

# ASK THE EXPERT

## BREANNE TABBERT



Breanne and Piper, aka "Lil' P"

### BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST

When it comes to having a new puppy in your home, they can be cute and cuddly for sure, but there will also be some growing pains and struggles. I know this because I've been there before and I'm in it currently. I adopted my first dog from CCHS 7 years ago. Zoey was 2 months old when I brought her home. Sadly, Zoey passed away unexpectedly last March.

When the "Bridgerton litter" came to us last fall, I felt ready to welcome a new puppy into my home. Originally named Daphne at the shelter, her new name is Piper and she is 6 months old and 35 lbs. of terror and love! In the 4 months I've had her she has certainly humbled me and has shown me that there's always more to learn about dog behavior, even for someone whose job title is literally 'Animal Behavior Specialist'!

I felt confident that I knew *exactly* what I was getting into with adopting another 2-month-old puppy:

- House training
- "Sit to say please"
- Impulse control
- Basic obedience cues
- Socialization

These were all tasks I knew I would be working on right away. Even though I had taken puppy training classes with Zoey, Piper was a new puppy with a totally different attitude about the world and I'll be honest with you: we've struggled with different issues, but at the end of the day I wouldn't have it any other way!

Here are some lessons that little Piper has taught me that you might find helpful with your puppy.

**Take Training Classes** – Even though I regularly take part in and lead dog training classes, there's something special about the community you find when training with other new pup parents. Classes are also great for socializing your puppy and keeping up to date with the best science-backed training methods.

**Puppy Witching Hour** – Without looking at a clock I can tell when it's 7 pm in my house! Puppy witching hour is a common occurrence in many new puppies, usually between 5 pm and 8 pm. It is a time of extreme playfulness that usually results in you or your furniture being your puppy's new favorite chew toy. Being proactive in making sure puppy-safe chews and appropriate toys are easily within reach will save you a lot of money on Band-Aids! It's also a great time to work on appropriate play and impulse control.

**Puppies Need Naptime, Too** – The AKC notes that puppies need 15 – 20 hours of sleep daily. Just like a toddler, you may find your overtired puppy throwing a tantrum and biting because they cannot settle and nap. I set aside time where I physically place Piper in an exercise pen in a quiet room and within 5 minutes, she's asleep. A well-rested puppy is a happy, friendly puppy!

**Give it Time** – For puppies, and even adult dogs, transitioning into a new home takes time. Everything is new to them: new house, new smells, new people, new routines. When adopting a dog or puppy, there's a commonly accepted guideline called the 3/3/3 rule. See *more on page 6*.

The saying "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" is far from the truth and even your resident CCHS Animal Behavior Specialist can always learn more!



# The 3-3-3 Rule: Adopting a Shelter Dog

The *3 Days - 3 Weeks - 3 Months* rule is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a dog after adoption. Please remember that every dog is unique and will adjust differently.

Give your new companion space and allow them to adjust at their own pace.










## 3 days

to decompress

-  Feeling overwhelmed
-  May be scared and unsure of what is going on
-  Not comfortable enough to be themselves
-  May not want to eat or drink
-  Shuts down, hides under furniture, and/or curls up in crate
-  Tests the boundaries

## 3 weeks

to learn your routine

-  Starting to settle in
-  Feeling more comfortable
-  Realizing this could possibly be their forever home
-  Figured out their environment
-  Getting into a routine
-  Lets their guard down; may start showing their true personality
-  Behavior issues may start to appear

## 3 months

to start to feel at home

-  Finally feels completely comfortable in their home
-  Building trust and a true bond
-  Gained a complete sense of security with their new family
-  Set in a routine

**Do you have a question for the expert?**

Our Animal Behavioral Specialist, **Breanne Tabbert**, is happy to answer any questions you have about why your pet is doing that . . . thing. Reach out to her at [breanne@ecu humane.org](mailto:breanne@ecu humane.org)!

Source: *Rescue Dogs 101* and *Maddie's Fund*



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

# Paw Prints

## IN THIS ISSUE

DIRECTOR'S NOTE .....	1
CHECK OUT KEARNS DRIVE .....	2
MEET THE TEAM .....	4
ASK THE EXPERT .....	5
ADOPT US .....	7
HELP US HELP THEM .....	8
MYTH & FACTS .....	9
SPECIAL THANKS .....	10
CCHS ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT .....	11
SPECIAL THOUGHTS .....	12



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