



1046 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington MA, 02476
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AKC S.T.A.R.
PUPPY PROGRAM

Welcome to Puppy Kindergarten!

Thank you for choosing Go Play! for your puppy's first training experience! This class covers the AKC S.T.A.R. curriculum (Socialization, Training, Activity, and Responsibility.) We will work with a clicker and food reward as well as verbal praise; by the end of this six week class session you will be weaning your puppy off of the food lure and clicker. We cover all basic obedience commands during this class session (Sit, Stand, Stand for Exam, Down, Attention, Drop it, Off, Polite Meeting, Recall, Wait, Polite Leash Walking, Leave it, Stay, and Uh Oh.) Additionally, we will help you teach your puppy to politely accept handling, restraint, grooming, and being left with a stranger. At the beginning of each class we will offer puppy playtime and we will finish class with a Q & A session. We will be able to offer advice on all common puppy behaviors such as play biting, jumping up, etc. as well as help you crate train and housebreak your puppy. At the end of the six week class session you will take the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Test. This class is taught by a certified AKC CGC Evaluator.

Your puppy's progress during this class session will depend on several things:

- **Class attendance** – it's very important you attend each class with your puppy. If you are unable to make a class for any reason, please contact your instructor as soon as possible to schedule a make-up session. You must attend each class session (or a suitable make-up) in order to take the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Test.
- **Your puppy's exercise and nap schedule** – your puppy will need daily appropriate exercise in order to be able to focus on obedience commands. An under-exercised puppy will have too much excess energy to learn appropriately. Additionally, an over-stimulated and over-exercised puppy will be too tired for class. Your instructor will assist in forming a suitable exercise and nap schedule for your puppy to help optimize training.
- **Your practice sessions at home** – practice really does make perfect! No puppy is born 'trained,' it takes a lot of time and patience! It's true that some puppies take to training quicker than others, but all puppies can be trained. The more you practice with your puppy, the more successful you will be! Keep practice sessions short and always end with a successful command, even if it's a simple 'Sit'. Don't train when you're feeling frustrated or in a bad mood; training should always be fun and positive.
- **Your puppy's early weeks (from birth – 8 weeks) and inherent temperament** – Some dogs are bred to work with human direction (sporting breeds, for example) while other breeds are more independent thinkers that rely more on instinct (terriers and certain herding breeds.) These years of selective breeding can absolutely affect obedience training and you may have to get creative in your training methods if your puppy is highly intelligent and independent! All puppies are individuals and need to be treated as such; don't feel competitive with other students in class, focus on bringing out the best your puppy has to offer!
The early weeks of a puppy's life are very important; much of your puppy's inherent temperament depends on the temperament of his parents and experiences he has in the first two months of his life. Therefore, puppies who have had a stressful early upbringing may need additional socialization before they are four months of age.

Class Rules:

1. We encourage the entire family to participate in class. If you will be bringing young children, please plan on having two adults in class – one to work with the puppy and the other to supervise the children. We encourage each family member to switch off working the puppy during class.
2. Please be quiet when your instructor is speaking. We cover a lot of material during class and it is important for everyone to listen. If your puppy is barking while the instructor is speaking, she will direct you on best way to focus your puppy into a more positive behavior.
3. Our facility is smoke, alcohol, and drug free. Please abstain from any alcohol or drug use before class.
4. If there is inclement weather or if class will be cancelled for any reason, your instructor will contact you.
5. Please be on time; we start each class session with playtime and it is an important part of your puppy's socialization process.
6. All puppies need to be kept on-leash at all times unless otherwise directed by your instructor.
7. All puppies need to be free from aggression toward people and other puppies to participate in this class. If there is a puppy that is not a good fit for this class, your instructor will move the puppy to a more appropriate class.
8. There are no refunds for class payment. If you need to miss a class, you are entitled to a suitable make-up session.



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Common Household and Yard Dangers

Many things we find in our home are not safe for our puppies to play with or ingest. Please puppy-proof your home!
 For your puppy's safety, please print this sheet and hang it somewhere clearly visible – such as your refrigerator.
 Below are two local 24-hour emergency and urgent care centers. Please fill in your personal vet's information below.

