

Pseudo-Socialization

A Cabin Fever Kick-Start Program

A simple, fun approach to teaching critical socialization skills when you can't socialize



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Welcome!

Greetings,

I created this training to support dog owners with new pups and rescue dogs who are concerned about losing socialization opportunities while we ride out the social restrictions necessitated by the coronavirus.

Let's have some FUN!!!

This training will:

- Show you a **super fun game** that doubles as a powerful **socialization tool**
- Teach you how to **safely socialize** (so you don't frighten your dog and do more harm than good)
- Give you **oodles of ideas** for socializing your dog to new experiences

This training is suitable for pups and dogs of any age.



Check out another Cabin Fever Kick-Start Program: *Critical First Lessons*

www.goldstardog.com



What is Socialization?

- We often think of socialization as how dogs get along with other dogs and people—but it's much more. It's all sort of things about living in this (sometimes really perplexing but amazing) human world:
 - *Sounds* such as the coffeemaker, the rumble of traffic, the doorbell, etc.
 - *Sensations* such as different flooring types under the paws, wearing a collar and leash, being brushed, etc.
 - *Experiences* such as riding in a car, walking in a new neighborhood, going out in the dark, etc.
 - *All sorts of items* that are part of the normal human world such as stairs, umbrellas, scooters, etc.
- **Socialization is:**
 - The positive adjustment a dog makes to her/his world
 - Developing confidence and social skills
 - What we do to teach and foster this



Pup meets dust buster. How fun!


Lack of socialization can increase the chances of behavioral issues such as separation anxiety, noise phobia, reactivity, and fear-based aggression. How about we try to avoid that?

Reframing the Concept of Socialization

- As dogs experience the many things, sounds, sensations, and experiences that make up our world, they are forming impressions about this world. When these impressions/experiences are good (have positive outcomes), dogs gain:
 - Self confidence and confidence in you
 - Mental resiliency
 - Curiosity about the world and willingness to learn
 - Ability to cope better with new experiences



Umbrella? No problem!

 This is great news! Even in times when we cannot interact with other dogs and/or people, we can still engage in activities that help our dogs adjust and become social, curious, and confident.

Now What? (Here's the FUN Part!)

Step 1: The “Check it out” Game

STEP 1. Teach your dog the “Check it out” game

I'll walk through how to teach your dog this game in 2 easy steps. We'll use this game on our socialization adventures!



Click [here](#) to access a 2-page guide to teaching your dog the “Check it Out” game. This guide explains **why** we’re teaching the game, **how to teach** it to your dog, and **how to use it**. Please read the guide first and then move to the how-to videos.



I've provided 2 videos so that you can see the lesson taught with a puppy (one I'd not met before and with the distraction of other dogs--talk about real-life training scenarios!) and with an adult dog. Both videos demonstrate the same approach.

- **Teaching the game to 9 week-old puppy Cedar** (~10 min): Click [here](#)
- **Teaching the game to 8 year-old Mya** (~6 min): Click [here](#)



Pup being invited to meet an umbrella

Step 2: Dog Body Language

STEP 2. Understand your dog's perceptions

Reading your dog's body language tells you how s/he is experiencing a given experience or interaction. This helps you make sure you aren't overwhelming your dog when you are socializing him/her.



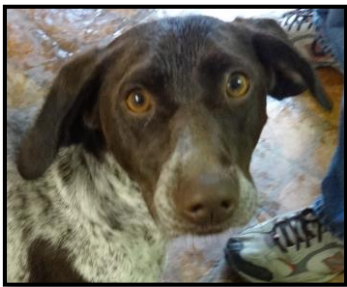
I'm Stressed! 4 Frequently Missed Body Language Signs

1. Turning the head away/averting the eyes
2. Inability to eat or take a treat
3. Seems to forget basic commands s/he knows
4. Yawning (this is also one way dogs relieve stress—so it's good but tells you stress may be present)

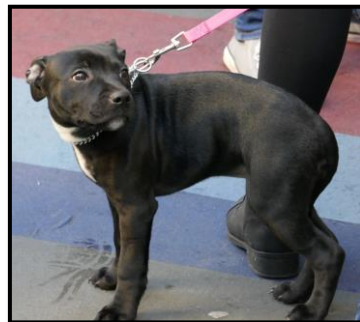


Lesson

Flip through my 16-page *Dog Communication Primer* photobook for a crash course in reading dog body language: Click [here](#).



Wide eyes, tense face, and closed mouth: "I'm worried"



Tense face, pinned back ears, tucked tail, and hunched back: "I'm not ok"



Bright eyes, open mouth: "This is fun!"



