

## Puppy Class Stages

### A typical class

Every class starts out with some mat work. It is a good time for the volunteers to just play with some puppies and take photos while the trainer brings the rest of the puppies in and gives them some time to settle in. If the puppies are not too stressed out or overwhelmed, you can have volunteers work on handling or basic training (*clicker priming, name recognition*). Then the puppies get recess time – if the puppies in class can safely play together. Before letting them off the tethers, have the volunteers play *gotcha* with the puppies. After *recess*, the volunteers can do handling or more training. While they are focusing on that, the trainer can pull out different items to use as *object socialization*. Volunteers can just interact with the items while puppies run around loose and engage with the objects if they choose, or stations can be set up where the volunteers and puppies rotate through, ensuring each puppy encounters a range of objects.

### Pre-school (Class 1)

A typical first class for puppies is a little chaotic and overwhelming. It is usually their first time both in that room and seeing that many people at once. Most of the time is spent with the puppies working on *staying calm on the mat*, doing *handling, recess*, and *object socialization*. You can do some *name recognition* at this point as well. The vacuum should be kept still during the first class.

### Kindergarten (Classes 2 & 3)

During the next few classes, *the clicker is primed* and the puppies begin learning how to *sit with a lure*. Depending on the puppy you can also begin working on *sitting with a hand signal*. For more active puppies, *come* is a good skill to start. During the object socialization part of class, *items can start moving around* (walker, wheelchair, etc.). If the puppies are comfortable, this includes the *vacuum*.

### First Grade (Classes 4 & 5)

For more advanced puppies, you can begin *using "sit" while working on sits*. The puppies start learning *down at this point, using a lure*. Once the puppies have accomplished both sits and downs, you can start working on *puppy push-ups*. If the puppies are comfortable with the vacuum moving around, you can turn it on. Instead of pulling out several different items and turning on the *vacuum on* randomly, the vacuum being turned on is a completely separate exercise.

### Second Grade (Class 6+)

Very few puppies make it to this level. But at this stage, besides working on skills from previous classes, you can also work on *down (hand signal and then verbal cue), follow me* and *wait* (at the door, for the food bowl).