

Socializing Your Puppy to Dogs

Socialization means making positive associations with new people, animals, places and things. Use your puppy's favorite reinforcers like food and toys to teach them these are all good.

It's important to teach your puppy that other dogs are nothing to get worked up about. Learning to walk calmly past older dogs is a critical skill for puppies, as many adult dogs do not appreciate puppies or their boisterous behavior. Puppies should also learn that calmly looking at other puppies is a good behavior. Reward your puppy for simply looking at puppies and dogs by feeding a yummy treat. Take a class where puppies can learn appropriate interactions led by a Certified Professional Dog Trainer.

If your puppy is joining a home with an existing dog, realize that your first dog probably won't like the new puppy jumping, invading cherished territory, or taking food or toys. Keep the new puppy under control with baby gates, exercise pens and crates. You can help both old dog and new pup make good associations with each other by giving treats and chew toys when they're physically separated but can see each other.



Feed for Looking

Watch your puppy. When she is simply looking at another dog or puppy, calmly feed a small yummy treat or play a favorite game. Reward with the food or toy *after* your puppy has looked calmly for a few seconds.



Give Space

Keep your distance to start. Reward for looking and repeat several times. Gradually move closer if your puppy seems comfortable. Always allow your puppy to decide whether to approach another puppy rather than forcing a greeting. Avoid adult dogs, who may be annoyed and snap at a puppy.



Keep it Short

Socialization sessions should be brief—only a minute or two at a time. Short and sweet is the motto! Play with another puppy should also be broken up into short intervals. Lure pups away with yummy treats every 45 seconds if natural breaks don't occur.

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