

SCAVENGER HUNT FOR PUPPY SOCIALIZATION

Puppies are cute, fun—and so much work! There's housetraining, bite inhibition, puppy-proofing and socialization, for starters. Socialization—the process of helping your puppy become comfortable with the sights, sounds and other experiences of life with human beings—is your most important job. Try to give your puppy as many new experiences as possible so that he'll be comfortable in any setting as he ages. Be sure that he meets at least 100 people by the time he's 16 weeks old, from babies to senior citizens. This will help him to be friendly and social with all the people he will encounter throughout his life.

People

- An infant held by an adult
- An infant in a carseat
- A girl, between 2 & 6
- A boy, between 2 & 6
- A small group of kids between 2 & 6 (no more than 5)
 - A girl, 7 or older
 - A calm boy, 7 or older
 - A boisterous boy, 7 or older
 - A small group of kids 7 or older (no more than 5)
 - A small group of kids playing with a ball
 - A man with a beard (mustache is okay if you can't find a bearded man)
 - You in a hat
 - A friendly stranger in a hat
 - A friendly stranger in sunglasses
 - A person with a bike (who stops the bike & greets the dog)
 - A person on rollerblades or a skateboard (people moving "abnormally" often worry dogs)
 - A person in a wheelchair
 - A person with an exaggerated gait
 - A person using crutches or a cane
 - A woman whose skin color is radically different from yours
 - A man whose skin color is radically different from yours

- A person in uniform
- A person driving a truck
- A person carrying packages
- A woman wearing a flowing skirt or dress

Sights, Sounds, & Sensations

- A stroller
- A balloon
- An umbrella
- Cameras
- Musical instruments
- An automatic door
- A mirror
- A bus (loading/unloading passengers)
- An 18-wheeler (you can often find these parked behind grocery stores)
 - A grocery cart moving past you and your dog
 - Walking between two parked cars
 - A vet's office (enter, give a treat, & leave)
 - A cat with attitude
 - An older, well-socialized dog (meeting off leash in a neutral, safe area)
 - A pet store
 - Lift the dog up onto a table-like surface
 - "Brush" the dog's gums with your thumb
 - Gently separate & hold each toe.
 - Tap each toe with a metal spoon.
 - Flapping movement, e.g. a flag or shaking out a towel
 - A sudden soft noise, such as a magazine dropping
 - A sudden louder noise, such as dropping keys
 - A sudden scary noise, such as a pan & lid dropping (use a helper so the dog doesn't associate this with you)
 - A gravel road
 - Get in the bathtub (first no water, then damp, then with an inch of water)
 - A lawn mower
 - A sprinkler

Colleen Pelar, CPDT, is the author of ***Living with Kids and Dogs . . . Without Losing Your Mind***. For additional information about bite prevention, please visit www.LivingWithKidsandDogs.com.