



PUPPY PACKET

Welcoming a new puppy into your home means spending a significant amount of time outdoors. Expect frequent potty breaks, consistent exposure to various environments, and guided socialization to help them remain calm and neutral around everyday stimuli.

Most behavioral issues stem from a lack of structure, insufficient physical exercise, and limited opportunities for mental stimulation and purposeful play. From the moment your puppy arrives home, your goal is to consistently reward and reinforce the behaviors you want to see.

Dogs learn through experiences, associations, and the consequences (good or bad) of their actions. They naturally repeat behaviors that bring them closer to what they want. For example, if jumping up results in attention, they'll continue to jump. But if calm behavior—like sitting or keeping all four paws on the floor—is consistently rewarded, that's the behavior they'll choose. Rather than reacting after unwanted behavior occurs, we see the best results when we guide and proactively teach our puppies the behaviors we want from the start.

Use this packet as a general guide, contact Sophia at ChannelingCanines.com for specific dog training advice.

PREPARING FOR A PUPPY ARRIVAL:

5 items to have

1. **Puppy Food** – Choose a nutritious, age-appropriate puppy food to support growth and development.
2. **Food and Water Bowls** – Stainless steel or ceramic bowls are durable and easy to clean.
3. **Crate** – A properly sized crate for safe transport and crate training. Consider one with a divider if needed.
4. **Harness and Leash** – A comfortable, adjustable harness and a sturdy 6 foot leash for walks and training. (have ID tag on collar)
5. **Toys** – If your pup still has baby teeth, crinkle or squeaky plush toys are a great option. Durable toys like Kongs or Nylabones, can help keep your puppy occupied and prevent destructive chewing. Puzzle toys, treat-dispensing toys, or interactive toys help keep your puppy mentally stimulated.

5 ways to puppy proof

1. **Remove Hazardous Items** – Keep electrical cords, small objects, and toxic substances (like cleaning supplies and plants) out of reach.
2. **Secure Trash Cans** – Use dog-proof bins or place them in cabinets to prevent your puppy from getting into the trash.
3. **Create Puppy-Only Zones** – Set up puppy-safe areas where they can explore safely, like a designated pen, crate or room.
4. **Hide Shoes, Socks, and Clothing** – Puppies love to chew, make sure your shoes and clothes are put away.
5. **Install Baby Gates** – Use gates to block off rooms that may not be safe or where you don't want the puppy to go unsupervised.



RESTRICTED ACCESS

Just as you wouldn't hand a toddler scissors and be surprised when they misuse them, you shouldn't give a puppy unsupervised access to the entire house. Allowing too much freedom too soon can lead to unwanted behaviors, such as chewing inappropriate items or having accidents indoors. Puppies need to be gently taught what is appropriate to chew, where and when to eliminate, and how to navigate their environment successfully.

To support this learning, it's essential to use confinement areas—such as crates, pens, or gated-off sections of the home—in combination with a consistent daily routine and supervised free time. These spaces help set clear boundaries, prevent the development of bad habits, and guide the puppy toward success.

Confinement areas should be associated with comfort and calm, not isolation or punishment. They should not become a place the puppy only goes when the household is leaving or as a form of discipline. Instead, these spaces should feel safe, structured, and supportive of the puppy's learning and emotional development.

Every time your puppy is placed in their crate or pen, they should receive something to eat, lick, or chew. This can include a full meal, a handful of kibble, a bully stick, a frozen lick mat, a stuffed Kong, or another safe enrichment item. This helps create a positive association with confinement and encourages calm behavior.

If your puppy begins to cry, bark, or whine immediately after being placed in the crate, it's generally best to ignore the behavior—provided all their needs have been met. However, if your puppy has been in the crate for approximately 20 minutes or longer and begins to vocalize, take them outside promptly for a potty break to prevent accidents and reinforce appropriate elimination habits. Try not to reinforce the barking behavior.

DRAG LEASH

Using a drag leash in the house gives your puppy more freedom while still allowing you to maintain control and prevent unwanted behaviors. With the leash attached, you can let your puppy move around the house but prevent them from accessing tempting items you don't want them to chew or interact with. You can loop the leash around your waist, allowing your puppy to follow you as you go about your day—whether you're doing chores, watching TV, or working from home in your office. The drag leash also makes it easier to reinforce rules and guide your puppy when necessary. If you need to step away for a moment, you can tether the leash to a doorknob or another safe anchor, ensuring your puppy stays in the room with you, surrounded by their bed and chew toys to keep them entertained.



CRATE & PEN/ONE ROOM

CRATE: an essential tool for teaching your puppy how to hold their bladder and bowels. Confined spaces typically discourage elimination. Many crates come with dividers to adjust the size, allowing you to make the crate smaller or larger as needed. The crate should be about one and a half times the size of your puppy's current size. Generally, dogs have a natural aversion to eliminating where they sleep or eat. The crate serves as a short-term confinement space, particularly for younger puppies. If left in the crate for longer than they can hold it, they may be forced to go to the bathroom inside, potentially developing a habit and experiencing unnecessary anxiety. Over time, as your puppy matures, they will be able to hold it for longer periods. At that point, you can experiment with leaving them in the crate for extended durations—always ensuring this is balanced with plenty of outdoor exercise and potty breaks.

PEN/ONE ROOM: provides your puppy with more freedom than a crate, while still offering a controlled environment. In the early stages, the pen can also serve as a long-term confinement. Place a pee pad in the area if you need to be out of the house longer than your puppy can hold it. By around 4 months of age, the puppy should no longer rely on a pee pad in the pen.

WHEN TO USE...

