

An Introductory Guide to Raising Your Puppy



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Congratulations on your new puppy. Here is a guide to help you raise your new friend! Dr. Rose, Dr. Valley and the staff at South Windsor Veterinary Clinic hope we exceed all of your needs during this challenging and fun time. Don't hesitate to call our office with any extra questions!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Stages of Development.....	3
Housetraining Suggestions.....	6
Vaccines and Deworming.....	8
Spaying and Neutering.....	9
Microchipping.....	10
Puppy Social Skills.....	11
Tips to Avoid Aggression.....	13
Diet and Exercise.....	14
Groomers, Obedience, Etc.....	15



Stages of Development: Why Puppies Do That?

By Susan Engel, Certified Dog Trainer

Puppies, just like children, go through stages of development. During each stage learning and new behaviors are taking place that will be critical to their overall well-being as adults. It is important for owners to understand each developmental stage so that they may interact and guide their pup appropriately. Understanding the limits of your pup will assist you in having realistic expectations.

Canine Socialization - 3 weeks - 7 weeks

This is the time when puppies need to be with their mother and littermates because this is when they learn behaviors *specific to dogs*. The puppy's greatest teacher during this time is his/her mother. Up to the 49th day, every 24 hours is an important and continual learning experience.

Beginning at age 5 weeks, the mother teaches the puppies good dog behavior. One of the most important lessons is *accepting discipline and submitting to her leadership*. So you can see why puppies that are removed from the mother too early may tend to be shy, more prone to barking, aggression and not understand the pack hierarchy. They may be aggressive with other dogs.

“Generally speaking, a puppy taken away from its mother and litter mates before seven weeks of age, may not realize its full potential as a dog and companion. To maximize the mental and psychological development of puppies, they must remain with their mother and litter mates until seven weeks of age.”

Quote thanks to Sue St. Gelais Hundmeister, Registered Dobermans

Socialization Period---- 7 weeks (49th day) – 12 weeks

This is a time like no other, when *puppies are like little sponges* and the concepts they learn at this time will have a lasting impression. This is when most puppies go to their new homes and families take over the job of guiding and teaching the puppies. *We recommend bringing a new puppy home between 8-10 weeks of age.*

Socializing your puppy around different sounds, people, and situations is very important. Socialization should always be done positively and without overwhelming the puppy. Overwhelming your puppy could result in an unusual fear to that situation/object. Remember, puppies at this age are soaking up the information intentionally and non-intentionally conveyed by their owners.

At 9 weeks, puppies will be able to absorb the patterns of the rules...so set the desired rules and behaviors now that you would like from your adult dog. They will be able to understand concepts including housebreaking, playing, and appropriate interactions with their families, yet they are not able to fully connect all of the dots at this age...meaning you need to give them some slack. For example:

they may go to the door to go outside to eliminate one day but not for the next two days. Remember, realistic expectations and understanding what your pup is capable of is important to raising your puppy fairly.

“Puppy Fever”- Almost all puppies go through a daily ritual of something we call “puppy fever”. They run around as if the devil is chasing them...this is normal and if possible, let them do it and have fun. Sometimes it helps to have them do this outside.

It is most important during this time that owners train their pups with voice tones (low tone), distractions and guiding techniques. Training should NEVER consist of yelling, swatting or hitting puppies.

Fear Imprint Period --- 8 weeks – 11 weeks

The term Fear Imprint Period refers to how a frightening, traumatic or painful experience may have more of an impact on your puppy, with a lasting effect, during this period. This is an interesting period and one that needs some understanding by owners.

Pups need fair, positive and not overwhelming interactions, during this period. Example: When going to the Vets office during this time, bring treats and a toy and play with your pup in the office. Try to make all experiences fun and playful.

Pups at this age will need assistance with their behavior, be sure the training used is distraction, voice tone (low) and guidance based. This is important to your pups overall mental soundness. You can see how yelling or hitting a pup may doom him/her to a life of fearfulness

Fear Imprint Period is not a reference to puppies having a shyness or fearful personality. Shy/fearfulness of the environment, object and/or people may be a sign of a hereditary temperament defect. Generally, puppies should not be fearful of new situations, however, it is normal for them to be curiously cautious; there is a big difference.

No need to be obsessed or over protective of your pup in his/her experiences during this time...just keep the experiences positive and fair. Training should NEVER consist of yelling, swatting or hitting puppies.

Seniority Classification: The Age of “Cutting”---12 weeks – 16 weeks

This is the time when your pup begins to feel confident and ‘cuts’ the apron strings. You will notice a big change in your puppy during this time. They have more coordination, many find their bark and some will try to tackle steps.

