



Puppy Raising Introduction

First and foremost, United States Veterans Service Dogs would like to thank you for making the decision to raise one of our very special pups. Puppy raisers play a vital role in our mission to help veterans find a new “normal” through the help of a service dog. Although most of you have probably raised a pet dog before, these dogs are different from the typical pet. To become a successful service dog, they will need lots of structure and training. All of your interactions with them serve a purpose in giving them the foundation to potentially change the life of a veteran at the end of this journey. While we still want them to have fun and enjoy the year, they have with you, how you raise your puppy will affect their future training and partner placement.

We strongly suggest reading and watching videos before you get your puppy, so you are prepared. Start with the sections that are most relevant to the age of the puppy. Also remember that you are now apart of our wonderful USVSD family and we are here to support you through this journey. Don’t ever hesitate to reach out to a Puppy Program Regional Coordinator or contact a group leader if you are in a group.

Main Objectives:

- Puppy should remain calm in any situation they encounter.
- Puppy should be able to walk on a loose leash next to you.
- Puppy is crate and potty trained.
- Puppy used the bathroom on command.
- Puppy doesn’t display possessiveness over toys, food, home, or handler.
- Puppy does not display separation anxiety when left in a crate or when left alone.
- Puppy can accept physical handling and grooming maintenance.
- Puppy can appropriately greet a stranger.
- Puppy uses the bathroom while *on* leash.
- Puppy does not display begging behaviors with human food.
- Puppy remains calm around children and other animals.
- Has good house manners.
- Provided a safe environment.
- Attend USVSD puppy classes if you’re within range of a group.
- Turn in monthly behavior reports so USVSD can keep up with how your pup is doing.

The most important objective is to have fun and document your experience. Although 12-14 months sounds like a long time, your time together will go by very fast.