



## **Puppy Basics**

### **Puppy Training and Socialization Guide**

#### **Socialization, Handling, Grooming**

Socializing and exposing your puppy to everyday sights and sounds is extremely important. A puppy that leads a secluded life may grow up to be a fearful adult dog. It's tricky because you don't want to expose your young puppy to other dogs and areas that carry diseases before they are fully vaccinated. There are, however, things you can do to help your puppy before and after they've completed their series of vaccinations which typically happens around 5 months of age.

#### **Meeting People**

- Ask friends/family to meet your new puppy. If your puppy seems shy/timid around new people, give your friend some treats and ask them to drop the treats on the ground for the puppy to eat.
- They can gradually work toward offering treats from their hands, but take it slow if the puppy seems nervous about the new person.
- Never let anyone force their attention on your puppy as this only heightens their fear of strangers.
- Once your puppy is fully vaccinated you can start to take him/her out to public places that don't have a lot of dog traffic, such as a walk in your neighborhood.
- Keep your puppy away from places like dog parks, pet stores, and other popular dog places until they are fully vaccinated as these locations put your puppy at higher risk of contracting a contagious disease.
- If your puppy seems extremely timid around new people please let us know so we can help you with further training tips.

#### **Handling/Grooming**

- Get your puppy used to human handling. Touch their feet, ears, tail, etc.
- Pick them up. Brush them with a dog brush. Getting your puppy comfortable with this type of handling will help tremendously when it's time to go to the vet or have their nails trimmed.

- If your puppy seems nervous about this type of handling, have some treats on hand and feed your puppy treats while handling them so they associate the handling with good things.
- You can smear a thin layer of peanut butter on a bully stick or something similar and handle your puppy while he/she is licking the peanut butter. This peanut butter trick also can work during bath time.

### **Meeting Dogs**

- Dog-dog socialization is important! Before your puppy is fully vaccinated you are somewhat limited where you can bring your puppy (no dog parks!).
- As an alternative, once your puppy is at least 4 months old, you can ask a friend to bring over their dog-social dog for a play date.
- Make sure your friend's dog is puppy-friendly as not all dogs enjoy the company of puppies.
- Be mindful about his/her first experiences with other dogs and always supervise the interactions.
- For adopted puppies who are fully vaccinated, puppy classes that include puppy free-play are great because they are supervised as well as offer a more sanitary place for puppies to play.

### **Introducing New Sights/Sounds**

- Expose your puppy to different sounds and objects both within your home and outside. You may have to start at low levels or from a distance. Using treats just as you did with new people is helpful.
- If your puppy seems fearful of sounds like thunder, you can use an app on your phone to play the sound while you adjust the volume.
- Always start at a level where your puppy shows zero fear and only work very gradually at increasing the volume/distance.
- If your puppy starts to show fear, back off the volume, give him/her lots of treats then try again later.
- This may be a slow acclimation process but it's worth it.

- When your puppy is old enough, bring treats along and walk him/her past a playground where children are having fun.
- You don't need to let a bunch of children pet your puppy if he/she seems fearful, but get your puppy used to the sounds of children playing, trucks passing, garbage trucks working, etc.

If your puppy is struggling with any of these socialization/handling exercises please let us know so we can work with you on a plan specific to your puppy.