Since all dogs see themselves as a member of a ‘pack’ (your family) this is the time to begin to show your pup that he/she is low man on the totem pole and that *all human pack members are leaders* not siblings. Play biting becomes more intense as the puppy tries to challenge your authority with their little needle teeth, but more importantly, he/she waits to see how you will address these advances.

It is important to remember that a dog’s natural instinct is to live thru a ranking system. Dogs view fair, firm leaders with respect; while they view wishy-washy, over-affectionate pack members as weak and inconsistent. *Dogs ultimately enjoy the leader’s company MORE.*

It is important to *send clear, consistent messages* to your pup that humans are the leaders and that dogs are the followers. Sending mixed message will only set up a lifetime of dominance battles between dogs and people and may result in aggression towards people. This is the time when rough play and

tug of war games are strongly discouraged, for it teaches the pup how to dominant it's pack members. Children are usually the ones that are the puppy's targets.

It is at this time that fair, firm training is needed. It is at this time that you may need a professional trainer to assist in the technique of effective training. Training should NEVER consist of yelling, swatting or hitting puppies.

Flight Instinct Period--- 4 -8 months

This is the time when pups begin to feel their independence. They begin their first 'flights' as little birds would. They will go from room to room poking their little noses into every nook and cranny searching for new experiences.

They begin to explore their surroundings and those that stayed close to people before are running down the driveway without a care in the world. Many owners are lulled into a false sense of security that their pups will not leave their side because when the pup was younger; their pups could be "off leash" and would listen to them. This is very dangerous for puppies. Be sure that your pup is always on a leash when not in a fenced in area. Reliable off leash training is only achieved after effective obedience training.

The very best time to begin formal obedience training is during this period. True, effective, reliable obedience means: when you ask you pup to "sit", he/she will sit and STAY seated UNTIL given a command to get up; no matter what environment they are in. Training should NEVER consist of yelling, swatting or hitting puppies.

Housebreaking Suggestions for Puppies

By Dr. Carole J. Rose



This chapter offers some guidelines to housebreaking with some emphasis on the use of a crate. The crate builds on the puppy's "den instinct" – his desire to maintain a comfortable, clean place where he

rests and eats. Scheduling, using of a single outdoor toilet spot, and consistent praising for passing stool and urine in that spot are also big parts of the plan.

Use the crate whenever you can't supervise your pup, such as when you are at work or sleeping. In addition to being a housebreaking tool, crating offers the added bonus of preventing your pup from chewing or eating objects that could be harmful to him as well as providing him with his very own "safe place". When introducing your puppy to this crate, emphasize the positive! Coax him into the crate with a tiny food treat, which he can eat when he enters the crate and you're praising him. While coaxing him into the crate, use a signal phrase like "kennel up" in a happy, relaxed voice. Now and then, leave a few kibbles in the crate with the door open so the pup learns to enter on his own, too. Many people feed their puppies their meals in the crate to increase the pleasant associations. For housebreaking purposes, the crate should be large enough for the pup to stand up, turn around, and lay down comfortably with food and water bowls present. Using an excessively large crate may cause the pup to establish a toilet area in one corner, then rest and eat in another. A NOTE OF CAUTION: DO NOT leave your puppy in his crate while he is wearing any kind of collar, as it is possible for collars to get caught on the metal bars of the crate.

Being consistent with the puppy's schedule also will help you on the road to housebreaking. As nearly as possible, feed the puppy at the same times daily. Decide where in your yard you would like the puppy to pass stool and urine – that is, establish his toilet area. Always bring him to that spot on a leash and choose a signal word or phrase like "busy, busy" or "hurry up" to use whenever you bring him there. Praise the pup warmly when he does produce stool or urine. *Do not distract the puppy with play or toys until after he's passed stool/urine.* The combination of going to the same toilet spot, using a signal word, and praising the pup for a job well done will help him focus and learn.

Predictable times to bring the puppy outdoors to use his toilet areas include:

-- First thing in the morning. Pick up the puppy as he leaves the crate – don't even let him hit the ground until you get to the toilet area with him! Remember to have him on a leash, use the signal word(s), and praise him for doing the right thing.

-- 15 to 30 minutes after every meal.

--Right after any indoor play session.

--Every 2 hours when you're with the pup and awake. An 8-week old pup can only control his bladder and bowels for 3 hours at the very most. His capacity will gradually increase, *but don't expect housebreaking to be completed until 6 months of age at the earliest!*

--Expect that the pup will need to go out at least once during the night. Have the crate in your bedroom at night, at least at first, so that you can respond to his requests to go outside. Activity or whining when the pup has been quiet is most likely a signal that he needs to go to the bathroom. Also, being near you at night will help make his adjustment to your home easier.

