

Hi, I'm Dr Gayle Watkins and this is part 3 of Savvy Socialization for owners.

In the last two sections, we've set the stage to go to work with our pups. Now, let's set up your plan!

< We know that socialization is a trust-building exercise focused on teaching our pups to trust four things:

People

The world around them

Our expectations of them

And themselves.

Let's go over briefly how we teach them this.

< We start with people. First off, pups must believe that the key people in their lives have their backs.

< The foundation of this belief is trust in their owners, the primary person or people in their lives. This trust sets the stage for every other aspect of a pup's development. It's impossible to overstate its importance.

< Next come the other people that they live with, such as children and other family members. The folks that pups interact with on a daily basis must also be trustworthy.

< Then comes caregivers, such as

< Vets and vet techs

< Groomers

< Dog walkers and pet sitters

< Our commitment to our pup has to be that these people will provide 5 things to pups:

< Safety

< Protection

< Consistency

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- < Communication, and
- < Value or importance. We'll talk about consistency and communication later in this video but what do the others mean?
- < When key people are safe, they don't cause the pup
- < Pain.
- < They don't understand anger...puppies don't understand human anger, scolding or even the word "no" so all we do is confuse them with these outburst, we aren't communicating. So key people don't do these things!
- < Finally, key people prepare pups for what they are going to experience in the future, for life.
- < That said, we do need to prepare pups for discomfort because that is part and parcel of a dog's life. Your pup is going to need vaccinations, ear cleaning, nail trimming, grooming and other uncomfortable experiences. We can't tell the pup that these things are for his own good so we need to
- < Start by handling the pup at home, touching ears, feet, hair, teeth, tails and every other part of the pup's body. Initially, we do it gently, with lots of good treats watching closely to see how the pup feels.
- < We talk to our pup's vet and groomer, telling them how important it is that he has a good experience.
- < When we go, we take the best treats we can and ask the vet or groomer to be very generous with them.
- < If we can go in with our pup, we do
- < Regardless, be sure to visit the clinic or groomer's several times before your pup's first appointment. Go and hang out outside, if you can't go in. Ask the vet clinic to take your pup in just to weigh him. Pay your groomer for a 10-minute introductory session during which your pup isn't groomed, just played with, fed delicious treats, and loved on. All of that preparation will set the stage for your pup to love going to the vet and groomer for life.
- < Next, the key people in your pup's life need to provide her with protection from:
- < Any kind of danger...since pups aren't very good at spotting that ahead of time, as well as
- < Strange or aggressive dogs, including

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- < Adult dogs barking or charging, whether at the pup or not.
- < As well as, unknown people and children that you don't know are good with puppies.
- < Finally, pups need to know that the key people in their lives have value. They are:
 - < Worth responding to and
 - < Focusing on.
 - < That they are fun to engage and play with and that they are worth
 - < Learning to respond to. By far, the best way to do this is through food, both meals and training treats. Pups don't arrive loving us. Many of them don't love petting, almost none of them enjoy hugs and kisses. They learn to love us over time as we build trust but initially, the quickest way to establish a relationship with a pup is time together, play and food. So be generous...but don't let your pup get fat!

Once pups know that key people are safe, we have a foundation upon which to get them out into the world to socialize. Now they know that if they aren't sure or if they are anxious, they can trust us.

- < So now we teach them that all other people are safe. To avoid diseases, we seek out places where there are few or no dogs, such as
 - < Banks
 - < Senior centers and children's day cares
 - < Home improvement centers, and
 - < Garden centers. Be creative and look for where you can take pups in your area.
 - < While you are getting your pup out, be sure to teach the right behaviors for direct contact, when the person is able to touch the puppy. That means the pup isn't jumping or nipping.
 - < But also teach your pup how to behave when she can see a person but not interact. This is indirect contact. Your goal is that your pup can ignore people who aren't interacting with it so isn't barking or lunging or leaping.

