



Supplementary guidance for dog breeders on the socialisation of puppies

**About:**

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the **Responsible Dog Breeding Guidelines**.

This guidance applies to those keeping dogs for breeding and should be consulted to help them meet their duty of care. Breeders should ensure puppies have a good start in life – they are well socialised and behaviourally healthy – so that they can fulfil their potential to live a good quality of life in their new homes.

Competent authorities and inspecting veterinarians, may wish to use this guidance to verify whether breeders are keeping puppies in suitable environments that provide them with experiences, to promote their behavioural development and safeguard their welfare.

Breeders should regularly update their knowledge to keep pace with developments and where available, seek expert advice from a certified veterinary behaviourist or applied animal behaviourist. Reputable behaviourists may be accessed via veterinarians or other professional associations.

Suggested review of the guidelines:

To keep pace with the evidence-base that underpins best practice for responsible breeding and care of puppies and dogs, the content of these supplementary guidelines should be reviewed in three years (2025) or earlier if necessary. For updates and more information view: **Eurogroup for Animals Cats & Dogs**.

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1. Introduction

For puppies to become happy confident pets, they must have positive, frequent, and varied experiences with people, other animals, the domestic home, and external environment during their development (Section 3, provides guidance on socialisation and habituation of puppies).

Puppy development begins in utero. The way bitches are kept and cared for, and consequently their welfare state during pregnancy has a long-term influence on puppy development into adulthood.

Puppies are particularly sensitive to learning about their environment and relationships with people when they are very young (3-12 weeks of age).

Without the right type of experiences during this sensitive period, puppies may grow up to be fearful and be predisposed to developing behaviour problems as adults.

Puppies must be kept with their litter and mothers until they are fully weaned, at least until they are 8 weeks old (unless veterinary advice suggests otherwise).

It is of critical importance that breeders take responsibility for positively shaping the early experience of puppies to prepare the puppies for life with people in a home environment.

This document provides supplementary guidance on providing puppies with the right types of experience they need to become confident adult dogs that can happily live with people in a home environment.

2. Puppy development

Puppies grow rapidly through relatively short periods of development, characterised below by puppy age, and the appearance of physical and behavioural milestones (Table 1). The timings of these milestones vary between individuals in the same litter, influenced by breed, genetics, sex, maternal and environmental factors that give rise to considerable variation between litters.

There are five periods of puppy development (Table 1): The prenatal period (before birth, gestation: 63 days – range: 58-72 days); the neonatal period (birth-to-2-weeks); the transitional period (2-to-3 weeks); the socialisation period (3-to-12 weeks); and the juvenile period (12 weeks-to sexual maturity).

Identifying and understanding the stages of development can help guide the timing of different and varied experiences necessary to prepare puppies for life in a home environment, to ensure puppies grow into happy, confident pets.



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Table 1 Overview of the stages of puppy development from birth to adolescence (summarised from Dietz et al 2018; Landsberg et al 2012).

| Development stages | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Neonatal: birth-to-2 weeks | Transitional: 2-to-3weeks | Socialisation: 3-to-12 weeks | Juvenile: 12 weeks-to-sexual maturity (adulthood) |
| Sensory, physical & behavioural milestones | | | |
| <p><i>Born completely dependent on their mother:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puppies are blind, deaf, unable to control their own body temperature & cannot toilet independently. - Puppies are sensitive to touch, pain, and temperature; they can detect certain odours & tastes. - Puppies can lift their head & 'right' themselves, but movement is limited to 'wriggling' short distances. - Time is mostly spent sleeping & nursing. - Eyes and ears gradually open from 10 days of age (eyes) & 14 days of age (ears). | <p><i>Rapid improvement in neurological and behavioural development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Toileting increasingly becomes under voluntary control. - Puppies begin to crawl forwards & backward, start to stand, perform simple walking movements, & wag their tails. - Puppies begin to interact with one another. | <p><i>Rapid learning facilitated by maturation of the sensory and physical capabilities leads to development of social behaviour:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puppy brain growth is rapid up to 7 weeks of age. - Senses are developed and fully functional by 4 weeks of age. - Learning rapidly increases through experience - puppies associate social and non-social objects with positive or negative emotions. - Toileting is voluntary & by 3 weeks of age puppies start to choose specific areas away from their bedding for elimination. - First puppy teeth appear by 3-4 weeks of age & all puppy teeth are present by 6-8 weeks of age. - Weaning starts at 3-4 weeks of age & completes by 6-8 weeks of age. - Normal sitting & standing develops by 4 weeks of age. - Puppies play with their mother & littermates; play-specific behaviours and expressions develop. - Exploration of their environment and new objects increases up to 5 weeks of age. - After 8 weeks of age puppies become more fearful of new experiences. | <p><i>Continued physical growth and consolidation of social learning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Puppies grow & refine their motor skills. - Puppy teeth are lost from 12-16 weeks of age & all adult teeth are present by 6 months of age. - Learning capacity is fully developed by 12 weeks of age; speed of learning slows by 4 months of age. - Exploration of environment increases, but puppies become increasingly fearful of new experiences unless their learning during the socialisation period is repeated and positively reinforced. - Onset of sexual maturity is highly variable and may be influenced by breed and other factors. - Toy or small breeds can reach sexual maturity from 6 months. - Large or giant breeds can reach sexual maturity after 18 months of age. - Social maturity happens much later by 18-24 months of age. |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Puppies are particularly sensitive to human contact and new experiences. | |
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2.1. Sensitive period for socialisation

