

# Living with your puppy

**The following was written by Jaromira Sojkova of Queen Elsa kennels in the Czech Republic who has been a successful breeder for many years and I believe it to be sound advice.**

When we become familiar with everything a puppy actually needs, how to take care of it, and what to pay attention to, it is also necessary to raise it properly.

The upbringing and training of a puppy are intertwined from an early age, and it cannot be said unequivocally that a puppy is "only" raised or "only" trained.

We need to have a dog at home who is a member of the family but also understands what it can and cannot do with individual family members. Clearly defined rules are important.

If the puppy has these rules set from the beginning when it joins a new family, it will feel better, become more confident, and ultimately grow into a self-confident and balanced dog. Uncertainty is the worst thing for a puppy and later for an adult dog. The puppy considers its owner as the leader of the pack (or should be, given the right upbringing) and expects the owner to provide the necessary security in life. When the dog senses that the owner is insecure and doesn't know what to expect from the dog, it may exhibit fearful or anxious behavior. This insecurity can lead to problematic relationships with the human family and others.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is important to maintain a few key principles when raising a puppy from a young age:

1. Interact with the puppy normally - avoid hissing at it, constantly talking to it, or excessive petting. The puppy cannot understand these behaviors and finds them confusing. While appropriate cuddling is acceptable, the primary principle is to only engage in cuddling when you desire to do so.

Do not respond to the puppy's frequent demands for attention and cuddling. Act indifferent in those moments, as if the puppy doesn't exist. You can call the puppy to cuddle after some time has passed. As the "master," you determine when it's time to cuddle, play, or eat. Not following this principle will result in spending the entire day dealing with an annoying and biting puppy.

2. The second principle applies not only to the human-dog (puppy) relationship but also to relationships in general, particularly in couples and within the human population. Foster a relationship based on pleasant mutual coexistence.

Avoid constantly seeking the puppy's attention. The more you force yourself into its attention, the more it will pay attention to you, but you will eventually become a peripheral object of interest. In colloquial terms, the puppy will have you wrapped around its paw, and it won't care about your commands. This can become a serious problem when the small puppy grows into a 50 kg dog, and you find yourself struggling to control it. Avoid this issue by not excessively indulging the puppy's attention-seeking behaviors. Maintain a calm and authoritative approach, asserting your role as the leader.

3. Another simple principle that applies to living with a puppy is consistency.

When giving commands to the puppy, such as asking it to stay in a certain place, wait for you, sit down, or not beg, be consistent. The puppy may not obey immediately, but waving your hand and giving in later is a huge mistake in its education. The puppy will learn that it doesn't have to listen to you all the time, as you will eventually give in to its desires. While you can allow the puppy certain privileges at home, such as lying on the couch or in a specific area of the kitchen, it must obey your commands when you tell it to get down or go to its designated place. Consistency is key to successful upbringing.

4. Avoid unnecessarily forewarning about extraordinary situations you evaluate, such as saying "something could happen" or "the puppy will be afraid of that," etc. By exhibiting extraordinary behavior (of which you are unaware), you actually warn the dog in advance that something is about to occur. This makes the dog insecure, quick-tempered, and may lead to inappropriate behavior—either fearful, aggressive, or otherwise abnormal.

Before Christmas, the new owner of our puppy called me with the question: "New Year's Eve is coming, and there will be fireworks. Should I cover the puppy's ears and hide with him?" My advice was to act as you normally would in any other situation. It is not an emergency; it's completely normal, just like the growling of a car's engine or the sound of garbage cans being moved (due to garbage trucks). When the puppy sees your calmness and certainty, he will also remain calm and should never be frightened by similar sounds in the future. Of course, there might be exceptional cases where a firecracker is thrown directly at a dog or something similar, but those situations are truly extraordinary and require separate attention. NOTHING IS HAPPENING, I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL

This principle should also be followed during walks when encountering other dogs. Of course, you won't allow your puppy to get hurt, but worrying in advance and thinking "something might happen" is pointless. The puppy will become fearful, and you are destined for a cowardly dog.

5. Another crucial principle is: DO NOT PROVIDE EXCESSIVE COMFORT OR CONSOLATION  
Comforting the dog excessively when he is afraid or has experienced something minor only

reinforces the idea that he is weak, and he will begin behaving like a weakling. A self-confident dog is a well-balanced dog that behaves naturally. He does not attack other dogs or people without reason, he remains happy and calm, and he tolerates the presence of strangers and other dogs. If they leave him alone, he will do the same. If your dog is scared or startled by something, you should have an indescribable urge to either pretend that nothing is happening or make light of the situation. Act as if it's all a lot of fun, whether it's a broom falling on him, snow falling from the roof, or a vacuum cleaner approaching, among countless other situations.

6.FEEDING or REGULARITY in general. This is not a principle in the strictest sense, but it is an essential aspect of training. We should feed the puppy at regular times every day. The puppy should eat in peace, such as not during our mealtime, not when a lively neighbor's child is visiting, or not when I am indulging myself, etc. If we have other dogs, we should teach the puppy to eat with them at an early stage. If the puppy doesn't want to eat, we leave the bowl for 10 minutes and then remove it. We never leave food available all the time, and we never give in if the puppy forces it. As the pack leader, you provide the food. You replace the role of the pack leader and decide when and where the dog receives food. However, it is crucial to feed the puppy regularly so that he can be certain he will always get something to eat. This helps him grow into a confident individual. If he has to constantly wonder whether he will get food, when he will get it, or whether he will receive it only in the evening or twice a day, he will become confused, and his life might turn into a constant state of "waiting for food."

Our pack receives their meal at 8 pm every evening, regularly, without fail. By half past eight, they are already excitedly communicating with each other, anticipating mealtime. They gently remind each other that they are there and that we won't "accidentally" forget them or let them down. And then they are content.

If, by chance, I have overlooked an important principle, and this article is read by a cynology expert, please reach out to me. I would be delighted to enhance this article with additional knowledge. However, this article is not specifically focused on the training of working or service dogs. It is intended for owners of social breeds who consider their dog a family member and serves as a guide for training. Of course, this does not exclude potential success in cynological sports or the ability to pass exams.

This article is based on our experiences in raising our puppies and the experiences of new owners of our puppies.

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