

Bringing an Under Socialized Dog Home

Congratulations with your new family member! You have saved a very special life. Puppy Mill dogs and pups come to their new homes with some unique challenges. Often these pooches have spent their entire lives in cages. Many have never felt grass under their paws. Most puppy mill dogs and pups have never experienced love from humans. To these incredible pups and dogs human touch has often meant only suffering.

That is about to change! With your patience and dedication your new family member is about to live the life he/she was meant to have.



In The Beginning

It might be hard in the beginning for your new family member to trust any human. If you and your family are willing to be patient, gentle and kind to your new family member then you and your family might be the first humans your dog learns to trust. As excited as you and your family will be to share your daily routines try to remember a few important points:

Your pooch may :

- Be fearful of people or being held or handled
- Be fearful being out doors
- Be afraid of loud noises
- Bite or snap out of fear
- Have a hard time figuring out where to go to the bathroom
- Have a hard time playing with toys
- Be shy about affection and accepting treats from your hand
- Have a hard time walking on a leash
- Be afraid or not understand to come when called
- Be afraid of stairs

Once Your Dog Arrives Home

Safety will be an important first step for your new family member. Make sure you have some items ready:

- Crate of correct size (check with LIBR or your local pet store or veterinarian for tips regarding crate size)¹
- Long leash for walks and exploration
- For smaller dogs consider a harness
- A collar that fits well with ID tag
- Baby gates to protect around restricted areas and stairs

1 See "Crate Training" educational sheet, or contact your veterinarian for more information on how to properly crate train your dog/puppy.

When you first get home

Make a safe place for your new family member. Start off in one room with the crate nearby and the crate door open. Don't feel bad if your new friend wants to stay in the crate for awhile. Also, it's always a good idea to have potty pads in the area since your new family member was probably never toilet trained.

For the first several weeks

Your new family member may panic and try to escape. Try not to become upset if that happens, your new family member is reacting the only way he/she knows how to respond to new scary things. Use caution when you first let your new family member roam the house. If you have a large house you may want to introduce your pooch to one or a few rooms at a time. In the car be sure to crack windows only slightly so your new family member can't squeeze out. You and your family may want to consider taking car rides with your new pal in his/her crate since getting in and out of the car is a prime opportunity for your new buddy to slip out of the vehicle. If you have a large back yard you may want to put a leash on your new family member so that you can easily stop him/her from fleeing the yard.

It's also important to be cautious when you place your face close to your new family member. Remember your new friend wasn't cuddled and kissed growing up.

Life with your new dog

Seeing you as a source of food will help your new family member learn to trust you and your family. If you have the time try to hand feed your new friend while he/she adjusts to the new routine. It will help you to bond with each other and help your pooch learn how to trust humans. Keep in mind that many of these special pooches are afraid of hands coming towards them so try to be quiet and move slowly when you attempt hand feeding.

After a few days let your new family member come into a busier part of the house so he/she can watch the family hustle and bustle. If you have one, an exercise pen is a safe way to bring your newly rescued friend into the family activity while remaining "safe".

Once you think your new family member is ready, introduce him/her to any other animal members of the family. Often new dogs will mimic the behaviors of the other socialized family dogs and will be more comfortable from the start. Your other family dogs can be excellent role models for your shy new pooch.

Down the road

Even after your new family member settles into the household routine continue to strive towards helping your new companion get more comfortable with every new thing he/she may encounter such as trips to the groomers, walks, meeting new dogs and other strangers.

Once again, congratulations on your decision to open your home to a wonderful new member. Don't hesitate to contact LIBR or your local veterinarian with any questions.