

Puppy Socialization



Congratulations on bringing home your new puppy! Did you know that socialization needs to start early before your pup has their complete set of Parvovirus and Distemper vaccines? Socialization is introducing your puppy to the world in a way that will help him be confident and unafraid of new people, places, and things throughout the dog's life. The most critical socialization period occurs BEFORE 12 weeks (about 3 months), and the window will start to close between 4-5 months of age.

Giving your puppy treats with all exposures will help to make positive associations with people, places, and things. Change the environment if your puppy seems frightened by giving him some distance. Socialization also includes helping him to generalize. This means he needs to be exposed to new people, places, and things to help him build confidence. Find some safe ideas in our DO'S list and avoid taking him to locations in our DON'TS list.

- ✔ Sign up for our puppy class or with a Certified Professional Dog Trainer at www.ccpdt.org
- ✔ Arrange for puppy play dates with your friends who have fully vaccinated and well-socialized dogs that are tolerant of puppies OR Puppy Kindergarten classmates (or both)
- ✔ Safe suggested places: wineries, breweries, dog-friendly restaurants that aren't overcrowded, malls and shopping centers (e.g., Lowes, Home Depot), and schools (expose your puppy to children, but NO group greetings!)
- ✔ Go for walks with or without dog-friendly fully vaccinated dogs in your neighborhood, the Arboretum, Biltmore Gardens, Lake Louise.
- ✔ Practice going to the veterinarian! Fun vet trips for treats and learning to jump on the scale as a puppy will help prevent anxiety when your dog has to go to the vet later in life!
- ✔ Go for car rides to new environments, including drive-throughs. Help him get used to the motion on short rides to the store or even just around the block.
- ✘ Avoid going to highly trafficked areas such as downtowns, densely populated free public parks, breweries where dogs are off-lead or environments where stray dogs may wander.
- ✘ Avoid going to dog parks or doggie daycares until your dog is at least 6 months of age. Not all dogs like puppies!

Keep in mind it's the quality of exposure that counts, not the quantity! Brief exposure is just as important, provided they are happy and enjoying themselves. Stay calm, take treats with you, and by all means, pick up your pup if they become uncomfortable. Let them know you have their back!