

PUPPY SOCIALIZATION TIPS

FROM ASK THE DOG GUY

JOHN WADE



CONFIDENT PUPPIES ARE BUILT

There's more than meets the eye when it comes to socializing a puppy. The happy, outgoing unflappable adult dogs you meet are dogs that experienced a wide range of sounds, sights, and smell experiences as puppies.



Anxious, fearfully aggressive dogs more often than not have back grounds where they had little variety early in life. Proper socialization exposure is much more than hanging out with immediate family and going to a puppy socialization class.

It's a common misconception that puppy socialization classes meaningfully have an impact on a puppy's socialization period. Weekly classes with other dogs have little to do with positive imprinting for potential future trouble spots like thunder, infants, children, even been left alone, and much more. It's better to not leave these things to chance so dog owners need to do a little extra

socialization planning to help their puppy grow up to be confident in all contexts of life.

Do it right and not only do you reduce the chances of anxiety and aggression but you'll "build" a puppy that's more confident that will grow up and be able to go more places and do more things with you. That means more opportunities for exercise and mental stimulation and that means a happier healthier dog.

Use the following check list to give your puppy a great start to life.¹

Focus on People

For proper socialization, puppies need frequent positive meetings with more than their immediate humans. Give your puppy plenty of positive experiences around:

- Infant Stage²
- Crawling Stage
- Toddler Stage
- Eight Year Old Males (Dogs bite 8 year old boys more than any other age group)
- Seniors that use canes, walkers, wheel chairs etc
- People from different cultures

¹ These tips are excerpts from 'Socialize Your Puppy for Everything by John Wade' and 'Prepare Your Dog for Your Baby - The Right Way! with John Wade'

² The sound is the most important aspect and if access to the real thing isn't possible you can use a sound track.

<http://store.askthedogguy.com/prepare-your-dog-for-your-baby-soundtrack-of-baby-crying/>

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Focus on Alone Time

Possibly the single biggest mistake made by new puppy owners is not building gradual increments of alone time in the socialization strategy. You can head off the horrors of separation anxiety by gradually increase the amount of time your puppy spends absolutely alone (preferably in a crate³).

- By the time a pup has reached 16 weeks of age they should be acclimatized to spending time alone from 4 to 6 hours a day. By absolutely alone - there is no one in the home.

Focus on Dogs

Not as important as you might think as dog to dog social imprinting ends at about 6 weeks of age so your pup's mom and litter mates should have worked out the important stuff by now. After that point it's about maintenance.

When exposing your dog to other dogs you need to take into account age, breed and personalities. Mother dogs are pretty diligent about what goes on amongst litter mates.

Be careful of puppy socialization classes where breed traits, age, size and attitude are too diverse. A bad experience, even just an accident during rough housing can have create assumptions that can have an impact on down the road.

- The best and safest approach is to set up regular play dates with similar puppies and dogs you already have experience with.

Focus on Experiences

Expose your puppy to every conceivable sound, sight, smell and texture and make positive associations with words of encouragement, treats and even the company of happy confident dogs. Here's a list of things to consider for your socialization game plan:

Veterinary and Grooming Care

- Go watch your veterinarian give a dog an examination.
- Go watch a groomer clip nails and give a trim, bath and dry a dog
- Practice all that at home - but in little bits and pieces, associating those positives every time.
- Visit the groomers and the veterinarian daily if possible.

³ The puppies crate experience should not be exclusively when left alone. During the early stages of introduction crates should be used frequently when owners are home and in or near the same room. Pups should be taken there for their naps (or when their owners need a nap.) They may have a chew treat that they especially enjoy but only in that crate. They can even be fed in their crates. At night, crates can be kept near their owners bed at first and gradually moved elsewhere if need be. It doesn't hurt to have an extra crate around so keep an eye on garage sales.

Motorized Vehicles And Equipment

- Buses (air brakes)
- Dump trucks (air brakes and rattling)
- Harley & Other motorcycles
- Dirt bikes
- Airplanes
- Lawn mowers/snow blowers/chainsaws
- Garage doors
- Vacuums
- Dremel (for nail trimming - great for thick or black nails)

On Wheels Without Motors

- Skate boards (this one is important)
- Bicycles
- Roller bladders
- Shopping carts

People Wearing

- Hoods
- Parkas
- Sunglasses
- Various hats

Scary Sounds

- Thunderstorms⁴
- Fireworks⁵

Other Animals

- Cats
- Rabbits
- Livestock
- Horses

⁴<http://store.askthedogguy.com/thunder-soundtrack-prepare-your-puppy-for-preparing-puppies-and-desensitizing-fearful-dogs-40-minutes/>

⁵ Comes with the Thunderstorm Sound Track
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Standing, Walking, and Playing on Different Indoor / Outdoor Surfaces

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CarpetTile | <input type="checkbox"/> Grass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardwood | <input type="checkbox"/> Wet Grass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Linoleum | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Grass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry Tub | <input type="checkbox"/> Gravel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sink | <input type="checkbox"/> Sand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manhole covers | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grating | <input type="checkbox"/> Mud |

Enjoy your puppy

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