For a short period of time during their development, puppies are particularly sensitive to learning about the environment in which they live, which includes other animals, people, sounds, sights, and objects that they will encounter in later life. During this short window (from 3-to-12 weeks of age), known as the (early) socialisation period, the puppy's brain is developing at a rapid rate (Dietz et al 2018). What the puppy learns about their environment, through experience, forms associations in the brain, and this has long term consequences for their behavioural development into adulthood. Puppies are particularly receptive to experiences that they find positive, learning to accept them as 'normal', non-threatening and rewarding. They are equally sensitive to negative experiences, learning to avoid anything they find frightening or painful. Towards the end of the socialisation period, the puppy's brain becomes less sensitive to forming new associations, with puppies becoming increasingly fearful when encountering new experiences. Accepting new experiences after this time becomes increasingly more difficult.

Providing puppies' positive experiences with other animals, people, the household environment, and outside world, during the socialisation period helps teach them to accept living in a home with people as 'normal'. Puppies that have been socialised¹ (with people and other animals) and habituated² (to the household and external environment) are more likely to develop into confident, friendly adults that can cope with future challenges (Landsberg et al 2012; Dietz et al 2018; Pluijmakers et al 2020). However, puppies that have been inadequately socialised to people and do not have experience of physically enriched early rearing environments are predisposed to develop fear- or aggression-related behavioural problems that negatively impacts their quality of life (Dietz et al 2018; Pluijmakers et al 2020).

Learning about humans happens most efficiently and predictably through regular, positive interaction during the sensitive period (Landsberg et al 2012). Indeed, a recent report has demonstrated that puppies who have regular, positive contact with different people during the socialisation period become confident around people as adults (Pluijmakers et al 2020). Puppies reared in barren environments, deprived of social and physical stimuli, develop extreme fear responses, become highly reactive and they display limited ability to learn (Pluijmakers et al 2020).

It is recommended that puppies are socialised with people early in their development between 3-12 weeks old. The more opportunities a puppy has for positive experience with different people the more confident the puppy is likely to be around people (Landsberg et al 2012; Pluijmakers et al 2020). It is particularly important to repeat positive experiences with people and the environment into adulthood. Puppies that have been well socialised up to 12 weeks of age, who subsequently lack continuation of experience with different people and the external environment, will not have their prior learning reinforced - they will regress, becoming fearful again (reviewed in Landsberg et al 2012; Pluijmakers et al 2020).

Whilst socialisation refers to the process by which puppies learn how to interact with others (animals and people), they must also learn that a variety of sounds, sights and objects present in a home and the outside world are non-threatening. This type of learning is known as habituation and it describes the process of familiarisation, where puppies 'get used' to (their response wanes over time) the different aspects of the environment which they encounter in daily life. Whilst this process happens more naturally in a home environment, in a breeding establishment breeders must give puppies regular experience of the different aspects the puppy will typically encounter when in a home.

¹ Socialisation is the process by which an animal learns how to interact with other dogs, animals, and people, and they develop appropriate social behaviour towards others.

