

Puppy Primer

What to bring/What to expect

To the first class: If you have not already emailed a copy of your vaccine records and veterinary permission, along with the application form, please bring copies of these to your first class. Your puppy is not allowed in the building without these.

Bring to every class:

- 1) Towel or bathmat- teaching puppies to settle.
- 1) Collar or harness and 6' lightweight leash- please no retractable leashes, choke chains or prongs.
- 2) High Value treats- boiled chicken cut into tiny pieces. You can also get the pouches of human baby food, that can be squeezed from the tube. Please choose high value-chicken, beef, and other meats.
- 3) Hungry puppy-please refrain from feeding your puppy a couple of hours before class.
- 4) Please give your puppy a chance to relieve themselves prior to arriving.
- 5) Please bring an item from home that is easily cleaned/disinfected that all puppies in the class may explore-a silicone potholder, a gentle smelling herbal tea bag (chamomile, vanilla, etc) dry and in a small container, a gentle smell of soap, lotion, or herbs also in a small container; a fairly quiet bell, a Tonka Truck or other child's toy, a dust buster, a thermos for some examples. We will not be turning on appliances, or frightening puppies in any way. These are simply novel, household items that puppies can choose to explore if they wish. This is to help build curiosity/comfort/confidence around everyday items.
- 6) A chew toy-Helps to keep them occupied on their towel while we are conversing.

What to Expect

- 1) It is critical to expose puppies under 4 months to a variety of people, other dogs, and household items, long before they are old enough for a complete series of vaccines. Puppies that get proper socialization, and exposure to novel items and gentle people, generally become adult dogs who are people and other pet friendly, confident with novel items and experiences, and are generally safer for the community at large. The problem is that viruses and bacterias such as Rabies, Parvo, and Leptospirosis (to name just a few) are everywhere in your community. It is completely understandable that your veterinarian has cautioned you to limit your puppy's exposure to places that unvaccinated dogs, raccoons, coyotes, and foxes roam. Fully vaccinated, healthy adult pets rarely contract these illnesses, but puppies immunity varies depending on the age, and when it was weaned. This is why we have a very strict protocol for cleaning, and vaccines for dogs over 5 months. Please help us keep this place safe and healthy for puppies under 4 months who may not have the third series of puppy vaccines, or rabies.
- 2) We will be working as a team to help all the puppies in the class. You may be handling someone else's puppy, or someone may be handling yours. Come with gentle hands and a soft, happy voice. Children are welcome provided they can be quiet, gentle, and slow moving. If a family member is disruptive or scary to the puppies, you will be asked to leave right away, without refund. This is a great opportunity for children and puppies to learn from each other, and for those without young ones to expose their puppy to a variety of people. But it has to be done correctly so that both puppies and children look forward to each other.
- 3) If your puppy looks sick-dull coat, glassy eyes, diarrhea, sneezing or coughing or you see fleas or ticks on them, please keep them home. We will offer you a make up class, but please do not infect the entire class. We reserve the right to turn anyone away if we believe they are ill, injured, or carrying parasites.

- 4) Your puppy will enjoy some playtime, but we will all watch for pups that appear overwhelmed, fearful, too exuberant, or are bullying. Some puppies may sit in your lap for a while for a time out, or we may put some puppies in your laps while other puppies play together. The first year of your puppies life there are fear periods that must be handled with care as these are very difficult, sometimes impossible to eradicate. Together we can help the entire class of puppies receive the foundations that will last a lifetime.
- 5) We also have a small outdoor area which we will visit about half way into the class. Puppies need frequent potty breaks, and you are welcomed to bring your puppy out at any time. This area is also disinfected daily, but sometimes weather does get in the way. There is a complete clean up station that offers a kennel disinfectant to help us keep this facility spotless.