

- Not be allowed to mix with unvaccinated dogs
- Not be walked in areas where other dogs have been
- Be taken out and about often in 'non-doggy' areas, being carried if necessary to avoid contact with other dogs and soiled areas

## Want more information?

Take on a puppy and you take on the responsibility for its future. This can be daunting, but there are lots of good sources of further information to help you do a good job.

## Puppy Parties

Ask your vet if they run puppy parties. These will help you to begin the socialisation process in a safe environment and allow your puppy to meet others while it is still very young.

## Puppy Classes

These follow on from puppy parties. They will help you train your puppy as well as continuing the socialisation experiences. You will also receive lots of good advice that will help you raise your puppy well. They should be fun for both you and your puppy and it is a good idea to visit one without your puppy to see if you like the tutor's methods. Only attend if they use kind, positive methods for teaching both puppies and people.

Puppy School is a UK network of training classes for young puppies. Classes are of the highest standard and tutors are trained in animal behaviour, animal learning and human motivation. Only kind, effective techniques are used.  
Puppy School, PO Box 186, Chipping Norton OX7 3XG  
[www.puppyschool.co.uk](http://www.puppyschool.co.uk)



### Socialisation progress chart - 048544

The Socialisation progress chart will help you keep track of your puppy's experiences and to prompt you to cover all aspects necessary for a well balanced dog.



- Socialisation "Sounds for Life" CD - 048548

Sounds for life will help prepare your puppy for life in the modern world. Regular use of the CD will ensure that your puppy will be more confident in noisy situations and when having encounters with noisy objects for the first time.



## Further reading:

- **The Perfect Puppy**  
How to raise a problem-free dog.  
Gwen Bailey Hamlyn 192 pages, ISBN 0 600 58581 6

- **Puppy School**  
7 steps to a perfect puppy.  
Gwen Bailey Hamlyn 128 pages, ISBN 0 600 610 810

- **How to Have a Happy Puppy\*** (booklet)  
David Appleby, 21 pages

- **Paws for Thought\*** (video)  
David Appleby

\* Both items are available from:  
Pet Behaviour Centre, Upper Street, Defford, Worcester WR8 9AB

## More information:

For further information please don't hesitate to contact your veterinary surgeon or visit our website



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# Puppy Socialisation

What it is...  
Why it's so important...  
and how to do it!

**Nobivac** the future of vaccination

For further information on early socialisation and habituation, please contact your veterinary surgeon or visit [www.f-o-v.co.uk](http://www.f-o-v.co.uk)  
Provided by Intervet UK Limited, Walton Manor, Walton, Milton Keynes MK7 7AJ.  
Manufacturers of Nobivac vaccines.

Item Code: 048538



## What is puppy socialisation?

All animals, including dogs, have a special sensitive period at the start of their lives. During this time, they learn to accept things around them so that they are not afraid of them in later life. In puppies, this window of opportunity closes at about 12-16 weeks of age. Anything that is encountered during the sensitive period will be tolerated, even enjoyed. After the window closes, unfamiliar people, objects and experiences are approached with caution and puppies may become fearful, which could ultimately lead to aggression.

Puppy socialisation involves meeting and having pleasant encounters with many different adults, children and dogs (puppies and adults), particularly during the sensitive period of their lives and then continuing through adulthood. During this process, they will also need to get used to a wide range of events, environments and situations.

The most common cause of fear and aggression is lack of socialisation. A puppy does not have to be mis-treated to become afraid of people or new experiences.

Good socialisation is the best way to ensure a friendly, well-adjusted puppy

## Why is socialisation so important?

To be a successful pet, dogs need to get on well with other living creatures as well as coping with a variety of different everyday experiences. Puppies that are well socialised grow up to be friendly and happy with people and animals, taking different situations in their stride and enjoying going anywhere with their owners.

Sadly, not all puppies are so lucky. A puppy that has not received adequate socialisation may bite the postman or a child, may be aggressive to humans or other dogs, or be very afraid of strangers. It may be very frightened when taken to new places, or to the vet, or be sick through fear when riding in a car. A natural response of a fearful dog, if it has no means of escape, is aggression.

As well as aggression, many other behaviour problems have their origins in fear. This fear is often due to lack of adequate experience during puppyhood. The resulting behaviour problems are often difficult for owners to cope with and may lead to the dog being relinquished to an animal shelter where it will face a very uncertain future or, if the behaviour is extreme, in euthanasia.

Behavioural problems are the main cause of euthanasia in dogs under 2 years old.

Good socialisation and habituation can help prevent many problems. The time to start is NOW!

## How do I socialise my puppy?

Socialisation is easy – it just has to be done! Puppies need to experience as many encounters as possible during their first year of life, particularly during the sensitive period, without being overwhelmed.

Ideally, socialisation should start with the breeder. If you own a puppy that was reared in a quiet house or, worse, outside in a kennel or barn, you will have to work hard as soon as possible to make up for lost time.

With any puppy, the time to start is now. Carefully arrange for your puppy to have several new experiences every day, allowing plenty of time for rest and recuperation in between. Take your puppy out and about with you as much as possible, taking care not to overwhelm it with too much and to keep it safe from infectious diseases (see later). As your puppy gets older, it will be able to cope with longer encounters and more of them.

Make sure all encounters are enjoyable for your puppy. Give strangers tasty treats to feed your puppy and a favourite toy so that they can play. If your puppy seems anxious or overwhelmed, give it more space and freedom to approach the situation in its own time. Think ahead and try to prevent unpleasant events. Arrange for all encounters to be successful and rewarding. Remember young puppies tire easily so keep encounters short and sweet.

## Areas to work on:

### Humans – adults and children

Puppies need to have pleasant encounters with different types of people and different ages of children every day. Ensure your puppy has happy encounters with veterinary surgery staff and delivery people also. The more humans your puppy meets and plays with, the more tolerant and friendly it will become.

### Other dogs and puppies

Puppies need to play with other dogs and puppies. Prevent your puppy from feeling overwhelmed by squatting down to create a safe haven for it to return to if it is worried. Allow it to mix with sociable dogs only. Interrupt any behaviour you do not want your puppy to show to other dogs as an adult. Join a good puppy class (see later) where your puppy can learn to mix with others of different breeds and temperament.

### Different experiences/environments

Take your puppy to places where he can experience car travel, traffic, crowds, towns and countryside. Imagine how it feels to be small and vulnerable and ensure your puppy is enjoying the experience.

### Cats, livestock, horses

Puppies should meet a variety of other animals. Keep your puppy on a lead to prevent it from learning to chase or harass other animals.

## Vaccination and socialisation

Puppies acquire immunity from common fatal diseases from their mother, but this fades over time and needs to be replaced by protection (immunity) stimulated by vaccinations. Some vaccines allow vaccination to finish at 10 weeks, allowing earlier socialisation than was once possible.

Your vet will be able to advise you on integrating the timing of these vaccinations with a good, safe socialisation programme. Until your puppy is vaccinated, it should: