



# PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

**Socialization** is the process of preparing your dog to enjoy interactions with other dogs and be comfortable with other animals, people, places and activities. Socialization should begin during the puppy’s “sensitive period” which is between 3 and 14 weeks of age.

## **SOCIALIZATION TIPS:**

- When adopting from a puppy raiser ask for their socialization plan pre- and post-adoption; avoid puppy raisers unable or unwilling to share this plan.
- For all dogs adapt or create your socialization plan to prepare your dog for his or her life in your household including planned exposure to the species, individuals, environments and activities that will be part of his or her new life at a pace that will encourage calm or playful responses from your dog.
- Provide regular positive experiences with these and other diverse experiences to encourage your dog to enjoy new experiences without becoming fearful or aggressive.
- Provide praise, play and treats to reward engagement.
- Allow the dog to withdraw if he or she is uncomfortable.
- Move at a pace appropriate for your dog’s temperament.
- Well-managed puppy socialization classes are a good way to begin to socialize a puppy within the sensitive period and to learn more about socialization.
- Continue to reward your dog for calm or playful responses to social interactions and new experiences throughout his or her life.
- For dogs with special behavioral needs work in consultation with your veterinarian and/or another animal behavior expert.
- Puppies that have not been fully vaccinated should not be exposed to animals of unknown vaccination status or potentially contaminated areas (such as outdoor parks).

**Questions or concerns? Ask us.**

**We are always happy to help.**

**[AVMA.org/socialization](https://www.avma.org/socialization)**