

Neo-Natal Period (1-14 days)

Newborn puppies are born helpless and completely dependent on their dams, responding only to the warmth, touch and smell of their dam. Newborns cannot regulate body functions such as temperature and elimination. ‘Dehasse’ research shows that the “position used by the puppy when licked by its mother when she is cleaning it and activating the elimination reflex will actually become a ritualized submission position used to stop agonistic behavior as a grown up dog.” In short, the mother teaches the submissive position from day 1.

Neonates must have artificial sources of heat, their mother, or in her absence, heating pads, water bottles, heat lamps, etc. to maintain their body temperature. Newborns start out with a 94-96 degree F temperature and build to normal canine levels of 101-102 in the next two weeks. They are very susceptible to excess heat and cold. Chilled puppies during this stage often develop infections, get pneumonia or have trouble digesting food, leading to “colic” or other GI stress. Many deaths of puppies during the first week can be traced to an incidence of chilling, followed by secondary infections and/or inability to digest milk. Puppies subjected to excess temperatures can also develop medical problems, including dehydration and dry eyes. Over warm dams spend less time with their puppies and produce less milk. The puppies sleep 90% of the time, only waking to suckle, a natural reflex in a normal puppy. The puppies crawl in a circle, moving their heads from side to side, when trying to find their mother for food and/or warmth. Their eyes and ears are closed. There are some vocalizations at this age, especially if hungry, laid on, or in distress from digestive problems or infections. Puppy noise may encourage the mother to nuzzle the puppy, which helps the puppy locate the dam. EEGs at this age show that there is no difference between the puppy’s brain function when awake and when asleep. Paramount at this stage is the health and happiness of the mother dog.

Too much stress at this age has a negative effect on puppies, but research (Fox; Scott and Fuller) has shown that newborns can respond to thermal, tactile and motor stimulation. Mild forms of stress create many changes in newborns including changes in electrical activity in the brain, muscle tension, and changes in oxygen levels and breathing. When tested later as adults, the stressed dogs were better able to withstand stress than their non-stressed littermates. According to Fox, they responded to stress in a ‘graded’ fashion, while the non-stressed puppies responded in an “all or nothing” way. The stressed puppies also matured sexually earlier, were more resistant to some forms of cancer and disease and withstood exposure to cold better, were more stable, more exploratory and learned faster. Articles published by Dr. Carmen Battaglia – see www.breedingbetterdogs.com – report on research by the U.S. Military program called “Bio Sensor” or “Super Dog,” also showed that “early neurological stimulation will have important and lasting effects” on puppies. He describes specific stimulation exercises for day 3 through 16 of the puppies’ lives. For 3-5 seconds once per day, each puppy should be:

1. Tickled between the toes with a Q tip.
2. Held perpendicular to the ground.
3. Held head down.
4. Held on its back in the palm of your hand.
5. Lain on a cold damp towel.

Pictures of these exercises are on the Cava Express Site and our website.

These exercises should not be a substitute for the normal handling of the puppies by the breeder. More importantly, more is not better; again too much stress is detrimental. Battaglia says “kicking the neurological system into action, earlier than normal will benefit the puppy with improved

cardiovascular, stronger heartbeats, stronger adrenal glands, more tolerance to stress and greater resistance to disease. Puppies were also more active, more exploratory, calmer and less distracted when working.

Transitional Period (14-21 days)

This period starts when the eyes are open and ends when the puppy first “startles” on hearing a noise. This week is characterized by the rapid development of motor skills, the ability to eliminate on its own, the onset of usable vision (by 18-21 days), the initial emergence of teeth, and the development of hearing—first evidenced by the startle response—although still unable to locate the source of the sound. The puppies move around a lot more, can now move backwards as well as forward and begin to walk instead of crawl, may start to lap liquids, and will begin to leave the nest to eliminate. Tail wagging begins even before developing functional sight and hearing ability, the first teeth erupt around 20 days and vocalizations become more specialized. They begin to show interest in their littermates—pawing at each other’s face and chewing on each other.

