

## Send Your Puppy to School

**Your puppy will learn a lifetime of skills at puppy kindergarten.**

*Arden Moore*

**Success Story:** Asia Carol Bennett has always had dogs, but Asia, her now 14-month-old Siberian Husky-German Shepherd mix, is the first to attend formal puppy school. When Asia was 12 weeks old, Bennett enrolled her in a class where she was one of eight puppy pupils. Not only did Asia learn to socialize with other dogs and people, but Bennett also walked away with some added knowledge. "At first, I got nervous each time Asia sniffed another dog. I thought I had to pull on her leash," says Bennett, of Middletown, Rhode Island. "But Bryon Davies, the puppy class teacher, reassured me. She said that it's normal for dogs to investigate one another and not to be so overprotective. Asia developed a lot of confidence, learned some basic commands and even gets along great with my cat, Trey." The most important lesson Bennett learned: Never stop training Asia or exposing her to social opportunities. "Asia rides with me in the car a lot and she loves to walk on trails at a nearby wildlife refuge," says Bennett. "There's always slack in the leash and Asia is growing up to be a terrific, well-mannered dog."

**Success Story:** Riley On a busy Saturday afternoon in downtown Seal Beach, California, Riley, a 5-month-old yellow Labrador Retriever, is performing some homework. His owners, Steve and Christina Chafe, opted to hire a professional dog trainer to come to their home to teach social skills and basic obedience commands to their puppy. "We started working with a trainer when Riley was 10 weeks old and are so happy that we did," says Steve Chafe. "When we first got Riley, he would bark whenever we tried to leave the house. But our trainer showed us how to put a crate in the kitchen and make it a terrific place for Riley to be when we're gone. We give Riley a chew bone to chew on and a soft blanket on top of the cage for a cozy, cave-like effect and he loves it." Although the trainer comes to their home to demonstrate different puppy training skills, the Chafes spend plenty of time outside their home with Riley to apply what they've learned. On a recent Saturday, the Chafes walked into town and purposely sat on a bench for 10 minutes to give Riley ample time to take in the onslaught of sights, sounds and smells. He eyed a square-shouldered man wearing sunglasses and an infant snoozing in a stroller. He heard the horn blasts from impatient drivers searching for precious parking spots. He smelled the wonderful aroma of freshly baked cinnamon rolls from the nearby bakery. Not once did he pull on his leash, even when dog-loving strangers approached with the request, "Can I please pet your puppy?" "Every day it seems like Riley learns something new," notes Steve Chafe. "He's learned sit, stay, lie down and other commands. Now, he's learning hand signals. It's amazing." With help from a professional trainer, any pup can be a success story.

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