

Socializing Your New Puppy During the Pandemic



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

A lot of effort has gone into providing your puppy with appropriate socialization during the first several weeks of life. To help your new best friend grow up to be a well-adjusted, confident and happy adult, it's vital that you continue with exposure to new people and things. Make all encounters positive for your puppy; never force an interaction.

- Though you can't bring new people into your home, family members can dress up in different hats, wigs, and costumes to safely provide exposure to "novel" people.
- Take special care with children; these interactions should always be supervised. Maintain a calm demeanor when children do noisy things as puppies pick up on our reactions.
- Set up a pen in the front yard where your pup can watch people go by, under supervision, for safety and to let your puppy see that you are happy about seeing these people.
- Stage interesting happenings by asking friends and neighbors to walk by with strollers, scooters, bikes and tricycles, wagons, children, teens, and babies.
- Sounds to expose your puppy to: vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, radios, washing machines and dryers, kitchen appliances like blenders and mixers. Associate the sounds with tasty treats. Extra praise and treats for things like garbage collection (loud, banging trucks) and yardwork with mowers and blowers.
- You can take your puppy to dog-friendly businesses that are open; just maintain safe social distancing. It's easier to do on weekdays when stores are less crowded.
- Take the pup for rides in the car. The ride is an adventure, and many businesses are offering curbside pickup of groceries and meals, so it's an opportunity for your puppy to see a new person.

