

Dog Socialization

Socialization is the interaction between dogs and how they learn to get along with each other.

Dogs communicate in three main ways:

1. By body language
2. By scent
3. By scent

Body Language

Dogs communicate with each other using their bodies. This includes signals such as the position of the head or ears, the hair on the body, the movement of the eyes or tail, etc. Observe these signals when your dog meets another dog. Learn to understand what these signals mean. Some examples are:

- Alert Dog** – Ears and head erect.
Hair is lying flat on the dog's body.
- Playful Dog** – Play bow body position.
Tail wagging back and forth.
Ears up.
Hair is lying flat on the dog's body.
Dog may be barking, licking, or twirling around.
- Stressed Dog** – Low body posture.
Ears back.
Pupils dilated.
Dogs may be panting or licking lips.
- Submissive Dog** – Tail tucked under.
Ears back.
No eye contact.
Low body posture.

Dogs are also extremely good at reading the human body language.

Scent

Dogs also communicate by smelling chemicals that are secreted by all dogs. These chemicals are called pheromones. Pheromones are in a dog's urine, feces, saliva, and vaginal and anal secretions. Humans cannot share in this type of communication, but for a dog these scent messages can give valuable information. This information can include such things as a dog's status, whether the dog is male or female, or whether the dog is sexually active. Humans also secrete pheromones. This can be the reason some dogs like to carry around unwashed socks and underwear.

Sound

Sound is the dog's weakest form of communication. As a dog owner, you quickly learn what your dog's verbal language means such as "I want to go out" or "I'm hurt" or "Let's play fetch". The types of sound a dog may use include crying (as when a puppy is hungry), barking, howling, whining, or yelping.

Knowing how your dog communicates with other dogs makes you an educated dog owner. This can give you confidence to allow your dog to interact with dogs she meets, and you will be able to understand all their forms of communication. Observe your dog as well as other dogs so you can learn how dogs communicate.