

Socialization Guide & Checklist

Socialization is an imperative part of a puppy's life but should occur at the puppy's pace. Socialization is the process of exposing puppies (and dogs) to novel environmental and social stimuli in a positive, favorable way so that their response is almost NEUTRAL. It should not be treated as a one-and-done checklist but rather as a process that requires patience.

Socialization Progress	Score	Response
Patience Needed	1	If either caretaker decided it was best not to proceed, or the puppy attempted to flee, freeze, or fight
Positive Progress Made	2	Puppy displayed happy, relaxed behavior and/or displayed few stressed behaviors but recovered quickly and accepted food
Going Swimmingly	3	Puppy displayed curious, relaxed behavior and explored the stimulus

Category	Types of Stimuli - Weeks of Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Environment	Other pets (cats, horses, dogs, rodents, etc.)							
	Other animals (squirrels, birds, etc.)							
	Surfaces: concrete							
	Surfaces: hardwood							
	Surfaces: carpet/rug							
	Surfaces: tile, slippery surface, etc.							
	Surfaces: grass/mud							

	Surfaces: stairs								
	Surfaces: metal (vet/groomer table)								
	Sounds: thunder & fireworks								
	Sounds: dogs barking								
	Sounds: doorbell ringing								
	Sounds: city sounds, sirens								
	Sounds: vacuum, hair dryer								
	Stimuli: skateboards/bikes								
	Stimuli: car/bus/motorcycles/garbage truck								
	Stimuli: rides in the car								
	Stimuli: pots/pans								
	Stimuli: balloons/umbrellas/brooms/plastic bags								
Dogs	Dogs who play appropriately								
	Small dogs								
	Large dogs								
	Intact dogs								
	Fluffy dogs								
	Younger dogs								
	Older dogs								

People	Various Women							
	Various Men							
	People of different ethnicities							
	Elderly people							
	People wearing hats/sunglasses, homeless people							
	People using canes, walkers, wheelchairs, etc.							
	Children standing, running, yelling							
	Sneezing and Coughing Sounds							
Handling	Touching ears							
	Examining mouth and brushing teeth							
	Touching feet							
	Trimming nails							
	Brushing puppy							
	Holding puppy in arms							
	Handling the puppy (gently)							
	Holding or touching the collar							
	Drying with towel							
	Giving bath/drying with dryer (grooming)							
	Putting on harness							
	Putting on muzzle							

	Running Water							
	Bath							
Objects	Trash bags, plastic bags							
	Leash & harness							
	Sound of popcorn, gas stove							
	Moving broom or mop							
	Water hose							