

Hi, I'm Dr Gayle Watkins and this is part 4 of Savvy Socialization for owners.

In this section, we are going to address the development needs of juvenile and adolescent pups.

- < Our socialization goals don't change during their period, only our methods and expectations do. Socialization is still a trust-building exercise focused on teaching juvenile and teenage pups to trust four things:

People

The world around them

Our expectations of them

And themselves.

If we've done our job well in the Sensitive Period, we'll have an easier time now. The more different positive experiences pups have had early on, the more progress we'll make during these last two stages of puppyhood.

- < 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 can rapidly imprint on what, where, how it happened or who was involved so keep protecting your juvenile pups from aggressive dogs, overwhelming people, and dangerous things.
- < 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 your juvenile pup
- < You're going to focus on ensuring they have no bad experiences but their life is filled with positive ones
- < Keep teaching all kinds of things to your pup, keep teaching manners, cues, tricks and games...anything you can think of or that will improve your relationship.
- < But be ready for your pup to be more independent, perhaps deciding to wander off or many not come as quickly.
- < You may notice that your pup doesn't pick up new things as quickly as before so be patient, be consistent and
- < Go to training class!
- < Finally, prepare for and respond to fearful behavior, even if you haven't seen it for a while. If it happens,
- < Treat your pup like she is 10 weeks old and don't forget to go back to the
- < Flowchart when these situations arise.
- < Don't forget to care for your pup's body, too, since she probably won't.
- < Remember that juvenile pups are far from grown. In particular, their joints remain immature and their growth plates aren't closed yet.

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- < But they are likely to try more things than they should, just like our 8-year old children so we need to keep them safe.
- < Do all you can to keep her from jumping from anything higher than her elbows.
- < Don't do long on-leash walks and especially no jogging, biking and hiking. Better to use a long-line and much of the time, let your pup set the pace. And keep up the off-leash Adventure Walks, if your pup has a good recall. Finally, no jumping or frisbee games yet.
- < However, at this stage you can start strength exercises or tricks, like sit pretty. A good place to find recommendations are the *Fit For Life Puppy Exercise Guidelines*.
- < And finally, let's focus on our teenagers, pups from puberty to early adulthood.
- < In tiny pups, that's by 9 or 12 months of age. In large pups, it's closer to 18 months or even later but on average, it's 15-18 months.
- < During this time, pups are testing boundaries. If a juvenile pup asks "Does sit mean sit at the park, too?" adolescent pups ask "What happens if I ignore my owner when he asks me to sit in the park?"  
Adolescent pups often struggle to focus, too. Their brains focus more on other dogs and people. In fact, there is recent researching showing that the people that even well-trained teenage pups are the least likely to respond to, it was their caregivers. Don't be surprised, instead be ready and talk to your trainer so you have a plan.
- < Again, your pup may have another fear imprint period or two around 12 months of age and
- < New fears and types of aggression may develop, including:
  - < Situational fear
  - < Dog-directed aggression or reactivity
  - < Stranger-directed fear
  - < Territorial aggression.
- < So what's the plan?
- < As with the past periods in your pup's life, your goal is no bad experiences and many positive ones.
  - < Keep teaching and reinforcing manners, cues, tricks and games

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- < Be ready for them to ignore you or struggle to focus on you. They are going to do it! It's normal but we need to work through it.
- < Keep doing training classes so you have a plan and support when you run into challenges.
- < More than any other time in your pup's life, be ready to respond to inappropriate behavior, especially
- < Dog-directed and territorial aggression.
- < Have a plan to stop both of these in their tracks. My saying is, "We don't do that in this house!"
- < As always, watch for new fears and concerns. When it happens
- < Take several steps back and treat them like they are 10 weeks
- < And, as always, use the flowchart.
- < To avoid long term health issues, we also need to help our teenage pups take care of their bodies
  - < Finally, their growth is slowing but they are still developing.
- < Until their growth plates close between 12-18 months. Spayed and neutered puppies' growth plates close much LATER—closer to 18 months--than intact pups, whose plates may close by 12-15 months. One of many reasons to hold off on spaying and neutering until adulthood.
- < Until those growth plates close, still no jumping from higher than elbows until then
- < But as your pup finishes maturing, you can start jogging, biking, jumping, frisbee, etc.
- < As you transition towards adult exercise, keep following *Fit For Life Puppy Exercise Guidelines*.
- < Well, we have come a long way! We started Savvy Socialization for Puppy Owners with our 9-week old pups. Along the way, we have talked about ways you can
- < Develop your pups from the time you get them until they are adults so they trust in
- < people

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- < the world around them
- < expectations
- < Themselves.  
We've talked about many, many ways to do this and we have
- < Discussed what to expect and how to respond at each step of the way!
- < So we can bring out the best in every puppy!
- < Thanks for joining me for these classes, Introduction to Savvy Socialization
- < Savvy Socialization for Breeders, and Savvy Socialization for owners. I've really enjoyed it! I hope you have, too!