ☐ Knocking on Door
- ☐ Fireworks
- ☐ Drill

## REMEMBER...

1

Experiences at a distance are just as important as close up interactions

2

Give you puppy a chance to decide what to do. If they are unsure give them time to make up their mind

3

Never force your puppy to confront their fears. Doing so could have long lasting implications



# ENRICHMENT IDEAS

## CHECKLIST

### SENSORY

#### SCENT

- ☐ Place an item of clothing that has your scent in their crate for soothing.
- ☐ Find a safe place (no/low dog traffic area) where your puppy can safely sniff on a long line
- ☐ Hide treats in a small room, then spread out to other areas of your house.

#### TASTE

- ☐ Enjoy a taster board of "novel foods including meats, fruits, veggies (check safe for dogs first)

#### TOUCH

- ☐ Explore different textures - lickimats, wooden roots, antlers
- ☐ Different surfaces - sand, mud, water, tree bark, grass, gravel
- ☐ Body Massage (gentle)

#### SOUNDS

- ☐ Wind Chimes
- ☐ Birdsong
- ☐ Coastal sounds
- ☐ Animal sounds
- ☐ Sounds Playlist

### REMEMBER...

1

Take care with any activities involving chasing, climbing or moving over wobbly surfaces

2

Don't leave your puppy unattended with any enrichment activity

3

Take new experiences at your puppy's pace. Never force them to do things they are worried about

### FOOD BASED

- ☐ Towel with treats in
- ☐ Noise box
- ☐ Recycled bottle "roller
- ☐ Stuffed Kong
- ☐ Muffin tin with tennis balls
- ☐ Slow feeder bowl
- ☐ Destruction box
- ☐ Toilet tube with treats
- ☐ Snuffle mat
- ☐ Scatter feeding
- ☐ Treats in a ball pit
- ☐ Treats under an upturned laundry basket
- ☐ Spinning bottle
- ☐ "treat dispenser
- ☐ Frozen broth and fruit/veggie ice cubes
- ☐ Lickimat
- ☐ Buffalo horn
- ☐ Yak milk chew

### PHYSICAL

- ☐ Digging - Sandpit/ "Paddling Pool
- ☐ Exploring
- ☐ Climbing On
- ☐ Climbing In
- ☐ Moving Under
- ☐ Moving Through
- ☐ Front Paws On
- ☐ Chasing bubbles
- ☐ Wobbly surfaces

### SOCIAL

- ☐ Watch the World
- ☐ Interact with People
- ☐ Interact with Dogs
- ☐ Watch Animals
- ☐ Investigate New "places together
- ☐ Settle in a Cafe/Pub
- ☐ Puppy led walk
- ☐ Trip to the woods
- ☐ Trip into town
- ☐ Trip to the park
- ☐ Trip to the pet shop
- ☐ Visit a friends house
- ☐ Take a car ride

### BRAIN GAMES

- ☐ Puzzle Feeders - 'sliding platforms, "treat wobblers, "rolling treat balls, "food under cups/plant pots,
- ☐ Clicker games - "reward incremental "interactions with a "novel object '
- ☐ Hide and seek - "puppy finds you
- ☐ Search for favourite "toy/food treats
- ☐ Training games - "hand touch, "peekaboo, down etc

### TOYS

- ☐ Tug (gentle)
- ☐ Chase - flirt pole, "whip toys
- ☐ Interactive dispensers
- ☐ Crinkly toys
- ☐ Squeaky balls
- ☐ Rustling plushie





# PREVENTING SEPARATION ISSUES

## TEACH YOUR PUPPY TO REALLY RELAX ON THEIR OWN

It takes time for our puppies to be comfortable with being left on their own, even for short periods. We should never force a puppy to experience isolation before they are ready but there are some key things we can do to help set our puppies up for success.





# WHY DO PUPPIES STRUGGLE?



When we bring our puppies home everything changes for them in an instant. They are separated from their brothers, sisters, mom and family that have been with them since the moment they were born. It's not surprising that this causes our puppies to want to be close to us, as they learn all about the strange new world they find themselves in.

## **IT'S PERFECTLY NORMAL**

Puppies naturally will want to be around their family, particularly in the early days of coming home. With so much change going on our puppies need to know they are safe and as they can't look after themselves nature encourages them to seek comfort from us. It's our job to be there for them and support them fully.

## **CAN I LEAVE THEM?**

It's really important that if your puppy isn't ready to be on their own, that we don't force them to be separate from us.

If your puppy starts to cry when you go, then we mustn't leave them to 'cry it out' as this will only cause them distress and teach them that we cannot be depended on for support when they need us the most.

