

# Your Smart Dog

## What Your Puppy Needs NOW

*Five Things Your Pup Must Learn*

**Did you know your puppy is only a puppy until he's 16 - 20 weeks old?** Yup, that's right. Your 6-month old dog is an adolescent, not a puppy. There are a lot of things you need to teach your pup before he leaves puppyhood, this newsletter will focus on five of them.

**Physically, your dog will grow until he's about 1.5 years old.** But socially, he stops being a puppy around 4 months old. Most puppy owners aren't aware of how quickly puppy minds and personalities are shaped. Therein lies the biggest reason for behavior problems later in the dog's life. These five things need to happen before your pup is 4 months old, the clock is ticking so get started!

**Let's take a quick look at the five things we'll cover in this article:** (1) feel comfortable in any environment, (2) play nicely with other dogs, (3) feel comfortable with routine handling and grooming, (4)

basic good manners, and (5) how to be a good puppy parent.

### CONFIDENT PUPPY

**Puppies need to know** that the world is a safe place, a fun place. If they're mobbed by a group of kids at the bus stop, if a car backfires as they're meeting a new doggie friend, if your pup is scared by someone by accident, the pup could suffer long-lasting



consequences. The more things and places and people your pup sees by 16 weeks, the more laid back and easy-going he'll be as an adult dog.

### SOCIAL PUPPY

**Your puppy needs** to be with his littermates for eight weeks, at least. After the pup

### Puppy Development

Your puppy will go through five stages of personality development before he's 16 weeks old! Here's a quick rundown of the five stages:

**Curiosity (5 - 7 weeks):** Lots of exploring, least fearful time of pup's life.

**Behavior Refinement (7-9 weeks):** Learning is permanent and pup is able to learn many tasks. Now is the time to start teaching!

**Fear Imprint (8-11 weeks):** Onset can be sudden, don't expose pup to potentially traumatic situations (boarding, major medical procedures, etc.)

**Environmental Awareness (9-12 weeks):** This period is defined by the relationships your pup forges. If you have two pups, now is the time to teach them to spend time alone.

**Seniority Phase (13-16 weeks):** Pup develops real independence, likely to find you less interesting.

### SMART DOG U'S PUPPY CHARM SCHOOL IS OPEN TO PUPS 8 - 18 WEEKS OF AGE

*Puppy Charm School* was created out of necessity. Smart Dog U was seeing too many frustrated owners of adolescent dogs. The owners thought their dogs were still puppies and didn't realize they could have been teaching their pup from the day he came home.

Determined to help both the pups and the owners,

Smart Dog U created a program to get pups off on the right paw from the day they come home.

The program is geared specifically for puppies and their owners and is structured to give pups the education they need when they need it, and to provide owners with answers and solutions to common puppy problems.

comes to live with you, he'll need continual exposure to friendly, healthy, socially appropriate puppies and adult dogs. **Your pup needs to see different dogs every day**, not the same old neighborhood dogs. Novelty is what your puppy needs. Your pup needs exposure to a wide variety in breeds, colors, sizes, and shapes of dogs. A puppy needs to continually practice his doggy-communication skills from the minute he leaves his litter until at least 16 weeks of age, (longer ideally). It's important that those interactions be structured and monitored, controlled to ensure your pup is having fun and learning, not being bullied or scared (or learning how to bully). **Failure to keep your pup well-versed in canine communication can lead to dog-to-dog aggression**, fear of other dogs, and isolation due to poor social skills.

### HAPPY & HEALTHY PUPPY

**Every dog needs to go to the veterinarian** and have regular grooming (either by you or a professional groomer). Puppies aren't born knowing that we (humans) are cleaning out their ears to keep them healthy. Or that we trim their nails so they can walk without discomfort. It's important that regular grooming tasks (ear cleaning, brushing, bathing, nail trims) and veterinary exams are introduced in a pleasant way. If introduced to routine tasks incorrectly, your pup could grow into a dog who gets less than optimal care because he's so hard to take to the vet.

### GOOD PUPPY

**Your pup needs to learn** basic "good manners" behaviors to fit in nicely into your home and to

be able to accompany you when you're out and about. Your dog doesn't have to be an obedience champion, but just needs to have a few basic skills down pat to be a star canine family member. One important skill for pups to learn early on in their training are polite greetings. **Eight-week old pups are very capable of sitting before being petted.** If you delay teaching this skill to your pup, you'll likely wind up with a full-grown dog who jumps on people. Other polite behaviors such as loose leash walking, coming when called, and responding to his name can all be taught as soon as you bring your pup home. Your pup will learn habits -- why not make them good habits instead of bad. **Failure to teach good manners behaviors can lead to fewer opportunities for your dog to join your family in fun outings.** It's no fun to walk a dog that pulls you down the driveway; no one wants to pet a dog who plants his feet on their chest! A few minutes each day teaching good manners behaviors is all it takes to help your pup grown into a polite, well-behaved adult dog.

### PARENTING YOUR PUPPY

**We've talked a lot about** what your puppy needs to know, but *you* need to know quite a bit, as well. You need to know how to deal with the annoying (and often painful) puppy nipping, how to teach your pup to *love* spending time in his crate, how to teach your puppy that his bathroom is outdoors (not on the living room carpet), etc. The normal puppy life entails all kinds of unpleasant habits like digging, barking, sock stealing, food guarding, and

chewing. But **with a few handy pieces of information, you can learn the difference between making the problem better and making the problem worse.** For instance, did you know that chasing your puppy when he's gotten hold of something only *encourages* your pup to do it again? That scolding a puppy for going to the bathroom inside only reinforces the idea that he needs to *hide from you* next time he's got to do his business (and much less likely that he'll try to to tell you he needs to go out). Have you considered putting the trash behind a closed cabinet or door so it's not available to your puppy? Believe me, your puppy thinks the trash is a treasure chest! The more he practices (and occasionally succeeds) getting into the trash, the more of an ingrained habit it will become. **You can stop a lot of habits before they even begin to form.** Using dog-friendly training, your pup can grow into the dog of your dreams!

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Helping good dogs become great dogs.

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