



# NEW OWNER HANDBOOK



## WHAT TO EXPECT THE FIRST WEEK:

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### MISTAKES HAPPEN

With so much changing today your puppy isn't concerned about remembering all the things he knows already or things he's used to doing. That means accidents will happen, he'll bark, he'll act up. He's going to have everything new and it's scary. New sights, sounds and smells.

So, for the first day give him comfort and forgive his accidents. Clean up the messes and don't scold him. Prepare for this and take him to his potty box or outside every 20 – 30 minutes to avoid these mistakes. Once he gets used to his new home you'll start to correct housebreaking accidents as they occur as you don't want this habit to become just that ...a habit.

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### MEET THE FAMILY

This is the time for family gatherings to be put on hold. You don't want to over-stress your new puppy with visitors. For the first couple of weeks everything should be calm and quiet. If excited family members do visit (or your children), they should sit calmly and wait for the puppy to come investigate them and introduce himself on his own terms. If he goes to them on his own, praise him happily for being social and give him some ear rubs. Don't just pick him up and snuggle him. Let him make the first moves. Children can be just as excitable as puppies and thus, can be scary to your pup so reassure both the children and the pup and keep things calm.

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### PUPPY NEEDS A PLACE

Your pup's own place needs to be set up. Consider it his 'room', like you have a room of your own. This area will be his safety place, a place to go to sleep or de-stress. Include toys, a blanket, and if this is a pen set up – his food and water bowls. Make it known to children and family members that this is a 'hands-off' place, and if the pup is there it's not time to go in and invade his space. He needs his own area to feel secure and confident. For the first few days, he doesn't need to visit your entire house. Wait to show him around and do it slowly so he understands where he is and that nothing is scary.



# AKC S.T.A.R. PUPPY<sup>SM</sup>

Socialization★Training★Activity★Responsibility

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## AKC CANINE GOOD CITIZEN<sup>SM</sup> (CGC)

The AKC's Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Program is the next logical step after S.T.A.R. Puppy. The CGC Program teaches good manners to dogs and responsible dog ownership to their owners. The 10-step Canine Good Citizen test is a non-competitive test for all dogs, including purebreds and mixed breeds. The CGC award is a prerequisite for many therapy dog groups. Some homeowner's insurance companies are encouraging CGC testing, and an increasing number of apartments and condos require that resident dogs pass the CGC test.

### Test 1: Accepting a friendly stranger

The dog will allow a friendly stranger to approach it and speak to the handler.

### Test 2: Sitting politely for petting

The dog will allow a friendly stranger to pet it while it is out with its handler.

### Test 3: Appearance and grooming

The dog will permit someone to check its ears and front feet, as a groomer or veterinarian would do.

### Test 4: Out for a walk (walking on a loose lead)

Following the evaluator's instructions, the dog will walk on a loose lead (with the handler/owner).

### Test 5: Walking through a crowd

This test demonstrates that the dog can move about politely in pedestrian traffic and is under control in public places. The dog and handler walk around and pass close to several people (at least three).

### Test 6: Sit and down on command and Staying in place

The dog must do sit AND down on command, then the owner chooses the position for leaving the dog in the stay.

### Test 7: Coming when called

This test demonstrates that the dog will come when called by the handler (from 10 feet on a leash).

### Test 8: Reaction to another dog

This test demonstrates that the dog can behave politely around other dogs. Two handlers and their dogs approach each other from a distance of about 20 feet, stop, shake hands and exchange pleasantries.

### Test 9: Reaction to distraction

The evaluator will select and present two distractions such as dropping a chair, etc.

### Test 10: Supervised separation

This test demonstrates that a dog can be left with a trusted person. The evaluator will hold the dog's leash while the owner goes out of sight for three minutes.

For Canine Good Citizen details, go to [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) Type "CGC" in the search box.

For more information on S.T.A.R. Puppy, see [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) Type "STAR Puppy" in the search box.

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## INDOOR HOUSETRAINING

Housetraining is one of the most important skills your puppy will learn. Most information on house-training is related to teaching a dog to go outside when nature calls. But there are some situations, particularly with city dogs, in which you'll want to teach a puppy to use papers or an indoor "puppy potty." With many puppies, the indoor set-up will serve as a safety net until the puppy can be transitioned to the outdoors. Remember that even when puppies are using papers, they still need plenty of socialization and opportunities for outdoor exercise.

