









IMPORTANT



Socialization and early exposure is most effective when puppies are 3 to ~12-14 weeks of age

What puppies learn about now will impact how they behave in adulthood!

Teach puppies to not be afraid of people, places, and things that they will encounter as adults



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Socialization and Early Exposure must Start with YOU

- Socialize <u>all puppies</u> between 3 to ~12-14 weeks of age
- Do not wait until just before re-homing, important for "hold-back girls" too
- Track your progress
- Educate new pet families on how to continue the process
- Use the Checklist: Puppy Socialization and Early Exposure



Six Steps towards Socialization Success



#1: Be on Time

Experiences occurring between 3 to ~12-14 weeks of age have the biggest impact on later behavior



#2: Be Positive

Give high value treats to the puppy during the interactions. The puppy does not need to earn these! Watch body language to make sure they are having a good time.

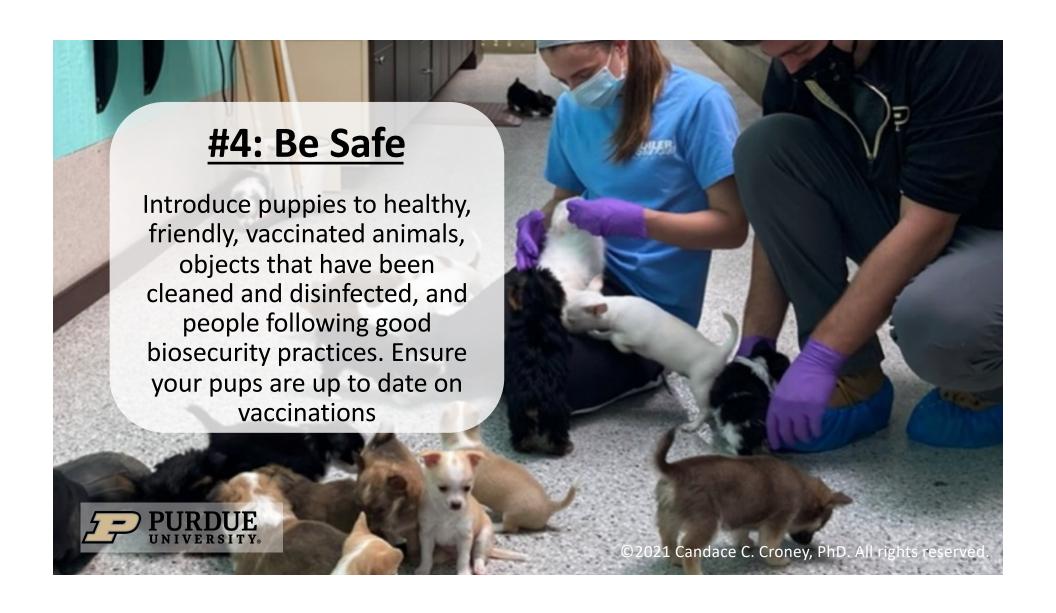




Go slow. Start with "easy" exposures that are less overwhelming and work up to the louder, slipperier, wilder experiences. Allow pups to choose to participate. They will do so when they feel safe.



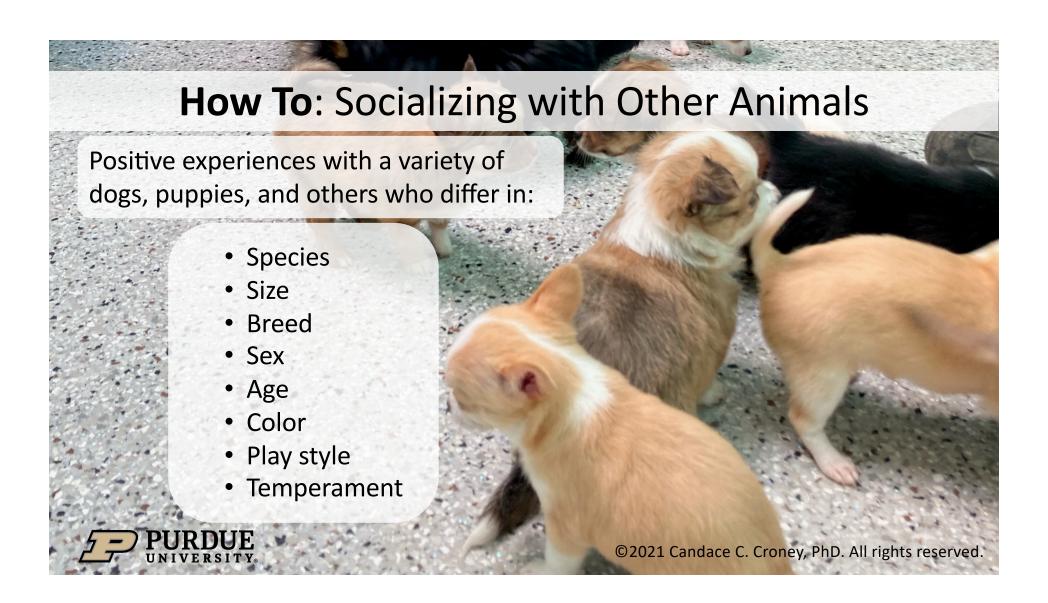




#5: Be Complex







How To: Socializing with People



Positive experiences with a variety of people who differ in:

Attributes -

- Height
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Known/strangers
- Canes/crutches
- Wheelchairs

Clothing/Accessories -

- Boots
- Glasses
- Hats

How To: Seven Ss of Early Exposure

A variety of positive sensory experiences:

- 1. Surfaces (gravel, sand, concrete, grass, water)
- 2. Sounds (storms, children, crowds, traffic, fireworks)*
- 3. Smells (foods, essential oils)
- 4. Sights (moving objects)
- 5. Scenarios (veterinary, travel, play)
- **6. Spaces** (home pen, exercise pen, office, crate)
- 7. Structures (ramps, platforms, steps)

*Hint: use a recording and start at a low volume!



Application Examples

- Dress in different clothing and accessories to appear different to the puppies
- Invite people you know who are new to the puppies to come for a visit (for example family or friends who don't work in the kennel)
- Regularly switch out toys and furniture items in the outdoor and indoor pens
- Create obstacle courses in the exercise pens with varied climbing structures and surfaces to experience



Things to Avoid:

Too much/too scary (loud blasting of fireworks <u>AND</u> lots of people)

Too fast (jumping right from greeting to being handled)

Too long (more than a few minutes and puppy gets tired and disinterested)

Too unsafe (play groups with unknown adult dogs)



FAQ #1: It is safe to socialize puppies when they are not yet fully vaccinated

- Do not wait for full vaccination! Efforts to build positive associations after this time will be harder and less effective!
- Minimize risks by socializing in known, clean environments with vaccinated, healthy, behaviorally appropriate (puppy-friendly) dogs
- Follow careful biosecurity precautions including sanitization of surfaces and objects, clean clothing, and foot baths
- Follow your veterinarian's guidelines and ensure puppies are current on vaccinations





FAQ #3: Continue to provide positive exposures to people, dogs, places, and things past 12-14 weeks of age

Positive interactions throughout a dog's life:

- Are still beneficial
- Are essential to maintain confidence and social skills
- Help to address fear-related behavior
- Are less effective than during the sensitive period, will take longer and impact behavior with more difficulty





To Learn More:

- Basics of Socialization
- Quick Tips for Success: Puppy Socialization and Early Exposure
- Checklist: Puppy Socialization and Early Exposure



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