

Hi, I'm Dr Gayle Watkins, founder of Avidog University where we've taught thousands of dog breeders from around the world and with hundreds of breeds to raise great puppies.

Welcome to the third in our series of Savvy Socialization classes. This lesson focuses on Savvy Socialization for Puppy Owners, what you can do in your pup's first year or so to set it up for a lifetime of success.

<>In the first two classes, I discussed a recent trend that I've seen where more and more young dogs are showing so much fear, anxiety, and reactivity that it is affecting their and their owners' quality of life. We looked at research and statistics supporting this claim.

Surprisingly, most of these dogs started out as normal pups with no apparent signs of problems early on. They had stable dog parents, their breeders did all of the "right things," and their owners have tried to socialize them according to the current protocols. Yet between 6 and 15 months, issues began to appear. These young dogs became so uncomfortable out in the world, with places, dogs, people, sounds, and more that it was affecting their and their owners' quality of life.

- < In this class, we are going to focus on how you can meet your socialization goals for your puppy, the foundation of which is building TRUST. During puppyhood, we are teaching pups to trust four things:
 - < their owners
 - < the world around them
 - < their owner's expectations of them, and
 - < themselves.
- < And we are going to do that through
 - < Introductions to all kinds of things in the world
 - < Socialization or building strong social bonds
 - < developmental experiences that build their bodies and brains, and

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- < manners or how should they behave under certain circumstances, say when they see a person or dog, meet a person or dog, get left alone, and so on.
- < Let's remind ourselves on where our pups are in their development. Here are the 8 stages of puppyhood, taking a dog from conception until adulthood. If you want to review the details of each stage, go back to Intro to Savvy Socialization.
- < Your breeder was responsible for developing your puppy until at least 8 weeks. Some breeders let their pups go to their new homes between 8 and 9 weeks,
- < While others keep them longer, say till 10 or 12 weeks.
- < So when you get your pup home, he is most likely in late sensitive period, between 9 and 16 weeks. Today we are going to outline how you can do a great job with your pup's development up through the Juvenile and adolescent periods.
- < Let's start by digging into the Late Sensitive Period. Pups during this stage are silly things with a mix of good and bad traits. On the good side, they are:
 - < Curious
 - < Playful
 - < Explorers that
 - < Learn quickly and generalize that learning more easily than any other time in their lives.
 - < They also mimic others, especially older dogs but also people
 - < They are primed to form strong social bonds, and
 - < They are hypersensitive and aware of new things—objects, sounds, sights, situations and more.
- < The obstacles that come naturally with sensitive period pups include:
 - < Hypersensitivity to negative situations and social experiences
 - < Increasingly concerned about new experiences
- < Wary, even fearful, at times with a fear imprint period between 8 and 10 weeks
- < Socially unskilled, even inept
- < At risk from disease

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- < All in all, we have a tug of war during the Sensitive Period when developing our pups is essential but also complex
- < Because pups have these competing needs to be protected from disease and trauma, while also getting out into the world to learn key lessons. But don't worry, I'm going to walk you through how to do this!
- < Before we go into socialization, I want to pause for a moment and discuss health challenges because this is often a point of confusion and conflicting advice from all sides.
- < Protecting Sensitive Period pups from two key diseases
- < Parvovirus and
- < Distemper is more complicated than just giving them a few shots because
- < The amount of antibodies they got from their mom during the first day of life, can interfere with vaccinations up until as late as 18 weeks of age! And the amount of antibodies varies widely among litters. So for pups in a litter whose mom gave them a lot of antibodies, we could give shots at 6, 9 and 12 weeks but the pups still won't be protected because the antibodies they got from their mom won't let their bodies respond to the vaccine.

But another litter whose mom gave them only a small amount of antibodies might respond to that 6-week vaccination.

Luckily, no matter how many antibodies the pup got, they will be gone by 18 weeks so at least we know when the end point is. But remember, that's past the end of the Sensitive Period...during which we have to socialize our pups...so we are betwixt and between.

- < And unfortunately, no one can look at a pup to tell when those antibodies will be gone.
- < So that means that
- < In puppies, vaccination doesn't always result in protection, only vaccination at the right time, which is

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- < hard to figure out.
- < So we either have to give distemper and parvo vaccines every 2-4 weeks until 16 weeks OR
- < We need a nomograph on the pup's mom. I mentioned nomographs in Lesson 2 so head back there for more on these cool blood tests.
- < But in either case, whether you have nomograph results or you are giving your pup multiple shots, you still need to run a confirmatory antibody titer on your pup two weeks after her last vaccination.
- < These titers confirm for you and your vet that your pup did indeed respond to at least one of the shots you gave and is protected against parvo and distemper, probably for many years.
- < It's pretty easy to run a titer.
- < Just have your vet draw blood from your pup and ship the serum to the CAVIDs lab at the Univ of Wisconsin Vet School. You can find the link to their website on the class page.
- < I'll talk more about this in detail as we go along but until you have results from CAVIDs telling you that your pup is protected against distemper and parvo,
- < Take your pups to busy and interesting places but with few to no dogs
- < Except for puppy kindergarten which has been shown to not only be safe but to be very valuable for pups longterm.
- < So if you don't have nomograph results on your pup's mom, you are going to have your vet vaccinate your pup every 2-4 weeks with a distemper-parvo shot until your pup is 16 weeks old and then you are going to titer to be sure the shots worked.
- < However, if your breeder ran a nomograph, you may not need to vaccinate as many times or as long. Follow your breeder's recommendation, which will be based on the CAVIDs lab guidance.
- < Then, run that confirmatory titer to be sure all is well and your pup is protected.

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- < Why is this important? Because as we socialize our pups out in the world, we want to avoid situations where they might come in contact with parvo or distemper. These two very serious, often fatal, diseases are transferred through the pup coming in contact with feces—poop—or saliva from an infected dog. As a result, it can also be transferred through shoes, the pup's feet, or someone touching an infected dog and then your pup.

So until you have that positive titer result back from CAVIDs, it's very important that you keep your puppy away from dog poop, Unknown, unvaccinated or sick dogs and places where dogs are walked, play or congregate except for puppy kindergarten.

Even be smart about your vet's office. Potty your pup at home so you don't have to do so there and don't let your pup interact with the other dogs that are there.

- < So we can reduce the two primary risks inherent in our Sensitive Period pups by controlling the situations we put them in and social distancing from other dogs.
- < **Now that we have those parameters, let's dig into socialization and have some fun with our pups!**