

# The Providence Puppy Owner's Guide to Puppy Socialization





## Hey Providence Puppy Owners!

**Congratulations on your new (furry) bundle of joy! While bringing home a new puppy is indeed exciting & joyous, it can also feel a little overwhelming & like the time goes by too quickly.**

As a new puppy parent, you have an extremely important job in socializing your puppy. Your puppy's "critical socialization period" takes place between between 3 & 16 weeks of age. This is the only period of time where "socialization" can take place - anything after that is remedial training.

What you do to expose your new puppy in this time period can determine if your cute pup turns into a confident canine citizen, or a nervous wreck who is scared of the world. No pressure, right?

That's why our experienced team of professional dog trainers put together this short guide to make socializing your pup just a little easier. In the following pages, we'll walk you through the process, show you what you need, & even give you some ideas on where to work on your puppy's socialization in Providence and nearby towns.

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## What is Puppy Socialization?

“Puppy Socialization” refers to the process of exposing your puppy to different “things” such as sounds, sights, smells, people & other animals. When done appropriately, your puppy should have a neutral, or even positive association with different things they’re likely to come into contact with in their life.

Following closely behind the socialization period ending around 16 weeks, dogs go through an adolescent “fear” period, where they’ll be less receptive & potentially fearful of new things. While you can still do remedial socialization work, it will be much, much harder.

### What You’ll Need for Socialization Outings



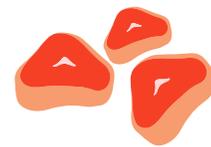
#### A 4-6’ Leash

No retractable leashes! We want our puppies to get used to walking on a leash with us, not zigging & zagging by themselves at the end of a 30 foot leash.



#### A Harness

For puppies 13lbs +, we recommend getting a front-clipping, Freedom No-Pull Harness. For smaller puppies, we recommend a well-fitted cloth harness such as a Puppia Harness.



#### Treats!

Bring itty-bitty pieces of something your puppy is really into. If your puppy is ignoring your treats while near new things, you need to up your treat game! Boiled chicken, Happy Howie’s treat rolls, & meaty baby food in a squeeze tube are great options!

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## How to Properly Socialize Your Puppy

Your goal is to expose your puppy to anything that will be a part of their life in the future. If you anticipate having your puppy around children, different ethnicities, body types, ages & genders, make sure you're making the time to work on this during your puppy's socialization period. If you have a fluffy pup who will need grooming, be sure to schedule a few short appointments to get your pup acquainted with the groomers.

Think long term & tailor your socialization schedule based on your lifestyle as well. Your puppy is going to be part of the family for over 10 years! If you anticipate beer gardens & wineries, make time for that.

If you intend on taking your puppy to the mountains with you, make sure your pup sees you carrying skis & poles, people wearing big clothing, etc.

If you intend on having children in the future, make sure to expose your puppy to children crying, running & screaming, too.

If you live in a busy neighborhood with lots of other dogs, be sure to expose your pup to other dogs, without always being able to greet them.

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## How to Properly Socialize Your Puppy

The goal of socialization is to expose your puppy to these new things to create a positive or neutral association. When exposing your puppy to new things that may be potentially jarring (loud sounds, skateboards, screaming children), be sure to give your puppy plenty of distance to observe first. If something does appear to frighten your puppy, try to pair the sight of said scary thing with your high value treats - things with a predictive quality can change how your puppy feels!

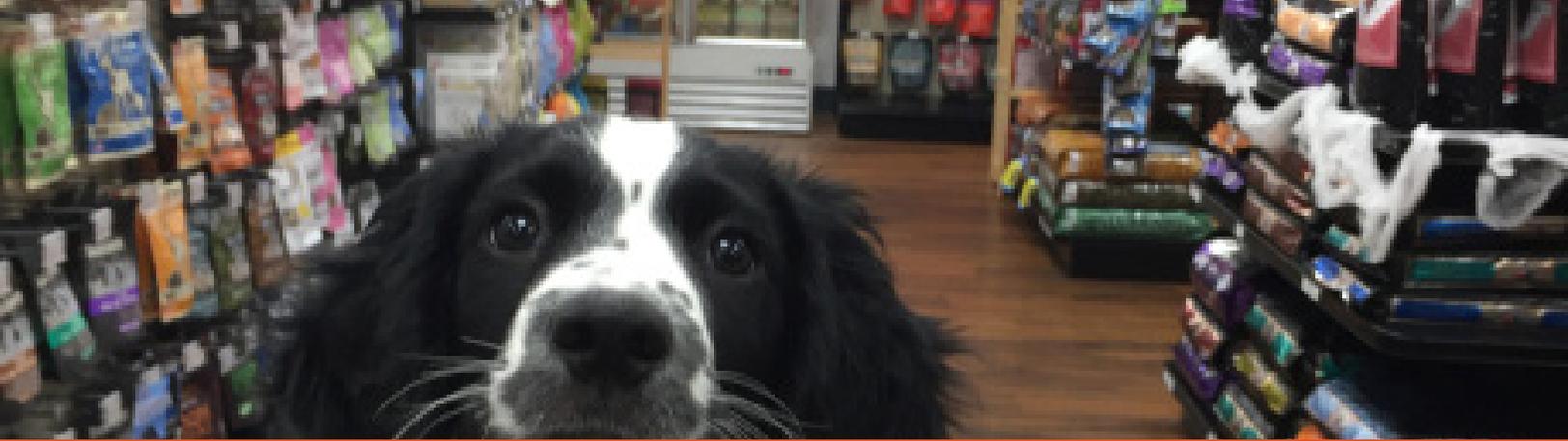
**TIP:** Keep socialization trips short. We recommend 5 to 10 minutes of socialization for every month of age. So, if your puppy is 8 weeks old (2 months), take them somewhere for 10-20 minutes and then head for home. By contrast, a 6-month-old puppy can handle a 30- to 60-minute socialization opportunity. Overdoing it can overwhelm your puppy and you may start to see some fearful behaviors. Quit while you're ahead!

