

The Perfect Puppy

By Gwen Bailey

The first excerpt deals with the early development stages of puppies.

The Perfect Puppy (完全な子犬) の著者、グエン・ベイリー氏は、英国「ブルークロス動物福祉団体」代表の動物行動学者で、「ペット・ビヘイビア・カウンセラーズ協会」(ペットの行動に関して助言する会) 所属カウンセラーです。このベストセラーからの抜粋を、数回にわたって、ニュースレターでご紹介します。今回は、その第1回目です。

子犬の発育段階と育て方どの子犬も、幼年期から成熟期まで、似たような発育過程をたどって成長します。それぞれの段階を理解し、あなたの子犬が、

一生のうち、どの時期に、どんな反応を示す能力があるかを知ることが大切です。そうすれば、子犬に過大な期待をしたり、重要な生育期に能力を最大限に伸ばすチャンスを逃したりすることもないでしょう。

発育速度は、犬によって多少異なります。ある段階を、他の犬に比べて早く通過するのあれば、予想より遅いものもあります。一般的に、小型犬の方が成長が早く、満1歳以前に成熟することもあります。大型犬は遅く、成犬になるまでに18か月も要する場合があります。

以下に述べるのは、



子犬の成長にかかる平均的時間です。

第1段階 誕生から2週まで

この短い期間、子犬は1日の大部分を眠っており、また、乳を吸う。寒ければ這って兄弟や母犬のぬくもりを求めようとします。排尿と排便には母犬の刺激が必要で、下腹部をなめられることにより排泄が促されます。目は、生後10～14日で開きますが、最初の数週間は視力がまだ強くありません。

移行期 (生後2～3週)

歯が生えてきます。子犬は歩きだし、液体をなめることを覚えます。3週の終わり頃、耳が聞こえるようにな

Gwen Bailey is the Blue Cross Animal Welfare Society's Animal Behaviourist and a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors. This the first of several excerpts we hope to serialize in ARK's newsletters, from her best-selling book, *The Perfect Puppy*.

All puppies follow the same pattern of development, passing through the same stages from infancy through maturity. It is important to know these stages and to realize what responses your puppy is capable of at any particular time in his life. This is so that you do not expect too much from him or miss out on making the most of an opportunity at a critical stage of his development.

The speed at which puppies progress varies a little, some individuals pass through some stages quickly and some take longer than expected. Generally, puppies of

smaller breeds tend to develop more rapidly, often reaching maturity before one-year old, whereas puppies from larger breeds can take longer, some being 18 months before maturing fully. What follows is an average time scale that most puppies conform to.

Newborn period

0 to 2 weeks

During this short phase, the puppy mostly sleeps and suckles. It can crawl and will try to find the warmth of its littermates or its mother if cold. It needs the mother to stimulate urination and defecation which she does by licking the genital area. Eyes open at around 10 to 14 days but vision is poor for the first few weeks.

Transitional period

2-3 weeks

The teeth begin to appear. The puppy learns to walk and lap liquids.

The ears open towards the end of the third week and the sense of smell begins to operate. The puppy develops the ability to urinate and defecate by itself.

What to do: The responsibility for what happens to the puppies during this time lies with the breeder. It has been found that puppies subjected to mild stress at this time are better able to cope with other stresses later on. Picking up each puppy every day, looking at them, and perhaps weighing them constitutes mild stress and conscientious breeders will do this. Each puppy should be picked up once a day and gently held in different positions.

Socialization period

3 to 12 weeks

This is a critical period. During this time, appropriate experience with