



# Newbies News: Socialization: How to Introduce Your Puppy to People

By Warren Johnson



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*Newbies' News: This section of TTRM is dedicated to the continual elementary education of those who are "new" to the Rottweiler breed.*



Your puppy needs to remain in a protective environment until all vaccines have been completed and a healthy immune system has been established. This complicates the socialization process, but you cannot wait until the series of puppy shots is complete before you start this important training. There is a relatively small window of time to imprint your canine companion's lifelong temperament in relation to his social acceptance and behavior. It should be your goal to introduce your puppy to as many different people as possible before he is sixteen weeks old. The confidence that the puppy develops in meeting strangers and the social behavior he learns during this critical stage will remain largely fixed through the duration of the dog's life. Therefore, you must dedicate yourself to invest the necessary time for this crucial training. Otherwise, you will have to deal with a dog that may be shy, fearful, or aggressive in interaction with strangers for the next decade or more. This can be not only undesirable but dangerous as the dog may be prone to bite someone at some point. A dog who is not properly socialized will have to be locked up every time company comes to the house. If the dog is used to being out in the house, he will whine or bark the whole time you are trying to enjoy your house guests. Another result of failing to properly socialize your dog is that it can present unpleasant problems when it comes to walking your dog or taking your dog out in public. These issues can be avoided if you prioritize the socializing of your puppy from the first day that he arrives home.



*Xavier von Warterr (Levi)*

It is enjoyable to own a dog who meets people with confidence and who can be trusted to interact with proper supervision. Until your puppy has completed all vaccines, you will need to invite people to your home for planned training sessions in socialization. Introduce the puppy to individuals and groups of people. Request the help of family, friends, and neighbors. The socialization needs to include men and women. You especially want to work on socializing your dogs with men as there is a natural tendency for them to be more guarded toward males. Introduce your puppy to children and elderly people. Try to have as much variety as possible as far as the people they meet: tall people, short people, heavy

people, thin people, people of different races, people with and without facial hair, bald people, people with glasses, people with hats, people in uniform, etc. The more people they meet the better when it comes to socialization. When people come to help with socialization, instruct them specifically what you want them to do before you introduce your puppy to them. Provide each guest with puppy treats to use during the introduction and interaction. Both you and the guest should give a lot of verbal praise as the meeting takes place. The food reward will teach your puppy that meeting new people is an enjoyable experience. A puppy that learns to love people will mature to become an adult dog that loves people. People love dogs that love people! It is very important to remember that the puppy owner must remain the alpha during these training sessions and as such, your puppy will look to you for protection. Do not let people play rough with your puppy. Do not let them pick him up high off the ground, hang the pup over their shoulders, or hold the puppy suspended in space in front of their face while the pup's feet hang in the air. This is frightening for the pup because he has no footing and feels as if he is completely out of control. A frightening experience for your puppy is a negative experience and you want socializing to be all positive. So protect your puppy from these types of negative experiences as they do leave an impression.



*Warterr's Zolo von der Jack (Wesson)*

It is especially important to supervise the socialization of children. Children love pups and just naturally want to pick them up and carry them around like a rag doll, but this is uncomfortable interaction for the young pup. Do not allow children to chase your pup around the room or get too excited and yell and scream. Have the child sit down on the floor, allowing the puppy to come to the child. Explain to the child not to make sudden movements that make the puppy uneasy. Children will be able to increase their activity level around the puppy as he grows in confidence after a few weeks of social training. When your pup reaches the age of twelve weeks and has had at least three sets of puppy shots, then he can begin to leave the house for more advanced socializing. At this point, you want to expose the puppy to a wide variety of environments where he can meet many strangers. If permissible, consider taking him to your place of employment for a day. Take him to a public park to meet people. Take him on daily walks around your neighborhood and introduce him to your neighbors. Tell people you are working on socializing and ask them to come meet your puppy. They will be glad to know that you are committed to training your dog to be friendly. Have a cook-out and invite a number of guests to your house for the occasion. Take your puppy to a tailgating party prior to a football game. Bring your puppy wherever there are people and your pup would be safe and welcomed. Your puppy can be both friendly and protective but it takes proper training. You have to begin at an early age or it will be forever too late in many cases.