² Habituation describes the waning of a response with time when the puppy repeatedly experiences a stimulus. This kind of learning is important for familiarising a puppy with aspects of its' care and the environment which are non-threatening, to which it is not expected to react (e.g., typical household sounds such as the radio or television, wearing a collar).

3. Guidance on socialisation and early experiences

3.1 General guidance³

Breeders should have a socialisation and habituation plan (Table 2, Section 3.2) in place and incorporate it into daily care routines to ensure puppies are adequately exposed to the right experiences early on. Section 3.2 provides further detail on timetabling of different experiences throughout the puppy's development (see Table 2).

- The plan should be appropriate to each puppy's age, stage of behavioural development and individual needs.
- The plan should help to guide and keep track of what to do and when, so that puppies are adequately socialised (Table 2, Section 3.2).
- Use appropriate infection control and safety measures⁴ when introducing puppies to new experiences.
- Both social and physical enrichment must be provided in the breeding environment to prevent the development of aggressive, and fearful behaviour and to improve trainability as puppies grow into adults.
- The positive effects of socialisation increase with the number of activities provided by the breeder – the more frequent and varied the activities, the greater the positive impact on puppies' behavioural development.

Ensure that the bitch and her puppies can cope with interactions

- The breeder should establish a positive and trusting relationship with the bitch prior to whelping, to facilitate socialisation and habituation of young puppies to people and the home.
- Puppies are more confident during socialisation and habituation in the presence of their littermates and the bitch. Their learning is facilitated by these important social relationships.
- Puppies can become overwhelmed when they are exposed to too many things too quickly. Carefully plan first introductions, to ensure they are positive and not overwhelming.
- Start interactions slowly and gradually allow puppies to interact at their own pace.
- The behavioural response of the puppy⁵ should guide interactions. The puppy's response and progress should be recorded in the plan and a copy of the plan should be provided to new owners at rehoming.
- Puppies should not continue to be exposed to aspects they find fearful on the assumption that they will 'get used to it'⁶, this approach is likely to exacerbate their fear. Instead, puppies should be desensitised⁷ to aspects they may initially find frightening.

Regularly and appropriately handle puppies to habituate them to different types of handling and to socialise them with people.

- Handle each puppy gently, for short periods of time initially, gradually increasing duration and type of handling as the puppy ages. Puppies handled early, for 5 minutes, a day from day 3–

³ [Responsible Dog Breeding Guidelines](#) (2020).

⁴ [Responsible Dog Breeding Guidelines](#) (2020).

⁵ Dr Sophia Yin: [Body Language of fear in dogs poster](#); RSPCA [Understanding dog behaviour](#).

⁶ Flooding describes methods or situations that provoke extreme fear from which the animal has no escape which may lead to panic. For example, a highly fearful dog restrained for veterinary examination. This reinforces the experience of fear during veterinary visits. THIS METHOD MUST NEVER BE USED.

⁷ In this instance, desensitisation refers to the systematic pairing of a positive reward directly with an uncomfortable experience to reduce any associated fear or anxiety. This usually starts at a lower intensity so that it does not induce any fear, gradually increasing intensity within limits that the animal can cope with. An example would be playing a socialisation soundtrack at low volume every time puppies are fed, and gradually increasing the volume over several weeks so that puppies can experience the 'sound' of a vacuum cleaner at its natural volume without reacting fearfully to the sound.



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to-day 21 were less fearful and reactive at 8 weeks of age, compared to puppies that had not received early handling by people (Gazzano et al 2008).

- Handling should include stroking the puppy in preferred areas around the head and along the back to the tip of the tail.
- These positive interactions should be interspersed with picking the puppy up and examining its' eyes, ears, feet and underneath the tail - the types of handling that are critical for providing good animal care in the future.
- Handling should stop immediately if the puppy or the bitch become distressed.
- Young puppies (up to 2-3 weeks of age) should be handled by the breeder/main caretaker, and as they age (from 3 weeks), puppies should gradually be introduced to new people. Early handling should occur in the presence of the bitch and littermates.
- Puppies should be handled by at least 10 different people, including adults (males and females of different ages and appearance) and (supervised) children of different ages. Research indicates that the more people puppies experience during the socialisation period the better – preferably 20-30 people (Pluijmakers et al 2020).
- Children must be supervised during interactions with puppies, as rough or over excited handling can result in puppies becoming distressed or fearful.
- Veterinary advice should be sought on the appropriate biosecurity measures⁸ to be followed by new people entering the facility during this time.
- Handle each puppy frequently (little and often) throughout the day.
- As a guide, interactions with people should increase in frequency and duration as the puppy ages (e.g., at least 4 times per day lasting up to 30 minutes). This socialisation is in addition to human interaction that occurs during normal husbandry events (e.g., feeding and cleaning); these events represent important learning opportunities for puppies, and they must be a positive experience for puppies.

