



Raising a Litter 101.

Date Born: _____

This document is to help raise stable, confident, pups/dogs that people don't surrender, with as little behavioral issues as possible – most of this is preventative care. Much of this information will come into play as you transition each pup into their next home. Keeping patterns the same and familiar through transitions and into the next family, will help the new family, and help the pup to avoid anyone's unnecessary frustrations. Educating the new family on stress-free transitions is the responsibility of the puppy-rearer.

Puppies/Dogs/Humans learn by doing things **on their own because voluntary actions become a habit**. With all these recommendations, we never force anything, all patterns and behaviors have to happen at the comfortability and pace of each individual pup, to gain genuine confidence.

1. Basic care for mom

- a. Nutrition is crucial for first 2-3 weeks postpartum
 - i. Eating higher protein, "all life" or on a puppy food
- b. Mom to get extra love and one/one time with you

2. Raising puppies

- a. Right from the start and every day.....
 - i. Cleaning
 - ii. Washing dirty toys, rotating toys
 - iii. Handling pups everyday.
 - iv. Thinking ahead about changing up the environments for optimal socialization

b. First 3 weeks

- i. Not moving much; it's more taking care of mom and lots of cleaning.

c. 3 weeks (date:_____)

- i. Sequence of separation/anti-separation anxiety training
 - 1. Coincides with eruption of **teeth** - mother will start actively to reject her puppies while in their presence
 - a. *Let mom leave and come back to pups at her will. She can't be stuck* – she will start to physically remove herself from the puppies but often remain within sight often by climbing on to something out of their reach
 - 2. House training starts now (rectangle pen/room that gets bigger

and bigger as they grow)

- a. $\frac{1}{3}$ place to potty, $\frac{2}{3}$ place to eat, play, sleep

d. **3/4 weeks**

- i. Puppies are curious and tend to approach people and investigate things, be more exploratory.
- ii. By 4-weeks of age the puppies should have as much room as possible to roam, explore, and interact with all types of surfaces, textures, novel items, toys, and be exposed to anything they may encounter in life, *all without being overwhelmed*.
- iii. Keep area clean
 - 1. So that walking in pee/poop isn't normal
- iv. Socialization & imprinting starts – so make sure everything is safe.
 - 1. Rotate stimulating items
 - a. Training: let's make sure there's no such thing as a strange noise, or strange smell
 - b. We want their environment **not** to be sterile
 - 2. Rotating toys (multiples of the same, or just ALOT)
 - a. Rotating 3-4x/day
 - i. Anything is a toy as long as it's safe - Toys must be indestructible- Anything the dog considers fun can be a toy; toys must be nontoxic, large enough that they cannot be swallowed, destroyed or ingested.
 - ii. Natural rotation because of cleaning pee/poo
 - b. Teaching pups to play with toy/tug, not chew each other
 - c. Pair fun, low-key soundtracks while they play
 - d. Soft classical while rest
 - i. Anything they can explore
 - 1. Different sounds, textures
 - 3. Imprinting phase (safety first, not overwhelm)
 - a. Things to explore, people to visit with, car rides, wagon around the neighborhood, city noises, etc
 - i. Important NOT to overwhelm at this time, as that will create fear later (sweet spot age)
 - b. Want to teach pups things other than just other pups that look like them
- v. FEEDING. Introduce wet/soft foods
 - 1. Need 50% more bowls than there are puppies - (important sharing behaviors, also prevention for resource guarding)
 - a. ex) 6 puppies, 9 bowls
 - Offering 3x/day, pairing with a song to begin
 - 2. Supervised feedings (we want pups not to think they're going to leave hungry - and not compete) – to cut down on aggression/fast eating
 - a. If puppy finishes first
 - i. If they bump another puppy out, then we show the 2nd pup that there's more in ANOTHER bowl.
 - ii. If pup finishes quickly, if we can redirect them to a non-occupied full bowl, this is ideal, eat a little and then remove gently

e. **5 weeks** (date:_____)

- i. Mom will visually remove herself more
- ii. Start having future owners involved in puppies lives
- iii. Pups have adult levels of learning
- iv. More rambunctious and wrestling
- v. Need more and more toys to explore is SO important
 - 1. Mouths on toys, not on each other is the goal
 - 2. Climbing stuff, Boxes/tunnels, Keep a kennel with a door open, so they get used to going in
 - 3. Can introduce a non-breaking (acrylic) mirror
- vi. The more things they can explore on their owner - the more confident they'll be later
- vii. Get puppies used to wearing collars
 - 1. Supervised so they don't get caught playing, etc.
 - a. Cat breakaway collars is an option

f. 6 weeks (date: _____)

- i. Mom will be writing out the advertisements herself ;)
- ii. Puppies will become more cautious of novel things and new experiences as they approach the "fear period" - 8-10 weeks. During this impressionable time, the puppies become hypersensitive to negative experiences.
- iii. 20 minutes a day, every puppy should have one on one with humans, having pleasant experiences at a new place every day

g. 7-8 weeks (date: _____)

- i. Start to teach retrieve with each pup individually
- ii. Place puppies into new homes (Puppies will be 49 days on: _____)

h. 8+ weeks

- i. Socialization to families/humans is essential
 - 1. Not other dogs
 - 2. Puppies role model should be a human, not the older dog

More examples of socializations:

(Have the puppies been exposed to, but not overwhelmed by)

Weekly/daily:

Children of all ages, Adults of all types, Other family pets, Handling & grooming, Roller skates, skate boards, bicycles, Baby strollers, Wheel chairs, Trash cans, Car rides, Umbrellas, canes

Household noises; vacuums, toasters, oven timers, radio, television, washer and dryers, hair dryers, power tools, etc...

Regular positive interaction with the puppies by adults and supervised children are so important. But, the puppies must be protected from overwhelming experiences. Be sure children are not allowed to annoy or bother the puppies – which will make it more difficult for the puppy to be around children because of past negative experiences later. Classroom visits to your home with sitting children are always wonderful for both parties.