

continuing

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In the past two issues of *You & Your Vet*, veterinary nurse Penny Jackson has discussed puppy development and how to socialise puppies with people. In this final article, she explains how to socialise puppies with pets and other animals and habituate them to different environments and experiences

It is essential that your puppy learns how to communicate with other dogs to avoid problems of dog-to-dog aggression in the future.

One of the best ways to achieve this is to attend a puppy socialisation class. Many veterinary practices run these and your puppy can usually start attending after having his first full vaccination, which is given from eight weeks of age. Choose your classes carefully – if you attend a class that concentrates on puppies playing together, you may end up with a dog that does not respond to you but thinks that all other dogs are the ‘bees’ knees!’ The class needs to be balanced and offer contact with people too. Any training undertaken at these classes should be reward-based.

Before this stage, it is acceptable for your puppy to mix with other vaccinated dogs. Do take care that such dogs are well socialised and are not over-confident,

which could lead to your puppy being scared. Terrifying encounters may cause problems in later life.

cats and other pets, horses and livestock

It is vitally important to get your puppy socialising with as many pets and other animals as possible so that he learns how to behave appropriately.

Many of these species are ‘prey’ animals, which your puppy will want to chase. You must teach him from an early age that this is not acceptable. When introducing your puppy to a cat, for example, restrain him so that he can’t chase it, and continue doing this until the cat is used to him. If you introduce your puppy without restraint, watch very closely. At the first sign of him wanting to chase, interrupt swiftly and play a game with him. By doing this, your puppy will learn that cats (or whichever species

puppy socialisation



Many veterinary practices hold puppy socialisation classes to help you start the process

Since you never know when your car may break down, take your dog for a trip on a bus, train or Underground. Imagine how frightening it could be – with the noises and sensations through the floor – to travel on public transport for the first time.

household items

Many household items can be scary if a dog has never encountered them before. Think about all the engines and machines your puppy is likely to encounter throughout life and familiarise him with their sight and sounds. You would be surprised at the number of dogs that are unable to cope with everyday things such as the whirr of washing machines, the buzz of a microwave and vacuum cleaners.

different environments

If you live in a town, take your puppy on quiet country trips – and if you live in the country go for trips into towns. A visit to a

dog-friendly pub, or outings to car boot sales or country shows, offer lots of new experiences. Try to get your puppy used to any environments that he may be likely to be exposed to, for example, grooming parlours, boarding kennels and veterinary surgeries.

Despite your best efforts, you may come across problems bringing up your dog to be a well mannered member of canine society. Do seek professional advice from your veterinary practice, which should be able to offer help or advice themselves or to recommend an approved behaviour counsellor (preferably a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors or the Association of Pet Dog Trainers).

These processes take time and patience and you should not stop socialising your puppy too soon – aim to carry on until he is 12 months of age. If you stop too soon you could find yourself with a dog fearful of environments or people and the like.

you are introducing) are not for playing with!

Introducing your puppy to any species must be done under control, always on a lead and from a distance, to avoid the animal you are introducing feeling the need to run away, which may encourage your puppy to want to chase it.

By being introduced to lots of animals, he will eventually think they are boring. Channel any excitement he shows using a favourite toy or game to keep his attention on you.

traffic

Traffic includes not only cars, lorries, and so on, but also bicycles. Many puppies are attracted to bicycles because of the speed and the whooshing noise they make. Traffic noise can be scary when you are tiny. And the noise that traffic makes differs greatly when the roads are wet, so get him used to traffic in different weather conditions!

Some young dogs may be travel sick or anxious in cars. A pheromone spray is available from veterinary surgeries that can help puppies and adult dogs overcome this problem.



Teach your puppy how to behave correctly with other animals

A useful tool in helping you to socialise/habituate your puppy is a checklist like the one on the right, which can help to remind you to get your puppy encountering different animals, people and environments.



First introductions to household items should be approached gently

Socialisation/habituation checklist

Please tick EACH box at EVERY encounter. Remember to carry on these processes until your puppy is at least 12 months old

Veterinary surgery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boarding kennel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grooming parlour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other people's houses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pub/party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fête/car boot sale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roadside	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Park/rural environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town/city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stairs/lift	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vacuum cleaner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washing machine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tumble dryer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hair dryer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's toys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pushchair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DIY tools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children/babies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elderly people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with walking sticks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confident/loud people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shy/quiet people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivery people (eg, postman)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People wearing hats/helmets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People wearing glasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in wheelchairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of different ethnic origins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Men with beards/moustaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veterinary staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in uniform	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other dogs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Livestock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other domestic pets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking with restraint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grooming/bathing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical examination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tooth brushing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Puppy/dog training classes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>