

# The Perfect Puppy

By Gwen Bailey

This third excerpt deals with the importance of socialization.

The Perfect Puppy (完璧な子犬)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3回目です。

## 社会化 Socialization

子犬は、成長期にさまざまな経験をさせることによって何でも怖がらずに受け入れられる落ち着いた良い成犬になります。これを「Socialization」「社会化」と言います。これは子犬にとって非常に重要なことで、成犬になってからの犬の性格は、あなたがこの「社

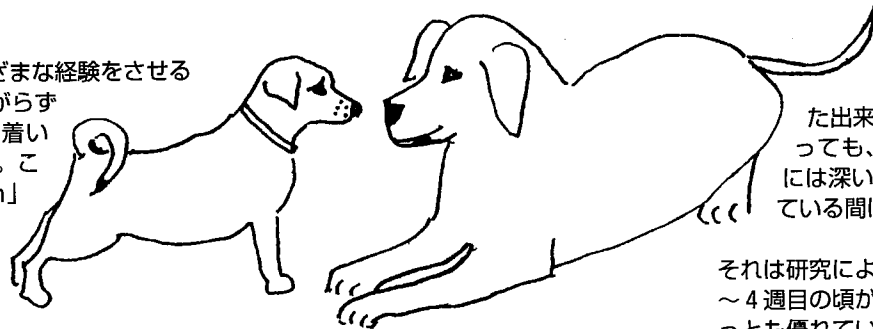
会化」をやるか、やらないかで決まります。「社会化」が十分に行われなかった子犬は人見知りをしたり、ちょっとしたことにもおびえたり、時には攻撃的な性格に育つこともあり、寿命にも影響してきます。

できる限り多くの時間を子犬の「社会化」の為に使って下さい。時間を取る事さえ出来れば決して難しい事ではありません。子犬の将来を良き物にし、バランスのとれた人と仲良くできる成犬を形成するために最も重要な訓練なのです。

## 社会化を行う時期

私達人間と犬の大きな違いの一つが成長の早さです。人間は18年から20年で成人します(それ以上かかる場合もありますが!)が、それに比べて犬は約1年から1年半で成犬になります。人間の幼児期の1週間は成長期のほんの一時であっても、犬は幼児期が短いぶんかなり幼犬にとっての1週間は非常に貴重な1週間になります。

したがって、子犬の内に出来るだけたくさんの楽しい体験をさせておくことが重要です。一番感受性が強いこの時期に経験した出来事は、それが良い経験であっても、悪い経験であっても子犬には深い印象となり、その犬が生きている間は忘れる事はありません。



それは研究により証明もされています。3~4週目の頃が経験から学習する能力がもっとも優れています。そして12週目にな

Gwen Bailey is the Blue Cross Animal Welfare Society's Animal Behaviourist and a member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors. This is the third excerpt from her best selling book, The Perfect Puppy.

## Socialization

The more new experiences and enjoyable encounters that a puppy has as it grows up, the more likely it will be to mature into a well-adjusted adult which can take anything in its stride without becoming fearful. This process is called socialization. Socialization is the most important process in a puppy's life and how much of it you do, or fail to do, will reflect directly in the future character of your puppy. Undersocialized puppies grow up shy, fearful, sometimes aggressive and unable to live their lives to the full.

If you do nothing else, you owe it to your puppy to find time for socialization. It is not difficult to do but time must be set aside for it. It

is probably the most important factor on the future well-being of your dog and in the formation of a well-balanced, friendly adult.

## When to socialize

One of the major differences between ourselves and dogs is the speed at which we grow up. It takes a human approximately 18 to 21 years to mature (although I have known it to take longer!) whereas dogs mature in about one to one and a half years. A week in our childhood is a relatively short period, whereas to a puppy it represents a large proportion of its puppyhood.

It is, therefore, important that you make the most of puppyhood and pack as many good experiences in as possible during this time. Deep and lasting impressions are formed at this age and whether these experiences are good or bad they will be remembered throughout a dog's life.

Research has shown that, from the age of three to four weeks, puppies are capable of learning from the experiences that they have and the more pleasant experiences a puppy

has before the age of 12 weeks, the more confident it will be in new situations. The older a puppy gets, the more cautious he will become and the more difficult it will be to accustom him to new experiences. Therefore, it makes sense to give him many enjoyable encounters as early as possible.

Socialization should be a continuous process up to the age of maturity and concentrated effort should be put in until this age. Socialization becomes progressively more difficult as the puppy grows older, but it is still worth doing and adults may need further effort in order to socialize them adequately.

## Your role : starting straight away

The usual ages for vaccination to be given are 8 and 12 weeks (sometimes 16 weeks as well). Until the vaccinations have taken effect, your puppy will be at risk of contracting diseases from other dogs.

Puppies can be vaccinated at six weeks of age, but because the success of this vaccination cannot be guaranteed, veterinary surgeons