

Subject: Rearing puppies from birth to placement.

Part One (Discussion posted on PSG July 30, 2007 by "Linda"
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I will answer in parts.

I start at three weeks of age. Each pup get held, stroked and talked to for 5 minutes each evening while I watch TV. NO LONGER THAN 5 MINUTES AT THIS AGE. If I have a large litter, hubby helps out to cut the time down. As the weeks go by, I increase the time. At 6 weeks I start taking them in the car (we don't leave the drive at first) giving praise for a calm reaction.

Also at four weeks I start putting "things" in their environment. i.e.--a ball of foil, a coke bottle, a pine cone, towel--whatever--a new thing each day. Watch them--don't just leave the things. Some are dangerous if they decide to chew them.

They get a new smell each day too. Perfume on a piece of paper to smell, people food, soap, and grass and so on.

And a new sound each day--the vac, a radio, snapping my fingers, whistling, pop a balloon, roll a Coke bottle on the sidewalk (this when they go outside--around 6 weeks).

Change surfaces in their box. Paper, a piece of linoleum, a piece of carpet, a flattened cardboard box, a flattened cardboard box wrapped in foil. When they are 6 weeks and go outside, let them walk on the concrete drive, blacktop, gravel, grass, dirt mulch etc.

At 3 week, shave their faces, feet and tail. Do it again at 8 weeks to 9 weeks and the third time expect struggling. Use all your patience then!

Keep up all this stimulation as time goes on and add to it by taking them places in the car. Take them to other breeder's homes (ones that have not had their dogs out lately) to meet other dogs and people. Take them to the bank, the pet shop and the horse farm down the road and let them get nose to nose with the horses! Just take them anywhere and everywhere!

Linda

Part two

Weaning---

I begin on day 23 of life. I use canned goat's milk that has been warmed just a little.

Keep the dam away from the pups all night and give the first feeding in the morning. I use a glass pie plate at first and graduate to a stainless steel puppy bowl that has a donut shape. Once the pups learn to lap (they use their tongues in the reverse motion to nurse) start adding human baby rice cereal to thicken it. After 3 days advance to two feedings a day and thicken the gruel more by adding pulverized

puppy kibble (soaked). Every 3 to 4 days, make the gruel thicker (drop out the rice cereal) and add meals (get up to 4 per day) until they are 6 weeks old. After the food is all eaten, allow the dam in with the pups.

Pick a day you will be home and dry the dam up by withholding food and water for 24 hours. I start counting at bed time so that she's got several hours under her belt (so to speak) in the morning. I do let her have very small amounts of water through the day and a regular drink in early evening, but no food until bedtime. (Make sure the bathroom doors are closed!) That meal should be very small--only one third to half of what she usually gets. (Her meals will have gotten quite large while nursing a litter).

Once weaned keep the dam and pups separated for the most part. They will stimulate her to make milk--this is not good. Let them play together a little each day though. They still need her lessons.

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Part three (and last)

I do temperament test for other people and have been a breeder for 25 years now. The pups are supposed to be tested by a stranger. Both of the other people in this area who did temperament tests have given it up due to their ages. That is the only reason I no longer do the tests--pay for someone to do them.

Pups are born with their lifelong temperaments intact (which cannot ever be changed). I judge mine myself now, but if you can find someone to do it that is my recommendation.

Do not confuse temperament with; 1) training, 2) dominance, or 3) learned behavior.

You asked about books. I can recommend The Monks of New Skeet. You will learn about puppy development from this one.

If there is anything else I can help you with, please let me know. Twenty five years and 27 litters makes me an expert on this subject! And--this has been fun!

Linda