

## SOCIALIZATION:

### The most important thing you can do for your puppy!

**Proper Socialization:** The act of teaching a dog NOT to react by desensitizing them to those things they will encounter in daily life.

- ✓ Don't just expose them to a new stimulus .... make it a positive experience.
- ✓ Think about what you are rewarding. What you reward will be repeated.
  - Do you want your puppy displaying that behavior you just accidentally reinforced by a touch, eye contact or any type of talking when they are an adult dog?

(Example – if you grab your dog's collar, pet to calm down, look and say anything when they are reactive (shaking, barking, lunging, hackles up etc) to a new stimulus ... they will think that is how they are to act)

BUT, if you reward by giving treats, petting, looking at and talking to before your puppy becomes reactive (just looking and curious) when looking at a new stimulus, they will think that is how they should behave.

**Never calm a nervous puppy ....be a strong leader  
or you will have a nervous insecure adult dog!**

**Know your puppy's Behavioral Threshold** - the point where a stimulus is at a strong enough intensity to cause a reaction. A threshold is analyzed in all kinds of animals who may be showing fear, anxiety, aggression, or other strong emotional reactions towards a certain object, animal, or place.

**UNDER** threshold – the puppy shows no sign of fear or anxiety towards the stimulus present.

**AT** –The point at which the puppy may go from showing no fear or anxiety to showing some awareness of the stimulus.

**Over** - The puppy shows apparent signs of fear and anxiety towards the stimulus present. May be very reactive (barking, panting, lunging etc.) and refuse treats due to stress.

## **Ways to introduce my puppy to a new person, another dog, or an object:**

### **1. *Start at a distance and move in gradually without your puppy noticing.***

Step 1: As you move forward towards the stimulus give a treat for calm behavior. You can take 2-3 steps, stop, (sit or stand), give treat & release.

Step 2: Turn around going away from the stimulus and do not give a treat.

Step 3: Repeat (Step 1), but move gradually closer to stimulus.

Repeat these steps, but go at your puppy's pace. Don't overdo it or force any interactions unless your puppy is ready.

\*That new object won't be so bad when your puppy gets yummy treats for moving towards it.

**2. *Hansel & Gretel*** – Lay a trail of treats to the “object” for example a vacuum cleaner. Let your puppy check it out at their own pace. You can even put a “Jackpot” of treats or food next to the object you are introducing.

**3. *Treat Tossing*** – Use this for people your puppy is cautious of. If your puppy is acting ok, have person just give a treat.

- The clicker is a great tool: ***Click for calm***, non-reactive behavior and give a treat.

## 20 People, Places & Things I introduced my puppy to this week

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Poor response to stimulus includes shrinking away, barking, hackles up with slow recovery.
- Average response, some hesitation but recovers in a couple of seconds.
- Positive response to the stimulus. No hesitation when noticing the stimulus. Makes attempts to approach / accepts its presence.

Stimulus	/	Response

Stimulus	/	Response

My puppy had a poor response to \_\_\_\_\_

I got my puppy comfortable by \_\_\_\_\_