

HOABC Top Recommendations for Puppies

Obedience Classes are required for puppies adopted through HOABCR. We can provide suggestions on great training facilities in your area if you'd like- just ask! Pick a school that feels comfortable to you and focuses on positive reinforcement (most do, these days). Please remember to honor the terms of your contract and send proof of enrollment in classes as indicated there.

First Vet Visit is required within 10 days of adoption. Make this a happy experience by taking some great treats along for the visit. Talk with your vet about when your puppy is safe to meet other dogs and be out in public. Our socialization suggestions below assume he or she is cleared to meet other dogs.

Socialization!!! Properly socializing your puppy is critical to his/her long-term well-being, and involves much more than meeting other dogs. Expose your puppies to many new experiences, and they will find the world a fun and exciting place instead of scary or intimidating. Be liberal with treats whenever you're trying something new!! Some of our favorites:

1. Visit your **vet clinic** with no appointment. Get them on the scale, let them sniff around and meet the staff. Dispense tons of treats!! Most clinics LOVE to meet puppies, and this will help them be comfortable when the time comes for real appointments in the future.
2. Visit dog-friendly **retailers**.
 - a. Home Depot is particularly amazing (call ahead to be sure your Home Depot allows pets) because there are lots of men, who can be scary to puppies in particular (deep voices, taller, facial hair...). Visit the construction material area & watch big fans and forklifts driving around making lots of noise.
 - b. Garden centers are fun to walk around and smell, but make sure to give the dog potty breaks so he/she doesn't leave a calling card on any merchandise.
 - c. Many Cabella's stores are dog friendly with a lot of "new" things to see (taxidermy)
 - d. Pet supply stores – try them all! Chuck and Don's and Bentley's are favorites of HOABCR
3. Puppy **play groups** at pet stores or doggie daycares are also wonderful opportunities for socialization
4. Go to a **park** with kids playing and just watch them on the swings and running around. Outdoor waterparks at community parks are excellent in the summer with lots of activity, or sledding hills in winter.
5. Check out a neighborhood **sporting event** - hang back and watch all the activity, meet some other dogs and kids!
6. Visit a **construction site** and watch at a safe distance. All those big machines and loud noises can be scary. Be calm and reassuring, and again – use those treats!
7. Meet as many **people** as possible. Not everyone needs to give your dog a treat upon meeting them, but make sure puppy isn't rewarded for jumping up/on people, only for keeping all 4 feet on the ground.
8. **Surfaces** – expose your puppy to as many different surfaces as you can. Let them walk on a metal trashcan lid, play on a skateboard that moves, and a pile of baking pans and cookie sheets (loud and slippery!). Go to a park and carefully help them walk on playground equipment, especially things like a sway bridge. Anything that moves or makes weird or loud noises is awesome. Treat treat treat!
9. **Dog Parks** should be used very carefully if at all. We do not recommend dog parks in general, and ask that you be really careful using them with a young pup. Little ones can easily get caught up in big dog play and be injured or traumatized. Reading this article will help explain more: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/smarter-living/the-dog-park-is-bad-actually.html>

Overall, go slow. Never force the puppy into an uncomfortable situation. Safety is key – a scared puppy may bolt away from you. If your puppy is afraid, whimpers, or cowers, respect what they are telling you. Simply walk away from whatever scared them and reassure them calmly. Any look back in the direction of what scared the puppy should be rewarded (ie: if a loud truck scared them, step back 50 ft. If the puppy even peeks toward the truck, they get a "good girl!" and a treat for trying to be brave.)

Great **resources** on puppies can be found in a multitude of places online, in book stores, and through friends and family. We especially like <https://www.siriuspup.com/free-downloads>.

Contact us anytime! We love to stay in touch with our adopters and welcome any questions you run into.

Good luck, and most importantly, enjoy your new puppy and THANK YOU for choosing rescue!