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CHILDREN OFTEN LOSE INTEREST IN PETS: Parents all too commonly surrender a perfectly sound healthy dog to the various refuges and pounds for re-homing or to be destroyed. **Please do not be one of the many callous people who contribute to the senseless slaughter of sound dogs. (There are an estimated 10 thousand dogs a week destroyed in Australia each week though various Pound, Refuges and Vet Surgeries)**

TEACH CHILDREN RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP: Children should be taught to be kind not to tease or be rough, and to provide food, water, shelter, exercise, training and companionship.

NEVER DISTURB A SLEEPING PUPPY: They are babies and not cuddly toys; they need their sleep. In fact, you may cause the puppy to grow into a hyperactive dog by regularly waking it up to play etc.

Puppies often find the transition from its original environment, with their mother and litter mates - to your home - very traumatic.

To assist on alleviating the stress new puppies often suffer, a drink of cool chamomile tea or a smear of lavender oil under the chin once a day will help to calm the puppy.

The puppy is born and raised with its litter mates and mother. This environment allows the puppy plenty of sleep time, play and food. It can chew what it likes and dig little holes when it explores. There are very few restrictions and those that do exist come from within the pack itself.

It is most important to understand that all dogs have one common ancestor, the wolf. Although domestic dogs have evolved over the centuries, they are cousins of the wolf and have retained at least 80% of its forebear's instincts. Indeed, whether it be a large breed such as a Great Dane or a small breed such as the Maltese; the puppy is in fact a wolf.

It is common for town dogs living near rural communities to form a pack and harass or kill farming animals, then return home our normal loving domestic pet. When the dogs form a pack, their primitive instincts return strongly and nature takes its course. The pack becomes a strictly structured society with a rank structure or pecking order, there is always one dog above the other in order of physical dominance and the fiercest and strongest is the pack leader and he rules the pack.

When you take the puppy into your environment the dogs mentality doesn't change - if the puppy sees you as weak in his eyes he will elevate himself in the pecking order to a position above you. You then have a dog that will suit itself, if it wants to obey you.

FIRST SIXTEEN WEEKS CRITICAL PERIOD OF A DOG'S LIFE: Research has shown that the first sixteen weeks of a dog's life are similar to our first five to seven years of human life. Whatever happens to a puppy in that period stays with it for life. Pleasant or unpleasant experiences in that critical time are imprinted in the dog's mind for ever and effects its future character.

PUPPIES SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN FROM THE LITTER BEFORE SEVEN WEEKS OF AGE: Research has shown that puppies need this time with their litter

mates in order to learn to be a dog. Puppies taken from the litter before seven weeks of age tend to think they are human rather than dog and may suffer identity crises. Often, dogs that are aggressive to other dogs are ones that have been taken from the litter too early.

PUPPIES FROM FIVE WEEKS SHOULD BE SOCIALISED BY THE BREEDER: Breeders have a responsibility to give individual puppies handling from as young as 2 weeks of age. From 5 weeks of age, the breeder should give the puppy time away from the litter to become accustomed to the sounds of television, radio, vacuum cleaners, etc. They should be encouraged to fetch balls, take drives in the car, be gently handled by stranger's etc., so they become confident and conditioned to some life experiences at this most impressionable age.

PUPPIES BRAIN FULLY DEVELOPED AT SEVEN WEEKS OF AGE: The puppy's brain is fully developed at this time. It is the optimum period in which to input the information you want into the dog's brain rather than re teach at a later stage. In fact, with some dogs, you may leave things too late and never correct of some bad habits.

THE TERRIBLE OR TANTRUM TWOS: Puppies between twelve and sixteen weeks go through a stage similar to our tantrum twos. At this stage of their development, the puppies test you to see if you are a weak leader. The puppy may be house trained at nine or ten weeks of age and suddenly un-house trains itself. It may also develop selective hearing, and only come when it is called when it suits itself etc.