--Any time you see him stop what he's doing indoors and start sniffing intently, he may be looking for a place to go.

If you catch the puppy “in the act” of soiling the house, pick him up immediately say “no” (sternly), and bring him right outside to his toilet area. Then be sure to praise him when he goes. When you get back into the house, don’t let the pup see you cleaning up the mess – avoid encouraging “maid syndrome”! Use one of the enzymatic cleaners like “Outright” to remove residual odor. Sometimes puppies will return to an indoor spot to pass stool and urine if they can smell where they’ve gone before. ***Remember, it does no good to reprimand a puppy for soiling in the house if you don’t actually catch him in the act of doing it!*** If you find a mess in the house do not bring the pup to that spot and scold him – he won’t understand why you’re angry. Although a scolded pup may indeed look “guilty”, he’s simply responding to your tone of voice without even remembering that he’s the one that made the mess!!

Keeping a close eye on your young pup, his activities, and signals can be difficult. One suggestion that has helped many people is attachment of a leash or lightweight line from the puppy’s collar to your belt loop. Through this “umbilical cord” method, the pup can’t run into another room unattended and have an accident or chew furniture, shoes, etc. Even if he starts to pass stool or urine where he shouldn’t, you’ll be in a better position to stop and redirect him.

If there’s no one home in your house during the day, you may have noticed that the schedule for letting your puppy outdoors does not match with yours! The ideal solution to this problem is to have a trusted friend, neighbor, or hired pet sitter come to your home to bring your pup to his outdoor toilet area during the day. Otherwise, you must back off from some of the restrictions noted earlier. For example, confine your pup in a larger crate than described above - he WILL need to go to the bathroom while you’re at work, so let him establish a toilet spot within the crate as far as possible from his bowls and resting area. When you’re at home, resume the schedule noted above. At night, use a different, smaller crate, or use the large crate but block off an area to make it more confining. Hopefully, the pup will rouse you during the night to be let outdoors. Using this adjusted approach can still work, but the process likely will take a longer period of time.

Vaccines and Deworming

Vaccinating your puppy is important for protecting them and yourself against diseases. Here is a list of the common vaccines that we offer.

- Distemper/Adenovirus/Parvo/Parainfluenza (DA2PP): This vaccine can be started at eight weeks of age and is boosted every three to four weeks until the puppy reaches 15-16 weeks of age. It is then boosted annually, although after the first year, this can be boosted as a three year vaccine.
- Leptospirosis: This is a series of two vaccines spaced two to three weeks apart. The first vaccine can be started at eight weeks of age although most are started later to coincide

with the last two DA2PP boosters. This vaccine is recommended for puppies that will spend anytime outside.

- Rabies: This vaccine is required to be given by state law. This vaccine is given at three months of age (12 weeks) and is boosted in one year. After the first year, Rabies vaccines can be boosted every three years.
- Bordetella (Kennel Cough): The vaccine is recommended for all puppies that are going to be attending puppy classes or are to be boarded or groomed at some point. This can be given once in puppy hood and then boosted annually.
- Lyme: This is a series of two vaccines spaced two to three weeks apart. The first vaccine can be given at nine weeks of age and is recommended for puppies that will spend any time outside where tick exposure is likely. If more than four weeks has elapsed between the first and second vaccination, then series must be restarted. This vaccine is then boosted once a year.
- Canine Influenza: this vaccine protects against a strain of flu virus and is recommended for puppies that will be traveling, going to dog shows, or frequently attending puppy day care programs or boarding. It is a series of vaccines given 2-4 weeks apart and is boosted annually.

If there are any other vaccines you wish to have done, let us know and we can help you!

Deworming is also very important as it helps to get any parasites out of your puppy's system and should be done when the puppy is two to three weeks old. It should be repeated every two weeks while the puppy is having their vaccine series done to ensure that all of the parasites are taken care of. Along with deworming your puppy during their first few visits, a monthly heartworm preventative should be given, as well as a topical flea and tick preventive. We have many products at our clinic that cover both internal and external parasites, and many of them come with a guarantee from their manufacturer if used as recommended.

Spaying and Neutering

We always recommended spaying or neutering your pet, unless you are a professional breeder. Pets usually live healthier longer lives if they are spayed or neutered. Here are some common problems associated with unaltered animals.

