



WELCOME FETCHIN' VOLUNTEERS AND FOSTERS!

Fetchin' Retrievers Rescue Waggin' Wednesday Zoom Social

Puppy Raising 101

PUPPY BASICS

- Puppies have their mother's antibodies until ~6 months of age
- It is important to watch for and be prepared for **Fear Periods** - 1 usually around 8-12 weeks and 1 usually in adolescence (6-14 months), lasts 2-4 weeks
 - Fear Periods are a normal part of brain development where puppies are much more susceptible to forming lasting impressions in response to environmental stimuli
- **Littermate Syndrome** – When 2 or more puppies of the same age (not necessarily just littermates) are raised together, they have a high likelihood of exhibiting Littermate Syndrome.
 - They are less likely to bond to humans and show increased incidences of behavioral issues like aggression, separation anxiety, hyperactivity and inability to settle
 - These puppy pairs go one of two ways, either one or both is chronically codependent cannot operate independent of the other or the constant state of emotional dysregulation causes them to become irreversibly and intensely aggressive towards each other. Most often one or both of the dogs need rehomed.
 - Always wait a period of time between raising puppies. The recommendation is around 18 months or more. Most often both dogs will continue to exhibit extreme reactivity to strangers or strange dogs.
- **Nutrition** –
 - Ensure food is specifically for puppies to ensure adequate support for growth. Talk to your vet about recommended calorie intake based on age, not just what it says on a bag of food.
 - Do not use home made diets or commercial diets that are not formulated by a vet nutritionist. Incomplete diets and nutritional deficiencies can lead to lifelong physical issues and delayed development
 - Avoid grain-free foods/foods that include legumes and pea protein due to concerns linking these ingredients to heart failure
 - https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Selecting-a-pet-food-for-your-pet-updated-2021_WSAVA-Global-Nutrition-Toolkit.pdf
 - <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/dilated-cardiomyopathy-dogs-update/>

PUPPY DEVELOPMENT STAGES

Puppies from ethical breeders get extensive exposure in the critical period of learning between 0 and 3 weeks and socialization up until they go to their new home between 8-12 weeks

Lots of training and critical learning can happen in this period:

- Puppy Culture raising protocols/Early Neurological Stimulation
- Scent exposure
- Outings/car rides
- Handling
- Crate training
- Potty training

Neonatal 0-3 weeks– Dependent on Mother

- Cannot see, hear, bark, support body weight, regulate body temperature well
- Can smell, feel body pressure, and grunt/cry

Transitional 2-4 weeks

- Puppies' ears and eyes begin to open
- Begin to walk and become aware of surroundings
- Begin to walk and play, bark and growl
- Puppy gruel may be introduced

PUPPY DEVELOPMENT STAGES (CONT)

Socialization 3-12 weeks

- Puppies get first vaccines and dewormer around 6 weeks
- Housetraining and crate training begins
- Weaning happens around 7 weeks
- Exposure to new things is critical during this period, even before shot schedule is complete. Take puppies places and let them watch and smell while being carried or carted
- Set boundaries with puppies and ensure positive experiences with things they will experience throughout life
 - Grooming and full body handling
- Training priorities are focused around impulse control
 - Waiting for permission
 - Able to disengage from playing, sniffing, and chewing

Juvenile 3-6 months

- Teething – puppy teeth fall out between 3 and 6 months
- Sexual maturity usually happens by 6 months
- Puppies begin to explore the environment in earnest

Adolescence 6-18 months (large breeds up to 2 years)

- Females are usually spayed after their first heat (spaying is always preferable to a pregnancy)
- Recent studies have been aimed at the association between early spay/neuter and certain cancers. Current recommendations are to wait to spay/neuter until full physical development (final closure of growth plates in the bones) around 18 months – 2 years
- Short attention span, hyperfocused on the environment instead of handler, “forget” things they know, test boundaries

SOME THINGS TO TRAIN WITH YOUR PUPPY

- Surfaces – grass, rock, metal, astroturf, leaves, concrete, unstable/wobbly surfaces, snow/sand, wet and dry
- Sounds – vacuum cleaner, babies and kids, trash trucks, construction sounds, fireworks
- People – young and old, loud and quiet, hats, blankets, sunglasses, walkers/wheelchairs
 - How to be calm and polite for pets and attention
- Wading and water
- Waiting to go in and out of doors
- Going through spaces – things overhead, tight squeezes, over obstacles
- Neutrality to food – do not set puppies up to learn to steal or lunge for food or items
- Calm around small animals
- Engagement/attention on handler

Other

- DO NOT force or put pressure on puppies to engage with things they are reluctant to approach or show fear of
- Exercise – general rule is 5 minutes of activity per month of age. IE 4 month old puppy should aim for about 20 min or less of play/activity in one go before taking a break
 - Many people begin intense exercise with their adolescent dogs before they are fully grown. Remember that a 1 year old dog is still a puppy! Save those long runs and biking until they are older
- Recommended reading – The Puppy Bible by Arrowsmith and Smith, Puppy Brain by Kerry Nichols, The Focused Puppy by Deborah Jones and Judy Keller, The Other End of the Leash by Patricia McConnell

CONSISTENCY WILL GET YOU EVERYWHERE

- Routines build confidence
- Schedules will help puppies learn potty training faster
- Firm boundaries for behavior from the beginning make for successful adult dogs
 - Do you want your adult dog chewing, pulling, jumping? Do not allow your puppy to practice these behaviors
- Supervision can mean everything
 - Unsupervised puppies are more likely to practice eating things, chewing on things, practicing unwanted behaviors like digging
 - Confine your puppy to a safe area when you cannot supervise. During supervision, use a tether to keep puppy near you and practice leash work. Close doors and use baby gates to keep a puppy in your vicinity
- What does your dog need to know to be confident in life?
 - Vet visits
 - Practice restraining your puppy, eye, ear, and mouth checks
 - Grooming – blow dryers, brushes, trimmers, scissors, nail clippers and grinders (Kikopup youtube for How To)
 - Separation/isolation

BEHAVIOR HOW TOS

If you assume all behavior happens for a reason and understand that dogs use trial and error to get what they want, how would it change your view of your dog's behavior?

What are they trying to get? Is this behavior getting them the BEST results for what they want (eg., barking, destruction for attention). How would I rather them ask for what they want? Am I reinforcing the behaviors I don't want to see by responding to the undesired behaviors more consistently than the desired behaviors?

■ Jumping

- Yes, all the internet tricks about ignoring jumping are true BUT you have to do the second step, which is rewarding an alternate behavior that would get your attention.
- [Instagram – Empowered Puppy Program](#)

■ Mouthing

- Dogs experience the world through their mouths, so it's unsurprising that they explore the world mouth first.
- Don't overreact
- Find something else appealing to your dog and play with it/encourage them to engage with the appropriate thing
- If mouthing continues, remove yourself from the puppy's access and wait for calm then reward. Most mouthing and biting happens when dogs are overstimulated. Consistently ensure that teeth on skin contact means that all interaction stops for at least a few seconds. Make sure you acknowledge and reward a return to calm. Like jumping, only performing the disengagement from undesired behavior does not help form alternate behaviors. If a dog things you are leaving when they are excited, they may double down in frustration to physically force you to stay.