

# Welcome Home, Puppy!

*by Elaine Pendell, M.Ed, CPT*

You've just brought your new puppy home and you're SO excited! Until he relieves himself on your dining room rug. Or chews a hole in your wall. (Yes...they can do that.) Or keeps you up barking and crying night after night after night. This is typically the moment when I get "the call." You know. The one with the once thrilled owner of a wonderful new puppy now transformed into a frustrated—and sometimes sobbing—owner of a puppy they don't know what to do with. It's a typical scenario—but one that can be avoided with a little planning.

One of the most important things you can do to ensure that you and your puppy share a lifetime of enjoyment is to begin training him the moment he comes home. Some owners read all of the training books and watch all of the training DVDs they can get their hands on before bringing a puppy home. And there are a lot of excellent resources available for those interested in doing that. However, for many puppy owners, it's one thing to read about training—but an entirely different thing to implement it correctly and consistently. That's perfectly understandable. Because each puppy is different and will require a unique approach when it comes to dealing with behavioral issues. One that often isn't "by the book."

For puppy owners who are either having a hard time implementing what they've read or who just don't know where to even begin, consider bringing a trainer in to conduct a puppy developmental session. Doing so can help owners and their puppies get started off on the right foot. If it's done in your home without requiring your puppy to be around other dogs, it allows you to start the training and socialization process before he is fully vaccinated—giving you a head start that will prove to offer a host of long-term benefits. Interestingly enough, the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior believes that it should be the standard of care for puppies to receive such socialization before they are fully vaccinated.

During the first three months of a puppy's life, his interest in new people, animals, objects and experiences far outweighs his fear of them. And it's during this window that the socialization process should begin to take place. If it doesn't—or if it's done improperly—there is an exponential increase in the risk of your puppy experiencing significant behavioral problems as she moves into adulthood. These can include fear, avoidance, and/or aggression. It's behavioral problems such as these that are the greatest threat to the bond between owners and their dogs.

At Carolina Dog Training, we come to your home and conduct a one-on-one, two-hour puppy developmental session that covers topics such as:

- Crate training
- House training
- Jumping
- Play-biting
- Leash introduction
- A variety of handling and socialization exercises including unfamiliar visual, tactile and auditory stimuli

Bringing home a new puppy should be one of the most exciting events of your life. And by getting things started off right with a puppy developmental consultation, you can make sure it's a very happy memory for you *and* your pup!

*For more information about Puppy Developmental Consultations and other dog training needs, call Carolina Dog Training at 919.349.0000 or visit [www.carolindogtraining.com](http://www.carolindogtraining.com).*