Males



Increased testosterone levels in non-neutered male dogs can result in the following:

- Urine marking (indoors and outdoors!!)
- Aggression toward humans and other dogs
- Territorial aggression
- Escape oriented behavior (in order to roam)
- Erratic behavior
- Difficulty concentrating on task (meaning difficult to train)
- Prostate infections
- Recurrent urinary tract infections

Females

Increased hormone levels in non-spayed female dogs can result in the following:

- Aggression toward humans and other dogs
- Erratic behavior
- Signs of abdominal pain
- Stains on furniture or carpeting
- Constant supervision by owner when outside (non-spayed female dogs can attract neutered and non-neutered dog from a mile away)
- Increased aggression toward other female dogs
- Increased risk of mammary and uterine cancer
- Increased risk of uterine infection (pyometra)

Females can be spayed starting at 6 months of age and males can be neutered at 4 months of age. Our receptionist can provide you information about scheduling a spay or neuter surgery for your pet.

Microchipping

When you do come in to have your puppy spayed or neuter, we also offer microchipping services. The brand our clinic uses is called “Home Again” and is recognized throughout the nation. It is a tiny microchip that can fit in a hypodermic needle. It is injected under the skin, much like a vaccination. This microchip will stay in your pet where it will remain for life. Once your pet has had the microchip injected all you need to do is register with the Home Again database (we do this for you!!) and keep your address updated should you move. There is a one-time fee to register.

If your pet is ever lost (and let's hope not!!) this microchip can be the priceless identification that brings your pet home to you safely. When your pet is found and brought to a participating shelter or animal hospital he or she will simply be checked with a scanner. When the microchip number is found, the 24-hour hotline is called and the database searched for your pet's ID number. At that point, Home Again will contact you to pick up your lost pet.



Puppy Social Skills

By Bridget Burton, Certified Veterinary Technician

Early development:

Dogs have several critical developmental stages during which social skills are formed. The first begins at 3 weeks of age as the puppy becomes truly mobile and can hear. Breeders should be aware of this and begin exposing the puppies to positive experiences meeting people of various ages, both male and female. The puppies should be raised in an environment that mimics the future home - vacuum cleaners, sounds of children playing, etc.

Most puppies go to their new homes between 7 and 9 weeks of age. Some research suggests that as early as 6 weeks is the optimum age. At any rate, they should be placed before 12 weeks of age. However, if they are removed from their mother and siblings before 6 weeks of age there is more likelihood that they will not have learned enough social skills to relate well to other dogs.

Research has shown that the benefits of early socialization may wear off if not continually practiced until the dog reaches maturity – at about 1 to 2 years of age. Therefore it is not enough to take them through a puppy class and assume they have had enough socialization.

What to do once you get your puppy home

Hopefully you have done your homework and visited with the breeder to see how the puppies have been raised until they go to their new home. It is important to continue the process in a positive way.

- Do not overwhelm your puppy in its first few days in its new home. Limit meeting new people to members of the household. Each person should spend a few minutes one-on-one, perhaps hand - feeding part of the puppy's meals.
- After an initial adjustment period start introducing the puppy to lots of new people of all ages and types. **Always** supervise all interaction between children and the puppy.
- Gradually introduce the puppy to sights and sounds around the home and neighborhood: cars and trucks, vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, etc.
- Get your puppy used to being handled from head to toe – look in ears, lift lip to look at teeth, handle feet, etc. Brush daily with a soft brush even if short coated.
- Take the puppy with you on short car rides (weather permitting). Start out with an empty stomach to decrease the chances the puppy will suffer from car sickness.

Prevent Play Biting

Puppies learn some bite inhibition when playing with other dogs. If a puppy bites too hard the other puppy usually squeals and stops playing. You can do the same thing. If teeth touch skin – even accidentally – say “ouch!” in a high-pitched tone of voice and offer your hand again. The puppy will usually respond by licking. Praise the puppy. If the puppy uses teeth again, say “ouch!” and walk away for a few moments. A few times repeating this will usually get the point across. Don't encourage biting behavior by teasing or playing tug with the puppy. Make sure there are proper chew toys available as an outlet for the normal desire for all dogs to chew,

Chewing, Digging, Jumping up – and all that jazz

The importance of early training cannot be emphasized enough. Many places offer puppy classes. Visit some of these to determine if the type of class is right for you and your puppy. Obedience is not the issue here – socialization and problem solving are what is needed at this stage. It is comforting to know that others are dealing with the same problems as you. Trainers can offer solutions to the common puppy behavior problems and educate owners to normal puppy behavior.

Skills for a lifetime

Bringing a puppy into your home is a big responsibility. And that responsibility lasts for the lifetime of the dog. Taking the time while the puppy is young will help ensure a lifetime of happiness for you and your dog. Continue with training past the puppy stage and consider taking classes for advanced skills, agility or trick training to keep you and your pet on your toes.



