

# Fort Kennel Club: Socialize puppy while being 'Safer at Home'

Many area families might have brought a new puppy home this spring and had planned to enroll their new furry family member in a "Puppy Kindergarten" class. These classes, like the ones offered by the Kennel Club of Fort Atkinson Inc. (KCFa), focus on socialization and confidence-building for puppies. Puppies must learn how to behave appropriately in both canine and human society, as well as how to respond to the new sights, sounds, textures and smells in their environment. That's a lot for a young pup to learn!

KCFa normally offers several Puppy Kindergarten classes throughout the year. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent "Safer-at-Home" order, the club's April-May session of training classes has been canceled. Despite this, KCFa advises that families with new puppies still can socialize their new four-legged family member successfully during this time of social distancing, and offers guidance for families that have recently adopted a puppy.

First, some "puppy basics." Puppies need a lot of help from their canine and human families to grow into healthy, well-socialized adults. Puppies are born unable to hear and with their eyes closed. They cannot regulate their body temperature or eliminate without the aid of their mother. By the time the mother begins to wean her pups (between three and seven weeks of age), they will have grown through several stages of sensory, social and cognitive development.

That's just the beginning, though. Puppies will experience several more developmental stages before reaching full maturity around 2 years of age. Typically, before a puppy is 6 months old, it will have experienced these four stages of development:

- **Socialization Stage:** The age many young puppies go home to new human families (around eight to 12 weeks of age) is a critical time for socialization with other dogs and people, and for

building their confidence in dealing with the world around them. It's an important time for introducing basic obedience skills and household manners using positive reinforcement methods.

- **Fear Stage:** At this age, puppies are developing their canine social skills and are capable of bonding with humans. However, they also begin to experience fear for the first time and may develop life-long fears stemming from anything frightening or traumatic that happens during this time.

- **Ranking Stage:** Shortly after these "socialization" and "fear" periods of development, a "ranking" period begins during which puppies begin to use dominance and submission behaviors to define their place socially or improve their status in the household.

- **Flight Instinct Stage:** By about 4 months of age, puppies begin to experience a second "fear" or "flight instinct" period, during which a puppy might tend to venture off alone and resist coming when called.



What experiences can families provide for their new puppy? Puppies 2 to 5 months (8 to 20 weeks) old and experiencing these stages of development normally would be enrolled in a Puppy Kindergarten class. Since holding group puppy classes isn't possible at this time, KCFa suggests several activities that can easily be done at home to help socialize young pups and build their confidence.

When doing any of these activities with a puppy, it's important to make each and every experience a positive one, with plenty

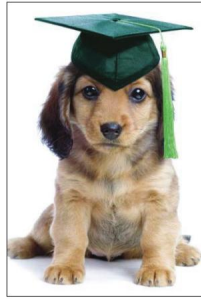
of reinforcement with things that the puppy likes — typically, things like soft pea-sized treats, praise, play, encouragement and gentle attention. Puppies usually convey their emotional state very clearly. Their handlers should allow them to take a break and have some space at their first sign of discomfort, anxiety or fear. Always go at the puppy's pace, letting the puppy's level of success and comfort be the guide.

- **Experience with a variety of sounds:** Puppies can get overwhelmed with new sounds. They should be exposed (gradually, with sensitivity for the puppy's tolerance and adjustment) to the vacuum cleaner, garbage disposal, trucks, radios, hair dryers, the television and even the occasional plastic bag being shaken open. Outside sounds like thunder, helicopters or planes, and birds flying overhead also should be included. Websites such as <https://www.freesoundslibrary.com/> provide sound clips to download to simulate some noises. The handler should encourage the puppy during these experiences and watch for any signs of stress. A calming hand on the puppy coupled with a soothing tone of voice will help to make it a positive time.

- **Experience with a variety of surfaces:** A puppy may be sensitive to walking on different surfaces. The owner should provide their puppy with the opportunity to have positive experiences on different surfaces and textures, such as carpet, wood, linoleum, shiny floors, grass, rocks, leaves, cement and asphalt (although not in hot weather).

- **Experience with other dogs:** Many adult dogs struggle to interact appropriately with other dogs, both on- and off-leash, and might overreact in either a fearful or hyper-social manner. Either can be problematic. While the Safer-at-Home order is in effect and community members are practicing social distancing, owners of puppies have an opportunity to teach them that the sight of another dog is a neutral occurrence — a

"non-event." Reinforce puppies for calmly looking at another dog and staying calm in the presence (at a safe distance) of another calm dog on leash.



- **Experience with people...** both at home and outside: As with experience with other dogs, this might be more difficult during this time of social distancing, but it also is important for a puppy to have positive interactions with people of various ages in order to develop appropriate dog-to-human social skills.

Owners should not feel pressured to have their puppies experience a certain number of interactions with either people or with other puppies and dogs. Where these types of social interactions are concerned, the quality of each interaction is much more important for the puppy's proper socialization than the total quantity of interactions.

- **Experience with touch:** A puppy should learn to have its paws and ears gently handled, and for its teeth to be examined. These lessons in being touched are preparation for grooming and veterinary visits, and will be greatly appreciated by others who need to handle the puppy and adult dog over the coming years.

