



Puppy Kindergarten

Thank you for your interest in our Puppy Kindergarten class! We congratulate you on your responsibility as a new dog owner and on your commitment to starting you puppy off right by enrolling in our socialization class.

Our goal at **the Humane Society of Western Montana** is to help dog owners understand their dog's behavior and learn how to create a partnership of mutual understanding and communication. Training does not have to be forceful and punishment based. Our methods incorporate a strong commitment to positive reinforcement and reward based training. We want owners to enjoy teaching their puppy, and we want puppies to enjoy learning!

This class is an Open Enrollment class, meaning you and your puppy can start anytime! Class is held every Wednesday from 6-6:45 pm in the Humane Society training room (please enter through the sliding glass doors on the south east side of the building.) Please register in advance before your first class, either online or in the main lobby of the shelter, at least 15 minutes before your class starts.

A package of four classes is \$40 and you again, start anytime, but then need to attend four classes in a row. If you must miss a class, we may be able to work with you, but we find that consistency is key when training a new puppy! Talk with your trainer to help you decide the best training plan for you and your puppy.

Below is a checklist of items you will need and some suggestions to help you and your your dog be successful in class. Please call your instructor at 549-3934 if you have any additional questions or email them directly: Bre at volunteer@myhswm.org, Laurel at sitstayplaywithlaurel@yahoo.com, Mariah at outreach@myhswm.org or Jean at behavior@myhswm.org. We look forward to training with you and your puppy!

What You Need for Class

- Your puppy should have already had at least one distemper combo vaccine, at least 10 days prior to your first class. A bordatella (kennel cough) vaccine is also recommended. *Please bring a copy of your vaccinations to your first class.*
- A flat buckle **collar**. No electronic or metal training collars, please.
- A harness (basic or front clip) or head halter if your dog pulls on leash.
- **A standard 6-foot leash**. No extend-a-leashes; they don't work well in a classroom setting and actually teach your puppy to pull!

- **Small, soft treats** – more than you think you will need! It's best if they are cut uniformly and should be as small as possible (pea size). We love Natural Balance, string cheese, turkey and dried liver treats.
- Your **clicker** if you are already clicker training or interested in learning how- it's easy!
- A **treat bag** – this bag clips to your waist which makes treat delivery much easier.
- A puppy who has already had some **exercise**.
- A puppy with an **empty bladder**. We will take frequent potty breaks throughout class as well.

More suggestions

- Check out our *Re-Tail* store at the shelter for any training supplies you may need. We sell clickers, collars, harnesses, Kongs, treat bags and more! We also have id tags and microchips available at reduced rates.
- Arrive on time. It can take a few minutes to get your puppy out of the car, take them on a short bathroom walk and get them into class. If you are rushing, you and your puppy will probably be stressed during class.
- Please avoid meeting other puppies on leash until we know everyone gets along. Your pup might be friendly but others may be a bit defensive when on-leash.
- Children over the age of 6 are welcome to participate in training. Kids 5 years and younger will most likely need an additional adult to supervise them.
- Please turn your cell phones off. If you need to be available during class, please set it to vibrate and leave the building for any necessary conversations.
- If your puppy is ill, please do not bring him/her to class.
- Please do not compare your puppy to other puppies. Some are more stressed in a classroom setting, some breeds do better with fewer repetitions, while some can train forever. It's better to do a few good repetitions and rest than to work until your dog is ignoring you.