

PUPPY SOCIALIZATION CHECKLIST

The first three months of your puppy's life is the most important time for exposing them to as many new people, animals, stimuli and environments as possible so they can learn to behave and interact successfully with the world around them. Early socialization and programs of positive training can go a long way to creating a life-long bond between you and your dog.

This is where your Puppy Socialization Checklist comes into play. It is divided into two parts of activities for you and your puppy to experience together. The first part contains a priority checklist of activities you should try to expose your puppy to before they are 12-weeks-old. The second part offers more ideas for activities that will continue helping their development. Ideally, they should experience all of these items before they are 18 weeks of age.

PRIORITY CHECKLIST

- PEOPLE**
 - Adults
 - Babies
 - Toddlers
 - Children
 - Teenagers
 - Seniors
 - Different ethnicities
- PEOPLE USING**
 - Canes
 - Crutches
 - Wheelchairs
 - Baby strollers
 - Back packs
 - Luggage
 - Metal-frame walkers
- PEOPLE IN UNIFORM**
 - Police officers
 - Postal workers
 - Vet clinic staff
- PEOPLE WITH**
 - Umbrellas
 - Baseball caps
 - Helmets
 - Mustaches
 - Beards
 - Glasses
- ATHLETIC FOLK**
 - Joggers
 - Skateboarders
 - Cyclists
 - Roller bladers
 - Roller skaters
 - Soccer players
- INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE**
 - Holding puppy
 - Touching paws
 - Touching muzzle
 - Touching ears
 - Touching collar
 - Checking teeth
 - Clipping nails
 - Brushing teeth
 - Checking between pads
 - Cleaning ears
 - Touching rear legs
 - Brushing/grooming
- PEOPLE SOUNDS**
 - Talking loudly
 - Laughing
 - Crying
 - Shouting
 - Arguing
 - Children playing
 - Newborn crying
 - Infant crying
 - Newborn laughing
 - Infant laughing
 - Children laughing
 - Children crying
 - Children shouting
- DIFFERENT SETTINGS**
 - Rides in vehicles - other than to vet
 - Socialization classes
 - Vet clinics
 - Groomers
 - Elevators
 - Automatic doors
 - School grounds
 - Car washes
- Walks after dark
- Busy intersections
- Crowds of people
- Your family's homes
- Sleepover visits
- Department stores
- HOME ENVIRONMENT**
 - Phone ringing
 - Doorbell
 - Knocking at the door
 - Hair dryer
 - Vacuum cleaner
 - Dishwasher
 - Electrical appliances (i.e. blender, can opener, mixer)
 - Sweeping
 - Mopping
 - Guests
 - Gatherings in home
 - Repair people
 - Delivery people
 - Gardeners
 - Dropping a hair brush
 - Washing a load of laundry
- OUTDOOR EVENTS**
 - Parade
 - Live music band
 - People dancing
- CONSTRUCTION SITES/ GARDENING**
 - Jack hammers
 - Cranes
 - Front end loaders
 - Bulldozers
 - Sledgehammers
 - Power tools
- Fork lifts
- Carrying shovels
- Wheelbarrows
- Lawn mowers
- Weed whackers
- MOTORIZED VEHICLES**
 - Cars
 - Motorcycles
 - Screeching brakes
 - Cars back firing
 - Street cleaners
 - Garbage trucks
 - City buses
 - Electric wheelchairs
 - Fire trucks
 - Police cars
 - Mail trucks
 - UPS truck
- ANIMALS**
 - Friendly, healthy dogs
 - Puppies
 - Cats
- DIFFERENT SURFACES**
 - Going up stairs
 - Going down stairs
 - Ceramic tiles
 - Carpet
 - Slippery surfaces
 - Manholes
 - Grates
 - Grass
 - Gravel
 - Children's playground equipment

STRANGE SIGHTS

- Scooters
- Tricycles
- Hula hoops
- Remote control toys
- Flags/banners
- Statues of people
- Statues of animals

SOUNDS

- Sirens on police vehicles
- Sirens on ambulances
- Sirens on firetrucks
- Thunder sounds
- Fireworks
- Construction site noises
- People yelling
- Trucks backing up with alarm sound

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

ANIMALS

- Small pets (hamster)
- Large birds (geese)
- Horses
- Goats
- Pigs
- Chickens
- Ducks