OBEDIENCE TRAINING: Puppies are capable of being formally obedience trained from as young as six weeks of age. It is common to have puppies as young as 16 or 17 weeks of age, sitting or drop staying in the one position for several minutes whilst the owner is out of sight. All dogs should attend obedience classes. Food reward training is not recommended. Bribing does not teach discipline.

PACK ANIMALS: Dogs are pack animals. They are social creatures and usually live in packs with other dogs or in our human pack. The dog needs to be with a member of the family most of the time throughout the average day or the company of another dog.

DIET: A good diet is essential for your puppy to obtain its maximum size and maintain optimum health. A diet lacking in certain nutrients can cause behavioural problems ranging from irritability and unexpected aggression, to timidness and nervy behaviour. I only recommend dogs be fed on raw natural food. Refer to www.vetsallnatural.com.au for further information.

HOUSE TRAINING: House training your puppy is achieved by thinking ahead. Prevent problems before they occur. Take the dog outside straight after it consumes food or water and wait for it to obey nature. When it does, give the dog a soft command word in a pleasant tone of voice such as "toily" or "toilet", praising the dog lavishly with your voice as well. Be alert for any indication the puppy may give such as unexpected whimpering, walking in circles, scratching at the door or the dog sitting directly in front of you and looking straight in your face. He maybe telling you that he wants to go outside to obey nature. Praise it lavishly as you take the puppy outside to toilet.

Ross Allan's Dog Training

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CRATING: You will prevent a lot of accidents in the house if you put the puppy in a cat or dog crate when you can't watch it. This is not a punishment station. The puppy should be patted when you put it in the crate. Some toys should already be placed in the crate for the puppy to chew on or play with. When you're free, you can let the puppy out to toilet itself. Crating also allows you to keep the puppy under observation during busy periods so that you can avoid chewed furniture, electric cords etc.

SELECT THE RIGHT BREED FOR YOU: Selecting a suitable breed for you requires careful thought. Otherwise you may end up with a dog that will be very unhappy in your environment or alternately, the dog you select may make your life miserable.

For example, should you select a working dog breed such as a Border Collie, Kelpie or Cattle Dog, you have a dog that has been genetically bred to work stock from daylight to dark in the harshest weather day in day out. When confined to a town yard without the exercise and mental stimulation these breeds need, we have in fact become the dog's jailers. This dog can become a total nuisance to an owner unless it can be given an enormous amount of exercise and obedience training.

Poodles and similar dogs for instance, require regular clipping and grooming. The dogs used commonly for guarding such as German Shepherds, Rottweilers and Dobermans also require daily exercise and a great deal of obedience training.

When selecting the right breed for your environment please be a dog lover not just a dog owner.

DON'TS:

- Do not let the puppy on the beds, chairs, couches etc.
- Always feed the puppy after you have eaten, never before you eat. (The pack leader always eats from the carcass first)
- Never feed the puppy from the table when you're eating or share your meal, biscuit or sandwich etc.
- Do not let the puppy enter the doorway of the house before you, through a doorway before you or a gateway - always after you. (The pack leader always leads)
- Never let the puppy pull you on the lead. (The pack leader always walks in front of the pack)
- Never let the puppy sit on the front seat of the car - always on the floor in the front or on the back seat.

These few rules may seem silly to us, but to the dog, they mean everything. These rules are most important to teach the puppy its position in our pack and raising a well-behaved dog.

References: Ross Allan – "Dog Obedience Training".
Val Bonney – "Who's the Boss".

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Puppy Information Sheet

The following information is offered so that you may better understand your puppy, and help you to raise a well-adjusted dog with a pleasant disposition. Your dog will then be a pleasure to own and not a nuisance to others.

A DOG IS A LIVING, BREATHING, EMOTIONAL AND INTELLIGENT CREATURE. PLEASE BE A DOG LOVER AND NOT MERELY A DOG OWNER.

NEVER BUY A PUPPY FOR A CHILD UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT YOURSELF.