



What to Expect in Puppy Play ‘n Learn

Welcome to Puppy Play ‘n Learn class! Since socializing and training puppies can be fun and chaotic, I’d like to introduce you to our method so you know what to expect.

We follow the same training curriculum in each class:

1. “Settle:” This will be the first and last part of every class. Here you will teach your puppy that it’s pleasant to sit or lie quietly while you pet them and handle their ears, feet, and body.
2. Name recognition: you will say your puppy’s name, and reward them for looking at you when you say it.
3. Come when called: When you say “Puppy, come!” you will reward your puppy for looking at and coming to you.
4. Sit: You will teach your puppy to sit when you say the word “Sit.”

You will use the clicker or a marker word and each will be paired with a small food treat so you can let your puppy know when they get the behavior right.

Play time: Puppies in the class have very diverse backgrounds, personalities and temperaments. Our job is to pair your puppy with other puppies with the same play style as yours and to supervise them very closely to make sure the puppy stays relaxed and is having fun. We group the puppies according to this philosophy because simply *being* with other puppies is not equivalent to *interacting appropriately* with other puppies. **We may switch a puppy from one group to another for these reasons:**

- Your puppy is too fearful of the puppies it is with. Note that if your puppy chooses to wander under the chairs instead of interacting, that is okay. We all remember how intimidating the first day of school was! Most puppies come out of their shell in week two or three.
- Your puppy is not behaving in a way that is beneficial to their or other puppies’ play. If your puppy is repeatedly growling, biting, or jumping on other puppies without giving them a break, we will pick it up and see if there are other puppies with whom its behavior will change. If not, we may pair your puppy with an adult dog, if one is available, or we may reward it for being on the other side of the barrier and interacting more calmly.

Our actions do not mean your puppy is “bad,” or that this behavior should be “corrected.” Socialization occurs beginning when the puppy is four weeks old, so every puppy brings past experience and genetic tendencies with it to class. Our job is to help your puppy to do its best, and if your puppy is struggling in class, our trainers will talk to you about the best way to help them.