

Huey's Socialisation

Story

For example, when I brought Huey home he was quite overwhelmed with the experience of leaving his family, a night in a hotel and the drive home. Once home he was faced with a strange new environment, four new dogs and several new people. Cocker Spaniel fear onset is at 8 weeks, so I knew this would have an impact on him.

The next two days involved him just adjusting to us and his new home. There were no visitors etc. Once he had adjusted and regained confidence, to the point of being slightly cheeky and naughty, we knew that he was being a normal puppy and would now be able to have new experiences with positive consequences.



The Smart Pup ® Successful Socialisation Protocol

The first four weeks are mostly about your puppy adjusting and having positive experiences in its new home and learning about its new family. For the first week, just give them time to adjust and settle, then you can think about doing more.

Your puppy is currently limited to what it can do because it will not have had all its vaccinations, but that does not mean that, after the initial week of settling in, you cannot start the socialisation process of meeting people, being carried places and going for car journeys.

- 1) Do not put your puppy under pressure.**
- 2) Make sure that your puppy is having good, positive and pleasant experiences.**
- 3) Teach your puppy appropriate coping strategies for difficult, stressful, frightening or scary situations. Learning to walk away is a good strategy when compared with bolting, fleeing, running or pretending to be scary (aggressive) in order to make the scary thing go away.**



TROUBLE SHOOTING

What if my puppy is nervous?

Sensitive and nervous puppies need to feel that they have some control over new situations. For example, if your puppy is worried about something and backs away, let it back away. They will often do a 'yo-yo' type behaviour where they attempt to approach something and then back away and then re-approach. The reason why they back away is that they are a little concerned and keep checking that there is an escape route. If there is an escape route, they will continue to attempt the investigation. If you remove their escape route, for example if the owner tightens the lead, then the puppy may panic and therefore learn that new things can be very scary. It is not realistic for us to believe that we can expose a puppy to all possible situations within such a short time frame.

Can I fuss my puppy if it gets scared?

If a puppy is scared and feels that it needs its own space, as this is its way of coping, then forced, unwanted physical contact could actually make your puppy feel worse. If your puppy is just a little worried and stressed, always make sure you invite them in for tactile contact and pay attention to whether it is wanted or not.

