

Certified Professional Dog Trainer – Tina Vanderlip

My name is Tina Vanderlip and I am a Certified Professional Dog Trainer. I hope you find the information below helpful to better understand the Foundational Stages of a dog's development. I have had the pleasure of sharing my life with 14 wonderful dogs - some who had litters of their own - and I would be happy to coach you to create the best relationship with your Fur Friend at any Stage!

Please feel free to call me at 250-383-2711

Email: justkeepsgettingbetter@telus.net

PUPPY STAGES: Giving Puppy the Best Start in Life

Tip: You may wish to read the last stage first - What you put in is what you get out!

Neonatal – Birth to 12 Days: Puppies must remain close to mother but be handled gently in order to create slight stress (conditioning). Then you can subject puppies to brief temperature change/sensation by holding them in front of an open refrigerator for a moment now and then, during this period.

Transitional Period – 13 to 20 Days: They begin walking. Puppies should be handled carefully everyday and introduced safely to new smells, textures, and toys.

Awareness Period – 21 to 23 Days (at 3 weeks): Learning begins as they start using their senses now. Keep mother and puppies in the whelping box and Do Not move the box (maintain a stable environment). Continue to handle carefully and introduce them to safe things and people.

Canine Socialization – 21 to 49 Days: Overlapping the **Awareness Period** – Puppies learn how to be dogs now - play/bark/bite. They get discipline from mother dog and learn to use their body to show dominance or submission. Mother begins to wean them so now is the time to introduce a separate *bedroom* area from the *bathroom* area. Good to isolate the puppies from one another for short periods and gradually increase time (take a different puppy when you run a short errand – great time to get them use to the car).

All Positive training starts at 35 days (5 weeks).

Human Socialization – 7 to 12 Weeks: Brain waves of puppies have been tested at 7 weeks and are shown to be the same as a mature dog; however, they don't know to be afraid of anything yet. (Puppy Testing for Temperament is best done at 7 weeks).

This period to 12 weeks of age is the time of most rapid development and what they learn now could impact them the most. Think of things that a dog would be exposed to in a lifetime and expose them to those things (or something similar) in a positive way.

Fear Imprint Period – 8 to 12 Weeks: Overlapping the **Socialization Period** so it is extremely important to remember...“what they learn now could impact them the most...” and training must be All Positive. Puppies **should not** be shipped at this time and great care should be made to make visits to the veterinarian a good experience as they will remember.

Sensory Classification - 10 to 16 Weeks: Overlapping of the consecutive stages will occur as puppies will develop at different rates just as children do. This is when puppies test their dominance and discover their role in their pack, human and animal. They will seem to forget everything they have been taught and will challenge you, so stay consistent as it will pay off in spades later. This is the teething period so provide appropriate chew toys to keep puppy from chewing unsuitable items.

Flight Instinct - 4 to 8 Months: This period will last anywhere from a few days to several weeks between age 4 and 8 months. Puppy wants to find independence, “test his wings,” and can be very challenging but hang in there as they do grow out of it. This period is when most people seek outside help for obedience training.

Second Fear Period – 6 to 14 Months: This time the dog must be encouraged to get over fear on its own in order to **build self confidence** - Protect only if there is a Real Threat - **Do Not Coddle** your dog. Larger breeds are still filling out and females are going into first heat. During this time there can be a rise in aggression, dominance, or territorial behaviour as the puppy is going into sexual maturation so being a good (human) Pack Leader may be even more important now to prevent problem behaviours from developing.

Maturity – 1 to 4 Years: Anything you were not diligent about regarding conditioning, socializing, and training the puppy will become apparent now and far more challenging to deal with. Be prepared to put in a **great deal more time and effort** if you are beginning at this stage – probably best to seek a professional.

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If I am not the expert for your particular concern, such as heightened aggression toward people for example, I can provide you with first rate resources here in Victoria, BC.



"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." ~ Gandhi (1869-1948)