



Puppy Notes

In your search to find just the right dog, here are some points to contemplate when considering raising a puppy.

Medical needs: We provide the initial vaccination and deworming for each puppy in our care. Most pups will need at least one, perhaps two, more sets of vaccinations and deworming. They will also need a rabies vaccination at four months and to be spayed/neutered at six months of age. With the number of trips to the veterinary hospital your puppy will require, you will get to know your selected veterinarian well!

Size/weight as an adult: It is very difficult to determine the adult size of mixed breed puppies when we haven't met the parents. If the adult size of your puppy is important, we strongly suggest adopting an older pup to give you a better idea of the eventual size. We recently had an 8 week old puppy who looked like a Beagle/Chihuahua mix; within two weeks, he looked more like a Labrador Retriever mix!

Housebreaking: Puppies under the age of 4 months need to go outside every 2-3 hours to be successful with housebreaking. Be patient and use a strict schedule. Use the same word every time you take your pup outside. Keep your puppy on a leash on these outings, even in a fenced backyard. It's very easy for a puppy to get distracted once outside and forget the reason for the outing. If a puppy does get distracted, more than likely, he will promptly come back in, remember he had to pee, and go in your home. They also benefit from being baby-gated in a room or exposed to crate training which help them avoid having accidents in the home.

While paper training can be an option, it is VERY difficult to properly housebreak a puppy if you are gone for a regular 8-hour day.

Socialization with people: It is vital to get your puppy out to meet new people and see new places. The more new experiences your puppy has before he is six months old, the more well-rounded he will be as an adult. Take him to the pet supply store to go shopping. Take him to a different park every once in a while. Have neighbors greet your pup. If there are not children in your life now, please take your puppy to places where he can encounter kids of all ages, especially if you plan on having children or grandchildren.

Be very careful to keep a loose leash when your pup is interacting with other people so that he can make decisions on his own. Pups who are handled with tight leashes can determine that their owner is concerned about the situation and learn to become suspicious

Time commitment: Obviously, puppies are a lot of work but it may be difficult to realize just how much time you need to spend on helping your puppy become a well-behaved adult dog. Don't underestimate the amount of time you will need to spend on socializing a puppy. Set a goal of taking your puppy three different places every week (make sure he meets new people on each of these ventures). Again, the more new experiences he

has now, the more easily he will accept new people and other changes in his life (such as moving or a new baby) as an adult.

Other dogs: It is very important for your puppy to meet other dogs now. Early exposure to other dogs will help your puppy learn how to appropriately meet, greet, and play with them. If your puppy does not meet other dogs now, you run the risk of him developing dog-aggression problems, which can be quite difficult to manage later in life. Your puppy should have some age-appropriate playmates, as well as introductions to well-behaved, older dogs who will teach him how to be respectful. With the number of dogs in our area (dog parks, vet hospitals, pet supply stores, on the street, neighbors' dogs) it is important that dogs be social and mannerly when meeting other dogs. Again, keep your leash slack, so as not to convey any concern to your pup. When it's safe, have your pup meet other dogs off leash too, which allows him to learn how to read canine body language without the constraints of a leash.

Puppy teeth and mouthing. At around 3 months of age, a puppy's adult teeth start preparing to arrive. The puppy's mouth will hurt and he will look for things to chew on to alleviate the pain. Do not let your puppy chew on your hands, even for a moment.

Redirect your puppy's "mouthing" with a toy — better to bite a toy than nibble you. Have him chew on a toy while you touch him, especially on his mouth. I also recommend teaching him a word such as "Out" or "Give" to teach him to spit out whatever is in his mouths. When your puppy has an object you don't want him to have, quietly say "Out" and offer him a biscuit as a trade. Most puppies pick up on this quickly. If the puppy is giving you a hard time, gently open his mouth, say "Out," take the item away, praise him, and quickly give him something approved to chew on so that he doesn't take the illegal item back. Many children have a difficult time redirecting "mouthing" behavior. Bear in mind that puppies are very time consuming for the first six months because of the amount of supervision required; it can be very difficult to supervise both young kids and a puppy.

Teaching your puppy to share. It is important that puppies learn to share their food and toys. You should occasionally take things away from your puppy so that he does not become overly-possessive of items. Twice a week put your hands in your puppy's food bowl as he is eating. Take a toy away from your puppy and give him a treat to reward him for sharing his toy with you. Puppies who do not learn to share at an early age can develop aggression issues regarding having items of value of taken from them.

Teaching your puppy to fetch. Fetch gives you and your dog something to do in the backyard or in the house on rainy days and is a great way for a young dog to burn off energy. To teach him how to fetch, first get him interested in a toy and throw it just a few feet away from you. Praise any interaction with the object - even if your pup just looks at it. Keep sessions to a short five minutes. You may have to pretend that the toy is the greatest thing in the world ("WOW! Look at this toy! Isn't it great? Do you want it?!"). Do not allow your dog access to this *great* toy *except* when you're working on playing fetch. When your dog finally starts to retrieve it, reward him by giving him a treat in exchange. Again, keep sessions short and don't throw the toy too far away (otherwise your pup will get interested in other things). With time, your pup will figure out that bringing you things is fun. Don't play "keep away" with your pup (unless you want to be chasing him forever). If he picks up the toy and runs the other way, ignore him. Only reward him for bringing the toy to you.