

## Puppy Sitter 101

#1 mistake puppy sitters make: relieving accidents

#2 mistake: putting a blanket or pad (anything extra) in the crate

The Raiser should send a Puppy Sitter Form with the puppy. It will include

- [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/082274\\_9806ea3a1ddc4eb3b702eafa97891a81.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/082274_9806ea3a1ddc4eb3b702eafa97891a81.pdf)
- Feeding Instructions - how much food the puppy eats and how often
- Relieving habits
- Any behaviors the puppy is struggling with
- Where the puppy sleeps
- Which outings the puppy is ready for
- Where the puppy is at in learning specific commands
- The raiser should send the puppy's leash, gentle leader, puppy coat and food. They should also send a bowl, drag line leash (babies), crate, ex-pen, tie down, clean up kit, and toys if you need them. If the puppy is coming for an extended stay (more than a week), they may send a toothbrush & doggie toothpaste, a brush/grooming tools. If the puppy will stay with you on the 1<sup>st</sup> of a month, they should send Heartguard and maybe Frontline.
- A sitter should not have to buy anything for a puppy sit.

You'll be asked to fill out a Sitter Feedback Form after the puppy goes home

- Feedback form can be found on the home page of our website
- [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/082274\\_38c8bfd426ed472593d6ee222259dc3f.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/082274_38c8bfd426ed472593d6ee222259dc3f.pdf)
- Asks for feedback on House Manners, Outings, Relieving, and Training.
- If the puppy is old enough to go on outings, please include a list of places you took the puppy in his feedback form. The raiser will use that for his monthly report.

Regardless of the age of the puppy coming to visit, assume he/she knows nothing. They are coming in to a new environment with new people. They don't know what the rules are in this new environment, and your job as a puppy sitter is to help them learn the rules in your home are the same as the rules in their raiser home. Give them the opportunity to make good choices (don't control their leash all the time), while at the same time, do not trust them until they have proven they are trustworthy. It's easier to grant more freedom once it's earned than it is to reel a puppy back in when given too much freedom up front.

Regardless of the age of the puppy, use kibble to reinforce behaviors you like (come, loose leash walking, calm behavior, appropriate dog-to-dog interaction, etc).

### Regardless of the age of the puppy:

- Start with no (or very limited) freedom
  - Consider using a drag line
  - Consider using an ex-pen to limit access to one or two rooms
  - If the puppy behaves appropriately with the limited freedom, you can choose to give more freedom. Or not. It's ok to limit the puppy's freedom during his stay with you.
- Start small and build from there
  - Short outings

- Short walks
  - 30-45 min without relieving is appropriate for a 15-month old dog
  - Use a shorter time for a younger pup
  - maybe even 5-10 minutes for a dog under a year until he/she proves they can handle the freedom
- If the puppy is “older”, and if the puppy behaves appropriately with the small amount of freedom/short outings, you can quickly move to more freedom and longer outings.
- Don’t always make it harder – sometimes, you may do a 30-minute outing with an older dog, and only a 10-minute outing the next day.
- Use a high rate of reinforcement for behaviors you like
  - Always reward for the DYB command; Do not use “nice” (the timing is tricky)

### **Relieving:**

Relieving is one of the top reasons a dog can be career changed. It is also the #1 mistake puppies make at a sitter’s home.

