

## Stages of Puppy Development

- Newborn (1 to 2 weeks). Puppies nurse and sleep. Eyes open at 10-14days, ears later. Start to crawl and explore.
- Transitional (3 weeks). Puppies begin signs of independence—more exploration and reaction to environment; start sampling solid food.
- Socialization (4 to 10 weeks). Critical period of socialization between people and puppies. Try to urinate and defecate outside sleeping area. More independence; weaning between 6-8 weeks old.
- Juvenile (10 weeks to puberty). Puppies can be taught basic obedience commands. Housetraining begins.
- Puberty (approximately 6 months). Spay or neuter.
- Adult (puberty to death). Independent, responsive; potentially receptive to all forms of training.

## Puppy Class Schedule

### Week One

Begin your class by introducing the puppies to one another. Make sure all puppies are on leash and carefully monitor their activity to avoid nipping or any aggression. Ask owners to hold and pet other puppies. Allow the puppies to explore new dog scents on the other owners. Be alert and sympathetic to any puppy that may be apprehensive in this situation. Keep sessions 20 minutes long or less.

### Week Two

Ask the puppy to come. Praise profusely as it approaches and offer a piece of kibble when it arrives. Back up, then do it again—and again and again. Then say “Puppy, Sit” and slowly move a piece of kibble from in front of the puppy’s nose to between its eyes. As the puppy raises its nose to sniff, it will lower its rear and sit. If the puppy jumps up, you’re holding the food too high. When your puppy sits, say “Good dog” and offer the kibble.

### Week Three

Say “Puppy, down” and lower a piece of kibble from in front of the puppy’s nose to between its forepaws. As the puppy lowers its head to follow the food, it will usually lie down. If your puppy stands, hide the kibble in your palm until it lies down. Then say “Good dog” and offer the food. Always complete kindergarten class with fun and play.