

PUPPY SOCIALISATION

What is puppy socialisation?

Socialisation is the process of getting puppies used to their surroundings, particularly to people and other dogs through early and continued positive exposure to them.

Why do puppies need socialisation?

- The more you socialise your puppy the better they will cope with life
- The more the puppy encounters new situations and novel things in its environment and has positive experiences the less “hang ups” they will have as an adult

At what age should the process start?

You would not wait until your child is a teenager before you send him to school, so why should you wait until your dog is fully grown to start his education?

The puppy socialisation period is mainly between 3 weeks to 12-14 weeks of age.

Described as “a special time in life when a small amount of experience will produce a great effect on later behavior,” (JP Scott and John Fuller) it seems that whatever puppies learn during this time builds the foundation for their likes, dislikes, fears and anxieties. In short this critical period shapes the puppy and sets their ability to cope with life.

It is now becoming very clear that this socialisation/critical period is a window of opportunity for owners. Early positive behavioral training and socialisation appear to “inoculate” immature dogs against many adult dog behavior problems, such as hyperactivity, excessive fearfulness, aggression, separation anxiety and general disobedience.

Since we know that this is a very important time for the puppy, it becomes your responsibility to give it the best possible start in life.

How to help?

- 1) Socialisation to people of all categories (male, female, young and old).
- 2) Socialisation to dogs and other animals.
- 3) Handling: grooming, hugging, restraining, pushing and pulling.
- 4) Prevent resource guarding: possessiveness of food, bones, toys and beds etc.

In other words how thoroughly can we make this puppy like strangers of all kinds, other dogs, feel relaxed and confident in all sorts of situations, love being squeezed, pinched, grabbed, having their nails clipped and giving up their toys / objects.

The SPCA offers puppy socialisation courses that teach all the above in a safe and fun environment using puppy-friendly methods. If you are interested in joining our puppy courses, please feel free to contact the Dog Behaviour and Training Department on 2232-5567. You and your puppy will have a great time in class!

FOR MORE ADVICE ON TRAINING CONTACT THE SPCA BEHAVIOUR AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT OR CONSULT YOUR VET