



## Puppy Preschool – Week 1



### **Get out there and socialise!**

While your puppy is young, they are the most open to new experiences. For this reason, it is essential that you expose your puppy to as many new experiences during this time as possible. These experiences should be as positive as possible. For example, each new person that your puppy meets should give your puppy a 'treat' (provided by yourself only).

This socialising is not limited to new people – new sights, sounds, places and objects can all be very strange and add to new environments.

### How to train:

- When introducing your puppy to new environments make it as fun as you can, especially if they seem to be a little timid.
  - ◊ Use silly voices to brighten them, provide treats and if safe play games.
  - ◊ Your body language is the first thing your puppy will pick up on in ANY situation. If you are positive and relaxed, this will show your puppy that this new experience is nothing to be anxious about.
- If your puppy does begin to get overwhelmed, gradually move away from the source causing anxiety whilst using silly voices and treats to brighten them again.
  - ◊ When your puppy is relaxed again, start gradually reintroducing them to the stimulus by slowly moving closer again using silly voices and treats.
- Make a list of places that you would like to take your puppy when they are an adult and start gradually introducing them to these areas. We have a basic list in your puppy notes to help get you started.
  - ◊ Record all the new sights, sounds, people and places that you expose your puppy to.
  - ◊ Make sure you add in places that you know you'd like your puppy to get used to when they are older.
- **REMEMBER:** some situations will be more overwhelming than others (e.g. children's sporting event) and you may need to create 'simulations' in a safe environment before progressing to full experience.



### IMPORTANT

- **Your puppy cannot touch the ground in public areas until fully vaccinated. If you are unsure when this is for your puppy, please ask the nurses next time you are in the clinic.**

### Other tips for training success:

- Consistency!!! If your puppy gets different responses from family members for the same action, they will get confused and won't be able to learn.
- It is also essential that ALL members of the family are communicating with the puppy the same way. This is true for hand signals, verbal commands and even rules around the house.
  - Using a noticeboard or a sheet on the fridge with all the information on it will give a reference.
- Repetition and integration into daily life can also be important to training success. However, it still has to be fun for yourself and your puppy or you won't stick with it.
- If you can manage it, the 10-15 minutes sessions worked into your daily life is ideal. Get as many of your family/household involved, but make sure only one person is giving commands at a time to stop confusion.
- Always finish training sessions on a positive note. If you're finding that your puppy is starting to get frustrated, get them to do a command which you know they have down pat, give plenty of rewards and finish the training session. Don't worry too much about doing any training before puppy school – they'll get plenty of training and exercise at class.

### **Biting vs 'Soft Mouthing'**

Biting is normal and natural in puppies. If you forbid your puppy from biting completely, it is only a band-aid fix. By taking this approach, your puppy doesn't know how powerful their mouths can be and they are unable to tell the difference between mouthing and biting.

A big part of this learning is encouraging play with toys. Have a collection – soft, robust, 'stuff-able' rubber toys work well for this. Ensure you are rotating the pool of toys daily to keep your puppy interested in the novelty so that they become a 'chew-toy addict'.

### How to train:

- Using the techniques discussed in class, practice training to reduce the force of play-biting so your puppy knows only to engage in play-mouthing.
  - If they do start to bite, always pretend it hurts, yelp, pull back & stop play.
  - If too heightened in their play and they will not stop, walk away from your puppy or give them a time out.
- If you find it difficult to keep your puppy focussed or in the one spot, you can do this training deliberately in a safe room that you can leave & keep them confined.
  - Leave the room for 30 seconds, if calm and willing to engage/play with toys, keep playing.

### Extra tips:

- Provide safe and suitable chew toys. Only have a few out at a time and rotate them out regularly.
- Instead of punishing your puppy for mouthing, distract them with safe and appropriate toys. Reward them verbally for playing with these toys.
- Make sure that your puppy isn't becoming too possessive of a particular toy. If they are, it may be best to not use this toy or even to throw it away. You will find that you have particular problems substituting this toy and may even find that your puppy begins to resource guard.



## **Preventing problem jumping and 'offering sit' when meeting new people**

Jumping up is one of the more common problem behaviours that we see in dogs and as such is one of the first things to train dogs out of before it becomes a habit.

