

## Five Critical Stages of Your Puppies Development

### STAGE ONE

The first stage is from birth to about 13 days. At birth, the puppy is practically helpless. He's blind, deaf, toothless and is restricted in motion (he can crawl or slither on his stomach, with his paws making swimming motions). He experiences very little in the way of learning. He's strictly a creature of reflexes. His total behavior pattern is built around reflexes dealing with food, elimination and bodily contact with his mother and litter mates. When deprived of food or bodily contact, the pup will object by whimpering or whining. During this first stage, he lives in a half-world, aware only of his physical needs.

### STAGE TWO

This stage extends from the 13th day to the 19th, according to Dr. Scott. It begins on the 13th day when the puppy opens his eyes (13 days is an average; some pups open their eyes earlier, some later). For the next 7 days, the puppy moves very quickly through sensory, motor and psychological changes. At the end of the 7 days, the pup can see, hear and walk. His milk teeth appear and he can eat solid food. He can also form conditioned reflexes and adapt to a variety of situations. But he still shows no signs of any permanent learning ability.

### STAGE THREE

The third stage begins on the 19th or 20th day after birth and continues until the puppy is 7 to 10 weeks old. It is a crucial stage in the puppy's development, one that sets the pattern for future behavior. And it is the stage when socialization begins and the pup forms a relationship with human beings and other animals. The third stage is ushered in by the pup's startled reaction to sounds. In stages one and two, the young puppies ignore sounds. But the puppy in stage three will really jump if you make a loud noise. He will also show an investigative curiosity about people and animals, and will tussle and scrap playfully with his litter mates. During this stage, the puppy's nervous system is still immature.

Neglect or faulty handling of the puppy during this third stage can result in serious damage to the behavior pattern. We've already learned what complete isolation can do to young puppies in this age group. Dr. Scott's group studied another effect of environment on the young puppy. Three-week-old pups were raised in individual cages, away from people and other dogs. They had no contact with the physical or social world beyond their cages. After three to four months in the cages, the puppies were taken out. They all seemed more or less physically sound, but they were woefully lacking in experience! These ivory-tower puppies couldn't adapt to the competitive life with other puppies their age, nor could they comprehend the world outside their cages. In general, what happens to a pup during the third stage of his life will determine his future behavior

### STAGE FOUR

Stage four begins when the puppy is from 7 to 10 weeks of age. This is the usual age at which puppies are weaned from their mothers. The pup is not completely independent, but he now has some increased motor skills and his nervous system is similar to that of an adult dog. The 7- to 10-week age group is ideal for raising a puppy. It is the best age at which to establish a sound relationship between dogs and people. If the puppy has had a happy third stage, he's eager to form an attachment. And what's more, he's ready to learn.

### STAGE FIVE

The fifth and final critical stage starts at about 12 weeks of age and lasts until the pup is 4 months old. Now the puppy starts to assert himself. He'll be bold, perky; testing you in all kinds of situations. It is time to teach him discipline. An understanding of your dog's instincts and behavior is a must for intelligent dog ownership. It's true that dogs just grew up in the "old days." But don't compare the "old days" with today. Know your dog and know him well. He's an extraordinary animal!

<http://www.HousebreakYourPuppyin7Days.com>