

# Things to Know about the Six Phases of Puppyhood

Compared to humans, dogs mature very fast. Most dogs are physically grown sometime between their first and second birthdays. In comparison, at this age, humans are considered toddlers, and still working on basic skills. I break down the dog to human behavioral developmental timeline, respectively, as follows:

- Birth to 8 weeks – infant
- 8 weeks to 4 months – toddler through preschool
- 4 to 6 months – elementary school
- 6 to 12 months – middle school through high school
- 12 to 18 months – young adult
- 2 to 3 years – fully mature

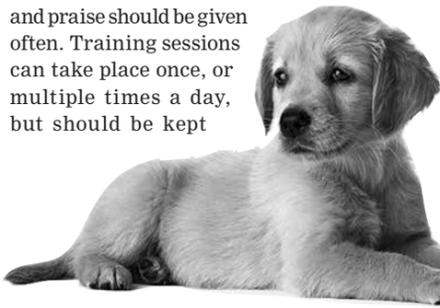
When bringing a puppy into the home, know up front that something of value will be destroyed; that just comes with the territory. While a puppy is being house trained, or if they are not listening well, they should be kept on a leash when inside the house. This allows the human to be in full control of the situation. Pups should not have free reign until they are house-trained and under verbal control.

Until about four months of age, puppies should be allowed to be babies. During this time they get loved on, played with, socialization, and learn basic manners; like no jumping or teeth on people. This is also the age when pups should learn to be comfortable wearing a collar and walking on a leash. It is unrealistic to expect puppies to understand the concept of house-training during the first few months; therefore it is the human's job to keep on top of things. This usually involves having a potty schedule and not giving the pup free roam of the house. Infant and toddler puppies will have to "go" during the night, so someone must be responsible to get up during the night to take them out.

At four months old it's time to start school. Puppies should be taught basic obedience; heel, sit, down, stay, and come. Training needs to be fun! While learning something new, treats

## the Canine Coach

by Valerie Broadway



and praise should be given often. Training sessions can take place once, or multiple times a day, but should be kept short (10 minutes or less) and positive.

Adolescence hits most puppies at five to six months old. This is when puppies become more curious about the world. They are finding their independence and are no longer attached to the humans at the ankle like Velcro. This stage is when most humans begin to get frustrated. Puppies become rowdy and difficult to live with; straying from home, digging holes in the yard, jumping on people, chewing and tearing things up. Compared to the teenage years in humans, adolescents are testing themselves and everyone around them. This is the time they must have guidance, direction, and when necessary, corrections. At this age clear boundaries and consequences are needed. Puppies must understand they have limits that will be enforced. If obedience training hasn't begun yet, start it now. Adolescence can last until 18 months of age, or longer; depending on the breed and other factors.

The next phase is young adulthood. This is like being a human in the late teens to early twenties. If dogs don't understand the hierarchy in the home by this time, then they may

feel like they can take over. If they haven't already tried it during adolescence, puppies may become pushy and not listen well. Mentally, dogs are still puppyish at this stage, so it is still easy to make the behavioral changes needed in order to have a peaceful home.

A puppy has only been on the planet for weeks or months. Often too much is expected of them. Be realistic and proactive. Puppies need to be introduced to the world, and in a positive way. A puppy should go everywhere possible with their people. Under-socialized dogs will become fearful and often aggressive. Until they are 2 years old, or have proven they can be trusted, dogs should be crated when they can't be supervised. Trust is earned when dogs don't have accidents in the house, chew things up, or bother other pets.

By 2 years old, 3 in late bloomers, most dogs have matured, and are much easier to live with. For people who don't want to deal with the hassle of puppyhood, this is the minimum age to get a dog. Raising a puppy is a gamble. There are many factors that can result in the puppy growing up to be a difficult dog. Understanding the phases of puppyhood helps people know what they are getting into, and if in fact, it is better to skip puppyhood altogether. Starting with a mature dog allows the opportunity to know the dog's adult size, personality, and energy level.

This is the time of year when puppies join families as gifts, or summer puppies are now adolescents. For more helpful information see the *Chatham County Line* June 2014 issue "Choosing a Puppy", July 2014 issue "House-Training Issues", and February 2015 "Sibling Rivalry".

From the Canine Coaching Services family to yours, have a happy, peaceful, and blessed holiday season!

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"We're futurists. We're imagineers. We're dreamers. And Chatham Park was a big dream for us, probably the biggest dream you could possibly have. We want to change people's lives when they live here." TIM SMITH, CO-OWNER, PRESTON DEVELOPMENT



Chatham Park continues to move forward with a new UNC medical center, a new UNC hospice center and retail opportunities that are coming in 2017.

Come visit us at our new headquarters across from Northwood High School and see the progress at Chatham Park.

As Chatham Park moves forward, we will continue to provide answers to questions we have received from members of the community.

Below is a cross section of common questions with our answers.

**Q: When will the first retail center open in Chatham Park and what will it include?**

A: Chatham Park's first retail center is planned to open the fall of 2017. Plans

presently call for a hotel, a grocery store, residential space, and local specialty restaurants. A movie theater is also anticipated in the near future.

**Q: Will Chatham Park have high speed internet?**

A: Yes. Chatham Park is currently in discussions with internet providers who would serve the community with broadband speeds of one gigabyte per residential unit and ten gigabytes per business.

**Q: How many schools will Chatham Park include?**

A: Chatham Park will donate up to ten school sites approved by Chatham County to house both public and private schools. The ten school sites proposed are based on actual student projections, and the exact locations of these sites will be shown in the Small Area Plan.

**Q: When will the first school open in Chatham Park?**

A: Thales Academy, a private K-12 school, will be the first school to open in Chatham

Park and is planned to open for classes in the fall of 2018.

**Q: When will the trails throughout Chatham Park be built?**

A: Trails and greenways will be built as the surrounding neighborhoods are constructed. The plans for these trails will be shown in the Small Area Plan.

**Q: When and where will parks in Chatham Park be built?**

A: As with trails and greenways, parks will be built along with the surrounding neighborhoods. The plans for these parks and greenways will be shown in the Small Area Plan.

**Q: Will Chatham Park include a solar farm?**

A: Yes. Currently, Strata Solar has a lease for a 20 MW solar farm.

**Q: Will native, drought-tolerant plants be incorporated into the landscaping in Chatham Park?**

A: Yes.