

SOCIALIZATION

What is it?

Socialization is the developmental process whereby puppies and adolescent dogs familiarize themselves with their constantly changing surroundings. It is how they work out what is safe and good as opposed to what is dangerous and not-so-good.

Anything you want your puppy to cheerfully accept as an adult—people of all kinds, animals, things, and situations—you must introduce her to often and in a positive manner in the first 6 months of her life. Then you have to make sure she stays comfortable with all these new things.

But puppies love everything already!

Sure, they do. Until the early stage of their development draws to a close. At that point, they become wary of other dogs if they have met too few. And down the road, puppies can become shy or growly around children or strangers, too, unless they have met and enjoyed meeting a bunch of them.

Under-socialized dogs are at much greater risk of developing all sorts of behavioral problems stemming from fear—aggression, agoraphobia, and reactivity towards certain people and animals, for example.

Teach your puppy that the world is safe and prevent behavior problems in the future.

How to socialize your puppy.

- Think about the things your puppy will see every week as an adult: Visit those places, see those people, or experience those things now.
- Help your puppy form positive associations: Cheer and praise her when she encounters something new. Offer a treat whenever possible.

Step 1. If your puppy seems even a bit nervous, move a little distance away, give her treats, and then walk away—anything she is unsure about should be encountered in short bursts.

Step 2. As soon as your puppy seems more relaxed, try again. As she sees or hears the thing that scared her before, start your cheerful praise and break out the treats.

Step 3. If your puppy did not seem nervous with the new thing or acts curious about it after she has been treated, go back and let her investigate a little more. Again, praise and treat.



Training Tip:

When you move away from any new thing, go quiet and stop the treats. We want your puppy to learn that the presence of the thing is what makes you give her the food. That way, she begins to associate the food with the new experience and realizes that, "Hey, that new thing isn't so bad after all."

Check out our Puppy Socialization Tips handout in this Behavioral Wellness Folder for more socialization dos and don'ts (it's *that* important!).

Need more help?

If you just don't have time to regularly take your puppy on socialization field trips, check out our **Friend for Life Training Packages**. Training can leave even the best puppy parents feeling frustrated and impatient. Leave the tough stuff to us so you can get to the good part: a well-behaved dog you love to spend time with.

We come to your home and work directly with your puppy two days a week, marking off things to do/see/experience on your puppy's socialization checklist while building manners. Plus it gives them a mid-day break and potty training support! At the end of each week, you'll join a coaching session to build your skills so you can keep those newly-learned behaviors going for life. The support doesn't end there— we continue to see you for a few additional coaching sessions to ensure the training sticks while your puppy continues to grow.

Get ready to enjoy life with a your new best friend! Contact us today to get started:

www.ingoodpawsdt.com