

The Puppy's Rule of Twelve

Make sure all experiences are safe and positive for the puppy. Each encounter should include treats and lots of praise. Slow down and add distance if your puppy is scared! By the time a puppy is 12 weeks old, it should have...

Experienced 12 different surfaces: wood, woodchips, carpet, tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, deep pea gravel, grates, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc.

Played with 12 different objects: fuzzy toys, big & small balls, hard toys, funny sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, metal items, car keys, etc.

Experienced 12 different locations: front yard (daily), other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, boat, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, kennel, veterinarian hospital (just to say hi & visit, lots of cookies, no vaccinations), grooming salon (just to say hi), etc.

Met and played with 12 new people (outside of family): include children, adults (mostly men), elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes, crutches, hats, sunglasses, etc.

Exposed to 12 different noises (ALWAYS keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level - we don't want the puppy scared): garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, Harley motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts rolling, power boat, clapping, loud singing, pan dropping, horses neighing, vacuums, lawnmowers, birthday party, etc.

Exposed to 12 fast moving objects (don't allow to chase): skateboards, roller-skates, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, vacuums, children running, children playing soccer, squirrels, cats, horses running, cows running, etc.

Experienced 12 different challenges: climb on, in, off and around a box, go through a cardboard tunnel, climb up and down steps, climb over obstacles, play hide & seek, go in and out a doorway with a step up or down, exposed to an electric sliding door, umbrella, balloons, walk on a wobbly table (plank of wood with a small rock underneath), jump over a broom, climb over a log, bathtub (and bath) etc.

Handled by owner (& family) at least 12 times a week: hold under arm (like a football), hold to chest, hold on floor near owner, hold in-between owner's legs, hold head, look in ears, mouth, in-between toes, hold and take temperature (ask veterinarian), hold like a baby, trim toe nails, hold in lap, etc.

Eaten from 12 different shaped containers: wobbly bowl, metal, cardboard box, paper, coffee cup, china, pie plate, plastic, frying pan, Kong, Treat ball, Buster cube, spoon fed, paper bag, etc.

Eaten in 12 different locations: back yard, front yard, crate, kitchen, basement, laundry room, bathroom, friend's house, car, school yard, bathtub, up high (on work bench), under umbrella, etc.

Played with 12 different puppies (or safe adult dogs) as much as possible. See that puppy has been left alone safely, away from family & other animals (5-45 minutes) 12 times a week. In addition puppy should have experienced a leash and collar 12 different times in 12 different locations.

(If your puppy is over 12 weeks start right away with this socialization guide.)