

PUPPY SOCIALISATION CHECKLIST

HELPING YOUR PUPPY GROW INTO A CONFIDENT, HAPPY DOG

The first few months of your puppy's life are a critical learning period. Positive experiences with different people, places, sounds, and situations can help them grow into a confident and well-adjusted adult dog.

Remember: Always introduce new experiences at your puppy's own pace.

Never force an interaction. Pair new experiences with treats, praise, play, or anything your puppy enjoys.

CONTACT PLANET PUP:

 083 858 4097

 www.planetpup.ie



Before You Begin...

Socialisation isn't about introducing your puppy to as many people, dogs, and places as possible. It's about helping them feel safe, confident, and comfortable in the world around them. Every interaction should be positive and appropriate for your puppy. If your puppy seems worried, overwhelmed, or frightened, increase the distance from whatever is causing concern, allow them time to observe, and use treats, praise, or play to help create a positive association.

The goal is simple: every experience should leave your puppy feeling happy, safe, and wanting more. One calm, enjoyable interaction is far more valuable than several stressful ones.

Less Can be More

It's also important not to oversocialise your puppy. Your puppy does not need to greet every person or every dog they see. In fact, encouraging this can lead to frustration, overexcitement, and pulling on the lead as they grow older.

Instead, teach your puppy that it's perfectly normal to:

- Watch people walk past without saying hello.
- See other dogs without needing to interact.
- Stay calm and focus on you in new environments.
- Enjoy quiet observation as well as positive interactions.

Think of socialisation as teaching your puppy to be comfortable in the presence of everyday life, rather than believing they need to interact with everything they encounter.

Quality always beats quantity.

MEETING PEOPLE

Your puppy should have positive experiences with people of all ages and appearances.

- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Teenagers
- ☐ Young children (under close supervision)
- ☐ Babies (from a safe distance if needed)
- ☐ Elderly people
- ☐ People wearing hats
- ☐ People wearing sunglasses
- ☐ People wearing high-visibility jackets
- ☐ People carrying umbrellas
- ☐ People using walking sticks or crutches
- ☐ Wheelchair users
- ☐ Cyclists
- ☐ Joggers
- ☐ Delivery drivers
- ☐ Postal workers
- ☐ Strollers



MEETING DOGS

Aim for calm, positive interactions with friendly, vaccinated dogs. Be fussy about who your dog makes friends with and try to match your pup with other dogs with similar energy/intensity.

- ☐ Small dogs
- ☐ Large dogs
- ☐ Puppies
- ☐ Senior dogs
- ☐ Long-haired breeds
- ☐ Short-haired breeds
- ☐ Dogs wearing coats
- ☐ Dogs on lead
- ☐ Dogs off lead (only in appropriate environments)



OTHER ANIMALS

- ☐ Cats
- ☐ Horses
- ☐ Cows
- ☐ Sheep
- ☐ Birds
- ☐ Ducks
- ☐ Squirrels



DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS

- ☐ Quiet streets
- ☐ Busy streets
- ☐ Parks
- ☐ Woodland walks
- ☐ Beaches
- ☐ Cafés with outdoor seating
- ☐ Pet-friendly shops
- ☐ Car parks
- ☐ Vet clinic waiting room
- ☐ Grooming salon
- ☐ Friend's house
- ☐ Different flooring (tiles, wood, carpet, metal grates)
- ☐ Stairs
- ☐ Lifts (elevators)



TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

- ☐ Short car journey
- ☐ Longer car journey
- ☐ Sitting calmly in a parked car
- ☐ Visiting a petrol station
- ☐ Watching buses
- ☐ Watching bicycles pass



SOUNDS

Introduce sounds gradually and keep experiences positive.

- ☐ Vacuum cleaner
- ☐ Washing machine
- ☐ Hair dryer
- ☐ Doorbell
- ☐ Children playing
- ☐ Traffic
- ☐ Buses
- ☐ Motorbikes
- ☐ Sirens
- ☐ Thunder recordings
- ☐ Fireworks recordings (played quietly)
- ☐ Kitchen noises
- ☐ Clapping



GOOD VET/GROOMER EXPERIENCE

These visits don't always need to involve treatment.

- ☐ Walk into the clinic
- ☐ Meet reception staff
- ☐ Step onto the weighing scales
- ☐ Receive treats from staff
- ☐ Visit the groomer for a positive introduction



HANDLING EXERCISES

Getting your pup used to these will make vet and grooming visits much easier.

- ☐ Ears checked
- ☐ Eyes checked
- ☐ Mouth opened briefly
- ☐ Teeth touched/brushed
- ☐ Collar held gently
- ☐ Harness put on
- ☐ Front paws handled
- ☐ Back paws handled
- ☐ Nails touched
- ☐ Tail handled
- ☐ Gentle brushing
- ☐ Towel drying



YOUR PROGRESS

Celebrate every success. Your puppy doesn't need to complete everything in one week—or even one month. The goal is quality experiences, not quantity.

If your puppy seems worried:

- Increase distance from the trigger.
- Keep sessions short.
- Use tasty treats and praise.
- Let your puppy choose whether to approach.
- End on a positive note.

Building confidence takes time, patience, and consistency.

YOUR PROGRESS

If you're unsure how to socialise your puppy safely or want guidance through those important early months, Planet Pup offers positive, reward-based puppy classes designed to build confidence while strengthening the bond between you and your puppy.

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DOG TRAINING:**



083 858 4097



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