

# Puppy Program

WEEK	ACTIVITY	SCIENCE
1 to 2	<p>Focus here should be helping the mother to establish the maternal bond with her puppies – this should be done by providing a quiet, calm environment. Puppies should be handled, gently, mainly to ensure they are healthy and making good progress.</p>	<p>Before week 3 commences, the puppy's mother is it's main social object (Lindsay, 2000), therefore, minimal interaction is required at this stage with humans.</p>
3	<p>Make sure the puppy hears as many different noises as possible such as doorbells, hoovers, TV, radio, doors opening and closing. It is possible to use CDs with a wide range of noises. These should be used throughout the day and, should happen, unexpectedly when the puppy is awake.</p> <p>Provide lots of things for the puppy to look at (although a 3 week old puppy has opened it's eyes, it's vision is poor), the puppy can detect movement. Roll things across the pen, flash torches (not directly at the puppy), change light levels, bounce a soft ball around the pen, etc.</p> <p>Cuddle and handle the puppies regularly, holding them in a comfortable, upright position and make sure they are fully supported.</p> <p>Stroke them, regularly, with different textured things such as gloves, sheepskin, rubber glove a very soft toothbrush.</p> <p>Allow the puppy to walk on different surfaces.</p> <p>Expose them to fully vaccinated, friendly dogs, outside the pen.</p>	<p>Scott and Fuller (1965) identified a critical (socialization) period - between the ages of 3 and 12-14 weeks. It is during this critical period that the effects of the environment have the greatest influence on behaviour development than at any other time. During this critical period emotional attachments are formed with both living (socialization) and non-living (habituation) aspects of the environment.</p> <p>During this 3 to 12-14 week period, the more the puppy is exposed to the better. The aim is to try to expose the puppy to everything (as much as possible) that it may encounter in later life.</p> <p>Dogs undergo a process of progressive biological organization and behavioural differentiation. This critical period (as described above) is, relatively short – it is essential that the puppy is exposed to the appropriate stimuli (as described in the activities on the left) of contacts and experience; these are considered to be of maximal benefit to the development of the dog, through the critical period.</p> <p>What is learned during this period is lasting, providing the foundation for adult behaviour patterns and, potential problems (Fox, 1968).</p>

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4 to 5	<p>Introduce more, different, surfaces to the puppy</p> <p>Add toys for the puppy to experiment with, upside down cardboard boxes, pieces of sheepskin, buckets (without handles) on their side, etc.</p> <p>Take each puppy, individually, out of the pen – spending, progressively, longer time away from the litter mates.</p> <p>Repeat some of the activities of week 3 (just one or two, occasionally).</p> <p>Continue handling the puppy – ears, mouth, feet, an all over body experience. Start to use tiny treats – the puppy will associate handling with positive experiences.</p> <p>Begin to get the puppy to get used to gentle restraint.</p> <p>Move the puppies, a s a litter, to different rooms around the house – this builds on week 3, exposing the puppies to different locations, sights and noises.</p>	<p>Algomimetic (group coordinated) activity begins to appear at this stage; the litter appears to behave like a miniature pack. Playful aggressive and sexual encounters occur between litter mates. Predatory components appear such as stalking, pouncing and shaking. Social status (dominant and subordinate roles) is unstable and shifts from moment to moment (Lindsay, 2000).</p> <p>This period forms part of the primary socialization for a puppy (3 to 5 weeks).</p> <p>This period is also considered important for the acquisition of bite inhibition; this is thought to be because of a mother's response to hard biting while nursing and, reactions from litter mates while playing. Puppies that have been weaned to early, tend to bite more often and vigorously than is the norm (Fox and Stelzner, 1967).</p>

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6 to 7	<p>Put more interactive toys into the pen such as tunnels, wobbly objects, bits of cloth to climb over or tunnel under, trays filled with pebbles (not too small) or shallow water. Of course, it is important to supervise these sessions carefully, ensuring the safety of the puppy.</p> <p>Solid foods can now be fed from your hand and different types of container (plastic, metal and ceramic).</p> <p>Make sure the puppy meets as many different types of people as possible, for example: men, women, children, people with hats, men with beards, etc. Make sure these encounters are positive and associated with rewards.</p> <p>Expose them to the objects they have heard during weeks 3 to 5 – so they now see a TV, an ironing board, a Hoover, etc. Start slowly, first of, then switched on, at distance. If the puppy reacts, back off, revisit it later.</p> <p>The puppies should be, increasingly, fed away from the mother, it's litter mates and humans. Occasionally feed the puppy from the hand, he learns that having a human around is a good thing.</p> <p>Spend, increasing amounts of time with the puppy. Playing, encourage following, making eye contact, stroking and generally handling him – this is all aimed at getting the puppy used to human contact, underpinning it is a positive thing for the puppy.</p>	<p>Secondary socialization begins when the puppy is weaned and leaves its mother. The optimum time for this is at 7 weeks of age, however, this tends to happen anytime during the 6 to 8 week period, therefore the secondary socialization period is considered to be 6 to 12 weeks of age (Lindsay, 2000).</p> <p>The 7 week marker is a long standing convention recognized by responsible trainers and breeders and, is supported by empirical observations (Rheingold, 1963). The mother's job is done both nutritionally and psychologically and, she starts to show, increasing, irritability together with disinterest in nursing (because of a decline in lactation). The puppies, do not share this disinterest. During this period, antagonistic interaction between the puppies is at a peak and is now longer serving a beneficial purpose for the dog's adult life.</p>

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8	The puppy will now be in a new home – this is a period of heightened fearfulness in a puppy. Everything is new. The new owner should continue to follow the activities already described in weeks 4 to 7, being careful not to introduce new things during this week	The goal here is to underpin the socialization activities of weeks 4 to 7.
9+	<p>Keep exposing the puppy to the things described in weeks 4 to 8 – these experiences need to be positive. So, for instance, if meeting a new person – get the stranger to give the puppy a treat, reinforcing that it is good to meet new people.</p> <p>Use interactive toys in the home, for instance a kong stuffed with treats, this helps stimulate the puppy by giving him problems to solve, this helps him deal with frustration and serves to continue the development of his brain.</p> <p>Leave him alone for short periods of time, maybe behind a baby gate, so he can still see you and then progressing to leaving him behind a closed door, and finally, alone, for short periods, in the home.</p> <p>Introduce as many friendly, vaccinated, dogs as possible.</p> <p>Encourage him to follow you, rewarding, initially with treats as he complies.</p> <p>Finally, after week 14, it is time, to undertake more structured training with the dog.</p>	<p>Fox (1979), Rabb, Woolpy and Ginsburg (1967), Appleby, 2010) demonstrated that regression in socialization is possible. To prevent this socialization and habituation needs to be reinforced continually throughout the animal’s juvenile period (in the dog this is from twelve weeks to maturity).</p> <p>From these studies we can deduce that, for instance, a puppy that is well socialized with children up to the age of twelve weeks, needs to be continually socialized until maturity, for the full benefits to be achieved. This same approach applies to any type of socialization; for instance, other dogs, traffic, crowds, etc.</p> <p>I would also suggest that socialization needs to be maintained throughout the dog’s life.</p>
This socialization schedule is adapted from (Thepuppyplan.com, 2015).		