



The Socialisation Checklist: Weeks 3–14

PETSLIKEMINE
NEW PUPPY & KITTEN

A tickable tour of the ordinary world, done gently, while the window is open

PET NAME

DOG OR CAT

DATE OF BIRTH (APPROX)

A puppy's brain is most ready to learn that the world is safe between roughly **3 and 14 weeks** of age (AVSAB, 2008). The early half is the breeder's job; the back half is yours, and it is the most valuable stretch you will ever have. The aim is not to tick everything, but good, calm coverage of each category, always ending on "that was fine".

SOCIALISE SAFELY BEFORE THE JABS FINISH: CARRY, DON'T WALK

*You do not wait until the course is complete. Behaviour problems, not infection, are the number-one cause of death in dogs under three (AVSAB, 2008), so the window is too precious to lose. Before the course finishes, **carry your puppy** so they meet the world from your arms, invite a known, healthy, **fully vaccinated adult dog** round, do the sound and handling work indoors, and go to a well-run puppy class that checks vaccination status. Simply keep off shared public ground and away from unknown dogs and dog faeces until your vet confirms the course is complete.*

PEOPLE — AIM FOR VARIETY, NOT JUST NUMBERS

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| ☐ Men, women and children (calm, supervised, gentle) | ☐ Babies and toddlers, and their sudden movements and noises |
| ☐ Hats, hoods, high-vis, uniforms, sunglasses, big coats | ☐ Walking sticks, crutches, wheelchairs, mobility scooters |
| ☐ Someone with a beard, someone tall, a cheerful loud voice | ☐ People carrying bags, umbrellas or boxes |

SOUNDS — ALL INDOORS, NO INFECTION RISK (BUILD UP GENTLY FROM LOW VOLUME)

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|---|--|
| ☐ Fireworks and thunderstorms | ☐ Traffic, sirens, motorbikes |
| ☐ Hoover, washing machine, hairdryer, doorbell | ☐ Babies crying, crowds, clapping, smoke-alarm test |

SURFACES & OBJECTS

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|--|--|
| ☐ Tiles, laminate, carpet, grass, gravel, a metal drain cover | ☐ Wobbly and unfamiliar footing; stairs (size and joint safe) |
| ☐ Umbrellas opening, bin bags, brooms, wheelie bins, bicycles | ☐ Short, positive trips in the carrier and the car |

HANDLING & GROOMING — A LIFETIME OF EASY VET VISITS STARTS HERE

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| ☐ Paws and between the toes (the foundation of stress-free nail clips) | ☐ Ears, mouth and teeth; looking at gums |
| ☐ Belly, tail and all over; being gently held and briefly restrained as a vet would | ☐ A "happy visit" to the vet: a weigh-in, a treat, a fuss, home again |

OTHER ANIMALS — CONTROLLED AND KNOWN, NEVER THE DOG-PARK LOTTERY

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|---|--|
| ☐ A known, healthy, fully vaccinated , calm adult dog on a home or garden playdate, plus vaccinated puppies at a good class | ☐ Cats, livestock or wildlife at a calm distance if part of your life — reward-based only, no fear or "dominance" (AVSAB, 2021) |
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KITTENS: THE WINDOW IS EARLIER, AND MOSTLY AT HOME

*A kitten's sensitive period is earlier and shorter, roughly **2 to 9 weeks**, so much of it happens before they come home. Kittens are not taken out to meet the world; the work is calm, frequent, positive **handling by several different people**, good*

experiences of the carrier and car, and gentle exposure to ordinary household life and sounds. End every session on a good note, and let the kitten choose to approach.

How to use. Pin this up and tick as you go, aiming for good coverage of every category. Carry your puppy for "had enough" signals (tucked tail, ears back, moving away, freezing, lip-licking, yawning, refusing food): add a bit more, then stop. **CARRY, DON'T WALK — SOCIALISE SAFELY BEFORE THE JABS FINISH** (AVSAB, 2008). This checklist is not a substitute for veterinary advice. **BEFORE THE JABS FINISH**