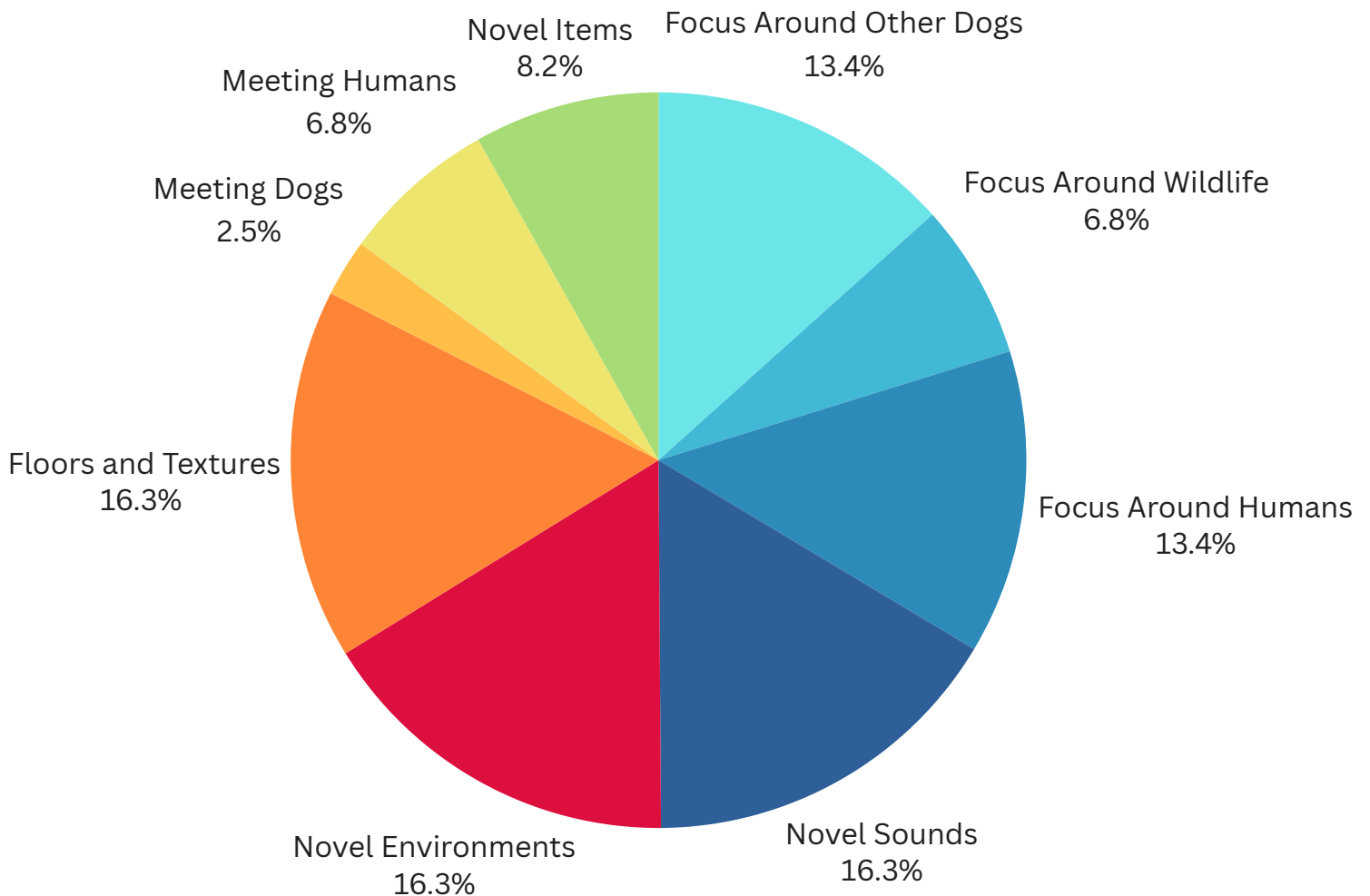


Socialization Goals for Puppies

There is a tremendous amount of misinformation about what socialization goals are for your dog. Many people make the mistake of focusing only on dog to dog interactions and not enough of exposure to novel environments, textures, sounds etc.

***Your socialization goals need to take place before 12-14 weeks of age when the critical socialization window closes.**



Created by Jessica Greenwell, CPDT-KA, SDC

<http://www.doggrrrl.com>

Socialization Guide - All Ages

Created by Jessica Greenwell, CPDT-KA, SDC



Socialization is about exposing your dog to a variety of different stimulus that may effect all 5 of their senses and managing the situations and environments so that your dog is able to focus and have a positive experience without becoming stressed out, frustrated or over excited.

Many dogs have missed their socialization window and can still become more confident by implementing a socialization plan for them. For new puppies, there is a chart above for you to use as a guide to reach your goals.

A great way to do this for any dog is to play a simple game, work on a trick or simple obedience cue to promote a positive association. You may also verbally praise and reward your dog after they experience something new (Ex; a loud car goes by and they notice it but stay calm, reward them)

Here's some more suggestions for you to reach your socialization goals with your dog;

1. Start small and go slowly - introduce new experiences and stimuli slowly and build
2. Introduce them to novel items that may make odd sounds or move in a peculiar way
3. Introduce them to different textures on their paws (carpet, wood, wet grass, snow etc)
4. Introduce them to different familiar scents in your home or neighbourhood (Smell it all!!)
5. Play a game with them in a public setting like a park at a distance from kids playing, people eating, people riding bikes, cars present etc
6. Prepare and plan your motivators and rewards and environments beforehand

If at any point during these experiences your dog becomes fearful or stressed out end this training immediately and try again another time. Understanding basic canine body language is suggested.

SIGNS YOUR DOG IS HAPPY AND RELAXED

- Relaxed facial muscles, sitting or laying down, mouth open slightly
- Tail wagging gently and loosely, ears tilted back slightly

SIGNS YOUR DOG IS FEELING FEAR OR STRESS

- Lip or Nose Licking, Yawning
- Pacing and panting
- Excessive Barking.
- Tail Between the Legs.
- Showing the Whites of the Eyes
- Freezing In Position

If your dog isn't exhibiting any stress sign but still has trouble focusing on you or the games you're playing, you can use what is known as **THE 3 D'S** as a troubleshooting guide during these experiences to help reach these goals and regulate your dogs emotions. If your dog is struggling during any of these socialization experiences one of the following may need to be altered to get results;

THE 3D's - Troubleshooting guide

DISTANCE - Are you too close to the new person, dog, or squirrel? Move away and try again to get results

DISTRACTIONS - Are there too many distractions for your dog to focus on you? Move to a place with less distractions

DURATION - Have you been in a new place for too long and your dog can't focus? End the socialization time and try again another time with a plan to end it earlier