

# SOCIALIZATION

## ***What is Socialization?***

There is a misconception about the goal and definition of socializing a dog. Many believe that a trip to the dog park to sniff other dogs, or a trip to the local pet super-store is socialization. And a dog that can participate in dog park activities without major incident is “socialized”



One aspect of socialization is the development of relationships with other living beings, but socialization also is exposure to different situations, and learning that “new” is ok. This is accomplished by introducing your puppy to as many different environments & environmental variables as possible. Dogs that are well socialized are happy, secure, confident pets that will readily interact with all types of people and can be put into new situations easily. A socialized puppy will easily play with other dogs and is not afraid of new objects or situations. The dog may be cautious about certain things (loud, large, moving, and unfamiliar) but does not panic and recovers quickly if startled.

Next to feeding your puppy, socialization is one of the most important things you can do.

## ***The Rule of 7***

The Rule of 7 means- for the first 7 days, and every 7 days thereafter (through 20 weeks of age) your puppy should have:

1. Walked on 7 different types of surfaces: carpet, concrete, wood, vinyl, grass, dirt, gravel, wood chips
2. Played with 7 different types of objects: big balls, small balls, soft fabric toys, fuzzy toys, squeak toys, paper or cardboard items, metal items, sticks, hose pieces
3. Visited 7 different locations: front yard, back yard, car, garage, basement, kitchen, laundry room, bathroom, crate
4. Met and played with 7 new people: including children and older adults
5. Exposure to 7 challenges: climb on a box, climb off a box, go through tunnel, climb down steps, climb up steps, in and out of doorway with a step up or down, run around a fence
6. Eaten from 7 different containers: metal, plastic, cardboard, paper, china, pie plate, frying pan
7. Eaten in 7 different locations: crate, yard, kitchen, laundry room, basement, bathroom

These are just a few of the types of events to challenge your puppy for each of the “Rules”. The Rule of 7 requires creativity on your part, but will pay off tenfold.

**\*\*\*\*\*FEAR\*\*\*\*\*DON'T EVER LET YOUR PUPPY EXPERIENCE FEAR!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Avoid fear at ALL cost. The most adjusted dog will be one who was raised without being exposed to harsh or frightening experiences; one who has learned that you are the master, life is fair, and there is nothing to fear. When you think your dog is afraid (or becoming afraid) stop and try something different- re-direct their attention. It is important to remember not to coddle a frightened dog because you are only reinforcing that



his response of fear is correct! This may be a difficult concept to understand and practice, because as humans we have an opposite requirement to eliminate fear. If you have a strong bond with your dog, he will look to you for the appropriate response to something that may cause fear. This is when it is most important to act calm and nonchalant- as whatever is scary is really no big deal.

Socialization and the experiences that come through socialization will teach your dog an important lesson- new is not frightening, new is actually a positive thing. The *Rule Of 7* is a well rounded approach to teaching this lesson in the time of the dog's life when experiences will mold their attitude. Your dog will exhibit through a well adjusted, confident, and secure attitude. A dog with this temperament will be a dog that can be exposed to new events, people and things throughout their lives, making lifetime experiences limitless.

