



# Socialization

## What is it and How to Help Your Dog Safely

Socialization is extremely important for people and pets of all kinds. For dogs it helps them develop life skills so they can adjust to everyday activities with their families. But 'socialization' is more than playing with other dogs – it's about exposing a dog to all types of people, places and things CAREFULLY and SAFELY. Well-socialized dogs usually develop into safer, more relaxed and enjoyable companions and are less likely to behave fearfully or aggressively when faced with something new.

### Sensitive Phases:

- Puppy socialization period starts around 3 weeks of age and ends between 12-16 weeks of age, depending on the breed. This is when a pup is most willing to try new things and accept new experiences, including meeting people and other pets.
- Adolescence starts at between 5-6 months and can last till 2 years of age, again depending on the breed. This period is known as the 'reactive or fearful phase'. The most confident pup can become a hesitant and cautious teen. This sudden increase in suspicion toward things in the environment is normal and can last only a few weeks or longer. When this 'fearful phase' will occur is different for every dog and owners should be ready to help their teen the instant the dog shows concern.

### How To's:

- Please be cautious when exposing a puppy / dog to new items and experiences. It should be done slowly and thoughtfully. This is particularly true of young pups, who need positive experiences early.
- Pets should never be FORCED into situation. Rather experiences need to be at the dog's pace. When a dog 'chooses' something and is successful, it builds confidence.
- The owner should be guiding and helping their pup / dog enjoy new situations. Your calm voice and smiling face will help immensely.
- Give the pup / dog extra yummy treats when it experiences new and potentially frightening things. The connection with high value goodies and new things helps the pet develop positive associations.
- Manage every situation and make sure your pet isn't overwhelmed. If the pup / dog is afraid, remove it from the situation. Try again another time or look for a quieter, calmer location to visit.

Review: Our information on **Canine Body Language, "Learning to Read Your Dog"**

<http://nvdtc.org/dogfun/LearningToReadYourDog.pdf>

Must Read: **Welfare Implications Socialization Puppies and Kittens**

by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AMVA)

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/literature-reviews/welfare-implications-socialization-puppies-and-kittens>

PDF version: [https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/socialization\\_puppies\\_kittens.pdf](https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/socialization_puppies_kittens.pdf)

Article with Video Examples: **Seven Days of Socialization in Place**

by Napa Humane at [www.napahumane.org](http://www.napahumane.org)

<https://napahumane.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Seven-Days-of-Socialization-1.pdf>



## Socialization - What is it and How to Help Your Dog Safely (continued)

Article with Lots of Info and Suggestions: **100 Ideas for Socializing Your Quarantine Puppy**  
by Steffi Trott, professional dog trainer and owner of Spirit Dog Training

[https://www.spiritdogtraining.com/socializingyourquarantinepuppy/?fbclid=IwAR1BudhzBnJEuhGjsqGvt\\_PmeFP1j8jE8fIVf0vTfe5-FJHWnpW3SYQexeE](https://www.spiritdogtraining.com/socializingyourquarantinepuppy/?fbclid=IwAR1BudhzBnJEuhGjsqGvt_PmeFP1j8jE8fIVf0vTfe5-FJHWnpW3SYQexeE)

**Below is an example of creating a schedule that allows your puppy / dog to experience a variety of things safely and in small increments.**

Chart by professional dog trainer, Meghan D'Arcy CTC, ACDBC, CSAT at <https://meghandarcydogs.com/>

**Pandemic Puppy**

<b>THINGS WITH WHEELS</b>	<b>HUMANS WEARING COSTUMES</b>	<b>NAGIVATE OBSTACLES MADE WITH HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS</b>	<b>LAUGHTER DEEP VOICES SHOUTING</b> <b>ROLE PLAY/ RECORDED</b>	<b>OBSERVE OR LISTEN: DOGS OF ALL KINDS</b>
<b>STAIRS</b>	<b>RECORDED TRAFFIC FIREWORKS SIRENS THUNDER</b>	<b>HUMANS CARRYING:</b> 	<b>WEARING BOOTS COAT HARNESS</b>	<b>HAVING COLLAR GRABBED</b>
<b>PORCH/ BALCONY/ WINDOW WATCH</b>	<b>WALK ON WET &amp; SLIPPERY SURFACES</b>	<i>Socialization</i> <b>BINGO</b>	<b>MOVE FURNITURE TO CREATE NOVELTY</b>	<b>KNOCK AT DOOR AND DOORBELL</b>
<b>WALK OVER OVEN RACK (GRATE)</b>	<b>CAR RIDES</b>	<b>WALKING ON A LEASH</b>	<b>PRETEND VET OR GROOMER VISIT W HANDLING</b>	<b>OBSERVE OR LISTEN: CHILDREN &amp; BABIES</b>
<b>HUMANS WEARING:</b> 	<b>OBSERVE A CROWDED AREA I.E. PARKING LOT</b>	<b>GETTING WET ALL OVER</b>	<b>SPENDING TIME ALONE/ SEPARATED</b>	<b>SHAKE A RUG OR BLANKET</b>

**PLAY FOR A FULL CARD**  
**GO SLOW & PAIR WITH LOTS OF TREATS!**  
**LET YOUR PUPPY SAY "NO" OR "NOT YET"**  
**#MAKEITMAGICAL**  
**@MEGHANDARCYDOGS**

