

Puppy Basics

Desensitization and Socialization Outside of Class:

The first 3 months of a puppy's life are very crucial regarding socialization. Everything is new and it is our job to help them see that new things mean good things happen! This does not mean that the second you bring your new puppy home you should slap a leash on them and take them to the local softball tournament, where they are bombarded with hundreds of new, loud and overwhelming stimuli. Being in a sensitive period means that if they are flooded with new things and the experience is scary for them, it will leave a much deeper scar than if it were to happen during a less sensitive time.

So! Fetch Please recommends carrying your puppy or pushing them in a stroller (at least until their second round of shots has kicked in) around the block first. If another person happens to come by, ask them if they'd like to meet your puppy. Keeping the puppy off the ground, give the person a treat to give your puppy when they meet. Help your puppy in the long run by not allowing their paws to touch the person. We will dig into proper greetings more in class. If a loud truck goes by, follow the sound immediately with praise and treats/kibble. If a person on a bicycle/skateboard/roller blades goes by, associate it with good things from you. The association with good things is the key to properly desensitizing and socializing your new puppy. Once the block gets old, take your puppy to another neighborhood or by a park. Let your puppy's comfortability lead you – don't push them past what they are comfortable with. If your puppy is showing signs of nervousness regarding a specific trigger, pause, take a step or two back, then provide encouragement and reinforcement before leaving the situation.

As for puppy socialization: Only socialize with dogs you know to be friendly and up to date on their shots. Even then, it doesn't hurt to take a baby wipe to a dog's paws before they enter your yard as parvo lives in the dirt and can be carried in on a dog's paws. Free play (off leash) in an enclosed space is best for your puppy to start to learn how to properly communicate. No dog parks, no dog beaches, nowhere that you cannot control and communicate with the owners of the other dogs' who are present. Ideally, your puppy is joining our puppy class at 12 to 13 weeks and you and your puppy can learn more about dog-dog socialization before the 4-month bite inhibition deadline!

Crate Training:

A crate is an excellent tool to keep your puppy contained when you can't give him all your attention or when it is time to rest. That being said, a crate should NEVER be used as a punishment. So, we first must show him that good things happen in his crate!

- Feed in the crate without closing the door. If the puppy won't go near the crate at first, leave a breadcrumb trail of treats and kibble to the bowl set as close to the crate as your puppy will get. Move the bowl slightly closer or further inside the crate for every feeding.
- Once the puppy is eating inside the crate, don't close the door! We want him to choose to be there and see it's not something he's being forced into.

When you are going to be out of the house or unable to pay attention to your puppy:

- Set up an ex-pen around the crate so the puppy can still choose to be in the crate or not



- Always leave your puppy with something to do while isolated (puzzle toys, long chews, frozen bones)
- If you will be gone for an extended period of time, leave water and an appropriate place to potty (pee pad or grass box) inside the ex-pen.

After long training session or exercise:

- Place puppy in ex-pen area with crate open. Puppies need rest **ALL OF THE TIME**. This will help him see the crate is the place to go to rest and let lessons learned during play or exercise really sink in (latency learning).

Potty Training:

The crate and ex-pen combo can help with potty training as well. For one, using containment when you are not paying 100% attention to your pup assures that any accidents happen in easy to clean areas. Using grass boxes will encourage your puppy to go where there is grass, therefore reinforcing the **RIGHT** places to potty.

1. First, know that any spots in the home where previous pets or your new pet have urinated will further urination in the area. The key is to not only disinfect but to eliminate the ammonia odor by balancing the pH with white vinegar.
2. If she is continually having bowel movements in the house due to urgency, pay attention to the consistency of their BM's. If they are consistently runny or discolored, you may need to explore new feeding options that better suit your puppy's digestive needs. Discuss this with your vet if it continues to be a problem.
3. Learn your puppy's biological clock and stick to a routine. Feeding, watering, and walking at the same times during the day will help your puppy in the potty-training process.
4. Once you've established her biological clock, kennel/confine them 10 or 15 minutes before she will need to go outside. When it's time, put her on leash and walk her to your preferred potty spot. If she does not start eliminating within 3 minutes, bring her back inside and put her in her crate. In 5 minutes, repeat the process. Do so until you have successful elimination.
5. Upon elimination in the designated potty spot, cheerfully repeat your potty word (potty, poo, pee, etc) in a high-pitched, excited voice while she's actively eliminating. Once she is done, heavily praise and treat. Also, give her some fun, outside time once she's eliminated. You don't want to inadvertently punish her for pottying by ending her outside time as soon as she's gone. That's how you create a puppy that waits longer and longer to go!
6. Repeat this process whenever it is potty time. Depending on your puppy's age, this may be more frequent. For instance, 8-week-old puppies should be let out hourly whereas a 5-month-old may be able to wait 5 or 6 hours.
7. Until potty training is established, it is your responsibility as master of the door to be vigilantly watching your puppy or, if at any point you are too pre-occupied, to keep her in a safely confined space until you can provide your full attention, or it is potty time.
8. If your puppy eliminates in your home, it is never her fault, and scolding her will only encourage her to go where you can't see her (behind the couch, bed, tv, etc).