Provide puppies with enough space and distinct areas to toilet away from their beds, feeding areas, and areas used for play.

- Provide puppies with regular access to different types of floor and walking surfaces so they do not develop strong preferences or aversions that will interfere with toileting outside the home.
- Toilet training should start before puppies are 8 weeks of age. From 3 weeks of age puppies begin to choose specific areas away from their bedding for toileting.
- Puppies from 5 weeks of age should have daily access to outdoor, safe, and secure exercise areas for at least 30 minutes per day (unless veterinary advice suggests otherwise). Note protection from inclement weather should be provided to ensure puppies to not get too hot or too cold.

Gradually habituate puppies to different textures, sounds and sights they are likely to encounter in households (e.g., appliances, televisions, washing machines and different surfaces on which to walk).

- Coupling these experiences with rewards such as food and play will help form positive associations.

Gradually introduce the puppy to a dog carrier prior to transport before homing

- Puppies/dogs should only be enclosed in a dog carrier for transportation, not at any other time.
- Provide puppies with repeated opportunities to explore and enter the dog carrier voluntarily.
- Place bedding impregnated with their familiar scent in the bottom of the carrier and encourage puppies to explore further by offering food inside the carrier.
- Slowly build-up positive associations with the dog carrier; puppies must be fully comfortable entering and resting in the carrier on their own before being fully enclosed.

Carefully and gradually introduce puppies to other animals (e.g., adult dogs and cats) if they share the same household.

⁸ [Responsible Dog Breeding Guidelines](#) (2020).



- Introductions should be staged. Start by providing puppies with items impregnated with the scent of other animals, then introduce the sounds of other animals (e.g., socialisation soundtrack), before introducing puppies to the sight of other animals from a distance.
- Supervise puppies during interactions with friendly, healthy, vaccinated animals in the same household. Puppies should be introduced to a variety (e.g., appearance, sex, and age) of vaccinated, healthy, adult dogs in addition to the mother.

Puppies should be reared in an enriched environment with toys, play equipment and a variety of surfaces to explore and walk on.

For a puppy's behaviour to continue to develop appropriately, socialisation and habituation must continue with new owners once the puppy has left the breeder.

- Socialisation and exposure to varied environmental experiences must continue in the new home; they must be frequent and positively reinforced, and they must happen early, from 8-9 weeks, and continue to sexual maturity.
- Puppies should be vaccinated and have regular contact or interaction with other friendly dogs.
- Participating in reward-based puppy socialisation and training courses, run by suitably qualified individuals, are recommended, as they help to decrease puppies' fearful and aggressive behaviour and increase the puppy's trainability.
- Participation in puppy socialisation courses should begin early, by 8 weeks of age, to have the most positive effects on the puppy's behavioural development (Pluijmakers et al 2020).

3.2 Socialisation programme

Table 2 provides detailed guidance on the type and timetabling of different experiences that puppies should have during their behavioural development with the breeder.

- Puppies must be monitored throughout the socialisation programme to ensure they are comfortable with the interactions.
- Keep track of each puppy's progress to ensure they are making adequate progress; they are confident around people in a home environment.

3.3 Transitioning puppies into new homes

Puppies should be prepared for separation from the mother and littermates before they are homed to their new owner (Table 2).

- Puppies over 6 weeks of age should experience short periods of separation from the bitch and their littermates. The duration of separation should gradually increase with time before homing. Puppies must not be left on their own; this period of separation should be spent positively interacting with a person, through feeding or play so that they form positive associations with being away from their litter.

New owners should be provided with a copy of the puppy's socialisation plan detailing the types of interactions the puppy has experienced during their development, and how the puppy has responded and progressed. New owners should be given guidance on continuing socialisation to reinforce and generalise what the puppy has learnt with the breeder (see Section 5: Sources of information).