While your pup is meeting all of these people, your job is to observe her to see how she is feeling. Go back to what you learned in part 2 to evaluate the pup in this photo. How is she feeling? If you said she is anxious, you are right. You can see she has tight lips. You can see the whites of her eyes, whale eyes. And she is

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pulling away from the hand. It isn't catastrophic but she isn't feeling positive about this experience.

- < So if we go back to our flowchart from Savvy Socialization for Breeders, we start by asking, is the pup safe and do I have time? Certainly, this situation seems safe but if you don't have time to help her through this, just pick her up, go home and make a plan to get her back out in a similar situation when you have more time.
- < But if you do have time, take a deep breath and relax. Wait and observe the pup to see if she gets more comfortable. Move a little bit away from the person if needed, or use your own body to give the pup reassurance. Sit on the ground, perhaps even ask the person to sit on the ground, to help the pup be more comfortable.
- < If you see that her anxiety isn't going away, pick her up and try again another day.
- < But if she is, terrific. Tell her what a good girl she is and head off on your walk.

You are going to use this same method with people, places, sights, sounds and everything else you introduce your pup to.

- < Next, we are going to focus on introducing our pups to the world, teaching them that they might be surprised by things (which you know how to identify) but they won't be hurt.
- < In addition, sometimes they'll be able to go up to touch or sniff things but sometimes they won't.
- < While you are teaching this, you are going to introduce your pup to all kinds of different
 - < Places
 - < Things
 - < Sounds
 - < Sights
 - < Touch
 - < Animals
- < The one thing you are going to go very carefully with are other DOGS. We'll talk more about that in a minute.

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Remember, sensitive period pups are hypersensitive to new things and generalize easily. This means that you don't have to take your pup to 100 new places for him to be comfortable in the hundred and first. You don't have to introduce your pup to 100 new people for him to be comfortable with the hundred and first. But you do need to give him quite a few opportunities to learn about the world

- < So look for new places and experiences. Cabellas are great opportunities for pups to see some pretty crazy stuff. Look for people in uniform and, shoot for walks on city streets, as well as the country.
- < Find an array of different sights and sounds. Bring some into your home, as well as finding them out and about. Things as simple as
 - < balloons,
 - < whirligigs,
 - < children's mobiles,
 - < recorded sounds and
 - < crazy toys work well.
- < And, of course, be sure your pup hears and sees everything in your house, from the vacuum cleaner to the dishwasher to the Roomba, if you have one.
- < Let your pup feel all kinds of things underfoot,
 - < from play mats to
 - < tile to
 - < grates. When you pick toys,
 - < select those with different textures and sounds.
- < Introduce your pups to other safe animals but
- < Be very cautious with other dogs. As I said in the breeder lesson, adult dogs often want nothing to do with young puppies.
- < We think it's going to be wonderful but
- < This is what often happens, with the adult dog either being fearful or or aggressive toward the pup. And remember, it only takes one bad experience during puppyhood to cause longterm problems.

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- < So stick with puppy-on-puppy play, with pups about the same age...no more than 5 months. Puppy kindergarten with supervised play will pay dividends in the long run.
- < We want to also spend some time helping ours pups learn to trust themselves so they are confident problem-solvers, with resilience and good cognitive skills, such as intelligence and memory. Ideally, we offer experiences that develop your pup's brain and body at the same time. Here are some that I recommend and the extra bonus is that all of them will tire your pup out, too! Often when pups are being incorrigible and you feel like they are all energy, mischief and teeth, it's because their brain hasn't been exercised. Do some cue training, which I'll talk about next, but also try these challenges and you'll learn the meaning of the old dog-trainer saying, "A tired puppy is a good puppy."
- < As I've said several times before, look for a puppy kindergarten class that offers social engagement among the pups but also with other people. Some also have equipment, puppy-sized obstacle courses and other stimulating events, while you and your pup are learning to work and communicate together.
- < Next, are Adventure Walks. During the Sensitive Period, going on off leash walks in safe nature spots like woods and fields, beaches or lakes, are tremendous developmental opportunities for pups. They have been shown to reduce the risk of orthopedic diseases, like hip dysplasia, and they teach pups to pay attention to you when in exciting circumstances, especially if started between 6 and 12 weeks of age.