Tips to Avoid Aggression

By Susan Engel, Certified Pet Trainer

Crate Train Give your dog a place of his own and a sense of security for at least one year.

Spay/Neuter your dog. Un-neutered males are more dominant and female may become grumpy during their estrus cycle.

Socialize your dog. Bring them around different people, noises objects and situations. This will prevent unreasonable fears.

No bed or sofas. This will cloud the chain of command in a dog's mind.

No tug of war games. This teaches your dog the art of fighting for something he wants.

Do not chain your dog outside for extended periods of time. This may make him overprotective of his territory.

Do not yell, hit, punch or kick your dog. It is ineffective, confusing and confrontational.

Early true obedience training. Although puppy training classes are fun and a good idea, they do not take the place of true obedience training.



Diet and Exercise

It is very important to provide your puppy a high quality meal at all stages of their life. Since they are growing, they will need a more nutrient-rich food so that their bones and muscles develop properly. When you bring your puppy home, it is best to keep them on the food their breeder provided to avoid causing an upset stomach while they are settling in. However, if you do decide you want to switch foods, it should be done very gradually and take at least a week to do the complete switch. Below is an example of how to gradually switch over food types:

Day 1: 1/8 new food, 7/8 old food.

Day 2: 1/4 new food, 7/8 old food.

Day 3: $\frac{1}{4}$ new food , $\frac{3}{4}$ old food.
Day 4: $\frac{1}{2}$ new food, $\frac{1}{2}$ old food.
Day 5: $\frac{3}{4}$ new food, $\frac{1}{4}$ old food.
Day 6: $\frac{3}{4}$ new food, $\frac{1}{4}$ old food.
Day 7: $\frac{7}{8}$ new food, $\frac{1}{8}$ old food.

Exercise is also very important for your puppy. Bringing them for daily walks is a great way to keep them fit. Swimming is also an excellent way for your puppy to stay active, provided they are fully vaccinated and are not prone to ear infections. It is always a good idea to dry out your puppy's ears after they go swimming.



Obedience Training, Grooming, Boarding, Etc.

Below is a list of businesses and people we recommended for your puppy training and care needs!

Boarding Kennels-

- Day Hill Kennels (136 Addison Road, Windsor) 860-688-2370
- Baywood Kennels (10 Moose Meadow Road, Willington) 860-429-5533
- Hidden Acres Kennel (247 Plains Road, Tolland) 860-871-9272
- Candlewick Kennels (2811 Hebron Ave, Glastonbury) 860-633-6878

- Best Friends Pet Care (1511 Silas Deane Hwy, Rocky Hill) 860-222-0279
- Country Inn Kennels (110 Sandy Beach Rd, Ellington, CT 06029) –[860-872-9551](tel:860-872-9551)
- Planet Bark (37 Darcey Street, West Hartford) 860-882-1711

Groomers

- Paw-rific Pet Grooming (597 Vernon St., Manchester) 860-645-3961
- Julie’s Barks and Bubbles (1678 Ellington Rd., South Windsor) 860-648-4050 (www.juliesbarksandbubbles.com)
- DJ’s Grooming and Pet Supplies (119 Oakland St, Manchester) –([860](tel:860-649-0485)) 649-0485
- Pupperdoos & Kitties Too (601 Sullivan Ave., S. Windsor) 860-436-6377
- Nose and Toes (mobile) 860-582-7855 (www.nosetoos.net)

Obedience Classes/Trainers

- Tails U Win (175 Adams St., Manchester) 860-646-5033 (www.tailsuwin.com)
- Camp Bow-Wow (1145 John Fitch Boulevard, South Windsor) 860-372-4787 (www.campbowwow.com)
- The Mellow Mutt (18 Sanrico Drive, Unit B, Manchester) 860-432-4221
- John Gagnon’s Pet Resort (227 Upton Road, Colchester) 860-537-3648
- Susan Mack (Simon Foundation) 860-428-4467
- Our Companions – Marie Joyner 860-242-9999

Daycare

- Camp Bow-Wow (1145 John Fitch Boulevard, South Windsor) 860-372-4787 (www.campbowwow.com)
- Julie’s Barks and Bubbles (1678 Ellington Rd., South Windsor) 860-648-4050 (www.juliesbarksandbubbles.com)
- Best Friends Pet Care (1511 Silas Deane Hwy, Rocky Hill) 860-222-0279
- Planet Bark (37 Darcey Street, West Hartford) 860-882-1711



We hope this guide helps you to understand how to raise your new puppy. If you have any further questions about raising your puppy, don't hesitate to call our office!

South Windsor Veterinary Clinic

