

# Why is SOCIALISATION so important?



## 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 every day 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, making the dog become more aggressive towards people and other animals. Dogs that are fearful often cannot escape these situations and often resort to biting. Many other 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 euthanasing 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). This should start the moment you first get your puppy. Ideally, socialisation should start with the breeder. 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, whilst allowing for rest and recuperation between. Make sure all encounters are enjoyable for your puppy. You can give new people tasty treats or toys for your puppy to play with. If your puppy

appears apprehensive, then give it space to approach in its own time. Do not overwhelm it.

If your puppy has not yet completed its vaccination course, here are things you can still do to socialise your puppy

- 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 dogs 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 used to it

Care and Kindness For Your Pet

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