

## **Seven Steps to Socialization**

*As soon as the litter is born, there is much to do. By the time a puppy has completed his or her 7th week of life it should have many life building experiences.*

*The next time you wonder what a breeder does all day, you'll know. We work very hard to make sure every puppy grows up to be the best he/she can be. This includes nurturing their mental health, as well as their physical being.*

*Dr. Carmen Battaglia, author of *Breeding Better Dogs*, gives us the Seven Steps to Socialization paraphrased here. We believe in it completely. Why? Because it works!*

### **1. Experienced 7 different locations: perhaps**

Family Room - kitchen or various rooms in the house, car, crate, back yard, deck, veterinarian's office, garage

### **2. Exposed to 7 separate challenges: for example**

Climbing up or down steps, being introduced to the cat, run through play tunnel, learned how to climb out of a small box, climbed over obstacles, searched for a hidden treat, dealt with a noisy environment (kitchen / child's play room), climb out from under a light blanket

### **3. Eaten in 7 different locations: such as**

Whelping box, exercise pen, family room, outside in yard, loose in the kitchen, laundry room (with washer and dryer going and it counts for a challenge!), crate, while in the car

### **4. Walked on 7 different surfaces: common ones are**

Carpet, wood, vinyl or linoleum, tile, marble, concrete, grass, dirt, paper/newspaper, pavement, gravel, chips

### **5. Played with 7 different toys: use your imagination**

Toddler toys that light up or make noise, balls (big and little), empty plastic milk jug (put pebbles inside and tightly cap and you have a whole new toy!), chew bones, rope tugs, stuffed animals (take off removable eyes first), squeaky toys, cardboard paper towel / toilet paper tubes, metal objects, empty water bottles, bubble wrap

### **6. Eaten from 7 different types of containers: most commonly**

From your hand, plastic bowl, ceramic bowl, metal (bowl, bucket, pie tin or muffin cups), paper plate – raise the bowl or bucket and it creates a new experience

### **7. Socialized with 7 new individuals: possibilities are**

Family, friends, your Veterinarian and staff and the neighbors, both men and women – different ethnic groups and **kids!** Rent a kid if you need to! Include people in hats, men with beards, quiet people and those that are loud, etc. Include the elderly, people with disabilities (wheelchairs, on crutches too!) and various ages of children and infants.