

A look at the components of appropriate puppy socialization, and including a checklist of different experiences to socialize your puppy and enable them to become a happy and confident dog.



**Checklist by Jan Casey**Design & Intro by Kimberly Archer



To your puppy, nearly everything is a new experience! By pairing these experiences with generous positive reinforcement, you can help them grow up happy and healthy, feeling confident no matter what the world throws at them. This process is called socialization training and is important to work on until your puppy is at least four months old (but older dogs might benefit, too!). So, how do you do it? Here are four options you can mix and match:

## group puppy classes

Puppy Classes are group activities led by a trainer on our campus. This is a great way to get a lot of your socialization done while also teaching important skills like sit, lay down, leave it, and leash walking. Consider signing up for one of our puppy classes at <a href="mailto:com/group-classes/puppy-training">com/group-classes/puppy-training</a>

#### private lessons

*Private Lessons* are one-on-one sessions with our trainer, your puppy, and you. These are great if you want a little help to ensure your socialization training is as successful as it can be. Sign up at <a href="mailto:courteouscanine.com/private-dog-training">courteouscanine.com/private-dog-training</a>

# board and train

Board and Train is when your puppy lives at our trainer's home for one week or more. This is great if you can't commit to the necessary training time right now, because our trainer is able to give your puppy a lot of dedicated attention throughout the day. Sign up at <a href="mailto:com/board-and-train">courteouscanine.com/board-and-train</a>

## on your own with this worksheet

This worksheet can guide you, so first print out multiple copies of the checklist pages (one per fourteen weeks minus their age).

Next, choose experiences from the list below to expose your puppy to. But remember: socialization is not just exposure but also training, so you must pair exposure with generous positive reinforcement (like their favorite treats) to ensure their experience is a good one. With each interaction, ensure the puppy consents the entire time by allowing them to voluntarily approach and interact. **Never force socialization**, as your pup will find this uncomfortable and scary, working against our goal of a confident, happy dog. Observe their body language for happy signals to make sure they're making positive connections.

Finally, keep track on these worksheets of which items your puppy was exposed to each day. Draw a happy face if they had a good experience, or draw an X if they struggled. Revisit those struggling spots later (try to start from farther away or less intense), and fill up as many bubbles with happy faces as possible! Getting a happy face on every line (more variety) is more important than repeating the same experiences that they're already confident in, and we encourage you to add your own ideas as well.

# age: weeks

Socialization training is the process of exposing your puppy to a variety of experiences in enjoyable, fun ways so that they build confidence and joy in the world around them. Ensure that their experiences are good ones by including lots of positive reinforcement (like treats and playtime) and by inviting your puppy to voluntarily choose to engage in each situation, never forcing their exposure.

Use this worksheet to record which experiences your puppy enjoyed or struggled with. Aim to get a happy face in every row!



PEOPLE	SMTWTFS
Toddler	
Child	
Adult	
Senior	
Disabled	
Various Races	
Facial Hair	
Carrying Things	
Hats, Scarves	

NOISES	SMTWTFS
Car	
Motorcycle	
Siren	
Playground	
Household Items	
Dropping Items	
Other Animals	

HANDLING	SMTWTFS
Toes	
Ears	
Belly	
Nails	
Tail	
Mouth	
Head	

FOOD SOURCE	SSMTWTFS
Cups	
Bowls	
Plates	
Hands	
Lick-It Bottles	
Paper Towels	
Travel Bowls	

EXERCISES	S M T W T F S
Stairs	
Hula Hoop	
In/Out of a Box	
Flatten Tray Table	
Poles on Ground	
Puppy Ping Pong	
In/Out of a Crate	

Socialization training is essential to raising a happy and confident dog. This list gives you an idea of different things your puppy should experience, but it also pairs well with our *Puppy Class*, which will not only assist in socialization but also teach you and your puppy the basics of training and beginner skills like *sit*, *lay down*, and leash walking.

Sign up now at courteouscanine.com/group-classes/puppy-training

LOCATIONS	SMTWTF	S
Store		
Park		
Friend's Home		
Training Class		
Downtown		
Rural Area		
School		
Parking Lot		
Sidewalk		
Fire Station		
Vet's Office		
Groomer		

YOUR IDEAS	SMTWTFS