PEOPLE WITH

- Leg in a cast
- Leg scooter
- Baby carriers
- Wagons
- Shopping carts
- Holding balloons
- Rain coats
- Sunglasses
- Cowboy hats
- Visors
- Costumes
- Masks
- Beanies
- Punk haircuts
- Shaved heads

PEOPLE IN UNIFORM

- Firefighter
- Vet tech
- Veterinarian
- Ambulance attendant
- Crossing guard
- Meter reader
- Telephone worker
- Courier

ATHLETIC FOLK

- Cross-county skiers

- Sledders
- Snowboarders
- Surfers
- Windsurfers
- Speedwalkers
- Spectators at 10K
- Paddlers (kayaks, canoes)
- Hang gliders
- Swimmers
- Water skiers
- Martial artists
- Bike couriers
- Dodgeball players

MOTOR VEHICLES

- Seadoos
- Trucks backing up
- Airplanes
- Helicopters
- Snowplows
- Trolleys
- Electric wheelchairs
- Segways
- Hoverboards

DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

- Boarding kennel
- Bank
- Gas station
- Toll booth
- Friend's home
- Public transit
- Country vs. city
- Escalator
- Pet supply store
- Downtown
- Boat ride
- Petting zoo

- Tunnel
- Bridge
- Outside day care
- Active railway
- Crowd of people clapping
- Crowd of people cheering
- Any drive-thru
- Sporting facility
- Beach
- Hiking trail
- Office
- Park
- Boardwalk
- Public event
- Mall
- Plaza
- Coffee shop
- Brewery
- Restaurant downtown
- Restaurant by the water
- Fast food restaurant
- Tourist spot
- Movie in a park
- Pool
- Lake
- Inflatable pool
- Home environment
- Phone announces calls
- Loud TV
- Loud music
- Kettle
- Dog in bath/shower
- Home office
- House party
- Lawn mower
- Leaf blower
- Maintenance people
- Dropping a plastic container

- Dropping a pot/pan
- Popcorn popping
- Fire alarm
- Drying a load of laundry

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS & NOISE

- Snow blowers
- Snow
- Rain
- Wind
- Airport
- Loud speakers
- Building demolition
- Sand
- Wood
- Tile
- Marble
- Watery or wet
- Cement
- Asphalt
- Swinging bridge
- Wooden dock
- Tarmac (not on a hot day)
- Astro turf
- Mud
- Ice

OUTDOOR EVENTS

- Hot air balloon
- People singing
- Farmers market
- Beach party
- Bonfire
- Santa Claus
- Easter Bunny
- Mascot
- Rodeo

- Fair
- Sporting event
- Clown
- Mime
- Rush hour
- A rally/protest
- Street vendor
- Food truck

CONSTRUCTION SITES & GARDNERS

- Ride-on mower
- Leaf blower
- Electric hedge shears
- Garden hose
- Sprinkler system

STRANGE SIGHTS & SMELLS

- Drunk people
- Ice cream trucks
- Strong perfumes
- Strong cooking smells
- Hammocks
- Playground swings
- Playground tunnels
- Kites
- Model airplanes
- Low-flying airplanes
- Air-filled decorations
- Pinwheels
- Loud kids toys
- Children in high chairs
- Children in walkers
- Children in swings outside
- Children in swinging chair inside

MAKE IT POSITIVE: When introducing your puppy to all of these new experiences, reward with treats and praise so he creates a positive association with the new activity. Observe your puppy's behavior to see if he is enjoying the experience; is he eating treats? Does he seem relaxed and comfortable? If not, take a break from the activity.

TAKE IT SLOW: Doing too much too fast can lead to overstimulation, which can result in fear or anxiety. Start with small experiences like the feeling of grass, walking on tile or meeting one new person.

Don't force your puppy to interact with his new environment or a new object, instead back away a bit until the puppy relaxes. Then use a silly voice, treats and praise to help him feel more confident in approaching the scary item or sound. As the puppy becomes more relaxed gradually he will get closer to the stimuli, pairing praise and treats with the experience.

Please consult a professional trainer/behaviorist to assist you in your socialization process for fearful puppies who display extreme behavioral responses such as shaking uncontrollably, urinating/defecating, growling, snapping or biting.

For more info on early puppy socialization visit American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior's position statement on early socialization: <https://avsab.org/resources/position-statements/>