If your puppy is relaxed and calm when you leave the room, you can leave them for short periods while you go to the bathroom, or make a cup of tea.

Don't be surprised if this is too much for your puppy to start with though!

1

Be supportive and available for your puppy

2

Never leave your puppy to 'cry it out' before returning the them if they're distressed

3

Be prepared to go at your puppy's pace – never rush them



# DON'T RUSH

We know that forcing separation too soon can be really damaging to our puppy's emotional and physical well being. So how do we help them to be ready?

Puppies will naturally become more independent when they develop a secure relationship with us. When they know that we are always on hand to support them and they can rely on us to keep them safe and happy, they will start to feel much more confident in their surroundings and the wider world.

We don't have to enforce isolation to make sure our puppies are able to be left. Exposure to being alone won't make your puppy feel happy about it. Instead what we need to do is build a secure relationship so that they know we won't leave them to fend for themselves. This will help them not to panic when we leave and instead feel fully relaxed and settled in our absence.



"BE WARM AND  
NURTURING IF  
YOUR PUPPY IS  
DISTRESSED"

We can help our puppies achieve this by doing a few simple things which make a world of difference.

- Be present and engaged – that means actively doing things with your puppy, not passively entertaining them while you watch TV or play on your phone.
- Go to them if they are upset. At this age they really do need you if they're in distress, so go to them, be warm and nurturing .
- Rescue them from situations that are causing them fear or distress. If your small puppy puts their paws up on you when a larger dog rushes over to them, lift them into your arms so that they feel safe and know you will always protect them. You can't reinforce fear with kindness...
- Engage in fun activities together. Explore new objects and locations. Learn new things together using fun, reward based training methods.

"INDEPENDENCE  
COMES NATURALLY  
WITH A SECURE  
RELATIONSHIP"



## SET PUPPIES UP FOR **SUCCESS**

When we are teaching our puppy to relax on their own for short periods of time it's important that we make it as easy as possible for them to succeed.

### **THE ROUTINE**

Before leaving our puppies we must first ensure that they have had everything that they need first. This should include:

- A walk or physical exercise appropriate for their age (typically 5 minutes per month of age)
- Food, preferably given to them in a way that is interesting and enriching. E.g. in a snuffle mat, Kong or puzzle toy
- A chance to use their brain by doing some fun training games with us
- A trip to potty before settling down

### **THE DEPARTURE**

When these are in place your puppy will be more relaxed and ready for a nap. This is the perfect chance to practice leaving them on their own.

Settle your puppy down in their crate or pen and stay close by until they start to settle and fall asleep. Quietly leave the room and let your puppy have some proper rest while you are in a different location.

If you hear them wake later, make sure you go back to them before they start to cry and see if they are waking up properly or settling down again for more rest.

Remember puppies need a lot of sleep each day - up to 18 hours! So be sure to let them rest as much as possible

**1**

Always ensure your puppy has had everything they need before leaving them

**2**

Go back before they fully wake up or start to cry.

**3**

Make sure your puppy is getting plenty of rest in a quiet area of the home.



# CHOICES

One of the most powerful things we can do to help our puppy succeed is to give them a choice. We know that choice helps to create confidence and it's a great way to allow our puppies a chance to practice being on their own, without any risk that we will go too quickly for them.

To set up this exercise you will need one of your puppy's chew toys, attached to a rope. A quiet area with a comfortable blanket/bed and something fixed to attach their toy to.

1. Start by stuffing your puppy's kong with their favourite treats such as small amounts of cream cheese, peanut butter, mashed banana or frozen yougurt.

2. Tie your puppy's Kong to the inside of their crate/pen or other fixed location next to their blanket. Make sure you don't close the crate/pen door.



"LET YOUR  
PUPPY DECIDE  
WHETHER TO  
STAY ON THEIR  
OWN OR  
FOLLOW YOU"

3. Let your puppy start to chew on their Kong, while you move around the room. Your puppy is completely free to follow you if they wish, or remain on their blanket enjoying their chew.

4. When your puppy is fully choosing to remain with their toy instead of following you around, you are ready to start leaving the room for a few seconds before coming back. Make sure that you aren't gone for long and that your puppy can choose to follow you if they want to.

You will find that your puppy becomes less and less interested in what your doing and more able to settle on their own with their chew toy the more we practice this game.

You can then start to increase the duration that you leave for and if your puppy is still fully relaxed even build up to closing your puppy's crate/pen door for short periods while you leave.

As you begin to lengthen the time you leave for, be sure to record your puppy while you're gone. You need to know that they are happy and relaxed and not stressed by your absence.

"CHOICE HELPS TO  
BUILD CONFIDENCE"