

# PET PEEVES PERIODICAL

A newsletter dedicated to preserving the human-animal bond through behavior counseling.

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## WELCOME!!



Amanda with her 6 year old pug, Rocky.

Welcome to my first edition of Pet Peeves Periodical. I am so excited to be able to offer this newsletter. There will be topics discussed on a quarterly basis, with one cat and one dog topic

## The Facts of Puppy Socialization

Puppy socialization is a very important part of owning a dog. If puppies are not exposed to all kinds of situations, the chances of them being more fearful of new things in adulthood are significantly increased. Young and old people, children, men, women, dogs, cats, cars, and all

kinds of everyday objects, like the vacuum and broom, are examples of things your puppy should have exposure to. For example, even if your dog will not be around children initially, you never know what future circumstances may arise. You may be starting a family in the future, grandchildren

may come and go from your home, or a friend may stop by with their children. If your dog is not exposed to these circumstances when it's young, the chances of an unintentional bite due to fear are very high. Puppies need to be exposed to all of these new and different

in each issue. The majority of these topics will be on general behavior questions, many of which JAMC clients ask on a daily basis. These topics will include basic puppy/kitten behavior problems, training techniques, and ways to hopefully prevent these behaviors before they become a problem and a learned behavior.

There is more to owning a pet than just feeding and watering it. Too many animals are brought to the humane society, dropped off out in the country to fend for themselves, and even euthanized because of behavior problems. The majority of these problems could have been prevented with the appropriate counseling and training. Let us all do our part in bringing up happy, healthy pets. As a result, you will notice a much happier home life with a well behaved pet! Furthermore, if anybody has a specific topic they would like to have discussed, please feel free to contact me at Janesville Animal Medical Center.

Sincerely,

Amanda Henry, CVT

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### Special points of interest:

- Why puppy socialization is so important.
- When is the right time to start puppy classes.
- Kitten socialization facts.

Resources are available on the back page.



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## Puppy socialization (continued from page 1)

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situations throughout their life in a positive manner. This means using lots of treats and rewards when they are behaving appropriately. Punishment should never be used. When animals are punished, they tend to become fearful of us, instead of being happy around us.

Puppies are most susceptible to new things prior to 12 weeks of age. This is why it is best to get them into puppy classes as soon as possible. Many people are concerned about starting classes before a vaccine schedule has been completed. It is necessary to weigh the risks of possibly getting a disease versus a lifetime of behavior problems. For the most part, the risk of disease is minimal, as long as some sort of vaccine protocol has been started.

One other very important aspect is that puppies should not be taken away from their littermates until at least 7-8 weeks of age. They learn valuable information from the mom and other puppies on how to interact with new dogs in the future. Puppies taken away too soon, generally have a hard time socializing with other dogs.

Socialization is not only important as a puppy, but also as an adult to maintain good practices. Classes are available for all stages of your dog's life, including fun classes like agility. Classes are a great way to strengthen the bond between you and your four-legged family member. Remember to socialize, socialize, socialize any chance you get!



CK is having a great time playing and getting socialized. He is JAMC's clinic kitty!

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## Giving Your Kitten The Right Start

Most people know that puppies need to attend classes when they are young, but they don't realize that this is important for kittens, as well. If kittens are inadequately socialized, they have a very high chance of developing irreversible fears, timidity, and even aggression. Kittens need to be continuously exposed to a variety of people, animals, and environmental stimuli. Examples include exposure to different odors, sounds, children, men, women, and dogs.

The most critical period for socialization is between 6-12 weeks of age, but should continue throughout the lifetime of the cat. By four weeks of age they are ready to develop social relationships with people and other animals. They should be kept with

their littermates until at least seven weeks of age. Kittens learn invaluable information from their littermates. This is one important reason why a singleton (a single kitten in a litter) should be raised in another litter of kittens of similar age, or have at least one other kitten around.

Make sure that physical or verbal punishment is never used on your kitten. This can lead to the kitten being afraid of being approached and handled. Always reward good behavior with treats or play time. This will help strengthen the bond between you and your kitten, and give it the great start to the happy life it deserves.

### RESOURCES

Overall, Karen L. *Clinical Behavioral Medicine for Small Animals*. Mosby, Inc, 1997

Landsberg, G., W. Hunthausen, and L. Ackerman. *Handbook of Behavior Problems of the Dog and Cat*. 2nd ed. Elsevier Science Limited, 2003