The importance of puppy class

Puppies bring such joy to our lives and with them comes a big responsibility on the human’s part to ensure that our puppies are brought up to be friendly, confident and social, adult dogs.

Puppy classes can help you to achieve those goals.

Puppy classes can offer you and your puppy solutions to common problems such as housetraining, biting, body handling and jumping. You can learn to teach your puppy basic skills to help with manners and help your puppy become exposed to different surfaces, objects and movements which helps to build confidence. Puppy classes will also introduce you and your puppy to appropriate puppy play.

But choosing a puppy class is an important decision.

First, be sure the training facility has strict vaccine and cleaning requirements to ensure your puppy is safe. They should require a Bordatella vaccine (for Kennel Cough), standard vaccines and a negative fecal. They should sanitize their floors, bowls and toys daily. If play is done (which is a good idea), they should separate based upon size. Play is important but a puppy should not be bullied by other puppies. So strict supervision is important. Also don’t be afraid to ask what they teach, how experienced they are AND what methods they use. Using training methods that are positive, reward-based will prevent puppies from experiencing excessive stress at a young, impressionable age. Punishment-based training (choke collar, prong collar, shock collar or Tens collar) puts puppy’s confidence at risk and doing so can increase the possibility of fear-based behaviors developing. Pain, fear or intimidation is never required to teach a skill. And puppy class should include exposure to novel things without forcing them, handling exercises, basic skills, and help with preventing problem behaviors.

Setting your puppy up for success starts with enrolling in a proper puppy class. Just as we start children with kindergarten, start your puppy off with a structured program that encourages learning and exploration. Certainly, training doesn’t stop there but it’s definitely the starting point. Their critical developmental and exposure periods require us to act fast! Get them started early (early as 8 weeks if properly vaccinated) to start them off on a journey of learning!

Please visit the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, [www.avsab.org](http://www.avsab.org) to learn more about the importance of puppy class and avoiding using punishment-based training methods.

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