- Our puppies should relieve on a leash, on a hard surface (concrete, asphalt, rocks, etc), with their jacket OFF, every time
- Our puppies are not allowed to relieve on neighborhood walks. They need to relieve before going on a walk and can relieve again once they return home. They are not to relieve during the walk.
- Our puppies should never be given the opportunity to relieve on grass. If they are playing in your yard and relieve in the grass, simply ignore the behavior and resolve to relieve the puppy before playing next time.
- Take the puppy to the designated relieving area, release the puppy with “OK”, give the “Do Your Business” command, and cast the puppy out in front of the handler with the leash.
- If needed, you can help the puppy move in a figure 8 in front of you.
- Don’t let the puppy relieve on your left side or behind you.
- Sniffing is a preliminary behavior to relieving. Watch for scavenging (picking up rocks, twigs and other debris), especially in young puppies.
- The Puppy Sitter Form is a good place to start with when and how often the puppy relieves.
- Please do not mark (say “Nice!”) to the puppy while relieving. The timing is tricky.
- Give the puppy up to 2 minutes to relieve. The younger they are, the longer it may take to relieve. There is no need to wait more than about 5 minutes for a puppy to DYB.
- If you know the puppy needs to relieve and he doesn’t when given the command, put him in his kennel to prevent accidents. If you’re out on an errand, try to end the errand early to prevent an accident in public. Wait about 20 minutes and attempt the DYB command again.

Read Relieving and Housebreaking in the GDB manual:

[http://www.gdb-official.com/site/DocServer/Relieving\\_and\\_Housebreaking\\_v\\_03-2017.pdf?docID=9847](http://www.gdb-official.com/site/DocServer/Relieving_and_Housebreaking_v_03-2017.pdf?docID=9847)

### **Water:**

- Allow the puppy free access to water. You may need to show them where the water is in your home.
- For young puppies, remember water in means they will need to relieve pretty soon after drinking. You may want to set a timer for 5-10 minutes after a drink for young puppies.

**Confinement:**

Crate: the only situation where you can leave your puppy unsupervised

- No pads or blankets in the kennel (#2 sitter mistake)
- A Nylabone or Kong is ok (NO red Kongs for dogs >5 mos, use black Kongs for over 5 mos)
- Use “Kennel” command for puppy to enter kennel, toss a few kibble in
- Ask them to wait when coming out. They should politely wait for an OK release

Baby Gate or Ex-Pen: Useful for limiting puppy’s access to areas of the home and for separating dogs

- Puppies may not be left unattended in an ex-pen
- If using outside on grass, put a blanket/mat underneath it so the puppy can’t eat grass

**IMPORTANT:** Most puppies will bark or whine when in a kennel in an unfamiliar environment or with an unfamiliar schedule. Your job as a puppy raiser is to ignore that behavior. DO NOT let the puppy out of the kennel when he’s barking. Even if you think he needs to relieve, DO NOT let the puppy out of the kennel when he’s barking. The ONLY exception to this is if the puppy has had diarrhea. If the puppy is quiet in his kennel, you can quietly drop kibble in sporadically.

**House Manners:**

- Do not leave the puppy alone (unattended) in your home until you are sure he can handle that freedom.
- It may be better to let the primary raiser work on home alone behavior.

**Socialization Guide:** Consult the Socialization Guide before taking the puppy anywhere. Also look at the Puppy Sitter Form for what outings the raiser says is appropriate for the puppy. Remember, no parks for puppies under 17 weeks old.

**Toy Policy**

Please consult the GDB Toy Policy before offering the puppy any toys his raiser didn’t provide. Not all toys currently on the market are safe for all of our puppies. Also, some toys and activities are counterproductive to developing a working guide.

- Please do not play any retrieving games with the GDB puppy

[http://www.gdb-official.com/site/DocServer/Puppy\\_Raising\\_Toy\\_Policy\\_v\\_11-2017.pdf?docID=9924](http://www.gdb-official.com/site/DocServer/Puppy_Raising_Toy_Policy_v_11-2017.pdf?docID=9924)

**Transportation**

- Baby puppies should ride in a crate, or on tie down in the car.
- They should not be allowed to ride on the seat
- Make sure puppies are waiting until released with “OK” to get out of the car
- Puppies under 6 months or so may need help getting in or out of the car
- When riding on a bus, teach them to sit between your legs or under the seat, not in an aisle
- On a bus, it’s helpful to back the puppy in, instead of trying to put them in a small space head first and then letting them turn around.