Massachusetts Veterinary Referral Hospital
 24-hour urgent care
 20 Cabot Road
 Woburn, MA, 01801
 (781) 932 - 5802

Blue Pearl Vet Partners
 24-hour urgent care
 180 Bear Hill Road
 Waltham, MA, 02451
 (781) 684 - 8387

Your Pet's Regular Vet:
 Office Hours:
 Address:
 Phone number:

Pet Poison Helpline: (855) 764 – 7661

ASPCA Animal Poison Control: (888) 426 - 4435

Foods that are harmful (please do not feed these items to your puppy!)

- Any type of fruit with a 'pit' (peach, plum, pear, apricot, cherry, etc.)
- Any type of fruit seeds (such as apple). Apples themselves (without the seeds) are fine.
- Many kinds of nuts such as almond and macadamia. Peanuts and peanut butter are fine.
- Xylitol is an additive found in gum, gummy candy, and some peanut butter.
- Yeast dough
- Coffee grounds
- Tomato and potato leaves and stems (the tomato fruit and potatoes themselves are fine.)
- Onions and onion powder
- Grapes / Raisins
- Cooked bones – these can splinter when chewed. Raw bones are a great chewing option!
- Chocolate
- Rhubarb
- Alcohol
- Excess salt

Common household items that are harmful (please do not allow your puppy to chew on or ingest these!)

- Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, prescription medicine, non-prescription medicine.
- Antifreeze, gasoline, oil, windshield wiper fluid, and other car fluids
- Bleach, detergent, deodorants, deodorizers, disinfectants, furniture polish, and other cleaning fluids
- Propane, kerosene, lighter fluid, matches,
- Weed killer, insecticides, rat poison, boric acid, snail / slug bait, and mothballs
- Paint, paint thinner, rubbing alcohol, turpentine, etc.

Common plants that are harmful (please do not allow your puppy to chew on or ingest these!)

- Any bulbed plants (daffodils, tulips, lily, etc.)
- Fruit trees
- Trees such as yew, hemlock, buckeye, holly, locust, etc.)
- Most flowering bushes and plants (azalea, hydrangea, holly, peony, rhododendron, foxglove, cyclamen, etc.)
- Holiday plants (poinsettia, mistletoe, amaryllis, etc.)
- Vines such as morning glory, bittersweet, wisteria, jasmine, etc.)
- Mulch – especially cocoa mulch!



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Quick Training Tips & Games to Play!

Clicker Training Basics:

- **Click Once (in and out).** Do not rapid-fire click. Deliver a treat when you click, even if you clicked by accident.
- **Keep training sessions 'short and sweet'.** A puppy doesn't have a long attention span; keep sessions quick.
- **The timing of the click is the most important.** Remember, the click **MARKS** the behavior. If you are asking your puppy to 'Sit', you want to click **IMMEDIATELY WHEN** he sits, not before. Deliver the treat after you click.
- **The click ENDS the behavior.** Don't be concerned if your puppy moves out of position once you click. The click is a sign to him that he's done the behavior correctly and that the behavior is finished.
- **Click toward the desired behavior.** If your puppy doesn't understand the behavior, giving a click when he makes any type of attempt toward the desired behavior is a great way to let him know he's on the right track!
- **Clicker training is POSITIVE.** Don't attempt to mix physical corrections (leash corrections, forcing your dog into position, etc.) with clicker training; your puppy will easily become frustrated and lose confidence in you.

Loose Leash Walking:

Everyone wants a puppy that will walk nicely without pulling. Consistency is important when training, **especially** when training your puppy to walk nicely. Here are some tips to help your walks with your puppy be enjoyable.

