

Socializing Your Puppy or Adult Dog

- Some dogs love everybody like a long-lost friend.
- Some dogs are fine with their own family (and perhaps a few family friends- but aren't so keen on strangers).
- Some dogs are fine with people of one sex -- but not the other sex.
- Some dogs are fine with adults -- but not with children.
- Some dogs are suspicious of certain physical features. For example, a person wearing a hat, or dark sunglasses, or a beard, or a uniform.
- Some dogs dislike ALL strangers.
- And some dogs basically ignore strangers

Your Dogs Reaction to Other Dogs

- Some dogs are friendly with virtually every other dog.
- Some dogs are good with other dogs they know well -- but not with strange dogs.
- Some dogs are good with dogs of the opposite sex -- but not the same sex.
- Some dogs are tolerant with puppies -- but not with other adult dogs.
- Some dogs are fussy about the SIZE of the other dog. They may dislike dogs larger than themselves. Or they may dislike dogs smaller than themselves.
- Some dogs are fussy about the BREED of the other dog. They may be fine with their own breed, but dislike other breeds. Or they may be fine with other breeds, but not with their own!
- Some dogs are aggressive or timid with virtually every other dog.
- And some dogs just ignore other dogs.

A Dog's attitude toward people and other animals comes from his BREED

His breed

In some breeds, the **GENES** for temperament traits such as friendliness, suspiciousness, aggression, etc. are so strong and so prevalent throughout the breed that it is highly likely that your dog will inherit them.

For example, most Golden Retrievers inherit genes for friendliness toward everyone. Most Chihuahuas inherit genes for suspiciousness toward strangers and other dogs. Most Pit Bull Terriers inherit genes for aggression toward other dogs. Most Borzois inherit chasing instincts toward smaller dogs.

His parents

Whatever his breed, if your dog's **parents** had a particular attitude toward people and other dogs, your dog will inherit THEIR genes and will probably also mimic THEIR behavior. So if your dog's breed is usually friendly, but his particular parents were suspicious, he may end up suspicious. If his breed is usually suspicious, but his particular parents was friendly, he may end up friendly.

How long he was left with his mother and siblings

If removed **before seven weeks old**, a puppy will not learn essential canine social signals such as **bite inhibition**, which are taught by his mother and siblings during the first **seven weeks** of life.

Puppies brought home before age of seven weeks very often become mouthy, nippy, resistant to being handled or aggressive and/or fearful with other dogs.

On the other hand, if a puppy lives with his mother or siblings for **too LONG** (more than 12 weeks), his position in the "pecking order" may be so established that he will always be inclined to act **dominant** (if he was at the top) or **submissive** (if he was at the bottom) toward people or other dogs.

His early experiences

Obviously, if your dog who was frightened by another person or dog early in his life, or if he acted inappropriately toward other people or dogs during his early life **and wasn't corrected properly for this inappropriate behavior**, you can expect him to be aggressive or fearful.

How well you socialize him

Socializing means getting your dog used to people, other dogs, and the big wide world in general.

Puppy socialization has the most dramatic effect on how your dog turns out. You must get your puppy out into the world between 7 weeks old and 6 months old.

Adolescent socialization is also critical. Adolescence begins between 6 and 9 months old, and ends between 1 and 3 years old. Larger breeds have the longer adolescent periods. Just as in people, adolescence in dogs can be an awkward time of change and upheaval. A teenage dog's attitude toward strangers and other dogs may change from week to week, even from day to day.

Adult socialization may not be able to change your dog's **attitude** toward people and other dogs, but it can control his **behavior** so that he doesn't ACT aggressive or afraid.

You can NOT change your dog's breed. You can't change his genetic makeup which he inherited. You can NOT put him back with his mother and siblings for that critical seven week period. WHAT YOU CAN DO is socialize him properly, now that you have him!