Provide new owners with a list of things their puppy likes (e.g., food and toy preferences) so that new owners know what their puppy will find rewarding.



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Table 2 Socialisation and early experience from birth-to-9 weeks of age

| Types of experience | Puppy development period > | Neonatal | | Transitional | Socialisation | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|---|--------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Weeks since birth > | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Human interaction | Puppies, from a young age, must receive regular, consistent, and positive handling by people. Socialisation of individual puppies should be done in the presence of the bitch and the puppy's siblings. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Early gentle handling & daily weighing | Provided the bitch is accepting, puppies may be weighed daily for the first 2-3 weeks by the breeders or main caretaker. Combine with gentle handling: | x | x | x | | | | | | |
| | Gently hold and stroke the puppy along the head, back and tail, touch paws and legs. As the puppy ages, the puppy's head, body, tail and paws can be touched and examined. The mouth and teeth should also be gently examined. | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| | Lift up and hold the puppy close to the body of the handler for 30s, the handler should wear different material types (e.g., wool, fleece, t-shirt etc). | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Handling for daily care and examination (include as part of daily interaction) | Gently groom the puppy from head to tail with a small, soft brush, soft towel, and soft grooming mitt. The duration of grooming should increase as the puppy ages. | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| | Place collar on for short periods of time during socialisation sessions. Collar wearing should increase in step as the sessions increase in duration. Ensure collar is suitable for size and age of puppy. Puppies should be comfortable wearing a collar before they are homed. | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Handling for weekly weighing | Puppies should be weighed at least weekly from 3 weeks of age until homing. A food treat and basic training can be used to encourage the puppy to step on to and sit still on the weigh scales. | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Time away from littermates | From 4 weeks of age puppies should be handled for health checks, grooming, and weighing for short periods away from their litter. To start with, time away from littermates should last no more than 5 minutes. Gradually increase to 10 minutes with longer durations paired with interactive play and reward-based basic training. | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| One-to-one play sessions | Puppies should have individual daily play sessions with people, lasting for at least 5 minutes. Interaction should be encouraged through a variety of suitable toys (e.g., soft, squeaky, tug toys etc). Basic training can be interspersed with play (e.g., requesting a puppy to sit and briefly wait before throwing a toy, and calling a puppy to come to interact with the handler for a toy). | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |



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| Interacting with people wearing different items of clothes | Puppies should experience caretakers wearing different items of clothing (e.g., hat, sunglasses, rucksack, high-vis, wig, wellington boots, overcoat, etc). Puppies should be allowed to investigate at their own pace and be rewarded for approach using food treats and interactive play. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Meeting new people | Introduce puppies to a variety of new and different-looking people (e.g., men, women, different appearance, and children), at least once per day. Aim for at least 10 different people (the more the better, between 21-30 people is advisable) during the socialisation period. Over several weeks, introductions should become more frequent and last for longer (e.g., x 4 per day, and last up to 30 minutes from 6 weeks of age). Interaction should be under the puppy's control, be rewarding, and involve interactive play with people. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Basic training | Start to introduce basic training during interactive sessions from 4 weeks of age. Use reward-based training methods. Start slowly and keep sessions very short. Guidance and videos on basic training have been produced by Dogs Trust . | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Learning to come when called | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Sit on request | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Toilet training | Puppies will naturally eliminate away from bedding and feeding areas. Provide puppies with designated areas for sleeping, playing, feeding and a separate area for toileting. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Transport in the car (weekly) | Puppies will likely be transported from the breeder to their new home by car. Puppies should become accustomed to a suitable dog carrier and short car journeys prior to leaving the breeder. Suitable dog carriers, with comfy, familiar bedding can be placed into the puppy accommodation for puppies to explore. Puppies must be fully comfortable entering and resting in the carrier before they are fully enclosed. Detailed guidance on getting dogs used to carriers is given by RSPCA . Once puppies are relaxed about being in the dog carrier, they can slowly be introduced to travelling. The process should be broken down into component steps (e.g., placing the puppy in the carrier, being enclosed, lifted off the ground in the carrier, and transported short distances in a vehicle). These sessions should be gradual and only proceed at a pace the puppy is comfortable with for detailed guidance see Dogs Trust . | | | | | X | X | X | X | X |