- Use a **training harness** such as an EasyWalk. Your instructor can fit your puppy correctly. A regular harness will encourage pulling. A training harness will prevent pulling and allow you to train for the correct behavior easily.
- Tire your puppy out before his walk with an active play session. A tired puppy will be less apt to pull.
- Always have your treats and clicker during a walk and reward frequently for polite walking.
- If your puppy is pulling, you should not be moving forward. Stop and refuse to move until your puppy stops pulling. If you are consistent, your puppy will quickly learn that pulling gets him nowhere.
- Penalty yards! Put a treat or toy several feet away from your puppy and back him to a starting point. Allow him to walk toward the item and if he pulls, back him up to the start point. Each time he pulls you must return to the start point. Eventually he will learn that pulling will get him further from the item! This is a great game for kids!

Recall (come when called):

It's very important to teach your puppy to come when he's called. Until you've trained your puppy to have a reliable recall, your puppy should not be off-leash in an un-secured area; use a long leash to keep your puppy safe. Always remember the rules of recall – once your puppy learns to ignore the recall command it's much harder to retrain him!

Three Rules of Recall:

1. **Never call your puppy if you can't reinforce the command.** In the early stages of training you must make sure if you call your puppy you can assure he will come to you. This means only practice recall while your puppy is on-leash. Once your puppy learns to come reliably when called you can move to off-leash work in a secured area.
2. **Never call your puppy if you are angry at him.** If your puppy has done something to upset you, please don't call him in an angry tone or yell at him while he's coming to you. We need to always make recall a positive thing!
3. **Never call your puppy and then do something 'bad' to him.** If your puppy is having fun outside, don't call him to put him inside. At this stage of training, we never want to teach your puppy that a recall = the end of fun.

Fun Recall Games:

- **Toss a Treat:** 1 Person. Show your puppy a treat and toss it away from you, allowing him to go find the treat. Once he finds it, call him to you and give him another treat when he comes.
- **Hide & Seek:** 1+ Person. When your puppy is distracted, sneak out of the room and hide. Call him and give him a treat when he finds you! This game can have as many people hiding as you'd like, just make sure only one person at a time calls the puppy.
- **Popcorn:** 2 People, both should have the same treat. Take turns calling your puppy between both of you. Once he gets in the habit of running back and forth, switch up who's turn it is to call him!
- **To and Fro:** 2+ People, all should have the same treat. Stagger each person at opposite corners of the room. One at a time, each person takes a turn calling the puppy. This will help your puppy come when called for everyone!
- **Tunnel:** 4+ People, only the person calling the puppy has a treat. One person holds the puppy and one person calls the puppy through a 'tunnel' made up of the others. The 'walls' of the 'tunnel' act as distractions!



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Grooming Your Puppy

Grooming sessions are a wonderful time to bond with your puppy. Besides helping your puppy become accustomed to being handled and gently restrained, frequent grooming sessions will keep you aware of any strange lumps / bumps your puppy may develop. Regardless of if you groom your puppy at home or have your puppy professionally groomed, every puppy has the same basic grooming requirements. Your puppy can be safely groomed after 8 weeks of age.

If you bathe your puppy at home, use only a natural high-quality canine shampoo (never use human products) and conditioner. It's very important to make sure your puppy is rinsed thoroughly and free of any shampoo residue. Try to dry your puppy as best as possible with either a towel or a hair dryer (set on the cool function only) to prevent your puppy's skin from remaining damp. Always clean and dry your puppy's ears after each bath.

All puppies require:

- **Brushing:** Short-haired puppies should be brushed once weekly. Medium and long-haired puppies need to be brushed as frequently as possible to prevent matting. The brush and comb you use should be suitable to your puppy's coat. When brushing, the grooming tools should glide through your puppy's coat without getting caught or hung-up. If the grooming tool keeps catching in your puppy's coat, it means your puppy is matted. Matting will lead to hot spots, infections, and parasites. Additionally, your puppy will have a difficult time regulating his temperature when matted. Extreme matting will result in your puppy having to have his hair shaved very short.
- **Ear Cleaning:** Puppies with long and floppy ears are more prone to ear infections, especially if your puppy likes to swim. To clean your puppy's ears, make a simple solution of diluted white vinegar and witch hazel (1 part white vinegar, 1 part witch hazel, 1 part water.) Dip a cotton square into the solution and squeeze out any excess. Swipe inside your puppy's ear with the cotton square and remove any wax or debris. Use a clean cotton square for each ear. Always dry the ears out after cleaning with a paper towel. Keep your puppy's ears dry.
- **Nail Trimming:** If your puppy's nails are touching the ground, they are too long. Long nails are painful for your puppy to walk on and can lead to structural issues as your puppy grows. Each nail has a blood supply vein (called the quick) that runs down its center – if this is cut into it will bleed and cause pain. It's very important to trim your puppy's nails carefully to avoid cutting into the quick. If you are unsure, have a professional instruct you on how to best trim your puppy's nails. It only takes one time of cutting into the quick to have your puppy become upset by nail clipping. You can also use a nail grinder or nail file to keep your puppy's nails short and smooth.
- **Teeth Brushing:** Dental care is extremely important; many dogs are prone to tooth decay. Provide appropriate chews to help your puppy's teeth and gums remain healthy. Brush your puppy's teeth as often as possible. Use only toothpaste suitable for canines and a soft bristle toothbrush.
- **Parasite Check:** Check your puppy daily for fleas and ticks, especially in Spring, Summer, & Fall months. If you find a tick on your puppy, make sure you have an appropriate tick remover and are able to remove the entire tick, including its head. Chemical flea and tick preventatives and treatments are not always effective as pests have grown resistant. Frequent skin / coat checks are the best defense against parasites along with natural treatments such as apple cider vinegar, diatomaceous earth, and naturally prepared sprays and oils.
- **Anal Gland Check:** These are small glands found in your puppy's anus. Most of the time your puppy can express these glands themselves when he passes stool. However, sometimes (especially if your puppy is prone to soft stool) there isn't enough pressure for his glands to express. If you notice your puppy scooting his bum or a foul smell coming from his anus, he may need his glands manually expressed by a professional groomer or veterinarian. It's very important not to over-express your puppy's glands as he will lose the musculature ability to do it on his own. Only have your puppy's glands expressed if he is showing symptoms of discomfort.

Always keep grooming sessions fun and positive. We want your puppy to accept being groomed; while it doesn't have to be his favorite time, he needs to be polite and accepting of the handling. Use treats and praise when your puppy is behaving during a grooming session and don't allow him to get away with bad behavior – only allow the session to end when your puppy is calm and accepting. Put your puppy up on a table or counter (with a sturdy mat underneath him to keep him comfortable) for grooming sessions and have a helper handy to hold him.



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Puppy Socialization Guidelines

Early socialization is necessary for every puppy and a very important part of your puppy's upbringing. A well-socialized puppy will have a less likely chance of maturing into an adult dog with behavioral issues than a poorly socialized puppy.

This is a helpful guideline of things your puppy should be exposed to in a positive manner. Make every attempt to have your puppy experience these people, animals, and situations every week between the ages of 8 – 16 weeks.

Once your puppy is 16 weeks old, try to have him experience each of these people, animals, and situations once monthly until he has reached one year of age.

It's imperative these socialization experiences are **positive**. If your puppy is afraid, use a treat or toy to focus him away from what he finds fearful. If your puppy is displaying any fears or concerns during any of these socialization experiences please ask your instructor for advice immediately. Don't ever force your puppy into a situation he is uncomfortable with.

Additionally, **do not**: hold, comfort, reassure, or pat your puppy if he is afraid, uncertain, or aggressive during any of these socialization experiences; by doing so you will teach your puppy this is the correct behavior. Ignore any fearful, uncertain, or aggressive behavior from your puppy and only give him attention or a reward when he is calm.

Weekly requirements for puppies aged 8 – 16 weeks, monthly requirements for puppies 16 weeks +

- Babies being pushed in strollers, being held, crying, and crawling
- Toddlers running, jumping, playing loudly, playing quietly, and crying
- Juniors actively playing on a playground, walking in a group, and laughing
- Teenagers yelling, laughing, walking in a group, and wrestling
- Adults (men and women) in all shapes, sizes, colors; doing common everyday behaviors
- Elderly (men and women) all shapes, sizes, colors; doing common everyday behaviors
- Disabled persons with canes / crutches / wheelchairs
- Costumes / uniforms / helmets / hats / beards / sunglasses
- Umbrellas / raincoats / boots stomping / tarps flapping
- Other friendly and vaccinated puppies
- Friendly and vaccinated adult dogs
- Cats / small pets / livestock / horses / birds
- As many new places as possible including a busy shopping center, playgrounds, and parks.
- A nature walk (woods, meadows, etc.)
- Slippery floor / rough gravel / carpet / tile
- Vet's office / grooming shop / pet store
- Bicycles / skateboards / roller skates / scooters / motorcycles
- Cars / buses / trucks / machinery
- Fireworks / gunshots / airplanes / helicopters
- Crying / laughing / clapping / shouting



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Common Canine Illnesses

- **Kennel Cough** – Kennel cough is one of the most common canine illnesses. It is highly contagious and caused by bacteria and / or viruses that are airborne. Healthy adult dogs rarely show any symptoms, but a young puppy lacking a fully developed immune system can be susceptible. Symptoms include a dry, hacking / honking cough and a runny nose. Dogs are not permitted to return to daycare until symptoms have subsided. Because of the vaccine's ineffectiveness, we do not require the vaccine for class. If you choose to have your puppy vaccinated against kennel cough, he may **NOT** attend class until five days has passed since receiving the vaccination.
- **Canine Papilloma Virus** – Viral papillomas are growths that often appear in the mouth, face, or paws of a young puppy. These growths are unsightly but very common and are usually large-sized with a rough, cauliflower-like surface. Papillomas are harmless; there is no vaccine or treatment, and your puppy is fine to attend class.
- **Dog Conjunctivitis (pink eye)** - If your puppy's eye(s) appear red, inflamed, sensitive to light, or have unusual discharge, he should not come to class and will need to see his vet as soon as possible. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious to dogs and people.
- **Fleas & Ticks** – Puppies who are found to have fleas will be immediately excused from class. Please refrain from putting a chemical topical flea and tick treatment (such as Frontline, etc.) on your puppy before he comes to class for the safety of the other puppies he will be playing with during playtime.
- **Ear Infections** – If you notice your puppy scratching at his ears, rubbing his ears on the floor, or shaking his head, he may have an ear infection. Ear infections are usually the result of water, bacteria, or yeast inside of the ear canal. Keeping your puppy's ears clean and dry will avoid ear infections.
- **Gastric Torsion – i.e. 'Bloat'** - Bloat is almost always a life-threatening emergency. Bloat is when the puppy's stomach distends and fills with gas and fluid and rotates. Symptoms of bloat include excessive drooling, restlessness, retching without producing vomit, and a 'bloated'-like appearance of the abdomen. Your puppy should not be exercised an hour before or after eating a regular meal. Avoid allowing your puppy to guzzle water as well to help avoid bloat. All breeds can bloat, but deep chested puppies / dogs are all considered high risk.
- **Hot Spots** – Hot spots occur usually in warm weather on a puppy with a matted, ungroomed, or heavy coat. A hot spot is an area of irritation that develops into a bacterial infection. A hot spot that is licked, scratched, or rubbed by the puppy develops into a bigger area quickly. Discourage your puppy from bothering it. To prevent hot spots, keep your puppy groomed, brushed, and combed.
- **Giardia** - Giardia are one-celled parasitic life forms that can live dormant inside your puppy. Cysts are found in contaminated water and feces. Giardia infects several species of animals, including humans. Cysts in the environment can remain viable for several weeks or months in cold, wet environments, so areas littered with feces should be avoided and piles should be removed from backyards. Your puppy may or may not develop symptoms (i.e. diarrhea). However, routine fecal floatation tests should detect the presence of Giardia. This is why having a yearly fecal floatation is required for daycare, dog walking, puppy kindergarten, and pet sitting clients. A puppy testing positive for Giardia, other bacteria, or parasites will have services withheld until a negative fecal floatation is received.