



# Puppy Socialization

## Little Puppy in the Big World

Socialization is one of the single most important jobs of a Puppy Parent. Puppies have a critical socialization period that runs roughly from age three weeks to three months. During this sensitive time a puppy is developing their early view of the world around them and making associations that will carry on into adulthood.

Young puppies are primed to be open to new people, dogs, animals, environments and other experiences. As puppies grow older this acceptance of new things will fade. Fear becomes the default response to new stimuli that the dog was not exposed to as a puppy. The more you can expose your puppy early on the less fearful he will be as an adult.



Tony La Russa's  
**Animal  
Rescue  
Foundation**  
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It is also important to keep in mind that not all socialization is good. Although puppies are typically more accepting of new things, it is possible for them to feel scared and overwhelmed in certain situations. Those negative events can later lead to fear and phobias that can be much more difficult to deal with when they become adults.

As a Puppy Parent, your job is to expose your puppy to as many new things and ensure that the socialization process is a positive and fun experience. The time and effort you dedicate to early socialization will pay off big!

## Puppy Talk

Knowing how to read and react to puppy body language will enable you to be smart about socializing your puppy.



This puppy is shifting his weight and his ears are back. He is scared and uncomfortable.



Some puppies will show their belly of lift their paw to show they are uncomfortable.



This puppy chooses to watch from a safe place. He is not ready to explore the environment.



Some puppies need time to cautiously investigate. Use treats to encourage and build confidence.

**Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation**

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## Charted Journey

Socializing your puppy is a big task and equally important. Your puppy is always learning, so start socialization and training as soon as the puppy comes home. Remember, the goal is that the puppy has positive experiences, not neutral or bad ones. You can pay attention to your puppy's body language to give you clues about his comfort level. Use treats generously to help form positive associations. If your puppy is scared or uncomfortable, immediately create space between your puppy and the scary thing. Once he is relaxed you can encourage him to approach by using treats. Never force a puppy to interact with something that may be scary to him.

Use our socialization chart to keep track of your puppy's progress. You can grade your puppy's response to each exposure or just check them off as you go.

Progress	Score	Puppy's Response to New Stimuli
Needs Work	1	<b>Over arousal:</b> Growl, nip, bark, struggle, lunge
	2	<b>Avoid:</b> Struggle, hide, try to get away, hesitant or won't approach
	3	<b>Freeze:</b> Holds still (and not eating treats), non-exploratory, moving slowly or acting sleepy when he shouldn't be tired
Going Well	4	<b>Calm, relaxed:</b> Playful, explores, focused on food
	5	<b>Calm, relaxed:</b> Playful, <i>even without food</i>

Handling	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Massage Ears							
Examine mouth & gums							
Open eyelids							
Lightly squeeze skin							
Touch nose							
Touch between toes							
Handle & trim toenails							
Cradle like a baby							
Tug tail lightly							
Gently grab other body parts							
Lightly grab collar							
Hold head							
Give belly rub							
Wipe body w towel							
Put on harness							
Put on head halter							

People	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Women							
People of other ethnicities							
Tall men							
Men with deep voices							
Men with beards							
Elderly people							
People running							
Infants (crawling)							
Toddlers (walking, squealing)							
Children standing & playing							
Teenagers							

People Wearing	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Hats or helmets							
Hoodies or heavy coats							
Backpacks							
Sunglasses							
Canes, walkers, crutches							
Costumes							

Sounds	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Doorbell ringing							
Phone ringing							
Children & Babies (crying , playing...)							
Garage Door opening							
Jackhammer / construction							
Shopping Cart							
Vacuum cleaner							
Beeping (Alarm clock, microwave timer...)							
Washing machine / dryer							
Clapping							
Sirens							
Fire alarms							

Stuff on Wheels	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Skateboards							
Rollerblades							
Rolling garbage bins							
Shopping Carts							
Baby strollers							
Wheel chairs							
Bikes							
Cars							
Buses / Trucks							
Motorcycles / Scooters							
Trains							

Other Objects	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Pots & Pans							
Blanket/rug being shaken							
Brooms & mops							
Balloons							
Umbrellas							
Plastic bags							
Sidewalk signs							
Paper bags							
Car keys							
Automatic doors							

Toys	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Fuzzy toy							
Big exercise ball							
Tennis ball							
Hard toy							
Squeaky toy							
Rope/ Tug toy							



Locations	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Suburbs							
Residential city street							
High traffic city street							
Mall parking lot							
Inside buildings							

Experiences	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Fun crate training							
Up & Down stairs							
In & Out of doorways							
Getting a bath							
Playing Hide & Seek							
Going through a tunnel							
Climbing over obstacle							
Walking on wobbly surface							

Unfamiliar Dogs	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Dog who play well							
Small dogs							
Big dogs							
A dog that reprimands puppy with force							
Other puppies							

Other animals	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Cats							
Horses							
Birds/Ducks							
Small animals (rabbits, hamster, Guinea pigs...)							
Livestock							

Surfaces	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Concrete							
Slippery Floors							
Metal surfaces							
Wobbly surfaces							
Stairs							
Wet grass & mud							

Wait for Puppy to complete shots before visiting	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Su
Pet stores							
Dog-friendly events							
Dog-friendly hiking trails							
Dog parks							
Doggy Daycare							

*Use yummy treats and praise when you puppy is introduced to new things and environments*

*If your puppy is scared or shy, move further away from the scary stimuli and give lots of yummy treats*

*Let your puppy choose the pace; never force your puppy to interact with something that may be scary for him.*