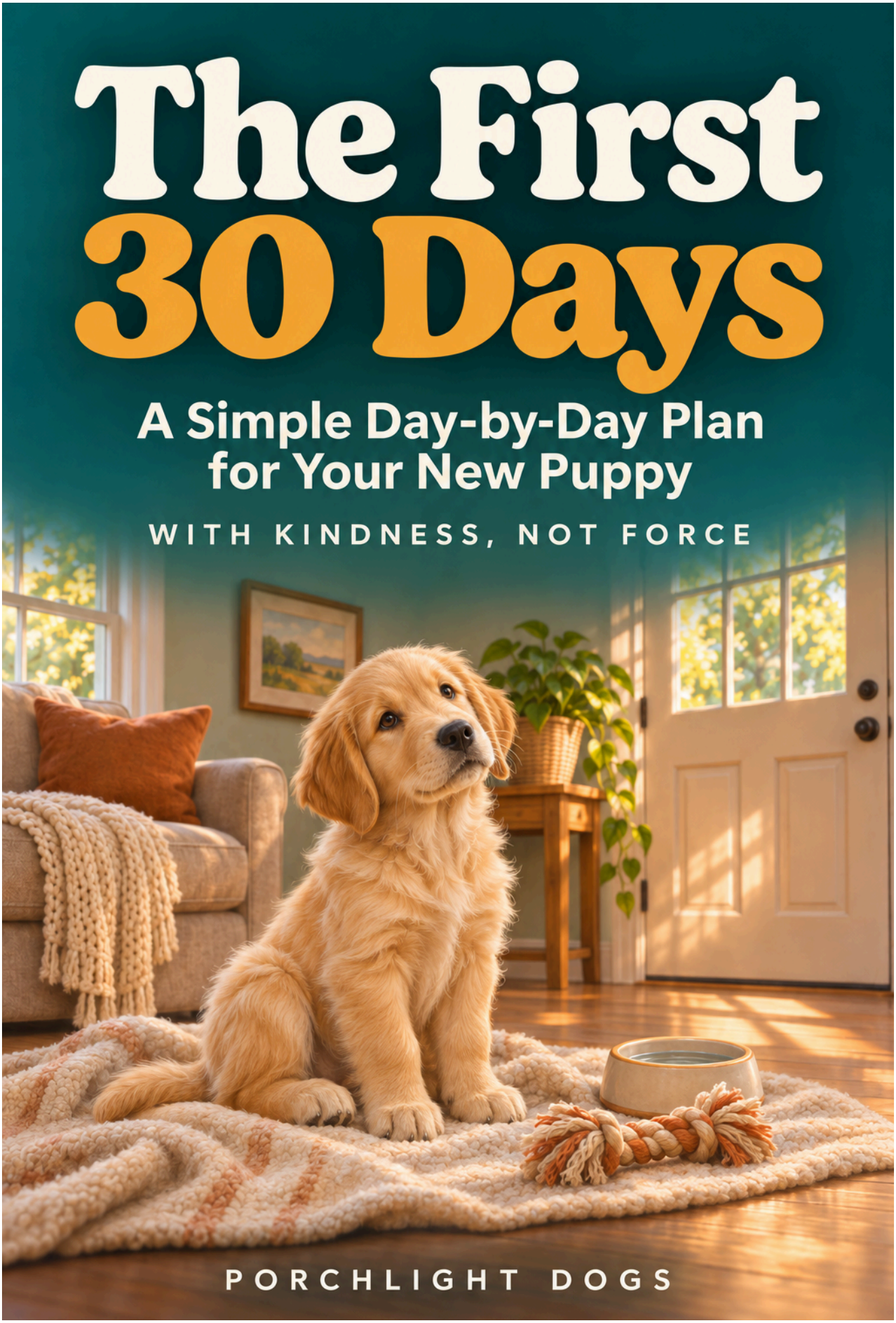
The First 30 Days

A Simple Day-by-Day Plan for Your New Puppy

WITH KINDNESS, NOT FORCE



PORCHLIGHT DOGS

The First 30 Days

A simple day-by-day plan for your new puppy. With kindness, not force.

Contents

Read This First 3
- Important safety notice 3
- Who this book is for 3
- What to expect, honestly 3
- The methods in this book 3

How to Use This Book 4
- The whole idea on one page 4
- Pick your route 4
- What the boxes mean 4

PART 1: SETTLE IN

Getting Ready 5
- 1.1 Shopping list 5
- 1.2 Puppy-proofing 5
- 1.3 Set up the puppy zone 5

The First Days and Nights 6
- 2.1 Day one 6
- 2.2 The first nights 6
- 2.3 A sample daily routine 6

Potty Training Without Tears 8
- 3.1 When to go out 8
- 3.2 The potty routine 8
- 3.3 Accidents 8
- 3.4 Signs your puppy needs to go 9

Crate, Pen, and Sleep 10
- 4.1 Making the crate a happy place 10
- 4.2 Overtired puppies 10