- **Experience staying in a crate:** Even though some new puppy owners might be at home more than usual during this Safer-at-Home period, it still is important

to make a puppy accustomed to spending some time in a crate. Puppy parents should develop a schedule and make time for the puppy to experience some downtime or alone time. It will help the puppy to become comfortable with being alone when it is time for everyone to go back to work or school.

Several free internet-based resources, such as the American Kennel Club website, provide good-quality information about crate training. Visit <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/how-to-crate-train-your-dog-in-9-easy-steps/> for an introduction to the topic, as well as links to additional articles and resources.

"Our pets can be such an important source of comfort, by not only providing us with companionship, but also by encouraging us to follow a consistent and reliable daily routine during this uncertain time," said Donna Ingham, chair of the KCFa's Training Committee.

She said she hopes the KCFa's puppy training suggestions can help make this challenging time one of positive growth and development for puppies so they will grow to realize their full potential as members of the family.

KCFa member Mabel Schumacher agreed.

"When this health concern is past, we'll resume our training classes," Schumacher said. "Visit the club's website at [kcfadogs.org](http://kcfadogs.org) for details. It's never too late to begin training with your dog. In the meantime, visit our Facebook page for links to online dog training resources and some upbeat stories and entertainment, as well."

KCFa is an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established in 1992, with a mission to enhance the well-being of dogs, to promote responsible dog ownership for the betterment of the community, and to foster the human-animal bond by providing education, training and activities.

## Patrons share what they miss about libraries during virus closure

By Jill Fuller  
Bridges Library System

A lot has changed in a month. While it's easy to focus on the negative that's taking place around the globe, I find myself drawn to the stories of love, kindness, and generosity that also are being shared in the news. In the spirit of spreading good news, I thought I'd share some of the beautiful stories we've collected from the past year from community members who find solace and connection at their public libraries. I hope that reading these stories helps one think of the ways a library has positively affected their life as well.

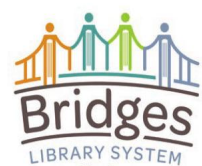
While working as a truck driver, Charlie always listened to books on tape. Recently, he discovered Playaways at the library after his sight started deteriorat-

ing. He goes to the Johnson Creek Public Library, which just got a grant to build a Playaway collection. "Now we've got maybe 20. It's a start. I think it's great for folks like me who used to read a lot, and they're so portable. Fits in your pocket. It's pretty handy. One can put in little earbuds and go. And what I like about them is they're so trouble-free. I've never had an issue with them and I've listened to 150-200 different books. It's all in one little thing in your pocket!"

Last Thanksgiving, Jann and her family used Watertown Public Library's snowshoes for some family fun. "We looked at the weather and they were expecting 9-13 inches, so we decided to get some board games for some inside activities. Then I remembered that the snowshoes were

an option, so we checked at the Watertown Public Library. It was a nice thing because it's not something we own. When you're trying something new, you don't know if you necessarily want to spend the fees...so it was a really great way for us to try snowshoeing again."

Even during this quarantine, people have been sharing what they love and miss about their library. "Our amazing Dwight Foster Library has been a staple in my life since I had my daughter almost 12 years ago," Tiffany wrote. "The baby, toddler and preschool story times were absolutely essential for us. It serves as a learning environment, a social gathering place, a change of scenery when the weather was not so ideal for outdoor activities, as well as a fabulous place



to get books, magazines and numerous other materials! The ways our local library can help others is truly endless! Thank you for being here for us always." And a patron from Jefferson Public Library said, "I always knew I loved my library but didn't know I am in love with the library."

Everyone is missing many things about daily, normal lives that were perhaps taken for granted. If the library is something one has been missing,

consider sending an emailing to share what is appreciated so it can be shared with others. Let's keep on spreading uplifting, positive stories to help us get through these difficult times.

And even though the libraries are closed right now, library and library staffs are still available. Visit [www.bridgeslibrarysystem.org/stuck-at-home-resources](http://www.bridgeslibrarysystem.org/stuck-at-home-resources) to find online library resources like digital books and magazines, streaming movies and TV, and online classes. One u can also contact to library staff or the Bridges Library System with questions or concerns.

Jill Fuller is coordinator of marketing and communications for the Bridges Library System based in Waukesha, of which the Jefferson and Waukesha counties' public libraries are a part.

## Stimulus checks to bear Trump's name in unprecedented move

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's name will be printed on the stimulus checks that the IRS will be sending to tens of millions of Americans around the country, an unprecedented move finalized this week.

The Treasury Department confirmed the decision in a statement Wednesday. It

marks the first time a president's name has appeared on any IRS payments, whether refund checks or other stimulus checks that have been mailed during past economic crises.

Treasury said that the decision to add Trump's name will not delay issuance of the paper checks, which will be mailed to people who are not

set up to receive direct deposit payments from the IRS. "Economic Impact Payment checks are scheduled to go out on time and exactly as planned — there is no delay whatsoever," Treasury's statement said. "In fact, we expect the first checks to be in the mail early next week, which is well in advance of See CHECKS, Page A3

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