

## **SOCIALIZATION BISCUITS**

Socialization is the process during which the puppy develops relationships with other living beings in its environment. The experiences which it has during the first 4 months of life will dramatically influence its adult personality. To prevent antisocial behavior, fear, and biting, it is important for a puppy to have frequent positive experiences with everyone it meets during these early months. Puppies that receive insufficient socialization to people, other animals and new environments during the first 4 months may develop irreversible fears leading to timidity and aggression.

It is important for every puppy to meet as many new people as possible, in a variety of situations. To facilitate introductions, encourage each person who meets the pup (whether out on a walk, or in your home) to give a small biscuit or piece of kibble. This will teach the puppy to look forward to meeting people and discourage hand shyness, since the pup will learn to associate new friends and an outstretched hand with something positive. Once the puppy has learnt to sit on command, have it sit before getting its biscuit as this teaches it a proper sitting greeting, and will make the puppy less likely to jump up on people. Be certain to have puppy greeted by a wide variety of people from babies to grandparents, children, and both sexes during these first few formative months.

Puppy classes are another excellent way to continue the socialization of young pups to both people and other puppies, but all pups should be fully vaccinated before entering these classes.

Since obesity is such a common and dangerous condition for growing dogs, biscuits should never be used merely as a snack or to win the puppy's affection. Your puppy will actually develop a closer relationship if you demonstrate leadership and only provide treats and attention when the puppy earns them. We recommend using a low calorie biscuit, small slices of carrot or a portion of the pups kibble (remember, for the average dog you need to reduce the volume of food fed by as much as 1/4 of a cup for every 4 biscuits that are fed as treats... for some dogs this would mean not getting any meals!) Please ask and we can suggest some low calorie treats.

### **Other helpful readings:**

1. How To Speak Dog. Stanley Coren. Helpful in understanding why dogs do what they do, and how we often don't get what they are trying to say.
2. Culture Clash. Jean Donaldson. Imagine landing in a different country and not understanding the language or nuances of accepted behavior. This book explores how things are viewed so differently by humans and dogs.
3. Before You Get your Puppy. Dr. Ian Dunbar  
By going to the website [www.siriuspup.com](http://www.siriuspup.com), this book can be downloaded for free!! Even if you already have your new pup or dog, this is well worth checking out.
4. After You Get Your Puppy. Dr. Ian Dunbar. Naturally we recommend that you follow up with this book. Both of these books are easy reads with great pictures.