

# The Puppy School Essentials! >>>>

written by  
*Monique de Jager*

**TURN YOUR PUP INTO A PRO**

## **Embracing a world of opportunities**

It is fundamental to expose puppies to a range of positive experiences during the first few weeks of their lives, as this directly and significantly influences their brain development. Puppies that encounter numerous positive experiences develop a higher number of cognitive connections in their brain, and these connections provide lifelong benefits like enabling them to easily solve problems. The critical window period for a puppy to socialize and establish as many connections as possible closes around 16 weeks of age.

The world presents a magnitude of opportunities, therefore your puppy can and should be exposed to various stimuli from an early age. Failure to do so may lead to your puppy experiencing regular fear responses when encountering unfamiliar situations later, this can be detrimental to their overall well-being. Elevated cortisol (stress hormone) levels can lead to increased breathing, heart rate, muscle tension, and elevated blood glucose levels. These physiological responses may have damaging effects on the digestive, reproductive, or immune systems. Over time, this pattern of chronic stress can contribute to the development of anxiety and depression in your puppy. Dogs are social animals and experiencing the world around them releases happy hormones which makes your puppy feel good and boosts their confidence.





## Meeting your puppy's needs

A virtuous puppy school ideally includes all 7 forms of enrichment in the curriculum.

**Social enrichment** - in the form of safe supervised play so that puppies develop bite inhibition, learn competitive skills, and dog body language (calming signals).

**Visual enrichment** - with mirrors or other interesting objects.

**Auditory enrichment** - sounds from the environment with controlled volume levels.

**Tactile enrichment** – provide different walking surfaces for example.

**Olfactory enrichment** – different smells like interesting safe plants.

**Cognitive enrichment** - new objects, problem-solving.

**Food-based enrichment** - sausage bobbing, food puzzles snuffle mats, etc.



## Different training methods

Puppies are inherently driven by their survival instincts, making food a potent primary motivator for luring, shaping, and capturing desired behaviours during training.

Repetition is key in a dog's learning process, and continuous reinforcement is highly effective for teaching new skills. "Jackpotting" is a method of delivering a few treats one after the other immediately after your puppy has had a breakthrough with a challenging task. This brings home the message that they did something right!

Timing is crucial and rewards need to follow desired behaviors as quickly as possible to ensure that puppies understand what they are being rewarded for.

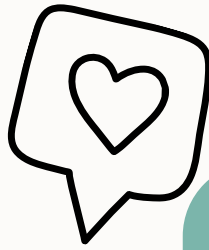
Reputable puppy schools also include information about how to fade lures, the difference between low and high-value treats – and when to use which.

## Life skills

Puppies need to learn how to settle in a busy environment and how to calmly greet other pups. Face-to-face introductions are never a good idea, and we need to guide puppies on how to greet one another.



## Basic obedience



Puppy class sets the scene for basic obedience and ensures that you and your puppy have a meaningful relationship. If you have a great relationship with your puppy, future training will be fun and your puppy will be eager and willing to learn.

Zani Koen mentioned, **“Attending puppy classes has been a crucial step in creating the “adventure” dog of my dreams. The socialization with other dogs, people (even children), and different environments from a young age has helped to turn Soda into a confident and optimistic adult dog”.**

Puppy classes will ensure your puppy will be ready and emotionally equipped to easily progress into dog sports and other disciplines with a solid foundation. .

## Cooperative care

According to a study by the “From Forceful to fear free” publication, 51% of people said their pets dislike going to the vet. If your puppy is desensitized to being touched and experienced body handling from an early age, they will learn that they have a choice in the matter, and cooperation becomes voluntary. Forcefully handling a puppy creates fear and distrust in people.



**Monique de Jager**

Tel: 071 893 3731

Email: [jurassicbarkpta@gmail.com](mailto:jurassicbarkpta@gmail.com)



## Training Tips

### #1

Always have **two different types of treats** for class, one lower value for the beginning of class when they are very eager to eat the treats and a high-value treat for when they are less attentive and more satiated.

### #2

Choose a **reward marker** word to be used for praise and consistently use that word when your pup performs the desired behaviour. A treat immediately follows the reward marker word.

### #3

Rewards can be anything your pup enjoys; it does not always have to be food. You may **use the environment to your advantage**, for example, sniffing rewards.

**Always end training on a high note.**  
This will ensure that your puppy is excited and ready for the next round of training with you.