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| Different animals (weekly) | Puppies can be introduced to the scent of other animals and have supervised interactions with friendly, calm, healthy, vaccinated animals in the same household. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| If possible, cats | Cloth containing the scent of a relaxed and vaccinated cat | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Visual contact with calm, friendly adult cat | | | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Dogs | Cloth containing the scent of a relaxed dog | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Puppies must be introduced to vaccinated healthy adult dogs in addition to the bitch. | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Early experiences (weekly) | Puppies must be introduced to household items and activities that they will encounter in their daily lives (e.g., television, radio, vacuum cleaner, washing machine, tumble drier etc.) | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Sounds | Puppies should not be exposed to excessive or continuous noise. Use a suitable soundtrack, to help introduce puppies to everyday sounds in a predictable way. Play the soundtrack daily. Start with a low volume so puppies and bitches are not alarmed. Once puppies and bitches appear comfortable with the noise level, gradually increase the volume over time (days/weeks). Dogs Trust in partnership with certified veterinary behaviourists have soundtracks available to help with puppy socialisation, and provide detailed guidance on how to use them. Don't forget to introduce a variety of other household sounds: | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Rustling sound of a paper and plastic bag. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Keys jangling. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Mobile phone ring (start on lowest setting and gradually increase the volume over weeks). | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Sounds of people talking, laughing and gentle clapping. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Household items and activities (weekly) | Young puppies should be comfortable with the socialisation soundtrack before they are introduced to noisy household items. Introductions should start when items are switched off. Keep experiences short and predictable. Gradually and carefully pair introductions with household items with rewarding activities such as play and feeding. Ensure puppies do not become frightened or overwhelmed, and that they are provided with places to retreat away from activities. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |



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| | Include introductions to other household items like an open umbrella, pushchair, bicycle, suitcases etc. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Surfaces | Introduce puppies to different walking surfaces (e.g., carpet, tiles, shiny surfaces, rough surfaces etc). Surface types should be appropriate for stage of mobility. Encourage use with food treats and play. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Enrichment | Provide different types and textures of bedding. | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Provide a variety of objects that puppies can explore and climb in, on or under such as different play structures - play houses, plastic paddling pools (no water), walk over ramps and climbing frames. Play structures must be suitable for puppies to use safely. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Opportunities to explore away from the main living area | The litter should experience socialisation and play sessions in a different area away from the main living area (e.g., in another room and safe outside space - concrete and grass), at least 3 times per week for 10 minutes. Increase the frequency and duration of these sessions as the puppies age. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Puppies from 5 weeks should have daily access to outdoor safe and secure exercise area for at least 30 minutes a day. | | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Toys | Provide different toys to help develop coordinated movements and different play behaviours. Only use toys suitable and safe for puppies based on age or stage of development (See Section 5.4 of breeding guidelines). Use toys of different textures and rotate regularly. Remember to include interactive play with people. Provide toys specifically designed to encourage chewing – check regularly to reduce risk of choking. | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Cardboard box | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Toys that roll | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Toys that can be chewed and safely explored by puppies using their mouth | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Toys that make sounds (e.g., containing bells or made from material that rustles) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Toys that puppies can carry in their mouths | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Big soft toy, suitable for use with puppies/dogs | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |



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| Food | Weaning must be gradual and must not start before the puppy is capable of ingesting feed on its own and not before 3-4 weeks of age. A suitable weaning diet must be provided in separate bowls, where possible, and in different types of receptacles (e.g., plastic, metal). | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Puppies should be offered wet and dry puppy food. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Puppies should be offered 3-4 different flavours of food to try. | | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| | Dry food may be presented as scatter feed to encourage natural feeding patterns | | | | | | X | X | X |
| | Puzzle feeders may be provided to older puppies that are eating well on their own. Do not use when puppies are very hungry and avoid competition. | | | | | | X | X | X |
| | Provide suitable edible chews that are appropriate for the puppy's size and age to prevent choking. Puppies must be supervised when given chews. | | | | X | X | X | X | X |



4. References

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5. Sources of information

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<https://drsophiayin.com>

Dogs Trust
[Introducing your puppy to the world around them | Dogs Trust](#)

LICG
www.licg.nl

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
www.rspca.org.uk