This is the time to begin increased individual attention by the breeder. Toys and other visual objects should be added to the box and puppies could be moved to a busy part of the house. Puppies should be placed on a new surface for a minute once a day. The mother dog will begin to spend short periods of time away from the puppies this week. In this short week of life, the puppy rapidly changes from the inability to hear, see and walk or eliminate without stimulation into a puppy that can now do all of these things—enormous steps in the puppy’s life.

Awareness or Identification Period - 21 – 28 days.

Since this is the first time the puppies have use of all of their senses, they now need a stable environment and the influence of a stable dam. Sight and hearing are functioning well. A variety of noises (music, TV, bells, vacuums, etc.) and sights (change in light level, moving objects and vibrations) should be part of their daily life. The exposure to sudden loud noises must happen during the 3rd week when fear has not yet developed. The startle response should be encouraged so that the pup will startle and then return to normal on its own—something it must be able to do throughout its life. Puppies must now learn that they are dogs; recognizing their mother (filial imprinting), recognizing other species—specifically humans that are part of their social relations (fraternal imprinting)—and have experiences that mean survival of the species (sexual imprinting). A poorly imprinted puppy will have problems being a “good” dog in the future. Dehasse cites several examples, including Scott and Fuller research, of imprinting “mistakes.” Puppies raised in isolation from dogs at this time and then introduced to dogs at 16 weeks get attacked and rejected. Puppies without dog contact will bond with other species or inanimate objects, like a stuffed animal or even a vacuum cleaner bag. The first signs of humping (imitation of sexual behavior) begin as early as three weeks and can be stimulated by pressing on the sternum or abdomen. Breeding behavior with the wrong species may result from poor imprinting at this age. Many more examples of imprinting could be listed.

The puppies will begin “play-fighting” starting at this time. Barking will increase. They can begin to eat real food this week, but the mother should still be staying with the litter. The mother will begin growling and baring her teeth when the puppies try to nurse. The puppies will then back off or roll over on their backs in submission, and learn to keep away from the mother’s teats when told. Puppies should learn one of the most important lessons in life at this time—to accept discipline.

When mothers are removed too soon from the litter, puppies do not learn this submission to adult dogs that can affect the puppy’s integration (hierarchy building) with adult dogs. Wild canids and

some bitches regurgitate pre-digested food to their puppies as a transition between nursing and complete weaning. Nursing can last up to 7-10 weeks, but extended nursing, especially in large breeds or big litters, can lead to a drain on the bitch, continued weight loss in her and extended problems returning her to working condition. Some bitches will never wean their puppies themselves and weaning must be managed by the breeder. Puppies still need a very stable environment during this time. Their humans should do a lot of handling, cuddling and pick up the puppies regularly. We, at The Monarchy, go beyond this with the rules of 7's, to be explained later.

Second Awareness/Identification Week (28 – 35 days)

During this week play behavior becomes much more sophisticated, including growling, chasing, and “kill” games. Distance perception is much improved.

Puppies need physical and mental challenges—things to move, chew on, climb on and carry, and tug toys to share with littermates. Play helps develop the strength, ability, coordination and skills to function as an adult. Puppies must develop the problem-solving ability and physical and mental skills to learn and excel at these adult activities. Deprived of stimulation, puppies either cannot learn or are poor learners at best. A puppy never experiencing and coping with frustrating situations has limited chance to develop the checks and balances of emotion needed to problem solve and develop good temperaments. A good breeder has the power to improve nerve conductivity in both speed and accuracy. Recovery time of the neural synapses is shorted as the chemical and electrical signs react faster and faster and the nerves can fire repeatedly quicker. The brain mass increases dramatically as nerve cell density increases. Much research backs up the conclusion that puppies raised in environments lacking challenges are more likely to develop into fearful, less successful adults.

Breeders will spend more individual time with each puppy; take puppies into a strange place, putting them behind a barrier and watching them, and adding new objects and challenges for them while alone. Separating each puppy from the litter for increasingly longer periods of time will teach the puppy independence, prevent separation anxiety problems later in life and will encourage bonding and acceptance of humans.

Curiosity Period 5 – 7 weeks

Weaning from the dam should be complete during this period, although the mother will still play with and teach the puppies. The puppies will be very curious now—wanting to climb, crawl, investigate and taste everything. They have very little sense of fear now and will approach and investigate anything and everything. Puppies have the lowest fear and the highest approach acceptance now. They are attracted and accept people sooner but peak at this time due to increased motor skills and mobility. Researchers Freedman, King and Elliot measured approach and avoidance behavior in puppies at all ages when first exposed to humans to make these conclusions. It's time to add scarier people and things, including children, and strangers. Tunnels, boxes, steps, baby pools and other challenges should be introduced. If frightened by something at this age, the puppy will bounce back very quickly. People should call the puppy, encourage it to follow, play with, stroke, talk to, make eye contact with, and be picked up and held several times a day. Some people call this the “gentling” process. Puppies will start rudimentary housebreaking at this time. This is the time for very brief trips outside, first baths and groomings, introduction to other animal smells, etc.

The start to learning bit inhibition is very important during this period, both with litter mates and with the human family. Studies show that puppies removed from the litter before the end of the 6th week will always have problems with dog-dog relationships.

Socialization Period (5 – 16 Weeks)

Fox (1975) found that puppies exposed to increasingly complex stimuli – “enrichment” – would seek out complex environments; conversely his “stimulus-poor puppies” were inhibited, fearful and looked for less complex environments. Additionally the enriched puppies were dominant in the presence of stimulus-poor dogs. The dogs lacking proper stimuli were also over excitable, learned slower and forgot easily later in life. And a puppy raised in a deprived environment may ***compensate with self-destructive behaviors like chewing on its coat, licking, etc.***

It is imperative that families whose dog owners work a full time job, seek out day care centers for their puppies . . . this is where things can go terribly wrong. Cavachons are bred to be companion dogs; they especially will do poorly if left alone for hours on end during the day. And the first six months are critical, someone needs to be home with them during the day, to properly train them and to provide the continued socialization they need. Families who would have to leave their puppy/dog for hours during the day (alone) should NOT ADOPT a puppy. Families need to be honest with themselves about how a puppy will fare (poorly) if left alone during the day. Either someone needs to come in and be with the dog, or you can enroll your puppy and/or dog into a reputable doggie care center. You would not leave a young child home alone for hours, so please do not consider it for your puppy.

Socialization does two things to habituate the puppy. It reduces the number of things in the world that a puppy might be frightened of and it continually provides the experience of first being afraid and then recovering. According to most behaviorists, bounce-back is one of the most valuable traits you can “teach” a dog. And the more often the puppy recovers, the list of things/people/experiences that the puppy is not afraid of grows faster and faster. **DOGS LEFT ALONE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME AND DOGS THAT HAVE CONSTANT HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP ARE PRONE TO SEPARATION ANXIETY AND OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDERS. THE PUPPY MUST BE CONTINUALLY SOCIALIZED TO OTHER DOGS.** This socialization to humans and other dogs must last the lifetime of the dog. If not, other dogs will also reject your puppy and your puppy will develop aggression.

Puppies must be exposed to a wide array of smells, textures, surfaces, sounds, vibrations, tastes and sights, including and especially a comprehensive variety of people. The more chances a puppy has to be properly exposed to something new during the critical socialization periods, the less bothered it will be throughout the rest of its life when confronted by other new or frightening things. Innate fears in the canine have not been found to exist but genetic sound sensitivity is common in some breeds and some individuals. Dogs have very acute hearing and must learn to concentrate on those that impact its life. Fears are caused from the dog’s experiences in life. Everything an adult dog is expected to do or coexist with should be added to the socialization program—I.e., children, swimming, exposure to livestock, dog shows, city noises, exposure to prey, etc.

Undersocialized dogs are shy, fearful, become defensive, discriminate threats inappropriately, and may even bite out of fear. If undersocialized to dogs, the puppy may be fearful or aggressive or the other dogs may reject the puppy. When afraid, a dog reacts in a “flight or fight” manner, trying out different methods to deal with its fear. If unable to flee, the dog will use increasing levels of “aggression” to first scare off the feared person or dogs and may progress to fighting or biting to defend itself. This behavioral mechanism explains why a frightened dog on a leash or restrained some other way reacts in a totally different way than if free to make better decisions about how to handle its fear, including flight—if that means has worked for the dog in the past.

Socialization requires creativity and is an ongoing process that should last the entire life of the dog and must occur during this critical period. There are many obstacles to properly socializing puppies—their owners work outside the home all day, dogs are unwelcome in most public places, owners avoid exposure to other dogs to reduce the risk of disease transmission, inexperienced owners/breeders don’t understand dog behavior, effective puppy classes and trainers are unavailable or not deemed necessary, the owners stop because either the older puppies are very outgoing or they are out of control by now. This list could go on, but there is no substitution for intensive and ongoing socialization for all puppies.

Behavioral Refinement Period (7 – 9 Weeks)

By 7 – 8 weeks puppies have fully functioning brains as shown by EEGs and are capable of learning anything, keeping in account their short attention spans, of course. More importantly, learning at this age is permanent.

Important: Scott and Fuller research showed that the dog-on-dog (primary) socialization isn’t complete at 7-8 weeks and if placed in a new home without continuing and correct exposure to dogs, the puppy will not learn to coexist in a dog world or when meeting new dogs.

Puppies will go through many changes during the time they begin to bond with their new owners and learning to survive. It is imperative that the puppy learn good habits, rather than learning bad habits that must then be modified.

Fear Imprint/Impact Period (7 – 11 weeks)

Puppies have no fear until about the 5th week of life with fear increasing gradually through the 6th week and escalating toward the end of the 7th week. Between 8 and 9 weeks, overlapping the Behavioral Refinement and Environmental Awareness Period, the puppy will begin a time of much more caution. It may be fearful of loud noises, sudden movements, strangers, discipline from other dogs or humans, etc. If frightened during this fear period, it may take weeks to return to normal. In a non-socialized puppy, anything associated with fear at this age will always be a fearful stimulus throughout its entire life without extensive desensitization. Most agree that this is the wrong time for ear cropping, traumatic visits to the vet, shipping, harsh discipline and maybe even transfers to new homes if the new family is inexperienced with puppies. The puppies should be exposed to lots of POSITIVE experiences at this time, but only in moderation, many novel situations, but in “small bites.” Unlike most other stages, the onset of this period can be very sudden. Some puppies pass

through this stage very quickly and others take longer, based on a combination of genetics, socialization and the experience of the new owner or breeder in handling the puppy.

Excerpt from “Puppy Development”. . By Kathryn Lana

A few tips, especially for the first few days at home. Remember, this is a big change for your puppy and the best advice I can give for you and your puppy to have a smooth and confident transition is to be careful not to overwhelm your puppy with new faces and new situations and be sure to let him ‘chill out’ when he chooses to retreat to his crate which should always be accessible with the door open. Please place a cover on top of the crate to hang over it just a bit. This gives them the feeling of being in a cave.

Being that the element of ‘fear’ in a puppy surfaces and reaches its strongest peak during the life period: 8 weeks – 10 weeks, I feel it is imperative that you are aware of this and I ask that you only introduce your puppy to the familiar faces of your household. Save visits from neighbors, aunts, cousins, until you can introduce them gradually and **after** several days or at least a week-- when your puppy has ‘recovered’ from the shock of being moved from its litter and its mother and from the only familiar and safe faces they know, the breeders!

Excerpt:

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CONTRAST THIS TO:

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Since fear in puppies is increasing rapidly during the 7th and 8th week, puppies are becoming fearful of strangers and new situations.”

Very Important:

“Fear Imprint/Impact Period (8 – 11 weeks)”

Puppies have no fear until about the 5th week of life with fear increasing gradually through the 6th week and escalating toward the end of the 7th week. Between 8 and 9 weeks, the puppy will begin a time of much more caution. It may be fearful of loud noises, sudden movements, **STRANGERS**, discipline from other dogs or humans. If frightened during this period, it may take weeks to return to normal. In a non-socialized puppy, anything associated with fear at this age will always be a fearful stimulus throughout its entire life without extensive desensitization. Most agree that this is the wrong time for unnecessary visits to the vet, shipping, harsh discipline and ‘maybe’ even transfers to new homes, especially if the new family is inexperienced with puppies. At this time the puppies must be protected from overwhelming experiences, hence only family members please, and they need to be exposed to lots of positive experiences at this time. Eliminate the possibility of overwhelming experiences. Let the puppy chill out alone when he goes to his crate, this is very important. Leave the

door open, place some type of cover on the top to make it feel like a den and give your puppy an added sense of security.

Please see full ‘copy’ of this article—sent earlier-- which will help you to keep your puppy from being overwhelmed.

All in all, your puppy is going to be ready very soon to give you unconditional love and loyalty! Enjoy!

A Short Guide to Puppy Development

Raising dogs, much like raising children, is done in stages. Just as your toddler needs to be supervised and socialized, so does your puppy. And, as you might expect your teenagers to flex the muscles of their new found independent nature, so too will your adolescent dog. That said, you would not expect your human youngster to sit (without fidgeting) for any length of time; the same holds true for your puppy. Because we have become a society of instant gratification (instant messages, instant images, instant banking, etc.), the idea of an instantly well-behaved dog might not seem like such a tall order. Regardless of the advances in technology, when it comes to raising dogs, growing up happens gradually, no matter what we expect.

We know that your teething youngster is not being at all aggressive but instead is at a stage of development when assertive behavior is par for the course. We know that your defiant adolescent dog (who was once a willing and obedient puppy) doesn’t need a new home but instead a simple refresher course in basic obedience. We could save both you and your dog a lot of heartache by helping you to set realistic expectations.

What to Expect:

7 – 12 weeks

Your puppy’s attention span and ability to focus are short. He has little bladder and bowel control. He will need constant supervision, contact, and positive reinforcement. He needs to bond with people and socialize to new surroundings. At this time he will follow closely and dutifully by your side. He will know little or nothing of what you expect of his behavior. Your puppy will be capable of learning simple, basic commands (sit and come). But also at this time, keep lessons short and fun. Introduce new people with gentle care and patience.

12 – 16 weeks

At this time the “toddler” pup is trying to figure out who he is as an individual and also who is boss. He needs to test the strength and personality of every family member (in order to figure out where he fits in). He will need several short, daily lessons in basic obedience and constant verbal reminders not to use teeth on people or property. Remember, he will also learn bite inhibition from being with other dogs. . . that is up to you! At this point the dog will be checking out his status within the “pack” by flexing his muscles and continually re-testing the youngest or weakest family member for the top dog spot.

4 – 18 months

The pup is learning to “fly” on his own. He won’t come when called; he won’t obey unless bribed with food. Attention-getting behavior (i.e., defiant barking stealing, running away) becomes his forte. He may seem deliberately vindictive but he’s really just trying to be what he knows best—a dog! He will need to be reminded that calm, gentle, and obedient behavior will always win your

attention and affection. Reward him whenever he is nearby for good behavior. Leaving the leash on him during training will help you follow through with commands. During this time, he will have an increased need for aerobic exercise.

9 – 12 months

Your adolescent now has an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other. He is in a constant power struggle between his good sense and his body (which is maturing sexually). Expect flaky behavior as well as more defiant behavior. Step up basic obedience lessons. Constant reminders and refresher courses in what you have taught him will help keep him on track. Increase aerobic exercise according to individual needs.

18 to 24 months

This is the time when your young adult dog might try to exhibit more protective or territorial behavior than in previous stages. Remind him using strong boundaries and basic obedience commands, that you are the one taking care of him. Dogs need to know they are working, not controlling members, of a pack; otherwise they feel they must take control and become top dog. Keep in mind that in addition to strong leadership, key elements in your dog's overall and ultimate behavior are proper diet, appropriate exercise and ample socialization, especially with other dogs. Some dogs never feel the need to flex their muscles and settle into adulthood nicely and without incident.

The more time we put into age-appropriate training and exercise, the more rewarding the results. Fantasizing about the success of the relationship, with little understanding of the natural course of how dogs learn, can make even the smallest setback in behavior seem monumental. Knowing what to expect and when to expect it will help you and your dog to stay on course!