**TIP:** Less is more. The goal is that your puppy is exposed to a “thing” - they do not need to meet the “thing” or touch the “thing” or love the “thing.” If your puppy seems a little bit bored, you're actually on the right track! That means you're doing a good job of not overwhelming them with weird “things.”

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## Where to Socialize Your Puppy

### Beer & Wine

Long Live Beerworks in Providence, Trinity Brewhouse in Providence, The Guild in Pawtucket, Providence Brewing Company in North Providence, Whalers in Wakefield, Greenvale Vineyards in Portsmouth, Carolyn's Sakonnet Vineyard in Little Compton (outdoors only)

### Outdoor Dining

Xaco Taco in Providence, Venda in Providence, India in Providence (has a dog menu!), Haruki East in Providence, Nick-A-Nees in Providence, Nick's On Broadway in Providence, Garden Grille Cafe in Providence, Seven Stars Bakery in Providence and Rumford, Coffee Exchange in Providence, The Square Peg in Warren, West Shore Coffee Bar in Warwick, BLU on the Water in East Greenwich

### Quick Bites & People Watching

Nitro Bar in Providence (order online for curbside pickup), Clementine's Ice Cream in East Greenwich (it's named for their dog & they have pup sundaes!)

### Stores

The Cheeky Hound in Providence, Frog & Toad in Providence, Bottles Fine Wine in Providence, Books on the Square in Providence, The Container Store in Cranston, Home Depot in Providence and Smithfield, Fetch RI in Richmond, Woof! Woof! Pet Boutique in Bristol

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## Where to Socialize Your Puppy

### Groomers

K9 Design in Cranston

### Parks & Outdoor Areas Where Dogs are Kept On-Leash

Roger Williams Park in Providence, Hope Street Farmer's Market in Providence (Saturday mornings May-Oct), Slater Park in Pawtucket, Rustic Tri View Drive-In in North Smithfield

**We don't recommend off-leash dog parks for puppies. A recent study showed that about 20% of dogs attending urban dog parks were actively shedding parasites - not safe for your puppy to encounter (or you, for that matter!) One experience being overwhelmed or run over by a well-meaning, but over-the-top, off leash dog can really frighten your puppy and lead to long-term fear of dogs. For your pup's well-being, we recommend keeping a safe distance from dogs you don't know well.**



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## Hand in Hand: Training & Socialization

Part of raising a confident, well-mannered city dog is taking time (& patience!) to train your dog in the presence of other dogs as well as distractions.

One of the biggest complaints we hear from new dog owners is “he knows it at home but doesn’t listen when we leave the house!” As frustrating as this issue can feel, it can be completely preventable by training your dog in increasingly distracting settings as they grow & develop.

**Tip:** Concerned about taking your puppy out before vaccinations are complete? The current recommendations of the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior are to begin training and socialization as soon as possible, especially before twelve weeks of age, in an environment that is disinfected regularly and is free of unvaccinated dogs. Crossbones’ vaccination and health requirements for our training programs exceed those set by AVSAB.

**Tip:** Are you unsure of introducing your puppy to new people while following COVID-19 distancing guidelines? Our Puppy Day School program is an essential service that provides socialization with other dogs & people that is difficult to achieve on your own. Our team of trainers & support staff will work with your puppy, teaching basic manners and guiding them through safe, fun interactions with other puppies and friendly adult dogs. We have a socially distant pick-up & drop-off protocol, plenty of space for spreading out during private lessons & group classes, & remote lesson options.

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## Crossbones Dog Academy: Making Puppy Raising Easy for Providence Puppy Parents

If any part of training or socializing your puppy feels overwhelming, we can help! We have a variety of programs tailored to help new puppy owners just like you!

### Flex Classes



Learn with your dog on your schedule! Our flex classes are designed so dogs & owners can start training right away. Work on the skills important to you with classes that work for your fluctuating schedule.

### Puppy Day School



Let us take care of the hard stuff. Our team of expert trainers will train your puppy, socialize them with other dogs & people, & provide you with resources to make puppy raising easy. Your pup will be ready to relax when they get home!

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