


A photograph of two dogs, one white with brown patches and one black with tan patches, both holding a blue, ring-shaped toy in their mouths. They are looking towards the camera with interest. The background is a blurred green lawn.

Social Interactions: Application

Croney Research Group

A close-up photograph of a golden retriever puppy being held by a person in a white shirt. The puppy is looking towards the camera with its tongue out. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building. A semi-transparent white box with a yellow border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Dogs are social creatures that benefit from interactions with people, other dogs, and other animals!

Ensure that all social interactions are safe and pleasurable for everyone involved

Dogs might interact with other animals through greetings, smelling, playing, or simply watching!



A photograph of two women walking their dogs on a grassy field. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark blue jeans, walking a tan dog. The woman on the right is wearing a light purple t-shirt and blue jeans, walking a smaller tan dog. The background shows green trees and a stone wall.

Beneficial interactions between **dogs and people** can include many types of activities!


Learn More: [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – People](#)



Low Stress Handling Improves Dog Welfare


Practicing handling in a positive way with puppies can help prevent stress responses to handling later in life

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Handling](#)

A photograph showing a person's hand reaching through the metal bars of a cage to feed a light-colored dog. The dog is looking up at the hand. The background is dark and out of focus.

Engaging with dogs using **positive reinforcement training** can increase confidence in social interactions, reduce problem behaviors, and improve dog welfare

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Skills](#)



Social interactions with other **dogs** through housing and play sessions are beneficial for dog welfare

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Dogs](#)

6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels



1

Provide interactions that the dogs feel positive about, not neutral or negative. Learn how to interpret body language and monitor it consistently to ensure positive interactions.

6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

2

Adhere to safety precautions for social interactions (e.g., healthy, clean, appropriate social groups, monitoring)

6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels



3

Prepare for social interactions in advance (e.g., be ready with treats, tools, plans)



6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

4

Tailor interactions to the needs and preferences of each individual dog. Offering options of how to engage (e.g., pet, play) and letting the dog choose can increase their engagement!

A photograph of a person wearing a blue shirt petting a light-colored, scruffy-haired dog. The dog is looking up and has its tongue out, appearing happy. The background is blurred green foliage.

6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels

5

Provide social interactions with unknown (to the dog) people, other dogs, and other animals



6 Ways to Support Beneficial Interactions for Dogs in Breeding Kennels



6

Provide opportunities for social interactions with other animals that may be met in adult life (e.g., cats, livestock)

Social Interactions: Things to Avoid

- Failure to monitor body language in order to ensure positive experiences
- Providing items that the dogs feel neutral or negative about
- Overlooking safety needs for social interactions (e.g., healthy, clean, appropriate social groups, monitoring, resource management)
- Entering into social interactions unprepared (e.g., without treats, tools, plans)
- Providing a one-size-fits-all experience for all dogs without choice or novelty
- Only exposing dogs to known humans, dogs, and other animals

Social Interactions: Things to Avoid (continued)

- Limiting caretaker interactions to only husbandry requirements such as feeding and grooming
- Utilizing punishment-based training methodologies and failing to implement low-stress handling
- Housing dogs alone or in poorly-matched groups
- Structuring play sessions with disregard for individual play styles
- Inadvertently promoting high arousal and frustration without monitoring and intervening as needed
- Positioning play/exercise areas in view of dogs restricted to pens

A small white and brown dog, possibly a Chihuahua, is running happily on a green lawn. The dog is wearing a red harness. In the background, a person is kneeling on the grass, partially out of focus.

Learn More:

- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Dogs](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Handling](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – People](#)
- [At-a-Glance Social Interactions – Skills](#)
- [Quick Tips for Success: Adult Dog Body Handling](#)
- [Adult Dog Body Handling Checklist](#)
- [Body Language Handout](#)
- [The role of caretaker interactions in environmental enrichment for kennelled dogs](#)



Authors:

Taylor Rezvani, PhD, Traci Shreyer, MA, Candace Croney, PhD

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