### **1. Choose an area with a floor surface that is easy to clean (such as a tile doorway, kitchen or bathroom).**

Cover the floor with plastic. You can use a piece of an old shower curtain. Put the newspapers on top of the plastic.

### **2. Alternatives to newspapers**

If you don't want to use newspapers, pet stores sell "puppy pads" that are specifically designed for house-training. In addition to puppy pads, a number of companies have a product called a "dog potty." To decide if you'd rather use a commercial dog potty instead of papers, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) Type "dog potty" in the search box and you'll be able to look at a number of commercial products.

### **3. Keep the area clean**

When your puppy uses the papers, replace the dirty papers (or clean the potty) as soon as possible. If you catch your puppy using the papers, be sure to praise the puppy. White vinegar or special cleaning products from your local pet store can be used to remove odors.

### **4. Accidents happen**

If you catch your puppy eliminating somewhere other than the paper, quickly pick the puppy up and rush to the paper. Don't yell at or scold the puppy. Praise the puppy for going on the paper.

### **5. Transitioning to the Outdoors**

As they grow older, puppies will be able to control their bladders and bowels for longer periods of time. This will make it possible for you to get down the hall of a city high-rise, onto the elevator, and outside in plenty of time. Praise your puppy and give a treat for eliminating outside. If it is your goal to have a dog who does not use papers indoors, begin the housetraining process with frequent trips outside.

For more information on S.T.A.R. Puppy, see [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) Type "STAR Puppy" in the search box.

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## HOUSETRAINING YOUR PUPPY

Housetraining will be one of the most important skills your puppy will learn. There are some very simple tips that will help with this process.

1. **Crate training.** By nature, dogs are very clean and they don't like to eliminate where they sleep or eat. The first step to housetraining your puppy is to crate train the puppy (see crate training lesson). If you choose to not use a crate, you'll want to have a way to confine the puppy to an area such as a small room or a section of a room. Baby gates across the doorway can be a good tool.
2. **Timing.** Remember, timing is everything when it comes to housetraining. The key to predicting when your puppy will need to eliminate is having **very consistent feeding times**. You should feed a consistent diet because changes in food can affect your puppy's bowel habits. If you feed the same food at the same time each day, you can predict approximately when your puppy will have a bowel movement.
3. **Scheduling.** Trips outside should be frequent and **the schedule for outside trips should be consistent**. It is commonly recommended that young puppies be taken outside to relieve themselves at least once an hour. If you have a work schedule that won't facilitate you taking your puppy out this often, understand that young puppies don't yet have control of their bladders and bowels and they may have accidents. They can't help this. Be patient when accidents happen. Quietly clean up the accident with cleaning products that will remove the smell.
4. **Reinforcing desired behaviors.** Rewards are important. When you take your puppy outside, be sure to **reward the puppy for eliminating (urinating or defecating) outdoors**. A treat and lavish praise will increase the likelihood the puppy will continue to eliminate outside.
5. **Providing exercise.** Activity plays a critical role in housetraining. Activity (such as running, playing, or walking on a leash) will increase your puppy's motility, meaning that exercise stimulates the bowels to move. A good walk in the morning or starting the day by playing with you in the yard will get your puppy off to a good start in the morning.

### What Not To Do

Never punish your puppy for a housetraining accident. Rubbing a puppy's nose in urine or feces is abusive and will not help the training process. If you are having housetraining problems, your S.T.A.R. Puppy instructor can give you some advice. Your veterinarian can assist you with selecting the proper food and feeding schedule for your puppy.

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## PUPPY PLAY TIME

Playing with your puppy every day will build a bond that will last a lifetime. Simple games stimulate your puppy's mind and they teach problem-solving skills. And, they're fun for both your puppy and you!

### 1. "Find it!"

Sit on the floor. When your puppy is close to you, show the puppy a toy, then hide it behind your back, under one of your hands on the floor, or under your leg. Tell the puppy, "Find it!" When the puppy gets the toy, use lavish praise in an enthusiastic voice. For very young puppies, you may need to make the game simple to start. Show the puppy the toy and cover only a portion of it with your hand. You'll eventually get to where you can hide the toy behind your back or for older dogs, somewhere in the room, and they'll find it.

