



HUMANE SOCIETY

of sonoma county

Santa Rosa & Healdsburg

## PUPPY WORLD

### What is Puppy World?

Puppy World is a small, structured area where your dog cannot practice inappropriate behaviors while you are living the rest of your life. You did still want to have a life, right? In addition to being a “place”, Puppy World also implements the initial training needed for a happy puppy and a happy household.

### Why is Puppy World Important?

You want your puppy to get off on the right “paw” so to speak, simply because it is much easier to teach your puppy appropriate and appealing habits you want to live with than it is to try to fix unpleasant habits later. Creating a safe and secure Puppy World to handle the next few months will help keep shoes intact, carpets from being soiled and tender skin from making contact with sharp puppy teeth.

### Creating Puppy World:

**Managing the Pup:** Manage your young dog’s environment 100% of the time to prevent accidents and normal puppy things like chewing, soiling and... did we mention chewing?...by utilizing the following items to create a safe and secure Puppy World for him:

**X-pens:** Install x-pens on a non-porous surface and place a crate, bed and water bowl inside. Include a variety of enrichment toys, destruction toys and safe chew items to keep your puppy entertained and to teach him appropriate habits. Repair, wash and rotate the toys on a daily basis to keep his Puppy World interesting.

**Crates:** Crates can be used for housetraining during the day and/or night, management while you are home but your attention is elsewhere and as a safe place to stay while you are away from the house for short periods.

**Tie Downs:** A tie-down is a leash, rope or ideally a specialized cable that is no more than two to three feet long with snaps at each end. One end of the tie down is attached to an immovable object, as a piece of furniture or an eyebolt screwed into the wall, and the other end is attached to your dog’s buckle or martingale collar. Never leave a dog on a tie down without a person present. If you are going to leave the house, use the crate.

**Baby Gates:** You can use a baby gate to limit your puppy’s access to other rooms, but allow adult dogs or people to hop over or open the gate. Do not be in a hurry to allow your puppy access to too much space. Close bedroom and office doors.





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**Eyes on the Pup:** If your puppy is out of his Puppy World, avoid taking your eyes off him. You need to be present to redirect any chewing ideas or unsafe exploring. You would not leave a baby/toddler unattended, so be attentive to your puppy.

### **Puppy Teaching:**

**Preventing separation issues:** It's very important to separate SLOWLY from your puppy. Abandonment can be a significant issue that will develop into life-long separation issues. Avoid them now by teaching your pup that separations will be very, very brief. Crate them near you overnight so you can respond to their needs. Slowly teach them there will be short separations in the car. Puppies sleep most of the time so car rides, safely in a crate, are a great way to create brief separations in new locations. If you cannot create this kind of slow separation for your young dog, then adopting an older dog might be more appropriate.

**Housetraining:** A puppy often will not have the physiological "holding capacity" for feces and urine until he is at least four months old. If given a choice, canines do not like to eliminate in their den or where they sleep. We can take advantage of that through crate training and management of a young dog's world.

**During the Day:** It is a good idea to have puppies get used to sleeping in their crates for naps during the day. Take the puppy outside every hour to hour and a half and stay with him so you can reward "production" outside. Puppies have to eliminate MUCH more often than adult dogs. Take your pup outside right after a nap, first thing in the morning, last thing at night, after a play session...all the time. Do not assume he will let you know or go out on his own.

**Overnight:** Have your pup sleep in his crate overnight. Take him out once overnight for a few weeks. Set an alarm, and take your puppy outside on a leash to avoid losing him in the dark, and ask him to "go potty," or whatever cue you have picked for this behavior, reward and put the puppy back in the crate.

**Training:** Teach your puppy a cue like "go potty" so he can connect the production to a verbal cue. As the puppy voids, give your cue. Once you have established this pattern, change your timing such that you give the cue when you take him to "his" potty area, but before he voids. You can then reward the pup with an "atta boy" and a reward. Avoid punishing your puppy for "accidents" inside the house. You missed a signal (intense sniffing, moving away from sleeping areas) that your pup needed to go. Yelling at the dog simply teaches him to avoid eliminating in front of you. It is much better to avoid mistakes and step up your monitoring of the puppy's signals.

### **Mouthing/Biting/Chewing:**

**Play:** Most puppies use their mouths to explore and play. Unfortunately, young puppies have very sharp teeth. Be prepared for this mouthing behavior by keeping a toy available to offer to the puppy. Redirect



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your puppy onto the toy immediately by dragging it on the ground and encouraging engagement. If your puppy grabs at your pants leg or ankles as you walk by, keep a toy handy to redirect his teeth. Stop moving and that often will prompt the pup to give up the chase. Quickly engage your pup with a toy. Try to manage your dog's access to you to prevent this type of "drive by" behavior.

**Handling:** Puppies often mouth on people's hands when stroked, patted and scratched (unless they are sleepy or distracted). If your puppy gets all riled up when you pet him, distract him by feeding him small treats from your other hand. This will help your puppy get used to being touched without mouthing.

**Enrichment Items:** Provide plenty of alternative chew items and keep rotating the offerings. Puppies get bored with the same chew toys and variety will often keep them engaged. Pick up the toys between play sessions. Chewing is a normal behavior for young puppies. Make sure you have done a good job of preventing the puppy access to items you do not want chewed. You can also use a chewing deterrent like bitter apple, but it should be used in conjunction with a strong environmental management program.

**Naptime:** If your puppy continues to go back to your hands and otherwise get out of control, he is likely in need of a nap. Take the puppy out for a potty break and place him in his puppy world. AVOID using your hands as a toy for the dog.

### **Jumping Up:**

Jumping up is a side effect of the physical difference in dog versus human height. Puppies especially, greet the faces of their senior dogs often with their paws on the face. Because our face is REALLY HIGH UP, the young pup is forced to get up there to greet.

**Management:** Manage your puppy's ability to get to you at the front door using baby gates or crate your puppy while you are out.

**Training:** Be consistent, because while we often encourage puppies to jump up for greetings, we then discourage it as adult dogs. It is very difficult for dogs to understand when it is okay to jump and when it is not.

Bend down low and hold your puppy's collar to greet him calmly. This provides very young dogs air-licking possibilities, which is a normal behavior. Your puppy should not be encouraged to lick your face directly. He will be satisfied with licking the air near you.

Reward the puppy who already has all four paws on the floor and reinforce that choice.

Play "Find It" to expel some of that energy and at the same time, giving your puppy an opportunity to connect.

**Relationship:** The nice thing about your puppy wanting to greet you is he LIKES you. Punishing this need to connect by ignoring, turning away, walking into him or spraying him with water, only hurts the



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relationship and does very little to teach the young dog what to do. Greeting and reuniting should be sincere and full of affection but avoid the frenetic, high arousal interaction.

**Puppies and Children:**

Children should never be left alone with a puppy. Young children often consider puppies to be toys and do not realize they can be harmed or scared through rough handling. Puppies have fragile bones and can easily be injured through inappropriate handling. If a puppy bites a child, it's important to separate them. Adults should model good behavior for the child and the young dog during these child/puppy interactions.