

Socializing Your Dog will Increase his Confidence

Confident dogs learn from socialization.

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Outside HelpAlong with your home-socialization plans, puppy kindergarten can provide some good experiences for your pup, especially if you live alone and don't have another dog. Before you sign your pup up for classes, you'll want to observe a class. Make sure the instructors keep the class under control so that one bigger or tougher puppy isn't allowed to bully the others. Many dog obedience clubs divide their puppy classes by both size and age. Look for a class that requires the owners to show proof of vaccinations and fecal checks. Safety, First and ForemostAnother important concern while you are socializing your puppy is its health. Until your pups vaccinations are complete, it can be at risk of picking up infections in some environments. For most dogs, the risk of being improperly socialized and ending up with a behavior problem (possibly even being dumped at a shelter) is much greater than that of disease exposure.

For most pups, the biggest risk period for disease exposure is about 12 to 14 weeks of age when their maternal immunity wears off and their own immune system starts to kick in. During that time period, its wise to stick to visiting dogs you know and avoiding high-traffic areas, such as dog parks or dog shows. At puppy classes, the risk is usually limited because all the participants must show health clearances before signing up.

Its your job to make sure your pup is kept safe from harm and grows up to be a model dog citizen. Plenty of good socialization exposures with well-behaved dogs and people in a wide range of areas will go a long way toward achieving that goal!