

PUPPY DEVELOPMENT: BEHAVIOR



REASON TO CARE

While your puppy's diet and vaccines are important, it's also vital to understand the different periods of development which will help to minimize behavior problems in the future.

PRENATAL PERIOD Conception to birth

The fetus starts to develop in the dam's womb. Pregnant dams can face stress, causing long-term effects on the puppies. Pups whose dams experience distress during pregnancy are more likely to be reactive, anxious and irritable as adults, with dysfunctional stress management systems. Puppies whose dams have enriched pregnancies are more likely to be calmer and more stable adults.

NEONATAL PERIOD 0 to 13 days

Puppies are born deaf and blind and with poor smell. They spend most of their time eating and sleeping. In this period, they have limited learning capabilities.



TRANSITIONAL PERIOD 14 to 20 days

The eyes of the puppy start opening, erupt teeth, and are able to stand. In this period puppies learn to avoid pain; however, there is no emotional learning. A startle response and hearing marks the end of this period.

SOCIALIZATION PERIOD 3 to 12 weeks

This period includes many changes such as gradual wean, puppy leaves nest to eliminate, and offer play behaviors. In addition, social relations are formed (6-8 week peak).



Puppies gain avoidance response and fearful postures develop. They also learn from bad experiences (emotional and avoidance learning).



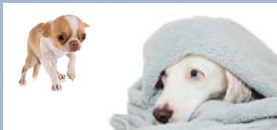
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..SOCIALIZATION PERIOD 3 to 12 weeks

Early illnesses predisposes to aggression problems, fear of strangers and children, and separation-related problems.

It should also be noted that isolation during this period leads to learning deficits and fear response, also known as “kennel dog syndrome”.



FEAR PERIOD 8 to 10 weeks

During this time your puppy is extremely sensitive to traumatic experience, to that point that a single scary event can have life-long effects. These experiences can cause retention of fear to persons, dogs, and objects.

JUVENILE PERIOD 3 to 6 months

There is a rapid growth, an increase in independence, and teething occurs, such as destructive chewing. Sexual interest begins at this time. Sexual maturity takes place at 6 to 7 months.

ADOLESCENCE

Time between sexual and social maturity

During this stage of life dogs have a second fear period and your puppy should be handle with care. This fear period may last 3 week any time between 4 to 11 months. Therefore minimizing traumatic experiences, and maintaining social experiences and skills is important.

SOCIAL MATURITY

Reached between 1.5 to 4 years

Your dog’s defense responses may become more proactive. Therefore, fearful puppies tend to become aggressive at this time.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Schedule a puppy behavior consult to help you and your puppy understand the basics of socialization (dogs and people), early low stress handling, house training, crate training, discouraging mouthing, basic manners, and avoidance of harsh punishments.

