

# Puppy socialization checklist

Short, happy tries with new things, starting the day your puppy comes home. Your puppy sets the pace.

Puppy's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date home: \_\_\_\_\_ Age when home: \_\_\_\_\_ weeks

## ✓ Happy

Relaxed, comes over on their own, explores, takes treats.

**Do more.**

## ~ Unsure

Hangs back, head or tail low, stretches to grab a treat while leaning away.

**Try again with more distance, less noise or a shorter visit.**

## ✗ Scared

Freezes, tries to leave, whale eye (whites of the eyes showing), trembles or won't take treats.

**Stop. Make it much easier next time.**

Write ✓, ~ or ✗ in a box each time you try something. Repeat anything that isn't a ✓ yet. Other stress signs: tucked tail, licking lips, yawning, shaking, ears back. If you see them, add distance or end the session. If you see ✗ a lot, or your puppy is fearful even when things are calm, talk to your vet.

## Before your puppy's vaccines are done

- Skip dog parks, pet stores and other spots unknown dogs use until your vet says your puppy's ready.
- Only meet dogs you know: healthy, vaccinated, friendly with puppies, not around unknown dogs.
- Where lots of dogs go, carry your puppy or use a sling, stroller, mat or blanket. Stick to sidewalks.
- Ask people to wash their hands. Visitors fresh from a shelter or dog park: change clothes and shoes first.
- Puppy class from 7 to 8 weeks, after 1 set of vaccines (7+ days before) and a first deworming.
- Ask your vet what's safe where you live.

| People                                                                           | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Men, women, teens, older adults                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toddlers and school-age kids (supervised)                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Men with beards                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hats, helmets, glasses                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People in uniforms                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wheelchairs, walkers, crutches                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bikes, skateboards, scooters                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Carrying umbrellas, bags, boxes                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delivery people, visitors at the door                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The vet team, a groomer                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ask for a sit before each greeting. The breed standard: 55 to 75 lb as an adult. |                          |                          |                          |

| Other animals                                                            | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Calm, vaccinated adult dog                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Healthy, vaccinated puppies                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A dog-friendly cat                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Farm animals, seen from the car                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own other pets                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| End it if the other animal avoids your puppy, growls or plays too rough. |                          |                          |                          |

| Handling                                                                                                              | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Paws, pads and nails                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ears, inside and out                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A look in the mouth, gently and briefly                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Belly and tail                                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A gentle hold, then a treat                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hand on the collar, then a treat                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collar and leash on and off                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brush                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bath and towel                                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hair dryer on low or cool                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| One nail trimmed                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toothbrush (once adult teeth are in)                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pick a calm, tired moment. Show each tool before it touches your puppy. Mouths can be sore while baby teeth fall out. |                          |                          |                          |

# Puppy socialization checklist

Mark each try: ✓ happy ~ unsure ✕ scared. Repeat anything that isn't a ✓ yet.

| Sounds                                      | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vacuum, hair dryer, washing machine         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Phone ringtones, a radio, kids playing      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Traffic, buses, motorcycles, garbage trucks | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Recordings of thunder, barking dogs         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Lawn mowers, power tools                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Start quiet and far away, pair it with treats, and turn it up over days.

| Surfaces                           | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Grass and leaves                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sand                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gravel and concrete                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slick floors: tile, wood, linoleum | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Carpet and rugs                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Metal grates, manhole covers       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stairs                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bumpy or uneven ground             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mud and puddles                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An exam table (towel on top)       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Places and things                                                           | Try 1                    | Try 2                    | Try 3                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Car rides that end somewhere fun                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drive-throughs, car washes                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Friends' homes                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| New neighborhoods: city, suburb, country                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bench near a school or sports field                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The groomer, before a full groom                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Crate naps, short alone time                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strollers, wagons, wheelchairs rolling by                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Umbrellas and balloons                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Elevators, automatic doors                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rolling and bouncing balls                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Off-season things: snow shovels, coats, holiday decorations, a running hose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your own:                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Where lots of dogs go, keep paws off the ground until your vet says your puppy's ready.

## Keep it positive

- Let your puppy approach. Start at a distance.
- Sight first, then sound, then movement.
- Treats for every new thing. Let new people offer some.
- Keep it short: early puppy parties about half an hour.
- Never force it. No rolling over, holding down, yelling or leash jerks.

## The window

About 3 weeks to 12 or 14 weeks old. It fades gradually, so keep going after that, just slower.

Many puppies have a fear period at 8 to 10 weeks. Bring treats to every vet visit.

Keep socializing through the teenage months.

## Notes

Puppy class and start date:

Things to work on: