Puppy Development Timeline 🌽



Preschooler - Socialization Period

Primary Socialization

3-5 weeks



Talk to your vet to set a schedule for puppy boosters, usually every 3-4 weeks until 16 wks.

Immediately after adoption

8 weeks Early Spay and Neuter Earliest age to separate 8 Weeks from litter to avoid issues

Foundation Training should begin 8 weeks

Fear Period 8-10 weeks

Traumatic experiences may result in lifelong avoidance.

Elementary - Juvenile

Final puppy booster vaccinations typically administered

16 weeks

Permanent Teeth begin 17-18 wks. / 4 mos. to emerge

Bladder Control Fully 4-5 mos Develops

Accidental litters may happen ~4 mos. + if not spayed/neutered yet. Schedule surgery in advance.

Teenager - Adolescence

Skeletal **Maturity**

8-10 months for a medium-sized dog

All permanent adult teeth have grown in

Annual Vaccinations

16 months

Growth plates close ~18 months

Before this time, allow your puppy exercise though free play and take as many breaks as they want. Repetitive exercise like long hikes/ walks and high-impact exercise like jogging and jumping should wait until after 18 months.

Secondary Socialization Begins

6 weeks

This period is the most important stage of development for the prevention of future behavior issues. Exposure to new things and keeping new experiences positive during this timeframe can have a positive impact on their development.

See Socialization Page for more info.

Puppy Class 7-16 weeks

Secondary 12 weeks Socialization Ends

Puppies become progressively more reluctant to approach new people/things 12-16 weeks

Ease of learning declines 16 weeks

Puppies become progressively more independent during Juvenile stage

Sexual Maturity /Puberty

6-9 months

2nd Fear Period

Potential Lasts 1-3 weeks May occur sometime between 6-14 months of age.

Adolescent dogs may become fearful of both familiar and unfamiliar things.

- Your puppy's personality is still developing until they reach social
- Think of them as a teenager, and provide ample mental/physical exercise and opportunities to express natural dog behaviors.
- Most importantly, have patience!

Adult

Social Maturity 2-3 Years

Depends on size of dog. Small breeds mature faster.

Congrats, you made it!

Your dog has reached maturity.

- Play behavior decreases.
- Confidence increases.
- Dog is in physical and mental prime.
- Socially mature dogs may become selective of their dog playmates and less tolerant of other dogs.

For more detailed information, see Puppy Start Right - Foundation Training for the Companion Dog by Kenneth M. Martin, DVM & Debbie Martin, RVT, VTS (Behavior), CPDT-KA, KPA CTP and Puppy Culture: The Powerful First 12 Weeks That Can Shape Your Puppy's Future. Speak with your veterinarian if you have any questions about this general timeline. Visit UtahHumane.org/OnlinePuppyClass for more information.