

# PUPPY DEVELOPMENT AGES & STAGES

**Birth to 12 days**

## **Neonatal Period**

The puppy is largely immobile and remains close to its mother and littermates. Its eyes have not yet opened, and its hearing is still developing.

**13 to 20 days**

## **Transition Period**

The puppy has developed the ability to hear clearly, and its eyes have now opened. It has begun to explore its surroundings by wobbling around. A responsible breeder will introduce various stimuli at this stage, including different sounds, toys, surfaces, and textures to promote healthy development.

**3 to 8 weeks**

## **Primary Socialising**

Puppies will develop their complete set of teeth during this stage. It is essential for them to remain with their mother and littermates to learn bite inhibition, which helps them control the intensity of their bite while engaging in play.



## 8 to 14 weeks

### **Fear impact period**

- Puppies transition to their new homes during this stage.
- Complete weaning of the puppy occurs at this time.
- Crate training should be finalized during this period.
- This is a phase characterized by rapid learning.
- Experiences during this time significantly influence future social behavior.
- It is a natural fear period; thus, caution must be exercised to avoid overwhelming the puppy during socialization.

Negative experiences can have lasting effects.

## 8 to 14 weeks

### **Human Socialising**

- *\*\*Puppy training should begin at this stage.\*\**
- The socialization window is narrowing—it's essential to positively and gradually expose your puppy to new people, places, animals, sounds, and experiences. This will aid them in becoming a well-adjusted and confident adult dog. This vital process helps to prevent fear and reactivity later in life by teaching them that new experiences are not frightening.
- ***It involves more than just interactions with other dogs;*** it also involves acclimating to various environments, objects, surfaces, and even gentle handling.



## The time to easily socialise your dog is now closing



**14 to 16 weeks**

### Juvenile Period

By this point, they should have had numerous positive experiences in the outside world, including plenty of car rides, visits to the groomer and vet, and the ability to walk past other people and dogs calmly.

**4 months to 6 months**

### Adolescent Period Begins

- Baby teeth will eventually fall out to make way for adult teeth, which can be uncomfortable and painful; therefore, it's important to provide suitable chew toys.
- Most of the height growth takes place during this period.
- This stage marks the onset of sexual maturity.
- Your dog may begin to test boundaries by not returning when called or refusing to play fetch as they once did. It's crucial to remain consistent and predictable during this phase.

## 5 to 12 months

### ***Adolescent Period*** **Second fear impact period**

Your dog might suddenly become cautious about unfamiliar things or appear shy and timid around new people or situations. It's essential to avoid overwhelming situations and to exercise patience.

Additionally, investing time into fun training can be beneficial for boosting your dog's confidence.

## 12 months +

### **Maturity**

- This stage represents a time of social and physical maturation.
- Smaller dog breeds tend to mature faster than larger dogs.
- It's advisable to avoid neutering too early.
- Growth hormones are essential for the fusion of growth plates in the limbs. These plates are soft cartilage areas at the ends of a puppy's long bones that allow for lengthening. They are susceptible to injury, which can result in permanent deformities if damaged. Therefore, it's crucial to restrict high-impact activities until they have fused.
- Growth plates typically close at varying ages depending on the breed, usually between \*\*6–8 months\*\* for small breeds and \*\*14–18 months\*\* for large breeds.
- Ongoing training for enjoyment is highly encouraged.