Meeting new people is very fun for everybody. Your puppy can get very excited and of course people are going to be excited to meet your puppy. However, this excitement can get a bit much for the puppy and lead to unwanted jumping behaviour on guests. This can sometimes lead a puppy to jump up on people to seek comfort when they become anxious. The natural response of the people is to pick them up and try to calm them. **Unfortunately, this just reinforces the unwanted jumping behaviour.**

### How to train:

- This training is best done with 2 people, so recruit some friends and family to help you with this. Make sure that you give them plenty of instructions (and treats) in preparation.
- Start by having your puppy on a leash with the other person in the same room, but not too close to the puppy.
- Get your puppy to 'sit', when they are sitting, have the other person start to slowly walk towards them. If their bottom leaves the ground, get the person to turn around and start walking away.
- The person holding the lead then asks the puppy to 'sit' again. Repeat the approach of the second person, again walking away if the puppy gets up.
- Often after a few tries, the leash holder doesn't need to keep repeating sit. Count to 5 slowly in your head before repeating the command to see if your puppy will sit on their own.
- The ultimate reward, is the other person coming to the puppy and giving them a treat & a pat when they are sitting.
- If the puppy starts to jump up on the person, have them turn around and walk away again.
- ***This training takes time and patience and unfortunately can be easily undone if you are not consistent. Make sure that whenever your puppy meets new people, even when out walking, ask them to politely ignore your puppy, only giving pats and praise when sit is offered.***



## **SIT**

"Sit" is the most basic command and should be practiced at home every day, several times a day. This is also the easiest command to become part of your everyday routine with your puppy. For example, get your puppy to sit before having food or before a door is opened for them etc.

Hand signal: Arm at waist height with palm facing upwards, raise hand

Verbal command: "Sit"

How to train:

- While your puppy is standing, put a very small treat in front of their nose allowing the puppy to sniff it.
- Very slowly, raise the treat in a steady, smooth movement back over the puppy's head. As the puppy's nose lifts, their backside should naturally come down to the floor putting them into a sitting position.
- As soon as their bottom hits the ground, reward your puppy with the treat and a verbal reward. When your puppy becomes more used to this command, try to get them to hold for longer and longer periods of time before giving the reward.
- Only add the verbal command "sit" when your puppy is consistently responding to the hand signal.
- Start near to your puppy and use lures and rewards (only if required – especially with a new person). The idea is to reduce the need for rewards eventually only giving intermittently or when really required.

Step 1



Hold a treat over your dog's head.

Step 2



Move it straight back.

## STAY

Essentially, 'Stay' means "do not move until I return to you or give the command 'Come' (will learn later)

Hand signal: Hand in a stop signal in front of puppy

Verbal command: "Stay"

How to train:

Ask your puppy to 'sit' and reward them when they do.

- Lean toward your puppy, make eye contact and extend your hand using the hand signal and say 'stay'. Do not move away, but reward your puppy if they stay still watching you.
- Repeat this several times.
- Then start to take a very small step backwards, use a verbal reward and return to your puppy to given them quiet praise and a treat reward.
- Use a release word (or marker signal) to let your puppy know they can move again. This can be something like 'Free' or 'Okay' – again, just make sure it is consistent with everyone.
- Once your puppy will stay for longer than a count of 15, start to increase the distance. Wait again for the count of 15 and then give the release command.

Step 1



Give your dog the 'stay' command with your voice and hand.

Step 2



Move a short distance away from your dog, while still holding your hand and telling your dog to stay.

## **LOOK**

Used to get your puppies attention, this can be utilised in between commands or if you just need to get your puppy's attention for any reason.

Hand signal: Use finger to point at one of your eyes.

Verbal command: "Look"

### How to train:

- Ask your puppy to sit and reward them.
- Show your puppy a tiny treat and hold it next to your eye. This should draw your puppy's attention to your eye. Initially, reward your puppy verbally and with the treat as soon as their eyes meet yours.
- Repeat several times and as soon as your puppy makes eye contact, say "Look" and reward them.
- Eventually, your puppy should look at you and make eye contact every time you ask them. Continue to reward with praise, but treats can be reduced as your puppy becomes better with the command.



**FRIENDLY & POLITE**  
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