

# Socialisation

## What is socialisation?

Socialisation is interaction for your puppy with other dogs to help them develop behaviourally. Socialisation is the single most important thing you can give your puppy to allow it to grow into a well-rounded dog.

Puppies have a sensitive period which lasts until they are about 12-16 weeks in which they are open to new experiences. After this period unfamiliar people, objects and places are approached with caution and puppies can often become fearful, leading to the possibility of being aggressive. A puppy does not have to be mistreated to become afraid of people or new experiences.

For a puppy to grow into a well-rounded and successful adult it needs to get on well with other living creatures, be comfortable in its surroundings and cope with changes in everyday life. A well socialised dog will be able to adjust to new surroundings, be friendly and happy around people and take changes in its life in its stride. A puppy which is not socialised from an early age may become afraid of new people and situations, potentially making the dog become aggressive towards people and other animals. Dogs that are fearful often cannot escape these situations and behavioural problems have their origins in fear due to a lack of experience in puppyhood. These problems are often difficult for owners to cope with and may end up with rehoming to an animal shelter or euthanising the dog if the behaviour is extreme.

## How do you socialise your puppy?

Get your puppy doing as many different things and meeting as many people as possible without overwhelming your puppy (young puppies get tired easily and need time to relax uninterrupted). Socialisation should start with the breeder and you need to continue as soon as your new pup moves in. If you get your puppy from a quiet house or an outside kennel you will need to start as soon as possible to make up for lost time. Arrange for your puppy to have several new experiences every day, eg vacuum cleaner, washing machines, noisy tv programmes and children playing whilst allowing for rest and recuperation between. Make sure all encounters are enjoyable for your puppy. You can give new treats or toys for your puppy to play with. If your puppy appears apprehensive, then give it space to approach in its own time.

- 🐾 Find friends or family of different ages and gender who don't mind having your puppy round to visit to experience new environments and people.
- 🐾 You can visit friends or family who have sociable, vaccinated dogs for your puppy to play with.
- 🐾 If you are unsure of another dog's vaccination status or the dog is unfriendly, do not allow it to mix with your puppy.
- 🐾 Take it on short car journeys.
- 🐾 Start basic training like sit, down and stay immediately.
- 🐾 Start putting a collar and lead on your puppy immediately to get them familiar with it.



## Contact Information

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