

**SOCIALIZATION** is the process of introducing a puppy to the world in a way that will help him be confident and unafraid of people, places and things that he will encounter throughout his life. The most critical socialization window occurs before the age of 12 weeks, and that window is considered to be closing by 5 months. Generally the younger the puppy is when he is socialized, the more quickly and easily he gains confidence. Waiting too long can result in a need for the more difficult process of rehabilitation instead of socialization. Most aggression issues are simply a result of inefficient socialization.

#### **RULES OF SOCIALIZATION:**

***Each socialization exposure must be fun for your puppy.*** If he is forced to confront fears he's not ready to handle, the process can backfire and create a fearful/aggressive response. Go at his pace, and at a distance he feels safe. Your puppy should be the one to initiate each approach to something new **and be allowed to retreat when needed to feel safe.**

***Socialization includes generalization.*** Though your puppy may be fine with the toddlers or dogs in your home, that does not mean he is fine with all children and dogs. Even if he is in a class, he will need to meet new and different dogs and people, and in different places, after his classmates and their owners become familiar to him. You need to continue to expose him to new things, places, and contexts to best generalize his confidence with new things.

***Pair treats with exposures to make good associations.*** If your puppy is worried about those children he sees running across the street, it can help if the sight of the children makes cheese suddenly appear. Or if he doesn't like her paws touched, a brief touch followed by a lick of peanut butter from a spoon can make paw touches easier to handle. If he will not take food, that is a good indication that you need to back up and lower the intensity of the exposure with more distance or less pressure.

If your puppy seems to be fearful of certain things and doesn't gain confidence quickly, please see a force-free trainer to help you. Remember that ***socialization is a time-sensitive procedure.***

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# Your Puppy Socialization Check List ✓



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Visual & Noises	Places	Interacting with people	Meeting People	People Sounds
Sirens	Veterinarians	Holding puppy	Men with:	Talking loudly
Fireworks	Boarding kennels	Touching paws		Laughing
Car horns	Daycare	Touching muzzle		Crying
Traffic	Pet shop	Touching ears		Shouting
Thunderstorms	<b>Maneuver &amp; Touch</b>	Touching tail		Arguing
Fairs and festivals	Stairs	Hugging puppy		Children playing
Shopping malls	Escalators	Touching collar	Women with:	
Busy traffic	Tile	Checking teeth		<b>Meeting Animals</b>
Crowds of people	Marble	Clipping nails		Puppies
Airplanes	Asphalt	Brushing teeth		Male adult dogs
Helicopters	concrete	Checking between pads	Children:	Female adult dogs
Wheelchairs	Grass	Cleaning ears		Kittens
Crutches, canes	Sand	Touching rear legs		Cats
Bicycles	Carpet	Brushing, grooming		Horses
Skateboards	Wood			Cow
Radios	Smell		Adults with	Sheep
loud cars				Chickens
Motorbikes				Ducks
Parking lots			Elderly Person	
Door bells			Male	
Knocking on doors			Female	
Trucks				
Trains				



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