

# THE BEHAVIOR CLINIC

Animal Behavior of Northeast Ohio, LLC

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## **How to Socialize Your Puppy**

By Elizabeth S.M. Feltes, DVM

- The canine socialization period occurs between 3 and 16 weeks of age. It is a time when your puppy is most receptive to learning about how to interact with people, places and things.
- A good rule of thumb is to introduce your puppy to at least one new person, environment, object, sound or experience a day with treats being given.
- Your puppy needs to love these introductions! We want this to be fun and enjoyable with treats being eaten to create a positive experience.
- If the introduction causes your puppy to act fearful, defensive or cautious, please increase your distance from the new thing and give the puppy irresistible treats.
- If your pup does not eat the treats, a more delicious food needs to be found or the distance needs to be further increased. If these cannot be done, please remove your puppy from the situation. We want your puppy to learn to love the new things, not to fear them.
- Remember, not all people look or behave the same! Make sure your puppy is introduced to a variety of age groups, ethnicities and races.

This applies to all experiences. Here are some examples of each:

Environment: veterinary clinic, different houses, rural/urban areas, parks, elevators....

Objects: Highchairs, Strollers, Walkers, Vacuums, Dryers, Traffic, Wheelchairs, Lawnmowers....

Sounds: Airplane, Fireworks, Thunderstorms, Crying children, Crowd cheering, Motorcycles....

Experiences: Grooming, Exercise, Veterinary Examination, Car travel