

## NEW EXPERIENCES ARE OK

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### Behavioral Vaccine #1

We all understand that puppies need to get vaccines for things such as parvo and rabies. But it is equally as important for puppies to get what is now being called “behavior vaccines.” These are the types of experiences that help your pup become comfortable in your world and they reduce the risk of fear and aggression later in life. Each week in class, we will talk about things you can do to “vaccinate” your puppy against problems later on.

### Why Is It Important?

Puppies need to learn when they are puppies that new experiences are okay. To achieve this, safe, early, and effective socialization is a must. Early socialization shapes the way your puppy will see the world as an adult. Poorly socialized dogs are difficult to live with because they can’t handle situations that are out of the ordinary. Well-socialized puppies grow into dogs that are adaptable and enjoy new places, people, animals and experiences. That means you can enjoy things like having visitors to your home, going on a trip and boarding your dog, and exercising your dog at the beach or daycare.

### Why Welcoming New Experiences Doesn’t Come Naturally...

Fear of the unfamiliar is a survival instinct, and a good one. Animals in the wild need to quickly learn what’s safe and what’s not. They can’t thrive if they are scared of everything so they’re programmed to accept new things for a short period of time, and then increasingly become wary of new experiences. Ever seen an antelope walk up to a lion? The fact that dogs have undergone years of domestication and are predatory in nature gives us more time to socialize them than many other animals, but their open and trusting phase begins to draw to a close between 12–16 weeks.

### Behavioral Vaccination Training

- Socialize your puppy early, safely and effectively.
- Socialize your puppy to places, people, animals, sounds, objects, and obstacles.
- Enroll in a puppy class and work with a trainer.
- Focus on the essentials. Take your puppy to experience places, people, dogs, and situations he’s likely to encounter in his life with you.
- Go at your puppy’s pace. Consult your trainer about what’s right for your particular puppy.