Crate:

- Feeding meals
- Supervising the puppy when you're home but unable to provide direct supervision and regular potty breaks (every 1–3 hours, depending on the puppy's age and abilities)
- **Short periods** when you're out of the house

Pen:

- Feeding your puppy meals
- Times when you're home but unable to provide direct supervision
- When you're out of the house for **longer periods**

WHAT TO PUT INSIDE...

Crate:

- Two durable chew toys
- A long-lasting chew (e.g., a thick bully stick or collagen chew)
- No soft toys, as these can pose a choking hazard
- You may need to remove any soft bedding if your puppy is prone to urinating on it
- No need to leave water in the crate

Pen:

- Many durable chew toys
- A long-lasting chew (e.g., a thick bully stick or collagen chew)
- A variety of squeaky or interactive toys
- A pee pad, if needed, for times when you're away longer than the puppy can manage
- A blanket or two for sleeping space (you may also use a bed, though puppies often enjoy tearing them up, so blankets are easier to replace and wash)
- A water bowl or bucket



MEAL TIME

Meals should be delivered through a foraging or enrichment device whenever possible. Some ways to feed your puppy include using a slow feeder, a puzzle dish, a wrapped towel, or scattering their meal. Ideally, feed your puppy in their crate or designated pen to help build a positive association with confinement, provide structure, and maintain separation between feeding areas in multi-dog households. I recommend avoiding basic food bowls—mealtime should be more engaging! Dogs are natural foragers and scavengers, we often overlook this instinct. Encouraging them to work for their meals not only helps burn excess energy but also supports their mental and emotional well-being in a more natural, fulfilling way!

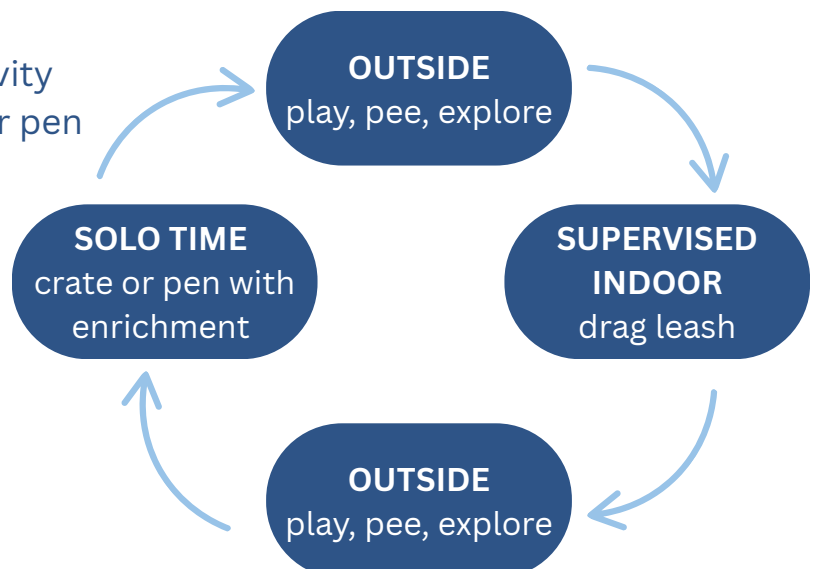
ROUTINE

Puppies thrive on a consistent, predictable routine that includes enrichment, exercise, supervised indoor free time, and both short- and long-term confinement. Aim to follow a structured cycle 5–8 times per day, adjusting the duration spent in each phase based on your puppy's age, energy level, and needs. Over time, your puppy will begin to settle more easily into the routine, as they'll understand what to expect next.

Keep in mind that young puppies have limited bladder and bowel control. A general guideline is that a puppy can hold their elimination for approximately one hour per month of age—e.g., a 2-month-old can usually hold it for about 2 hours, a 3-month-old for about 3 hours, and so on, assuming consistent training and good habits.

Your puppy should always be taken outside after:

- A nap of any length
- A play session or training activity
- Spending time in their crate or pen
- 10–20 minutes after eating





MOUTHING

Mouthing is a common behavior in puppies, they use their mouth and teeth to explore, relax, and play. It can take time to teach them that mouthing humans is not acceptable. Following a structured routine, as outlined above, will ensure your puppy gets plenty of exercise, enrichment, and play throughout the day, which will naturally reduce the urge to mouth. However, mouthing may also occur when the puppy becomes tired, or overstimulated by excessive petting. It can be a sign that the puppy is stressed, tired, overexcited, or frustrated.

Use this packet as a general guide, contact Sophia at ChannelingCanines.com for specific dog training advice.

General Tips:

1. Keep a drag leash on your puppy to maintain quick control and prevent unwanted mouthing.
2. Avoid overstimulating your puppy by refraining from waving your fingers or toes in their face or tapping their face to encourage play. These actions can encourage mouthing!
3. Don't discourage play altogether. Play is essential for building a strong bond between you and your puppy. Focus on teaching them to play with a toy rather than avoiding play.
 - a. Engage in activities like fetch, tug-of-war, or flirt pole play rather than roughhousing with your hands.
4. Don't jerk your hands or feet away when your puppy mouths you. This can encourage the puppy to grab at you more.
5. Distract with treats: If your puppy tends to mouth when being getting leashed up, toss some treats on the ground.
6. Provide plenty of toys to keep your puppy entertained and prevent them from gnawing on you or your clothing.

Teaching Your Puppy to Be Gentle:

1. Time-outs can be an effective way to reduce mouthing behavior. If your puppy's teeth touch your skin or clothing, pick up the leash and calmly guide your puppy to a designated time-out area (such as a bathroom or gated space) or simply leave the area. This teaches your puppy that mouthing leads to the removal of attention or play.
2. Substitute a toy or chew bone whenever your puppy starts gnawing on your fingers or toes. Show them what to chew on.
3. Be patient: Mouthing is a normal part of puppy development. It takes time to teach them proper boundaries, so be understanding and consistent.