



Socialisation Part One – Pre Vaccination Socialisation

What is Socialisation?

Many people believe that socialisation is about getting your puppy to play with other dogs.

Socialisation is actually a stage of development that your puppy goes through. During the first 12 months your puppy will go through different development stages. These stages will affect your puppy's behaviour and we will help you through the stages, explaining what they are and giving you tips and training exercises that will help your puppy learn the right habits and prevent the wrong ones from developing as you work through the Smart Pup® programme.

Socialisation is about exposing your puppy to all the different situations and social settings it is going to need to learn to cope with and be comfortable in for the rest of its life.

The Socialisation development stage starts at four weeks and closes at around sixteen weeks.

Your puppy has been through two development stages already. The Neonatal stage and the Transitional stage and it is now in the Socialisation stage.

Hazard Avoidance

Your puppy will possibly also be experiencing what is called 'hazard avoidance onset' which is the first fear stage. This is variable between breeds with the onset ranging from 7 to 9 weeks old. The fear stage is where your puppy may become fearful or overwhelmed of new or strange experiences. This only lasts a week or so, however fear is also genetic which means that some puppies are just naturally fearful and sensitive. You need to make sure that your puppy does not get overwhelmed and if you think it is struggling and worried about new experiences, then you need to avoid too much exposure and just take your time. You are more likely to cause problems by 'socialising' a puppy in its fear period than just taking a break.