Socialising During Confinement Period

For nearly 50 years I have worked with dogs, and have owned many who have not had a good start in life - they have either been dogs I've rescued and rehabilitated myself or dogs belonging to other owners.

One problem comes up again, and again, and again,
and that's lack of proper and early socialising.

Since the early 1980's, I have met many professionals in the veterinary field - excellent medical people and I've often marvelled at their expertise. But in all that time, I have only met a few vets who truly understand how dogs learn and how the early weeks can affect the rest of a dog's life.

I have had the pleasure of working with some of the few:

Dr Ian Dunbar - a British born and qualified vet who is one of the world's leading behaviour specialists, and author of many puppy and dog training books (Ian is writing the foreword for my book on bringing up and training puppies)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Dunbar   www.dogSTARdaily.com

Kendal Shepherd - the first UK veterinary surgeon to be accredited by the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour as a certified clinical animal behaviourist, and author of the book "The Canine Commandments".
http://www.endangereddogs.com/EDDRChildrenandDogs.htm

Another vet who totally understands how dogs learn, live and communicate is Dr Bruce Fogle www.brucefogle.com and his book "The Dog's Mind" should be read by everyone who shares their life with a dog. http://www.amazon.co.uk/Bruce-Fogle/e/B001HCUYSS

Puppies should meet 100 new dogs and 100 new people, and experience100 new life situations in the first 12 weeks of life, to be considered socialised.

What a pup doesn't meet or experience during its first 12 weeks of life,
is much more likely to scare it and result in a fearful response.

Fearful puppies are much more likely to develop into fear-aggressive adult dogs if socialising is withheld until after the 12-week "socialisation period"

The whole point about puppy socialising is that much of must be done in the first 3 months of the pup's life, after which the "learning window" starts to close, making the pup much more apprehensive.

Socialising is not something that can be "made up for" later in the pup's life

because what puppies miss during the "socialising period" (4-12 weeks),

can never be recovered by over-socialising in later weeks, months or years.

As a dog behaviourist and trainer with nearly 40 years' experience, and specialising in puppy training and dog aggression, it saddens me to see so many pets of all ages acting out of fear due to a lack of proper socialising in the early weeks of its life.

Heather Stevens MCFBA MGoDT(MT)
Canine Behaviour Specialist and Master Trainer

Important socialising information is contained at the following links:

http://www.dogstardaily.com/training/ch-2-raising-puppy

http://www.dogstardaily.com/training/puppy-personality-development

http://www.dogstardaily.com/training/fearfulness

Puppy Party - People

Invite 6 people into your home for a puppy socialising party for about 10-15 minutes. Six men one night, six ladies another night, then six children etc., etc.

Ensure visitors leave their shoes at the front door or hallway, and sit them down on the floor somewhere. Give them each a small handful of your pup's daily allowance of food and let your pup socialise with them whilst they feed your pup.

Puppy Party - Dogs

Invite a dog (with its owner!), into your home for 10-15 minutes of socialising with your pup. Ensure that the dogs you invite are happy, healthy and of sound temperament. Do some of the socialising off lead and some on lead (both dogs), to ensure your pup is happy to meet others whilst on lead.

Puppy Socialising - Outside

Carry your puppy for socialising times in different areas/places outside. Limit their exposure to 10-15 minutes of meeting people as puppies tire easily. If you need to put your pup down at any time, take a towel or sheet with you.

10 Golden Rules for Puppy Owners

http://www.wetrainanydog.com/assets/WTAD_Puppy_Tips.pdf