

A GUIDE FOR YOUR PUPPY

SOCIALIZATION



LIFE WITH MARLOWE

WELCOME



EVERYONE TELLS YOU TO SOCIALIZE YOUR PUPPY

But a lot of people are left wondering what that actually means in everyday life.

How much should you be doing?

What if your puppy seems nervous?

Can you do this before vaccines are finished?

What actually counts as socialization?

This guide is meant to simplify it.

Most socialization is much quieter and more ordinary than people think.

You don't have to do everything.

Instead the goal is to help your puppy experience the world in a way that feels safe and manageable.

WHAT IS SOCIALIZATION?

SOCIALIZATION IS THE PROCESS THAT TEACHES YOUR PUPPY ABOUT THE WORLD AND HOW TO FEEL SAFE IN IT.

Early experiences shape their sense of what's normal and what feels comfortable.

Puppies are most open and adaptable when they're young. From about 3 to 12 weeks is the most important window to start exposing them to new people, environments, and experiences.

But socialization doesn't end there.

This is simply the stage where their brains are most open to learning and adapting, so it's worth being intentional about how you use it.

A LOT OF SOCIALIZATION IS SIMPLY LEARNING HOW TO EXIST AROUND THINGS CALMLY





WHY IT MATTERS

HOW YOUR PUPPY FEELS ABOUT THE WORLD NOW
TENDS TO FOLLOW THEM LATER.

Experiences during puppyhood help shape:

- confidence
- recovery after uncertainty
- comfort around everyday life
- reactions to new situations
- ability to settle around stimulation

A puppy who learns the world is generally safe is more likely to grow into a dog who can move through everyday life more calmly and confidently.

The goal is to help your puppy experience the world in ways that feel manageable, supportive, and safe overall.



HOW TO SOCIALIZE YOUR PUPPY

START FROM A DISTANCE

A lot of puppies do better when they're able to watch things first. That may mean sitting outside of a store rather than going inside, or watching kids play from further away. Let them watch first and take things in without pressure.

LET YOUR PUPPY SET THE PACE

You don't need bravery, but you do want curiosity. If your puppy wants to move closer, great. If they hesitate, that's okay too. Try not to push interactions before they're ready. Confidence is built from puppies having space to take things in at their own pace.

FOCUS ON CALM, NOT INTERACTION

Many people think of socialization as interacting with as much as possible. But it's actually learning how to calmly observe and how to exist around everyday life. Your puppy does not need to greet every person they see or do on-leash greetings with every dog. And they definitely do not need to be constantly entertained. A puppy calmly watching the world without reacting is doing exactly what we want.

KEEP IT SHORT

A few minutes of a good experience is enough. In fact, leaving while your puppy is still coping well usually creates a better learning experience. Especially early on, shorter and more positive exposures tend to be more helpful than long, overstimulating outings.

WATCH YOUR PUPPY

Pay attention to how your puppy is actually handling something instead of trying to push through because you had a plan for the outing. Can they still take treats? Stay relatively calm? Recover if something surprises them? If not, create some space or make it easier for them. That's normal.



USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT



REWARDS CAN HELP YOUR PUPPY BUILD POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS WITH NEW EXPERIENCES.

A reward is simply something your puppy enjoys. Most often this is treats, but it could also be praise, play, or moving toward something they're interested in.

A lot of the time, we're simply rewarding:

- calm behaviour
- curiosity
- check-ins
- recovery after uncertainty
- choosing to stay regulated around something new

This might look like giving a small treat after your puppy calmly watches a shopping cart go by or hears a loud sound and stays settled.

You're helping teach your puppy:
"this is safe."

SOME THINGS THAT HELP

STEP IN EARLY	REPEAT THE SAME THINGS
<p>Don't wait for barking, or push your puppy to the point of overwhelm.</p> <p>If you notice them getting unsure, create some space, redirect their attention, or make the situation easier before it escalates.</p>	<p>Confidence comes from familiarity. Through seeing the same things until they become normal.</p> <p>Notice where your puppy seems nervous or unsure and repeat those exposures with support.</p>
OBSERVATION COUNTS	NEUTRAL EXPERIENCES MATTER TOO
<p>Sitting and calmly watching the world is still socialization.</p> <p>Your puppy does not need to interact with everything for it to count as socialization</p>	<p>Your puppy does not need to love everything.</p> <p>A calm, neutral response is a win.</p> <p>A really well-socialized dog is often actually kind of boring in public.</p> <p>They notice things, but they don't feel the need to react strongly to everything around them.</p> <p>.</p>

