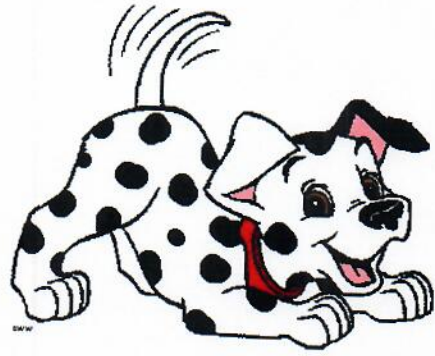


Puppy Socialization Tips

Puppy socialization is important in order to build self-confidence in your pup. Extra time spent now socializing them will pay off later in their life, as it helps form a confident, obedient, and well-balanced adult dog.



Expose your puppy to different environments, such as taking him/her to the veterinary office for "good vet visits," which will reduce fear of the clinic. When your pup goes to the veterinarian, they are typically placed on a slick table where they are poked and prodded; this visit, unfortunately, is not usually a positive one. "Good vet visits" work to combat their feeling that each time they go to see the veterinarian it will be unpleasant. These happy visits involve getting your pup in the car, bringing him/her in the office, walking them on the scale, handling them, getting a positive food reward and then returning home. Other ways to expose your puppy to different environments include taking them to the park to play, walking them on a busy campus, attending sporting events (obviously, these will be most likely be outdoors), parades, and even firework displays. When exposing them to this stimuli, be sure to have tasty (not kibble), high-value food rewards to help them associate good food with what can sometimes be scary situations for pets.

Handling your puppy is also important in building confidence. Play with your pup's feet, mouth, ears, back and muzzle. Tip the puppy on his/her back, pinch the skin between the shoulders, clean ears, etc., again, making sure to provide tasty treats during the process.

Once your puppy is vaccinated and protected against disease, it is important to expose them to other non-aggressive, calm, adult dogs and also other puppies (make sure these pets are vaccinated as well). Your puppy will learn more from other canines than humans, as they speak the same language.

Exposing your pup to different stimuli now in a positive, controlled manner will pay off hugely in their adult life. It will help them gain confidence and be less afraid in situations that can be scary for pets. A confident dog will also be less likely to develop behavioral problems down the road and build the owner-pet bond.