Find safe woods or fields where you are unlikely to meet other dogs. Let your dog drag a longline...hang on to the end of it if you are worried he'll run off! But get out there—it will be good for you and your pup!

- < A third way to present challenges to your pup (and to tire him out) is to teach him puzzles, games, and tricks. There are dozens of doggie puzzles on line and even some do-it-yourself suggestions. Find games that both of you enjoy BUT make sure they don't teach the wrong thing.

For example, when you play hide and seek or chase, it's always the puppy chasing you. You are never chasing your puppy so you don't find yourself chasing your pup down the street before work. He thinks it's a game and you do not. So have your pup come find you when you hide or chase you through the house!

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And tricks! Tricks like shake, wave, hide your eyes and hundreds of others are wonderful ways to have fun with your pup, build your relationship, and develop his mind.

- < While you are doing these things, do be cautious though and follow published exercise guidelines, live Avidog-Zink's.
- < Sensitive Period puppy bodies and
- < joints are still developing. Check out this xray of the lower half of a young pup's that is lying on his back. You can see his tail here, his hind legs. His head would be up here.

Now look at his hip joints here. In the case of puppies, the leg bone isn't connected to the hip bone...or the knee bone.

- < His bones are softer and
- < His growth plates are open so we don't want to damage them.
- < And, if you live in a hot climate, his cooling mechanism is not as efficient as it will be as an adult. So he will overheat sooner.
To keep your pup safe, don't let him
- < jump from heights higher than his elbow, such
- < as beds, couches, cars, porches. Teach him to wait for you to lift him off or to use a ramp or stepstool
- < Stairs done slowly are fine but don't let him fly down them.
- < And don't do long on-leash walks, jogs, hikes or bike rides. Young pups can get a lot of exercise OFF-LEASH or on a long-line where they can go at their own pace, stop and sniff when they want, lie down for a bit, and then race off for more fun.
- < For lots more on this, check out *Avidog-Zink's Fit For Life Puppy Exercise Guidelines*.
- < The final aspect of trust that you are building in your pups is what you expect of her. The principles here are:
- < Your pup can understand what is expected of her. This means that you have taught her how she should respond in specific situations. Without specific

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training, pups aren't going to understand that they shouldn't bite or steal fun things or pee on the floor. We must teach them those things!

- < And those expectations are a moving target. This is a huge problem for puppies and dogs. We let and even encourage them to jump on us or even bite our hands in play when they are itty babies but as they grow, we change the rules. This is hard and confusing for dogs and breaks down their trust in us, as well as their confidence in themselves.
- < We recognize that it takes time for pups to develop physically, mentally and in their learning so we manage pups until they are able to do what we want. House-training is an example. The vast majority of baby puppies can't go very long without pottying so we manage them until they can
- < Comply with our expectations. Speaking of complying, we also need to recognize that pups will be able to do things at home before they can do them in the yard and long before they can do them in town or other exciting places. Because of the way dog brains work, we literally have to teach them what the cue is in each of these different places before they will be able to generalize it.

So this is all about training and teaching our dogs, as well as developing two-way communication with them.

- < As we get started with our pups, we must recognize that pups do what we call bad things, what they call perfectly natural. Who wouldn't
 - < bark when you want to,
 - < bite those fun fingers, or
 - < eat this delicious sandwich?

Those and so many other things that bother us about dogs—peeing the house, running off to explore—are perfectly normal dog behaviors. They just don't work for us in our world so we have to teach dogs different options but as we do so, we need to recognize that we are asking them to change their nature. And, because dogs are so amazing, they can and do.

