

CANINES, CHAOS, AND CAKE

Most people want nothing but the best for their baby. Many do background checks on daycare facilities and months of searching for the perfect kindergarten. But for a puppy, often very little research on their schooling is done. There may be some training done in the dog's lifetime, but usually that is only sought out when the dog is already "misbehaving." Remember at full size many puppies turned dog have jaw capabilities strong enough to tear through flesh and crush bone. Don't you want to be certain that you are doing everything possible to insure that your dog grows up to be a loving companion and wonderful addition to your family?

Leroy was the newest addition to my family. The banner reads, "It's a Boy," But the cake says it best reading, "It's a Border Collie!"

It was a Saturday afternoon and as luck would have it, it was raining out. Does rain on your puppy shower day feel the same as rain on your wedding day? Would the other puppies still arrive to welcome baby Leroy into this world? Would all the dogs get along? Would the dogs all enjoy a piñata filled with treats? Yes came to be the answer to all of these questions. The rain let up and a fun-filled afternoon of canines, chaos and cake commenced.

Many owners were amused when their invitations arrived, but did they really understand the most important reason for the puppy shower?

My goals for my new Border Collie are high and socialization is the highest point of call. What most owners don't realize is that the biggest window for socialization falls before 16 weeks of age. Unfortunately, many puppies spend much of that time alone in their crate being exposed to very little. At such a young age puppies are very malleable. Exposure to the world is extremely important. Almost anything that you introduce to them will be viewed as good later on in their life. If a puppy is seemingly afraid of something, then lots of treats paired with that item can quickly change the puppy's mind about matters. So items that dogs may at first fear such as hats, bags, men, or boxes could have been adored by the pup by merely exposing the pup to it early on in life.

Everyone loves a party. So, what better way to acclimate a puppy to "everything" than by inviting "everything" to a huge celebration? This includes dogs, men, women, and screaming children. Lots of treats were available for owners and dogs alike. After doggie cake and biscuits galore, Leroy thought that any sight of balloons and banners meant great stuff for him.

It was required that everyone handles him and cuddle him. Many people did not object...who wouldn't want to pet a fuzzy baby with puppy breath? However, I had a hidden agenda. All this handling would teach Leroy that strangers of all sorts are good and that handling would on most occasions lead to fun. He learned that

some people may just look weird and make strange noises but hats and noisemakers are just another thing that humans use.

The **DO's** and **DON'Ts** of throwing your own puppy shower:

<u>Do's:</u>	<u>Don'ts:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be sure that all dogs attending are healthy and up-to-date with all their vaccinations. Be sure that young puppies have received at least their first round of shots.▪ Educate owners on what to look for regarding dog fights and have them monitor their own dogs▪ Have people designated as monitors to recognize the early signals of a dog fight because it is very possible that a dog's owner might become distracted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Don't</u> let the dogs figure it out for themselves. Sometimes all of us need to be pointed in the right direction▪ <u>Don't</u> keep dogs on leash. Owners walking their dogs on leashes may not even realize that they are completely altering their dog's body language and thus changing the dog's interaction with another dog▪ <u>Don't</u> throw lots of treats into a group of dogs. Fighting over food is an extremely common

<p>and not see a fight coming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite dogs that you know are friendly towards other dogs, children and adults ▪ Have extra crates available to serve as a time-out area for tired or over stimulated dogs ▪ Try to separate large dogs from small dogs. A large dog's good intentions may not be enough to prevent him from stepping on and possibly severely injuring a smaller dog ▪ Choose a fenced area with a secure entrance/exit so that there is no chance of a dog escaping (nothing puts a bigger damper on the celebration of a new puppy than losing another 	<p>behavior among dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Don't</u> expose all dogs to all things and expect that it will be a positive experience (Most puppies will quickly learn that if something novel is paired with a really good treat, that novel item is viewed as good. An older dog may have already developed some bad associations with certain things or just fear a novel item. I.E. Don't just whack a piñata expecting every dog to like it. Especially with an older dog it may take more time to develop a positive association) Be sensitive to your dog's needs! ▪ <u>Don't</u> let dogs run wild all
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<p>dog)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have several fun games and contests planned. Everyone enjoys showing off his or her pet. Try to have all owners leave feeling good about their dog...even if you have to have such contests as shortest tail and loudest barker. ▪ Give out lots of information about the proper socialization of puppies. Well-adjusted puppies are not an accident. They are products of well-educated owners 	<p>afternoon. Add some fun games and share any training knowledge with all dog owners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Don't</u> be stingy about giving out information regarding puppy socialization. Owners can't hear enough about it!
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Some owners were skeptics at first, but once all the dogs, about 20 to be exact, were loose all the chaos began. To the skeptics' surprise, all the dogs got along and many owners realized how much fun their dogs were having. Suddenly

their fear of their dogs misbehaving was gone and they allowed themselves to have a great time. This motivated them to take their dogs out more in public and soon everyone was asking when Leroy would have his first birthday party. All owners left with an informed mind of just how important socialization is and all the different things that dogs can grow up and fear just for the mere lack of exposure. If owners would even take their dogs out more in public then the vicious cycle of dog misbehaving and being placed in the backyard would change into owners being relaxed and their dogs enjoying a more fulfilling life. When is your dog's next occasion for a dog party?