

Puppy Socialization Solutions

BEHAVIOR SERIES



The first few months of your puppy's life are critical for its health and development. A well socialized puppy is one that gets along well with all different types of people, dogs and other species, like cats. This takes effort on your part, ideally this exposure needs to start between 4 and 16 weeks of age and be maintained throughout his/her life. While socialization is a lifelong process, the most sensitive period is during the first 16 weeks of life. Take advantage of this opportunity to set your puppy up for lifelong success.

Things to Do:

- Read your puppy's body language and make each introduction comfortable for your puppy
 - Comfortable: body relaxed, ears up, tail up and wagging
 - Fearful: backing away, ears back, cowering, tail tucked
- Identify a favored reward:
 - Special toy
 - Treat
 - Petting
- Introduce your puppy to:
 - Five new people each week until he/she is 16 weeks of age
 - Upon introduction with your puppy, have the new person give a favored reward. Make sure to include all different groups of classes of people in this process including people of different ages (children to senior citizens), genders and ethnicities
 - Well mannered, healthy, vaccinated pets to come to your home and play with your puppy
 - After 16 weeks of age, your goal should be to introduce your puppy to at least one new person each week
- Enroll your puppy in a puppy obedience/ socialization class

Things to Avoid

- Overwhelming your puppy
 - If your puppy exhibits fearful behavior, you have gone too far, too fast; adjust the circumstances so that your puppy is comfortable
- Physically disciplining your puppy by hitting, swatting or rubbing its face in a mess
 - These techniques may negatively impact its future relationship with people
- Taking your young puppy to high risk disease areas like parks, rest stops or areas with stray dogs

Do not wait until your puppy is 4 to 6 months of age to start socialization.



For additional information, please contact your Banfield medical team.

