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Socializing Your Puppy

Socializing your puppy is a very important part of your puppy's health and development. It is recommended to start socializing as soon as possible. In fact puppies begin their socialization process while they are still with their litter mates. Your puppy will form a majority of his/her personality by the age of 16 weeks, therefore beginning your socializing process is considered critical before the age of 16 weeks. Socializing includes exposing your puppy to a variety of peoples, places, smells etc. There are many ways to help socialize your puppy. For instance, an orderly puppy class would be a great start to socializing. They would be able to obtain a good experience with places outside of the home as well as exposure to other vaccinated dogs and people. Taking your new puppy to places where unvaccinated pets may be is not recommended ei pet stores, parks, rest areas etc.

When exposing your puppy to different people, places, and things make sure that you are ready to give appropriate attention and reward your pup with positive feedback. Most puppies like rewards such as: praise, treats, petting. You will want to make sure that you are rewarding your pup when the desired reaction is obtained. Be careful not to reward your puppy for an undesired reaction. For instance if your puppy is acting fearful be sure not to reward or give undue attention to your puppy. Instead try not to avoid the situation but try to tone the situation down to a level where your puppy can deal with it.

Socializing to People

It is important to socialize your puppy to many different people. Dogs notice all sorts of differences with people. It is important to create a positive experience with every variation on the human condition you possibly can. For instance people who are: short, tall, wide, narrow, bearded, long hair, short hair, wearing sunglasses, wearing a hat, in uniform, etc.

Socializing to Places

Dogs who have never been anywhere but their homes can become unable to cope with going anywhere. Socializing to places becomes essential to your dog's mental health. To help socializing to places you should strongly consider a puppy class as well as positive outings to your veterinarian (for a treat and no shots) as well as many other places. Be prepared to reward your pet immediately while socializing. Avoid giving rewards on the way home or after returning home, because rewarding then can cause your dog to want to get home quickly.

Socializing to Things

First impressions are lasting impressions, therefore socializing your pet to common things like umbrellas, big trucks, kitchen appliances, reclining chairs, vacuums, etc. Make sure to approach things calmly and cheerfully yourself and never drag your dog up to an item. Keep at a comfortable distance for your dog and possibly walk around the item and then move on. You may even put your body between the object and the dog. Be sure to always positively reward your dog when the desired behavior is obtained.