

Puppy milestone checklist

Birth to 18 months: what is happening, what to do, and who does it. Hand it on to the new owner at go-home.

Puppy or litter

Date of birth

New owner

Weeks 0 to 2 Neonatal

☐ Weigh every puppy every day, at the same time	Breeder
☐ Expect birth weight to double by about day 10	Breeder
☐ Keep the box warm: they cannot regulate their own temperature	Breeder
☐ Early Neurological Stimulation, days 3 to 16, once daily	Breeder
☐ Trim nails weekly from about day 10	Breeder
☐ Handle every puppy every day, briefly and gently	Breeder
☐ Watch for a puppy who is cold, limp or not gaining. Act in hours	Breeder

Weeks 2 to 4 Transitional

☐ Eyes open, around days 10 to 14	Breeder
☐ Ears open, around day 14	Breeder
☐ First wobbly steps: add traction to the floor	Breeder
☐ Start gruel, weeks 3 to 4	Breeder
☐ Set up a separate toilet area	Breeder
☐ Worm on your vet's schedule	Breeder

Weeks 3 to 8 Socialization window opens

☐ New surfaces each week: vinyl, carpet, grass, metal, wobble board	Breeder
☐ Everyday sounds: traffic, vacuum, doorbell, fireworks recordings	Breeder
☐ Handle feet, ears and mouth daily	Breeder
☐ Meet new people, calmly, several times a week	Breeder
☐ Keep the litter together to 8 weeks: bite inhibition is learned in play	Breeder
☐ Solid food weeks 5 to 6, fully weaned by weeks 7 to 8	Breeder
☐ First crate introductions from week 5	Breeder

Week 8 Going home

☐ Vet health check and first vaccines, as your vet advises	Breeder + vet
☐ Microchip registered to the new owner	Breeder
☐ Go-home pack ready	Breeder
☐ Keep go-home calm: the first fear period runs 8 to 11 weeks	Breeder + owner



Weeks 8 to 12 First weeks at home

☐ First fear period: lower the intensity, never force	Owner
☐ Keep socializing: most of the window's work is done before 12 weeks	Owner
☐ Puppy class once your vet approves	Owner
☐ Short, positive car rides	Owner
☐ Name and recall games	Owner

Weeks 12 to 16 The window closes

☐ Socialization window effectively shuts by 16 weeks	Owner
☐ Final puppy vaccine lands after 16 weeks	Owner + vet
☐ Handling practice for grooming and vet visits	Owner

Months 4 to 6 Teething

☐ Adult teeth coming in: safe chews	Owner
☐ Large breeds: check growth rate is not too fast	Owner
☐ Talk to your vet about spay or neuter timing	Owner + vet

Months 6 to 14 Adolescence

☐ A second fear period can appear: reduce intensity, never force	Owner
☐ Keep recall practice going	Owner
☐ Females: note day one of the first season	Owner

Months 12 to 18 Adult

☐ Most small and medium dogs reach adult weight	Owner
☐ Large and giant breeds keep growing toward 24 months	Owner
☐ Plan breed health tests with your vet, if breeding	Owner + vet