- < To help with consistency, set house rules that everyone in the household commits to. And set them with your grown-up dog in mind, particularly it's size and coat.
- < So why should we do this?
- < Well, because puppies learn best what they learn first, which leads to

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- < Training things right the first time is much easier on everyone—you and your puppy- than re-training.
- < As you are raising your pup, go out of your way to avoid teaching the wrong thing. It's fun to tease your pup with your hands but you are teaching him to bite people's hands, not just yours. But when he bites the hands of your neighbor's kid, you are going to be angry at him, even though you taught it in the first place.
- < So, in the first week you have your pup, you and your household members decide on rules regarding:
 - < Which if any furniture your pup will be allowed on when he's grown up, wet from a walk in the rain, or has dirty paws.
 - < Is he allowed to be the pre-wash for the dishes in the dishwasher and is he allowed to get on the door to do this?
 - < Can he get in people's laps? If so, whose and by invitation only or on his own?
 - < And then agree on what cues or commands you are all going to use with the pup. Just a hint, "No" should not feature prominently on this list. Use cues to tell pups what you want them to do not what you don't.
 - < Just a hint as you get started...focus on house and crate training first. Your pup can be the sweetest, most brilliant pup ever but if he potties all over the house and is hysterical anytime he is confined, he is going to make your life miserable.
 - < As you think about house and crate training, have realistic expectations of your pup. Just like it took you a while to get potty training, it may take your pup many months to not only understand but be able to be clean in the house.
 - < Until then, you have to be committed to managing your pup thru either
 - < Confinement or
 - < Supervision.
 - < And the final step in raising your sensitive period pup is the one many people start with, teaching cues or commands. Most people don't need a dog with a huge vocabulary, they need a dog that understands and does
 - < The basics, the vast majority of the time, at home and away. They include:
 - < Paying attention when their name is said
 - < Coming when called
 - < Sit or some other stationary command that means stop and wait

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- < Stay is helpful to lengthen that wait as you talk to the UPS guy or go out to get the mail.
- < A good dog knows how to greet people and dogs politely
- < And how to be quiet, either most of the time or at least when asked.
- < And finally, for his safety and yours, your dog needs to know to leave your things—not just furniture and kids toys, but medication and food—alone.

That's it. Seven simple things but they are easier said than done.

So just like we use teachers and coaches to help teach kids, take some training classes with your pup. Not just one 6-week session but several in a row until your pup is a grown up. There are tons available, in person and online, like Avidog's Puppy College.

- < So there you have it! Sensitive Period socialization tips focused on trust building. Hopefully, you have developed a strong bond with your pup and she knows she can rely on you. You have introduced the pup to the world through positive experiences so she now takes new things in stride. She is resilient to surprises and even uncomfortable situations. And she is confident in her ability to figure things out.
- < Now let's briefly look at how this plan changes a little during the Juvenile and then Adolescent periods.
- < As we discussed in the Intro class, the Juvenile period runs from 17 weeks to puberty, that point when the pup is sexually mature (but definitely not physically or mentally mature). In the tiniest breeds, that might be as early as 20 weeks, while in the large breeds, puberty doesn't usually hit until 8 to 12 months.
You'll know when your female pup is in puberty because she'll come in season. Boys are a little harder so we usually notice their increased interest in girl dogs to figure out they have moved on to their teenage months.
- < Our juvenile period pups aren't as mentally quick as they were a few weeks ago. They can certainly keep learning but their
- < Brain is consolidating past learning and
- < Testing it in various contexts. So sit means sit in the living room but do I really have to sit at the park. This is normal so you simply teach her yet again that yes, sit means sit at the park, too. Juvenile period pups are fine with that, they just need to know.

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- < You'll likely see pups this age ranging further from you on your walks. There are methods to handle this but we don't have time to cover them now so hopefully, we'll have a future class on Adventure Walks.
- < At this stage, fear of new things—neophobia—strengthens unless pups have been introduced to many, many experiences and situations earlier in their lives.
- < And juvenile pups will likely go through yet another fear imprint period
- < Around 6 months of age, when they become hypersensitive to traumatic experiences. That would be better said that they are hypersensitive to a single traumatic experience and can rapidly imprint on what, where, how it happened or who was involved.
- < They also can go back to being a little flakey, shying at the trashcan or car backfire. So be ready and just accept that despite all you have done up until now, everything that was old might be new again to your pup. But if you've socialized him well earlier, this will pass quickly if you follow the flowchart.
- < So to develop our juvenile pups