Wagging tail, open mouth, paw soliciting attention: "Pet me!"

Step 3. Using the “Check it out” Game

STEP 3. Use the “Check it Out” game to invite your dog to investigate new things

By this step, your dog has already learned to approach/touch new objects. Now you are going to use this technique to invite your dog to investigate new things! When s/he does so, there will be lots of praise and a food reward!



Review the 2-page guide referenced on page 5—especially the sections related to:



1. **Golden rules for using this approach responsibly and safely**
2. **What to do if your dog won't approach or check out a given object**
3. **Is my dog ok (using the red, yellow, green light approach)**



Your dog is clearly uncomfortable—stop and remove your dog from the situation.

Your dog is starting to show minor signs of being uncomfortable or you're not sure what your dog is thinking: Proceed with caution and only if your dog's stress signals start to go away.

Your dog is clearly enjoying the experience—keep going!

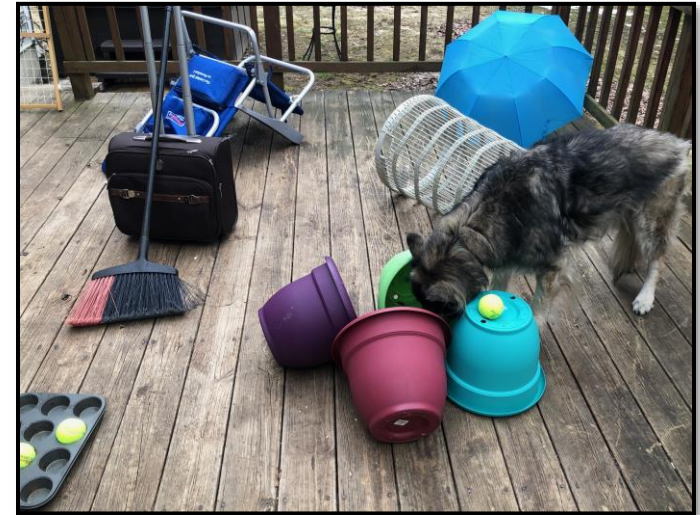
Adventures!

Going back to the concept that we can engage in all sorts of experiences that can help our dogs adjust and become social, curious, and confident, we're ready to go on some adventures!

This article offers many great ideas!

100 Ideas For Socializing Your Quarantine Puppy: click [here](#).

Be creative! There are many things around the house, in the yard, and on our walks that we can employ for socialization adventures. Grab some treats and using your new check-it-out approach, have fun!



In a 10-min tour of my house, I found a nice assortment of items for my dog to check out. What will you find at your house? Mya didn't even wait for me to grab the treats for the check it out game!



Puppy conquers the stairs (with some helping hands). A useful new experience!

Additional Resources

The Gold Star Library

Contains many short articles covering a wide range of topics from helping your dog with weather-related fears to assessing when your dog is ready to be off-leash. Bookmark the page as I'm always adding new material! <https://www.goldstardog.com/visit-the-library/>

Gold Star's Product Picks

Links to recommended books, harnesses, leashes, treats, games for your dog, and more (scroll to the bottom of the page to see these!). Bookmark the page as I'm always adding new recommendations. <https://www.goldstardog.com/visit-the-library/>

Gold Star Dog Training Videos

My growing library of dog training and for-fun videos. Become a subscriber to get notification of new videos <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSnluzts6LLGGz43LGJl8yg/playlists>

Gold Star Dog Training on Facebook

Follow the page to be in-the-know on all events, training opportunities, tips, tricks, new programs, and more!
<https://www.facebook.com/goldstardogtraining>

Generally, these sources and authors have excellent advice on a wide range of topics:

- Jean Donaldson
- Karen Pryor
- Association of Professional Dog Trainers
- Pet Professional Guild
- Patricia McConnell
- Doggone Safe
- Dr. Sophia Yin
- Victoria Stillwell



The “Something New!” Game

Stuck At Home? Need to Burn Off Your Dog's Energy?

Dogs need to exercise their minds as well as their bodies. This game helps your dog use his brain by becoming engaged in the training process, thinking up behaviors to offer—as opposed to being instructed what to do. This game can burn a lot of your dog's energy. Most of all, it's pretty darn fun!

Game instructions: Click [HERE](#)

Video of German Shepherd Mya playing the game:



Click [HERE](#)

~ 2min

CORONAVIRUS-RELATED

- Working From Home: Helping Your Dog Stay Busy (and Quiet): Click [here](#)
- Preventing Separation Anxiety When You Work From Home: Click [here](#)