

## 30-day socialization challenge

Using rewards, choice and careful select socialization to set your puppy up to be the best he can be.

Handout Number: 152

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We all want the best for our puppies.

We want puppies that will be confident, optimistic, adaptable and social creatures when they become older.

To do this we must carefully socialise them.

This means that we pick and choose, who, what, where and when our puppies socialise.

However, there is a catch. To get the maximum benefit for your puppy, you should aim to have a solid grounding by the time your pup turns 12 weeks. The next catch – your pup will not be fully vaccinated before this time despite vaccines with an early finish, and depending on vaccination program/protocol this may not actually be completed before 18 weeks. Saying that, pups still learn after this period, but they aren't as naturally flexible.

So, what am I saying? Let's get our pups out and about – safely. This means choosing well run puppy schools, taking your pup places that are safe (vaccinated dogs houses etc, other peoples places etc), or taking your pup out and about where they can see and smell the world from safety – this could be your arms, pram etc.

Dr Ian Dunbar reports that *“Well socialised puppies grow up to be wonderful companions, whereas antisocial dogs are difficult, time-consuming, and potentially dangerous”*. *After You Get Your Puppy – Dr Ian Dunbar*.

But it's not just humans your pup needs to be comfortable with. Its new things, animals, sounds

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and smells.

So, I have set up a 30-day challenge for you. Take note each day jot down what your puppy saw, interacted with etc, how your puppy responded, and how many new people he meets and new dogs.

Remember when meeting new dogs, ensure your puppy is safe (vaccinated friendly dogs only, in safe environments). Also it is important to understand that he doesn't have to play with them and they don't have to play with him. Just seeing them, and having good things happen (small meaty rewards, tug game etc) is more than enough.

We actually don't want to teach our pup that you can play with each and every dog – otherwise one day he will run across the wrong dog and likely lose his nose. Of course, select, well matched play mates are great!

Pamela Dennison says *“During the socialisation process (and really during his entire life), it is imperative to make sure that he is around only friendly people and dogs. Sometimes, all it takes is one attack from a non-friendly dog to create a dog aggressive dog or one really bad experience with a person to create a human aggressive dog”.*

Just yesterday, my own pup and I watched a tractor go by and then on the way back the gentleman stopped and came over to say hi. 2 things off my list in one go.

If at any time your puppy is fearful, wants to gain space etc, let him. It is as much about learning that they can also trust you not to force them in to things they are not comfortable with as it is building confidence. Listen to your puppy!

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If he doesn't want to participate, stop for the day, or break it down in to smaller achievable chunks. Use two people where possible, one to control whatever the pup may be meeting/watching etc, and the other to reward the puppy and be his advocate.

Be guided by how your puppy interacts and how he takes reinforcement. If he is usually gentle when taking rewards, and now you are feeling teeth and he is "grabby", he is likely over aroused or stressed. Likewise, if your pup is usually keen on rewards and isn't taking them, he is also likely stressed. Remove the stressor or increase his distance from the stressor until he is comfortable.

Day	New people	New Friendly Dogs	30 novel options	New Things	Response
	<p><i>Record the following:</i></p> <p>Age groups Sex Nationality Unusual Clothing (helmets/backpacks/boots etc) Facial hair</p>	<p><i>Record the following:</i></p> <p>Breed Age</p>	<p><i>Complete this in any order.</i></p> <p><i>Mark off once complete.</i></p> <p><i>You can continue to mark when exposed etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Below is a list – you do not have to complete in order, but aim to complete as many as possible over the next 4 weeks.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure your puppy has the best time possible, and remember listen to his needs. You are his advocate.</i></p>	<p><i>Describe how your puppy responded.</i></p> <p><i>Body language. Confidence/Unsure</i></p> <p><i>Took Rewards nicely, rough or not all.</i></p> <p><i>If he isn't enjoying it, cease this attempt, or change the set up so that he feels safe and that he can succeed.</i></p>

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1				Balance boards/different surfaces/wobble boards <i>(Kmart has a selection in the human fitness section).</i>	
2				Brush/Comb – gently used.  Choose your timing for this – chompy time is not ideal.	
3				Expose to broom/mop (gently move it, only if puppy relaxed – do not chase, or turn it in to a game – you will regret that long term 😊)	
4				Expose to vacuum (switched off but moving)	
5				Expose to vacuum switched on (make sure he can move away and start at a distance)	

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6				Wheelie Bins (lift the lid, put noisy rubbish in, move bin).	
7				Umbrellas (on floor set up, and then carried if comfortable)	
8				Things with wheels (skateboards, scooters, bikes). Start stationary and then add gradual movement.	
9				A car ride (safely secured in doggy seat belt or secure crate).	
10				Fun trip to veterinary clinic (scales, take his mat, time on table etc). Talk to the clinic the best and safety time to do this.	
11				Body Handling – including paws, tail, mouth and ears.	
12				Running water in bath tub or shower (doesn't have to get	

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				in, but don't discourage if he shows interest).	
13				Other animals – birds/livestock etc  List any you have seen.	
14				Fun stuff – wet grass/mud/sand/puddles	
15				Visit to train station/bus station (if possible, a quick trip in a lift).	
16				Noises – sound proof puppy app has a great selection of sounds. Choose one or two each day.	
17				Balloons – blown up, moving, floating.  Not a play toy – we don't want a balloon pop.	
18				Doorbell Ringing/Door knocking.	
19				Sirens (fire/police etc)	

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20				Shopping trolley/prams/wheel chairs	
21				Crutches/walking sticks	
22				Ball pit (plastic balls/cardboard box)	
23				Tunnel (could be children's tunnel/cardboard box)	
24				Heavy machinery – garbage truck/tractor etc	
25				Grooming tools (nail clippers, dremel or hair clippers etc).	
26				A gentle bath (paired with licky mat or second person feeding rewards).	
27				Sit on sidewalk (with puppy on your lap) –	

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				watch people and cars go by.	
28				Visit a school or stop by a children's playground (let your pup watch from a distance before choosing to move closer).	
29				Storm/Rain/Lighting /Wind	
30				Washing machine/dryer	
				Other:	
				Other:	
				Other:	
				Other:	

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