PART 2: GOOD HABITS

Biting, Mouthing, and Chewing 11
- 5.1 Why puppies bite 11
- 5.2 What to do 11
- 5.3 Chewing 11

A Confident Puppy 12
- 6.1 Why the early weeks matter 12
- 6.2 Safe ways to socialize 12
- 6.3 Quality over quantity 12
- 6.4 Handling and vet visits 12
- 6.5 Short alone times 12

First Skills 13
- 7.1 Name and "Yes!" 13
- 7.2 Sit 13
- 7.3 Come 13
- 7.4 Leash basics 13
- 7.5 Four paws on the floor 13

Common Puppy Problems 14
- 8.1 Zoomies 14
- 8.2 Barking or whining for attention 14
- 8.3 Stealing things and running off 14
- 8.4 Jumping on people 14
- 8.5 Pulling on the leash 14
- 8.6 Eating poop or random things outside 14
- 8.7 Car rides 14
- 8.8 Growling over food or toys 15
- 8.9 Crying in the crate 15

PART 3: THE PLAN

Your 30-Day Plan 16

Appendix 18
- A. Socialization checklist 18
- B. Family rules 18
- Sources and further reading 19

BEFORE YOU START

Read This First

Welcome to the most tiring, wonderful month of dog ownership.

Important safety notice

PLEASE READ

This book is general education for new puppy owners. It is not veterinary advice. Your vet is your partner for vaccines, deworming, diet, and anything health-related.

- Call your vet right away if your puppy has vomiting, diarrhea, won't eat, seems very tired, or has trouble breathing.
- Ask your vet which places are safe for your puppy before vaccinations are complete.
- Keep toxic foods, medicines, cords, and small objects out of reach. Puppies explore with their mouths.

Who this book is for

This book is for anyone bringing home a puppy, or who just did and is wondering what they got into. Accidents on the rug, needle-sharp teeth, crying at 3 a.m. All normal. Over the next 30 days you'll set up habits that make the next 15 years easier: house-training, calm sleep, gentle mouth, and a puppy who feels safe in the world.

What to expect, honestly

- Puppies learn fast and forget fast. Repetition is everything.
- Accidents will happen. Most puppies need several months to be fully reliable with house-training.
- You'll have days that feel like you're going backward. That's development, not failure.
- Every puppy is different. Breed, age, and personality change the pace.

The methods in this book

Everything here uses rewards, routine, and prevention. No rubbing noses in accidents, no yelling, no alpha rolls. Puppies learn best when they feel safe, and the trust you build now lasts a lifetime.

START HERE

How to Use This Book

Skim now, then follow the day cards.

The whole idea on one page

1
Set up
A safe space where mistakes are hard to make.

2
Routine
Same times for food, potty, play, and sleep.

3
Reward
Catch good choices and pay them, often.

4
Prevent
Supervise or confine. Fewer mistakes means faster learning.

5
Explore
Gentle, happy new experiences every day.

Pick your route

If this sounds like you	Start with
"Puppy arrives next week."	Chapter 1, getting ready.
"Accidents everywhere!"	Chapter 3, potty training.
"The biting!"	Chapter 5, mouthing and chewing.
"Just give me a plan."	Chapter 8, the 30 day cards.

What the boxes mean

TRY THIS
A step you can do today.

WATCH OUT
A common mistake or a safety point.

GOOD TO KNOW
The reason behind a step.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 1

Getting Ready

A little prep saves a lot of chewed shoes.

1.1 Shopping list

- [ ] Crate or exercise pen (sized so your puppy can stand, turn, and lie down)
- [ ] Soft, washable bedding
- [ ] Food and water bowls, and the food the breeder or shelter used
- [ ] Collar with ID tag, a light leash, and a well-fitted harness
- [ ] Chew toys in different textures (rubber, rope, soft)
- [ ] Small, soft training treats
- [ ] Enzyme cleaner for accidents (it removes the smell that attracts repeat visits)
- [ ] Baby gates for doorways and stairs

1.2 Puppy-proofing

Get down to puppy height and look around. Anything at that level is a chew toy as far as your puppy is concerned.

- Hide or cover electrical cords.
- Move shoes, socks, kids' toys, and remotes out of reach.
- Lock away cleaning products, medicines, and trash.
- Know the common dangerous foods: chocolate, grapes and raisins, onions and garlic, xylitol (a sweetener in some gum and peanut butters), and cooked bones.
- Check houseplants. Some are toxic to dogs. Your vet or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control website can help.

1.3 Set up the puppy zone

Choose one easy-to-clean area, like the kitchen, with a gate. Put the crate or pen there with the door open, bedding inside, a water bowl, and a couple of chews. This is your puppy's safe home base for the first weeks.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 2

The First Days and Nights

Big changes for a small dog.

2.1 Day one

1. Go straight to the potty spot when you arrive. Wait quietly. Praise and treat when your puppy goes.
2. Let your puppy explore the puppy zone calmly. Keep visitors to a minimum for the first few days.
3. Offer a small meal and water.
4. Expect lots of naps. Puppies need a lot of sleep, often 16 hours a day or more.

