

# How Our Puppies Are Raised

**All of our puppies are raised in our home. We pay special attention to all of their developmental stages and provide the appropriate stimulation.**

## **Neo-Natal Period (1-14 days)**

Puppies are born helpless and completely dependent on their moms. They respond only to the warmth, touch and smell of her. The puppies crawl in a circle moving their heads from side to side when trying to find their mother for food or warmth. Their eyes and ears are closed. There is some vocalizations at this stage, especially if hungry, cold or in distress. Vocalization also encourages the mother to nuzzle the puppy.

Early neurological stimulation will have important and lasting effects on puppies. Please see the article published by Dr. Carmen Battaglia, report on research by the U.S. Military program called "BioSensor" or "Super Dog"  
[www.breedingbetterdogs.com/achiever.html](http://www.breedingbetterdogs.com/achiever.html)

**All of our puppies receive the "Super Dog" stimulation during this period.**

## **Transitional Period (14-21 days)**

This period begins when the eyes are open and ends when they are first "startled" upon hearing a noise. This week is characterized by the rapid development of motor skills. The onset of useable vision (by 18-21 days), the emergence of teeth, and the first signs of hearing first evidenced by the startle response. The puppies move around a lot more, and begin to walk and leave the nest to eliminate.

We increase individual attention with each puppy, and add toys and other visual objects to their nest. We also move the puppies to an area of the house that has more activity. The mother will start to spend short times away from the puppies.

## **Awareness or Identification Period (21-28 days)**

This is the first time the puppies have use of all of their senses; they need a stable environment and the influence from their mom. Imprinting during this period is very important to becoming a "Good" dog in the future. Puppies will start play fighting, barking increases. They may begin to eat real food, but the mother will still be with them.

During this period we introduce a variety of new noises, (T.V, radio, vacuums, hair dryer, heavily closed doors). We also introduce new areas of the house, and change the lighting. We track and record the handling, cuddling and picking up of the puppies. We invite strangers to visit to handle and cuddle the puppies. Teenagers love to volunteer.

## **Second Awareness/Identification Week (28-35 days)**

During this week Play behavior becomes much more sophisticated, including growling, chasing, and kill games. They are eating well now, and will start to be weaned. There is much research supporting the conclusion that puppies raised in an environment lacking challenges are more likely to develop into fearful, less successful adults.

Also during this time, more time is spent individually with each puppy, adding new objects for challenge; a maze of chair legs works well. Each puppy is separated for short periods of time from the rest of the litter, teaching more independence and preventing separation anxiety problems later in life. This also encourages bonding and acceptance of humans.

## **Socialization Period (5-16 weeks)**

Dogs lacking proper stimuli are overexcitable, learn slower, and may compensate with self-destructive behaviors like coat chewing, licking, etc. According to most behaviorist, bounce-back is one of the most valuable traits you can "teach" a dog. And the more often the puppy recovers, bounces back from a frightening situation the list of things that it is not afraid of grows faster and faster. Puppies must be exposed to a wide array of smells, textures, surfaces, sounds, vibrations, tastes and sights, including and especially a comprehensive variety of people. The more chances a puppy has to be exposed to something new during the critical socialization periods, the less bothered it will be throughout the rest of its life when confronted by other new or frightening things. Under socialized dogs are shy, fearful, become defensive, discriminate threats inappropriately, and may even bite out of fear.

During this time age (5-10 weeks) prior to the puppy going to their new home. Our puppies will experience a trip to the Vet, meet new people, go for rides in the car, learn to walk on a leash, learn to navigate obstacles such as poles on the ground, ramps, and or stairs. They will continue to be introduced to new toys, objects, sights, and sounds. Crate training begins. All of this and more will ensure that all of our puppies make a smooth transition into their new homes with as little stress as possible.

## **Curiosity Period (5-7 weeks)**

Weaning should be complete, however the mom will continue to play with and teach the puppies. The puppies are very curious now wanting to crawl,

investigate and taste everything. They have very little sense of fear now and will approach and investigate anything and everything. They have the lowest fear and the highest approach acceptance now.

