

S.E.T. YOUR PUPPY UP FOR SUCCESS

SOCIALIZE EXERCISE TRAIN

**By: Laurie Zurborg, CPDT
Head Trainer, Owner**

**Wags & Wiggles Dog Daycare &
Training Facility, LLC
949 635-9655**

www.wagsandwiggles.com

SOCIALIZE

When do I start to socialize? Your puppy's peak socialization period is between 3-12 weeks of age. This means the clock is ticking to raise a well-adjusted puppy. Socialization is gradual exposure to a variety of environmental stimuli (different people, animals, places, and experiences) in a controlled manner to affect a positive experience and increase social skills. This must be done in such a fashion that the puppy is never frightened or traumatized by the experience or a life-long fear of that stimulus may occur.

Socialization should continue after 12 weeks, but it is less effective and requires considerably more time and effort to obtain a similar effect. Although 12 weeks is the upper end of the optimum period, socialization experiences should not stop at this age. As with any skill, if social skills are not "practiced" over the dog's lifetime, the dog will lose some of its ability to adjust to strange people, animals, and places.

During this critical socialization period, you should expose your puppy to:

1. Meet a minimum of 10 new people each week and receive treats from each one. (not the same people each week)
2. Meet a minimum of 5 new (friendly, healthy & vaccinated) dogs each week.
3. Go to a minimum of 5 different environments each week.
4. Make one trip to the veterinary clinic each week, just to receive treats from the staff.

5. Be exposed to a variety of sights and sounds around the house and neighborhood. (cars, bikes, skateboards)
6. Take a short ride in your car at least 2-3 times a week.
7. Take a 10 minute (or more) walk around your neighborhood at least 5x a week. Ask any people you meet along the way to give your puppy a food treat. Stay away from public grass until your puppy is fully vaccinated to avoid contact with contaminated feces from other dogs.

"Kindergarten puppy training classes are often an excellent way to meet some of the socialization requirements. Most classes begin puppies at 8-10 weeks of age. These classes give puppies an opportunity to meet other people and puppies and be exposed to various noises and objects." – Dr. Lore I. Haug, DVM, MS, DACVB, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital

EXERCISE

Exercising your puppy is also critical to its development into the ideal dog. Exercise can take the form of mental or physical exercise. The brain, like all organs, needs to be used or it becomes atrophied. Mental activities can be using food stuffed toys like Kongs or Buster Cubes to replace their energy that would've been spent foraging for food. Play 100 kibble pickup in the backyard. Scatter their breakfast or dinner kibble in the grass and let them hunt away. Teach your dog to be a thinking creature by using the clicker to capture great behaviors. See clicker training pamphlet on www.wagsandwiggles.com.

As for physical exercise, this will vary depending on age and breed. Puppies should be allowed free off-leash play in secure enclosed areas. Use this opportunity to start training them to come. Before unclipping the leash, do 10 recalls for food treats. Then release to go play. Nothing will provide more exercise than playing with another dog. All that romping and chasing will ensure a good night's sleep. Be sure to only allow free play with appropriate healthy dogs.

Teach your dog to retrieve toys from day one. Start with the puppy on a leash and both of you sitting in the corner of a room. Throw the toy against the wall so the puppy will have no choice but to head back in your direction. Reward with a game of tug or a food treat. Playing tug does NOT cause aggression if done properly. Teach your puppy to drop the toy by exchanging the toy for a food treat. Add the word "drop", give the treat, and throw the toy again. Teaching proper toy manners will encourage good bite inhibition and provide much needed exercise. For large breed dogs that are susceptible to growing pains, use caution with repetitive exercise.

TRAIN

85% of the 2 million dogs that were euthanized last year in shelters were reported by the owner to house soil or have aggression issues. Both issues can be completely avoided by training your puppy. Even if you have trained dogs in the past, your puppy needs to come to class to be exposed to real life. You might even learn something new since Wags & Wiggles is

always on top of the latest advances in dog training.

Puppy classes held at Wags & Wiggles minimize risk of disease by requiring a full vet check and at least one series of vaccines before coming to class. The class area itself does not have through traffic from unknown dogs. It is cleaned with veterinary approved products after each class.

"Many veterinarians are making this early socialization and learning program part of a total wellness plan. To take full advantage of this early special learning period, many veterinarians recommend that new owners take their puppies to puppy socialization classes, beginning at 8 to 9 weeks of age. At this age they should have (and can be required to have) received a minimum of their first series of vaccines for protection against infectious diseases. "-Robert K. Anderson DVM Professor and Director Emeritus, Animal Behavior Clinic University of Minnesota

Components of every good puppy class:

- ♥ **Experienced knowledgeable instructor.** At Wags & Wiggles, all instructors are Certified Pet Dog Trainers, CPDT. They have 300+ hours of hands on experience and 1 year apprenticeship before teaching classes.
- ♥ **Positive Reinforcement Training.** Be sure to choose classes which reward and encourage rather than using physical means to get the dogs to behave.
- ♥ **Establish a good potty training plan.** Every household can develop a good potty training plan with the right tools.
- ♥ **Relationship.** Building a better relationship is the key to raising an attentive

puppy. Learn how to control the resources and dish them out for good behavior.

- ♥ **Biting/Chewing/Mouthing.** Many puppy behaviors are cute and relatively harmless, but these same behaviors exhibited by an adult dog could be dangerous. Puppies do not "grow out" of poor behavior. Behaviors that puppies exhibit when they are young will typically persist unless you teach the dog a more acceptable alternative.
- ♥ **Restraint/Handling/Being Alone.** All puppies need to learn restraint and self-control to make vet trips enjoyable. Puppies should learn to accept handling and manipulation without fear. Puppies eventually have to be left alone. Owners need education on how to prevent separation anxiety.
- ♥ **Food/Possessions .** Puppies should learn to accept having people around their food & possessions which is best taught early in life. The goal is to imprint the puppy that approaching people and hands bring good things.
- ♥ **Beginning Commands.** Puppies should be taught to pay attention to their name, sit instead of jump, and how to settle.

ARE PUPPY CLASSES SAFE?

With a knowledgeable instructor who will prevent puppies from being overwhelmed and a facility that can minimize the risk of exposure to disease, safe puppy classes are the most critical influence on the rest of its life. Wags & Wiggles does numerous aggression consults a year and the one common denominator is a lack of socialization and training as a puppy. Now is the time to invest in your puppy's future to ensure you have the happy puppy you wanted for your family.