

Dog Training by PJ

5303 Louie Lane #19, Reno, Nevada 89511

www.dogtrainingbybj.com

775-828-0748

The Benefits of Early Puppy Training as Early as 7-8 Weeks of Age and Before the Age of 15 Weeks

Did you know, your puppy began even before you brought him or her home. Learning begins early, from the moment of birth. Handling this puppy is part of the learning experience. So, when your puppy finally comes to live with you, you can begin teaching and training good manners and habits immediately. Your puppy's mind is like a sponge waiting to absorb information. At Dog Training by PJ, we encourage you to begin training our puppy as early as possible, and at least at 10 weeks of age. With early puppy training classes you can begin teaching your puppy good habits, rather than have to retrain or break bad habits when the puppy becomes the adolescent dog at 6 or 8 months of age. It is always easier to teach good manners early, than to undo an unwanted habit or manner.

Remember, your puppy is always practicing manners and learning habit, good or bad. We know what happens when practice occurs, "practice makes perfect." So, why not teach a good habit rather than try to undo the undesirable or bad habit.

For many years, it was popular to wait until a puppy was 5, 6 or 8 months of age to begin training. However, with the acceptance of positive, humane, training methods it is possible to begin a puppy as early as 8 weeks of age.

A good puppy class will teach you how to teach and instruct your puppy to sit, lay down, come, walk on leash without pulling, how to eliminate puppy mouthiness, and to how to greet people without jumping on them. You will learn how to teach your puppy what are appropriate toys to chew and you'll learn all about house-training your puppy and more.

In addition and possibly the most important aspect of puppy class, is the socialization your puppy will gain. It is crucial your puppy be socialized to have only positive experiences with strangers and with other dogs before the age of 16 weeks. Good socialization helps to reduce cases of separation anxiety, unwanted barking, destructive chewing, digging, unwanted elimination, aggression, fear or anxiety issues, and gives owners the tools to deal with handling, grooming and visits to the veterinarian. A good puppy class will allow time for puppies to meet other puppies and people in class.

Aside from socialization and preventing unwanted behaviors, puppy class will enhance your relationship with your new puppy. Positive, humane, training is another way to be effective when communicating with your puppy. An additional benefit to you and your puppy is you will have fun together. Training will help your puppy become the "family member" and companion you had in mind when you first brought him or her home.

Additionally, training will help reduce the chances that your puppy, as her or she enters adolescence, that your puppy will not be surrendered to shelter or re-homed because "the puppy is simply out of control." Training does reduce the number of surrendered dogs, helps teach good manners and behaviors, and is a nice chance to learn how dogs think, learning theory - classical and operant conditioning.

Often times, owners are discouraged from enrolling in an early puppy class, because of infectious diseases or encouraged to not allow the puppy to "go anywhere." At Dog Training by PJ, our facility is an indoor facility, sealed concrete floors that are regularly cleaned and disinfected. We pride ourselves in feeling comfortable we are able to provide you and your puppy with a safe environment for teaching your puppy. We are often asked about the vaccinations, and feel it is important to have all the facts before new owners make critical decisions regarding their new puppy's safety, health and well being. Therefore, Dog Training by PJ, wishes to provide the following open letter from noted Veterinary Behaviorist R.K. Anderson DVM. Please read the following information, share and discuss this open letter with your veterinarian and make an informed decision for the well being of your new puppy. Following Dr. R.K. Anderson's letter on vaccinations and socialization is additional resources to assist you and your veterinarian in regards to socialization and puppy classes.

PUPPY VACCINATIONS AND SOCIALIZATION SHOULD GO TOGETHER

TO: My Colleagues in Veterinary Medicine:

Common questions I receive from puppy owners, dog trainers and veterinarians concern: 1) what is the most favorable age or period of time when puppies learn best? 2) what are the health implications of my advice that veterinarians and trainers should offer socialization programs for puppies starting at 8 to 9 weeks of age.

Puppies begin learning at birth and their brains appear to be particularly responsive to learning and retaining experiences that are encountered during the first 13 to 16 weeks after birth. This means that breeders, new puppy owners, veterinarians, trainers and behaviorists have a responsibility to assist in providing these learning/socialization experiences with other puppies/dogs, with children/adults and with various environmental situations during this optimal period from birth to 16 weeks.

Many veterinarians are making this early socialization and learning program part of a total wellness plan for breeders and new owners of puppies during the first 16 weeks of a puppy's life -- the first 7-8 weeks with the breeder and the next 8 weeks with the new owners. This socialization program should enroll puppies from 8 to 12 weeks of age as a key part of any preventive medicine program to improve the bond between pets and their people and keep dogs as valued members of the family for 12 to 18 years.

To take full advantage of this early special learning period, many veterinarians recommend that new owners take their puppies to puppy socialization classes, beginning at 8 to 9 weeks of age. At this age they should have (and can be required to have) received a minimum of their first series of vaccines for protection against infectious diseases. This provides the basis for increasing immunity by further repeated exposure to these antigens either through natural exposure in small doses or artificial exposure with vaccines during the next 8 to 12 weeks. In addition the owner and people offering puppy socialization should take precautions to have the environment and the participating puppies as free of natural exposure as possible by good hygiene and caring by careful instructors and owners.

Dog Training by PJ

5303 Louie Lane #19, Reno, Nevada 89511

www.dogtrainingbybj.com

775-828-0748

Experience and epidemiologic data support the relative safety and lack of transmission of disease in these puppy socialization classes over the past 10 years in many parts of the United States. In fact; the risk of a dog dying because of infection with distemper or parvo disease is far less than the much higher risk of a dog dying (euthanasia) because of a behavior problem. Many veterinarians are now offering new puppy owners puppy socialization classes in their hospitals or nearby training facilities in conjunction with trainers and behaviorists because they want socialization and training to be very important parts of a wellness plan for every puppy. We need to recognize that this special sensitive period for learning is the best opportunity we have to influence behavior for dogs and the most important and longest lasting part of a total wellness plan.

Are there risks? Yes. But 10 years of good experience and data, with few exceptions, offers veterinarians the opportunity to generally recommend early socialization and training classes, beginning when puppies are 8 to 9 weeks of age. However, we always follow a veterinarian's professional judgment, in individual cases or situations, where special circumstances warrant further immunization for a special puppy before starting such classes. During any period of delay for puppy classes, owners should begin a program of socialization with children and adults, outside their family, to take advantage of this special period in a puppy's life.

Robert K. Anderson DVM
Diplomate ACVB and ACVPM
Professor and Director Emeritus, Animal Behavior Clinic and
Center to Study Human/Animal Relationships and Environments
University of Minnesota
1666 Coffman Street, Suite 128, Falcon Heights, MN 55108
Phone 612-644-7400
FAX 612-644-4262