# Top Five Puppy Myths



**#5 "Kids and puppies are meant to be together**".

Need I say more? This can be a memory for your child that lasts well into adulthood. We can all remember our first dog, and the times we shared with him. The reality is that yes, kids and puppies can do very well together. They can form long lasting bonds and teach children many life lessons. Where it seems to fall apart is the expectation placed on the child to be the caregiver of these puppies. Children have a hard time raising children. They don't have the life lessons needed to show patience and tolerance where it is needed. Kids should be taught boundaries when it comes to their puppy. They should learn how to handle the puppy, but should not shoulder the responsibility of doing the training alone.

**#4 "He's a small pup, so he will be a small adult dog"**

Of course, this myth is pertinent to mixed heritage puppies. When I was a child I remember my uncle telling me that the size of the puppies feet would dictate how large he would be when he grew up. While this may be true, the science of this can be shaky at best. You can do your best to judge, but if you were looking for a small adult dog perhaps visit a shelter to seek out a full-grown companion. Or research breeds that a suitable for your lifestyle and speak to a reputable breeder. The main issue of concern for many people looking for small breed dogs is one of exercise. This brings us to another myth. Lets call it myth #2a. Small dogs are often the puppy of choice for apartment dwellers, with the thoughts turning again to exercise. Small dogs don't necessarily need less exercise. Make no mistake. Small dogs are often a bundle of energy, while there are many larger breeds that are laid back and happy with a half hour walk around the block a couple of times a day, and then back to the couch.

**#3 "He will grow out of it".**

Really? Naughty puppy behaviors usually lead to naughty adult behaviors. All puppy issues need to be addressed. This includes nipping, chewing, barking and our favorite….toilet training. If your puppy is left to his own devices, he will start to enjoy his freedom. He will enjoy leaping about on the furniture and peeing behind the TV. If you show him as a youngster that the household has rules, and then consistently follow through with them, you should have a well-mannered adult dog. Many adolescent puppy owners call us with toilet training problems. They tried to crate train the pup, but he didn't like it, so they gave up. They tried to get him outside to pee, but he didn't like it, so they gave up. Let's do these puppies a favour. If they don't like to

do an activity, let's do our best to make sure it is safe and healthy first. If you feel you are asking him to do something that seems reasonable (peeing outside seems reasonable), then continue to remain calm and consistent, and teach him what you expect. Call a trainer if you are feeling like you are not accomplishing your goals and before you know it the little monkey will be a model canine citizen.

**#2 "I had a pup when I was a kid, so I now how to raise one".**

"Times they are a changing" as Bob Dylan used to sing. I don't think a lot of adults realized just how much time and energy went into these pups. Our parents must have been busy in the background making sure things went smoothly. And yes, it can be a fun time to have a dog when you are an adult, but things are different now. We have to ensure that we have time as adults to train and exercise our dogs. We have to fit them into our budget. Remember, as kids, most of us didn't know about Veterinarian bills. Just because you had a St. Bernard as a child it doesn't mean it is the best breed choice for you at this time in your life. You might feel that a smaller breed would suite your lifestyle, or perhaps a more active breed to go on a hike with. Whatever your thoughts are, try to get your dog education from a reliable source. Look at some current training styles. Find a motivational and respectful trainer to help you. Have fun and enjoy the learning process.

**# 1 Top Tip. "My puppy is socialized, he visits the neighbors dog every day".**

Socialization is a critical step for all puppies. They need to be socialized to a variety of environments. It is fine to take your puppy for a walk down the same street, to the same park, to play with the same puppies each day but let's not confuse that with socialization. To ensure that your pup has adequate social time, he needs to go on other outings. He should ride in a few elevators, he should take car rides to nowhere in particular. He should sit in the Veterinarians office and just have a cookie and go home. He should meet people with beards and hats. He should take leash walks on noisy streets. All of this will add to his overall social skills. You might feel that you live in the country and would never need to have your dog in an elevator. I am a strong believer in exposing these dogs to a great variety of scenes at a young age. This will eventually help him overall in life. It is always good to keep your puppy healthy. Ask the advice of your Veterinarian when considering the best age to get him walking on the street. Before that, you can carry your puppy and still expose him to many sights and sounds. Joining a puppy pre-school class in your neighborhood is great for youngsters as it is a controlled environment, and disinfected daily.