

SOCIALISATION

Your Puppy's Early Life Experiences

For puppies to grow into confident adult dogs they need early introduction to a range of experiences that they may encounter in life. The more things they are introduced to as a puppy, the better they will be able to cope with novel experiences, such as new sights and sounds etc, throughout their life.



It is up to you as your pup's leader to ensure that he has as many positive experiences as possible whilst protecting him from bad experiences. Remember that your pup will often take his cue from you, so try to show a matter-of-fact confidence in every situation. If, for example, you run around screeching at lightning and thunder and slamming windows and doors shut when a thunderstorm is coming, your puppy will associate thunderstorms as bad events. To avoid this, make preparations for the storm in a calm manner and carry on as though a thunderstorm is a normal occurrence. Treating your puppy with a high value reward after a loud crack of thunder as this will help convince him that thunder is really a pretty good occurrence – after a thunder crack, he gets something good!

Before you introduce your puppy to new experiences you should learn about his body language and the signs he may show if he is anxious. Talk with your Trainer to find out about dog body language and for suggestions on what to do if your puppy does indicate that he is worried. It is important to introduce new things gradually – do not flood puppy with too many new experiences at once. Start with him at a distance from new objects or sounds and gradually move him closer if he is coping well. Reward him for every sign of confidence.



If you do see signs that your puppy is anxious when you are introducing him to new experiences, then you need to take action to relieve that anxiety. This means you will need to take charge in a confident manner – do NOT fuss over him and try to reassure him – this only serves to increase the behaviour. Instead, move him in a no-fuss manner to a distance at which he feels safe, allow him to approach the “scary” item at his own pace, or gradually increase the volume of sounds as he becomes comfortable. *Remember to reward* him for every small sign of confidence.



The checklist below may help in your quest to expose your puppy to as many new experiences as possible while he is still young. Using the principles outlined above, check each item off as he becomes comfortable with it. It may not be practical to expose them to all these items, but you need to ensure that at the very least, the items most commonly encountered in life are included. There may also be items which are not listed – add them at the end of the list. If your puppy has a bad experience with any item or event it is best to contact your Instructor for suggestions before exposing him to that event again.



LIFE EXPERIENCES CHECKLIST – Page 1

PEOPLE		PEOPLE WEARING		MOVING THINGS	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	Raincoats	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joggers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Babies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Umbrellas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skateboarders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Toddlers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyclists
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hats	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roller Bladders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Noisy Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Beards	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scooters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teenagers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Helmets	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flags
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seniors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Costumes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Streamers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both Genders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unusual Hairdos	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Different Ethnicities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unusual Headgear		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Different builds				
PEOPLE WITH		ENVIRONMENTS & NOISES		TRANSPORT	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sirens	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cars
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crutches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thunder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buses Trams
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legs in cast	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lightening	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trains
<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Frames	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorbikes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lawn mowing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trucks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide Dogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	People Yelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Street Cleaners
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prams	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crowds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garbage trucks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Baby Carriers			<input type="checkbox"/>	Helicopters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Back Packs			<input type="checkbox"/>	Airplanes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luggage			<input type="checkbox"/>	Hot Air Balloons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shopping Carts				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Limps				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Erratic Body Moves				



LIFE EXPERIENCES CHECKLIST – Page 2

PEOPLE IN UNIFORM

- Postal Workers
- Veterinary Staff
- Meter Readers
- Couriers
- Ambulance officers
- Police Officers
- Firefighters
- Bus Drivers

ANIMALS

- Friendly Dogs
- Puppies
- Small Pets
- Birds
- Cats
- Livestock

HOME ENVIRONMENT

- Telephone Ringing
- Doorbell
- Loud TV
- Loud Music
- Hair Dryer
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Brooms
- Mops
- Kettle
- Dishwasher
- Washing Machine

DIFFERENT SURFACES

- Stairs (up &down)
- Sand
- Wood
- Ceramic Tiles
- Vinyl
- Grates
- Grass Wet Grass
- Gravel
- Cement
- Metal Surfaces

DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

- Car Rides
- Vet Clinic
- Park
- Groomers
- Shopping Centers
- Outdoor Café
- Automatic Doors
- Schools
- Walk After Dark
- Bridge
- Busy Intersection
- Beach
- Sporting Events
- Boarding Kennels
- Friend's Houses