



# Irish Pet Advertising Advisory Group

## Puppy Hello World – Week 3

This is the first week of socialisation and habituation and is a really important week – and a busy one!

### **The Science**

In week 3, the puppy's eyes start to open and, while his vision is initially poor, he can see movement (although may not notice stationary objects). He also starts to hear what is going on around him. This is the time to start to introduce the sights and sounds of family life – anything he sees or hears now will be accepted as normal.

He will begin to startle when hearing unexpected sounds but, as his fear response is not fully developed, he will quickly return to normal. This is how he should learn to respond to non-threatening events as an adult rather than show the escalating fear that, for example, noise phobic dogs do.

In this week, the puppy is also starting to learn about his social group. He learns to recognise his mother and his littermates, and also to recognise humans as being part of his family too, and this is when he starts the bonding process. This is a good time to begin to introduce all other animals in the household (other fully vaccinated dogs and cats if you have them) and people (including children) who you will want the puppy to look on as part of his family group if they haven't been around already. This should initially be done quietly, allowing them only to wander around outside the puppy pen.

While all puppies and breeds develop differently and at different speeds, it is far better to introduce new things too early than too late. Perception develops faster than reactions do, and so often they are learning long before we realise they are.

NOTE: Do not introduce small animals such as rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters etc. You do not want to teach your dog that these are part of his social group and therefore show play behaviours towards them. While your eventually large dog may enjoy playing with your hamster, the hamster is certainly not going to enjoy it! Your puppy instead needs to learn to ignore these animals.

### **Suggested Tasks**

1. Make sure the puppy gets to hear as many sounds as possible. These should include: doorbells, TV, doors opening and closing, vacuum cleaners, music, bangs, clatters, conversation, and an introduction to fireworks and thunder. You can buy CDs with these noises on them or you can download them from the internet if you can't find them all. These shouldn't be playing all the time and do not need to be loud but should happen unexpectedly throughout the day at times when the puppies are awake. You are looking for the puppy to notice them and then quickly return to normal. For most people who rear the puppies in the house with the family, most of these noises will be nothing new but make sure the puppies get to hear the unexpected ones too such as fireworks and thunderstorms! These sounds need to start at a low level and can increase later in these weeks.
2. Provide lots of different things to look at. Roll things across their puppy pen, flash torches (not at the puppies but around the room), change the light levels. Bounce a large soft ball outside the pen. Roll or drag things past the outside of the puppy pen so the puppy gets used to movement he can't chase. Hang a baby's mobile above the pen for 30 minutes a day (out of reach). Some puppies will show very little reaction during this early period of life – but having these things around them will make a difference.
3. Handle, cuddle and pick up the puppies regularly, making sure they are being held in a comfortable, upright and natural position, and are being fully supported. They need to begin to bond to humans, and ensuring they are handled in an appropriate way will help this. The mother may be slowly starting to wean the puppies in the next couple of weeks, and when she does you can let them lick a dab of fish paste or pureed meat off the tip of a finger so they associate human hands with positive experiences. It is good for different people to do this (starting with any new people just sitting on the floor so the puppies can approach them in their own time).
4. Stroke the puppies gently with different textured things – woollen glove, a piece of sheepskin, a rubber glove, a very soft baby's toothbrush – as this will stimulate and develop their sense of touch.
5. Introduce different surfaces for the puppies to walk on (more of this in Week 4). Don't underestimate how much puppies learn through their feet!
6. Let other dogs (as long as they are calm, friendly and vaccinated) and cats (if you have them) wander around the outside of the pen. Some may have been doing this already.



Irish Pet Advertising  
Advisory Group

A step forward for the safe  
advertising of pets online



[www.ipaag.ie](http://www.ipaag.ie)