

SUZANNE CLOTHIER



**the ENRICHED
PUPPY PROTOCOL™**

**Raising Confident, Coordinated
& Connected Canines**

**Newfoundland Club of America
2024 Duluth, MN**



The Enriched Puppy Protocol™

Basic Concepts & Ideas from Suzanne Clothier's the ENRICHED PUPPY PROTOCOL™ (EPP)

From birth onwards, the puppy's brain is taking in the various experiences and adapting. EPP focuses on providing an enriched, safe environment to promote the kind of balanced brain development that helps puppies become confident, coordinated and competent adult dogs.

Age appropriate stimuli in an increasingly complex yet safe environment helps the puppy develop an extensive "reference library" about things he knows. This helps them during the development stage when pups become naturally cautious about **unknown** stimuli.

Good rules of thumb:

- If doing something *to* a puppy, keep it brief – this can mean *seconds*
- Start with low intensity – you can always add more, but you can't undo "too much"
- Be sure the puppy has a way to avoid it if he chooses to
- Be sure *that specific pup* is developmentally ready, even if others in the litter appear to be
- Think **variety!** The nervous system pays close attention to *novel stimuli*. However, stimuli must be both novel and *benign*.

YOUR AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Many breeders have limited resources in terms of time and energy. Here's the order of priorities so you know where to put your resources for the best possible results.

1. **Space** – give your puppies absolutely as much space as your home allows
 - a. space for a complex environment
 - b. space for moving – movement develops bodies
 - c. space for appropriate social interactions
2. **Novelty and variety are the daily priority**
 - a. Use limited time to provide novel experiences, even briefly
 - b. Even just re-organizing the environment helps
 - c. Add new elements daily if possible, or keep rotating what you put in
 - d. When age appropriate, take pups to new places every day. With limited time, aim for 10-30 minutes **every day** rather than longer periods just 2-3x week.

3. **From 6 weeks on, daily individual socialization of each pup** This is one of the *best* investments you can make in that animal's future. 15-20 minutes per pup each day is ideal.
4. **Install self-regulating behaviors** – four on the floor, sit for food/petting/release. The few seconds you will invest in these behaviors will pay off for the dog's entire lifetime.
5. **High quality socialization experiences with kind people and puppy-savvy adult dogs**

Space, space and more space for puppies to run & play

One of your very best investments in happy, coordinated, competent & confident pups is giving them as much room as possible. Get creative about using tarps & ex-pens to create odd shaped areas, even those that go around corners into other rooms.

Multiple textures & experiences

Keeping their safety as the first priority, get creative!

Think ground level and above the pups' heads. Consider which of their senses are being engaged.

Think textures, shapes, sizes, noise, smell, interaction, coordination, exploration, and try everything!

You are building their "reference library" so they are not surprised by the world.

All day every day, the puppy environment needs to provide challenges and interesting things to do, feel, taste, carry, bite, etc.

Remember that growing brains responds *only* to the demands placed on them. No challenges, no complex brain development.

Challenging, complex and interesting environments take a lot more work to keep clean than simpler, more boring environments. A little extra time and work is a priceless investment in the pup's entire life in terms of their confidence & coordination levels.



Newfoundland Club 2024 Special

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relationshipcenteredtraining.thinkific.com/courses/enriched-puppy-protocol-epp

RECYCLING WITH PUPPIES

We use things that can be easily washed (preferably thrown in washing machine if not easily handwashed) or just thrown out and replaced with yet more easily had recyclables.

It doesn't take a lot of money to create a great environment for puppies. It takes imagination and creativity. Visit your local dollar stores for cheap and fun items.

- Pillowcases filled with paper or plastic bags (knot the pillow case once filled, give to puppies - noisy, soft, easy to wash - throw out bags, wash pillow case, refill)
- Different textured blankets, bath mats, throw rugs, indoor/outdoor mats, etc.
- Uneven surfaces (old sofa cushions, pillows)
- Inclines/ramps
- Plastic boxes of various sizes with lids make broad, stable climbing platforms (duct tape lid to box)
- Stove pipe for tunnels (duct the tape edges!) Safe and do not collapse on puppies as other toy tunnels may
- Oatmeal "boxes" with ends removed - great tunnels for little pups!
- Cardboard boxes with holes, or joined together in various configurations
- Plastic bottles of various sizes, can also cut small holes so treats fall out (remove the labels)
- Rattles made from vitamin or juice bottles (rope or fabric strip secured to neck, treats inside, superglue lid on so it cannot come off)
- Empty Kleenex boxes - make great hiding places for treats
- Egg cartons
- Toys, toys, toys!
- Baker's cooling racks, metal grating
- Plastic sledding saucers, garbage can lids (oddly popular)
- Things to pull & tug, some with bells to "ring" when pulled. Multiple handles let pups share the fun.
- Strips of flannel/ fleece braided together to make a cloth "octopus" – *never* long enough to wrap around pup's neck
- Varied footing: Metal pans, samples of linoleum or tile, crate pans, etc.
- Foil or other wrapping paper spread out under supervision
- Paper towel/toilet paper tubes, add a few treats, crimped at both ends
- Metal measuring spoons, pie pans, serving spoons, whisks, sieves
- Empty yogurt or cottage cheese containers with treats and holes in top, sides or bottom
- Stuffed toys from Goodwill
- Plastic lattice fence panel
- Cloth bags of hay, shavings
- Children's play equipment (age appropriate size) from yard sales
- Flags, banners, umbrellas
- Chimes, bells, gongs
- Old hoses (great in a heap!)
- Beat up cookie sheets, baking pans
- Wobble boards
- Skateboards
- Kid's wagons

EPP WEEK BY WEEK Highlights

EPP encourages gentle handling daily from birth in a variety of positions – this should be done by the breeder or skilled helpers, not visitors. Friendly, gentle people of any age can interact with the puppies from an early age if the dam permits.

Think in terms of the quality of the interactions, not the quantity. Quality matters! Supervise even the kindest visitor as they may not know how fast even very young pups can move and escape hands.

Here are some highlights of EPP week by week:

WEEK 4

Group Activities

- Introduce variety of sounds
- Daily group walks w/dam if possible
- Four on the floor
- Friendly Fido(s)
- 24/7 in pen – provide appropriate variety of objects & surfaces
- Introduce to safe cat(s)

Individually

- Sit/Down/Stand individually for food – 2 sessions daily if possible
- Kinesthetic/tactile – jackets, bibs, collars, handling, brush/comb
- “Share” good treats/chews with pup by holding one end in your hand

WEEK 5

Group Activities

- Daily Walk *as group*; FOLLOW ME
- Sit for meals (self regulation)
- Friendly Fido(s)
- Car rides
- Crating for naps (in pairs, trios or entire litter)
- Variety of noises – use CDs and real noises wherever possible, including most household items

Individually

- Sit/Down/Stand on variety of surfaces
- Follow Me
- Sit for petting, meals, release
- Grooming & “Let’s Play Vet”
- Begin socialization in pairs or trios
- Collars worn under supervision

WEEK 6

Continue all from Week 5, and add:

- **Prioritize: Individual socialization 15 min/day in unfamiliar area**
- Walking on leash in new areas, not familiar areas
- Crating individually

WEEK 7 & 8

Continue all from Week 6 and add:

- Group walks in more challenging environments & with new experiences
- Individual socialization in new places (homes, town/city, country)
- Individual crating at night and at times during day to prepare for placement
- Car rides in crates