### 2. "Fetch it!"

Start with a ball (for larger dogs) or toy. In the beginning, throw it a short distance only a few feet away. Tell the puppy, "Fetch it." When the puppy gets the toy, call the puppy back to you. You can clap your hands and use encouragement to call the puppy. Give lavish praise, hugs, and pets when the puppy brings the toy.

### 3. Nothing like a good massage

Petting, holding young and small dogs in your arms, and a gentle massage are all good activities for bonding. Start at the head and ears, gently massaging your puppy. Work your way down the body. Some puppies will resist having their legs or feet touched, or they won't want you touching their ears. If your puppy squirms, tries to get away, or tries to bite, you'll know you've identified a target behavior that you need to work on.

### 4. Hide and Seek

To play hide and seek, when the puppy is distracted, you can go out of sight not far away and call, "Find me." When the puppy comes and finds you, praise the puppy. For older dogs, you can go to a different room in the house and call the dog to find you. You'll eventually want to teach the command, "Stay," so the puppy does not learn to try to find you every time you leave the room. Make sure that you go out of sight sometimes and don't call the puppy.

### 5. Scheduling a Play Date

Young puppies learn through play while they are still in the litter. Chances to play with other puppies in safe, controlled situations can teach your puppy canine social skills.



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The “R” in S.T.A.R. PUPPY stands for Responsibility. Every puppy deserves a responsible owner. The AKC’s Canine Good Citizen® Responsible Dog Owner’s Pledge is for S.T.A.R. puppy owners too. After S.T.A.R. PUPPY, we hope you’ll go on to earn the CGC award with your wonderful puppy!

## **AKC CGC<sup>TM</sup> RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER’S PLEDGE<sup>®</sup>**

All dogs deserve a responsible owner. I agree to maintain my dog’s health, safety, and quality of life.

### **I will be responsible for my dog’s health needs. These include:**

- routine veterinary care including check-ups and vaccines
- adequate nutrition through proper diet; clean water at all times
- daily exercise and regular bathing and grooming

### **I will be responsible for my dog’s safety.**

- I will properly control my dog by providing fencing where appropriate, not letting my dog run loose, and using a leash in public.
- I will ensure that my dog has some form of identification when appropriate (which may include collar tags, tattoos, or microchip ID).
- I will provide adequate supervision when my dog and children are together.

### **I will not allow my dog to infringe on the rights of others.**

- I will not allow my dog to run loose in the neighborhood.
- I will not allow my dog to be a nuisance to others by barking while in the yard, in a hotel room, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog’s waste in all public areas such as on the grounds of hotels, on sidewalks, parks, etc.
- I will pick up and properly dispose of my dog’s waste in wilderness areas, on hiking trails, campgrounds and in off-leash parks.

### **I will be responsible for my dog’s quality of life.**

- I understand that basic training is beneficial to all dogs.
- I will give my dog attention and playtime.
- I understand that owning a dog is a commitment in time and caring.

Owner’s Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

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## SPAYING AND NEUTERING PET DOGS

The S.T.A.R. Puppy Program is all about responsible ownership. The American Kennel Club encourages responsible dog owners to spay or neuter their pet dogs if there is no plan to participate in AKC conformation events.

Conformation events are the dog shows in which licensed judges select the best specimens of each breed based on the dog's physical structure, general health and appearance, gait, and temperament.

Breeding should be left to responsible breeders who have an organized breeding plan and knowledge about canine genetics. They breed dogs to preserve and/or improve a breed. Many have contracts that specify if for any reason a new owner can not keep a dog, it must be returned to the breeder rather than taken to a shelter.

Spaying (for females) and neutering (for males) can have health and behavioral benefits. For females, the benefits of spaying include lowering the risk for uterine cancer and mammary tumors, no more messy heat cycles, and eliminating the chance of accidental breedings that result in unwanted puppies. With male dogs, neutering can decrease aggression and the tendency for the male dog who has females on his mind to want to get loose and wander. If it is done early enough, neutering helps do away with with scent marking, the tendency for the dog to lift his leg and leave his "signature" on your furniture. Neutering male dogs also reduces the risk for testicular cancer and prostate disease. Your veterinarian can help you make decisions about the right time to spay/neuter your dog.

For more information on the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program, see [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)  
Type "STAR Puppy" in the search box.

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