During this period, many new objects are introduced, steps, tunnels, blocks of wood, cardboard boxes and anything else we can think of. The puppies are encouraged to follow our voice and spend time outside with us. Handling continues making eye contact and talking to the puppies several times a day, including play interactions such as fetching toys. House breaking begins and the pups learn to eliminate outdoors. Puppies learn to be groomed and bathed. Clicker training is introduced. Our goal is to teach each puppy a trick or command such as sit or high five.

During this period we try to introduce the puppies to the specific things that they will come in contact with in their new home. Such as water, farm animals, chickens, ducks, sheep, horses etc. It is very important that we understand your situation and your expectation for your puppy so we can give each puppy the best possible chance at success through proper socialization. Much time has been spent with each puppy observing the temperament, thus making it easy to temperamentally match each puppy with it's new owner.

#### **Behavioral Refinement Period (7-9 weeks)**

Puppies have fully functioning brains and are capable of learning anything. Learning at this age is permanent. Many behaviorist agree that this is the best time for the puppy to go to its new home. Puppies that do go home at this age must continue with the correct exposure to other dogs, so it will learn to coexist in a dog world. Puppies that stay with the breeder and other litter mates must be treated as an individual-including crate training, housebreaking, separation from mother and littermates for extended periods of time and extensive socialization..

During this time boundaries should be taught, as well as good behavior. The proper time to place each puppy may vary; depending on the situation and if the new owner is equipped to provide a stable learning environment.

#### **Fear Imprint/Impact Period (8-11 weeks)**

Puppies have no fear until about the 5<sup>th</sup> week of life with fear increasing gradually through the 6<sup>th</sup> week and escalating toward the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> week. The puppy will begin a time of much more caution. It may be fearful of loud noises, strangers, sudden movement, other dogs, etc. If frightened during this period it may take weeks to return to normal. Most agree that this is the wrong time for anything traumatic, shipping, harsh discipline, and maybe

even a transfer to a new home, unless the new owner is experienced with puppies. The puppy needs to be exposed to lots of positive experiences at this time. Some puppies pass through this stage very quickly and others take longer, based on a combination of genetics, socialization and the experience of the owner or breeder in the handling of the puppy.

#### **Environmental Awareness Period (9-12 Weeks)**

Puppies start to learn the right behaviors for the right time pay more attention to their humans and are very busy learning about their New World. Many believe that if left with littermates they will bond with them and not their human, I have found this to not be the case with the Boston puppies, they are so devoted to their human, but also enjoy the bonding with a littermate or other dog. When the human spends time individually with each puppy I notice no difference in pups that are separated at this time from each other VS the pups that have a littermate or similar age pup as a playmate. If you do choose to have two pups join your home at the same time the key is to treating each as an individual. Separating them from each other during periods of time such as night, each in their own crate. If the puppy has no other dog interaction at this time there is a risk of the puppy not acquiring good doggie social skills.

#### **Seniority Classification Period (13-16 weeks)**

This is the age of independence. The puppy begins to test leadership and dominance. "temper tantrums" may occur. Puppies that have been compliant may begin to have an opinion of their own. This is a critical period of learning for the puppy. This is the time when attending puppy class is essential. The exposure to other puppies, other breeds, other sizes is critical. The puppy will learn the difference between play and work. An environment with a lot of other of distractions helps build self-confidence. Most behaviorists/trainers believe that the end of this period (14-16 weeks is also the closing of the "window" of effective socialization, so waiting until the puppy is 6 months old for class may be too late.

Recommended Books: Another Piece of the puzzle: Puppy Development  
By Pat Hasting and Erin Ann Rouse  
Dogfolk Enterprises [www.dogfolk.com](http://www.dogfolk.com)

Kissme Boston Terriers  
AKC Registered Boston Terriers in California  
Elizabeth Ferris  
[www.boston-terriers.us](http://www.boston-terriers.us)