WHAT TO SOCIALIZE

PEOPLE

- Adults, kids, older adults
- Hoods, hats, sunglasses
- Loud or animated people
- People carrying things
- _____
- _____

DOGS

- Calm dogs
- Different sizes and breeds
- Dogs that ignore your puppy
- Brief controlled greetings
- _____
- _____

ENVIRONMENTS

- Quiet and busy streets
- Patios
- Stores
- Parks
- _____
- _____

SOUNDS

- Household (vacuum, blender, hairdryer)
- Traffic
- Sirens
- Kids yelling
- _____
- _____

OBJECTS & MOVEMENT

- Bikes/scooters
- Shopping carts
- Strollers
- Umbrellas
- _____
- _____

HANDLING & GROOMING

- Paws, ears, and tail
- Brushing, combing
- Clippers, scissors
- Hairdryer
- _____
- _____



WHAT THIS LOOKED LIKE FOR US



Grooming prep

- electric toothbrush near her → treat
- hair dryer across the room → treat
- brief air on her → back to distance



Busy places

- sat outside stores instead of going in
- rewarded calm and check-ins
- left before overwhelm



Kids

- watched recess from far away
- stayed where she could stay calm
- repeated this over time



Patio life

- practiced tethering at home first
- rewarded calm lying down
- brought that same setup out with us



Everyday handling

- touched paws briefly → treat
- lifted lips gently → treat
- practiced short periods of being held still
- rewarded calm during brushing or towel drying

A SAMPLE WEEK

MONDAY

Sit outside a store and watch people

TUESDAY

Neighbourhood walk noticing sounds and movement

WEDNESDAY

Handling and grooming practice at home

THURSDAY

Watching kids play from a distance

FRIDAY

See one calm dog

SATURDAY

Visit a store

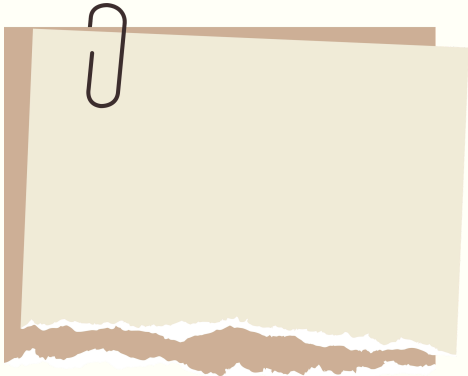
SUNDAY

Repeat something familiar



A QUICK NOTE ON VACCINATIONS

YOU DO NOT NEED TO AVOID THE WORLD COMPLETELY WHILE WAITING FOR VACCINES.



The goal is balancing safety with exposure.

- avoid high-risk areas like dog parks
- choose lower traffic environments
- carry your puppy if needed
- focus more on observation than interaction

If you're unsure, your vet can guide you based on your area

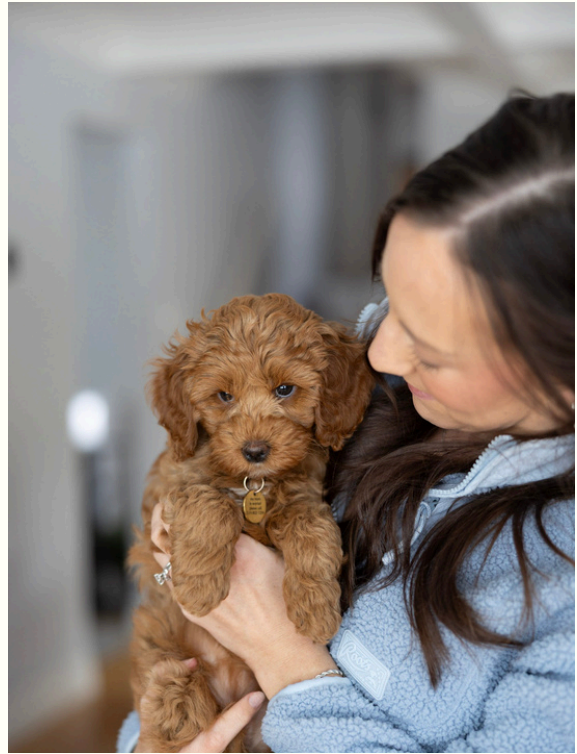




A SIMPLE WAY TO THINK ABOUT SOCIALIZATION

GIVE YOUR PUPPY OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD IN WAYS THAT FEEL MANAGEABLE.

Let them observe.
Let them recover.
Repeat things often.
Keep building familiarity over time.



A LOT OF SOCIALIZATION IS LESS EXCITING THAN PEOPLE EXPECT.

And that's usually a good sign.



YOU'VE GOT THIS

♥ MARLOWE