2.2 The first nights

Your puppy has just left their littermates. Crying at night is normal. A few things that help:

- Put the crate or bed **next to your bed** for the first weeks, so your puppy can hear and smell you.
- A worn T-shirt in the bed can be comforting.
- Take your puppy out for a quiet potty break if they wake and cry. Young puppies often can't make it through the night. Keep it boring: no play, then back to bed.
- Gradually move the crate to its permanent spot over a few weeks if you want.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Comforting a scared puppy doesn't "reward fear." Puppies who feel safe settle faster and grow more confident.

2.3 A sample daily routine

Time	Activity
Wake up	Straight outside to potty
Breakfast	Meal, then potty 10-20 minutes later
Morning	Short play and training (3-5 min), then nap in the puppy zone
Midday	Potty, meal, short outing, nap
Afternoon	Gentle new experiences, play, nap
Evening	Last meal a few hours before bed, calm play, chew time

Time	Activity
Bedtime	Last potty, then bed

PART 1 · CHAPTER 3

Potty Training Without Tears

Get it right more often than wrong, and the habit sticks.

3.1 When to go out

Young puppies have small bladders. Take your puppy out:

- [ ] Right after waking up, including from naps
- [ ] After eating or drinking
- [ ] After play or excitement
- [ ] Before bed and before being left in the crate
- [ ] Every 1 to 2 hours while awake for young puppies

A rough rule many vets and trainers mention: puppies can hold it for about as many hours as their age in months, plus one, up to a limit. It's only a guide. Your puppy will tell you their real number.

3.2 The potty routine

1. Carry or lead your puppy to the same spot each time.
2. Stand quietly. Say a cue like "Go potty" once.
3. The moment they finish, praise and give a treat right there, outside.
4. If nothing happens in 5 minutes, go back inside to the puppy zone or crate for 10 minutes, then try again.

3.3 Accidents

- **Caught in the act?** Calmly scoop up your puppy and take them outside. No scolding.
- **Found it later?** Clean it with enzyme cleaner and say nothing. Punishing after the fact just teaches your puppy to hide when they go.
- **Lots of accidents?** You need more trips out, more supervision, or a smaller space. If accidents stay frequent, check with your vet for a urinary infection.

> **TRY THIS**
>
> Use the potty tracker (it's in the bonus planner if you have it, or make a simple chart). After three days you'll see your puppy's pattern, and you can get ahead of accidents.

3.4 Signs your puppy needs to go

Sniffing the floor, circling, walking off to a corner, whining at the door, or suddenly stopping play. When you see these, go outside right away.

PART 1 · CHAPTER 4

Crate, Pen, and Sleep

A safe den, not a jail.

4.1 Making the crate a happy place

1. Leave the door open. Toss treats inside. Let your puppy go in and out freely.
2. Feed meals inside the crate with the door open.
3. When your puppy walks in happily, close the door for a few seconds while they eat. Open before they fuss.
4. Build up slowly: a minute, five minutes, a nap with you nearby.

WATCH OUT

Never use the crate as punishment. And don't crate a puppy for longer than they can hold their bladder. If your puppy panics in the crate, stop and use an exercise pen instead, and talk to your vet or a trainer.

4.2 Overtired puppies

An overtired puppy is like an overtired toddler: wild, bitey, and impossible. If your puppy suddenly gets crazy and nippy, they probably need a nap, not more play. Lead them to their bed with a chew and let them sleep.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 5

Biting, Mouthing, and Chewing

Those little teeth are normal. Here's how to teach a soft mouth.

5.1 Why puppies bite

Puppies explore the world with their mouths, play-bite with littermates, and teethe. Most puppies lose their baby teeth and get adult teeth at roughly 3 to 6 months. Mouthing is normal. Your job isn't to stop it overnight but to teach what's OK to bite.

5.2 What to do

1. **Keep a toy in your hand** during play. Offer it before your puppy reaches for your hands.
2. **When teeth touch skin,** freeze and let your hand go still. Many puppies let go. Then offer the toy.
3. **If biting continues,** calmly stand up and step away for 20-30 seconds, or step over the gate. Fun stops when teeth hit skin.
4. **Reward calm.** Praise and treat when your puppy plays gently or licks instead of biting.
5. **Check for tiredness.** Many biting sprees are a sign your puppy needs a nap.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Avoid pushing your puppy's mouth closed, tapping their nose, or yelling. It can excite them more, or make them scared of hands.

5.3 Chewing

Chewing is a need, especially when teething. Give lots of safe options, rotate toys to keep them interesting, and supervise. If your puppy chews something wrong, swap it for a toy and praise when they take it.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 6

A Confident Puppy

Socialization: helping your puppy feel safe in a big world.

6.1 Why the early weeks matter

Puppies go through a sensitive period, roughly from 3 weeks to about 12-14 weeks of age, when new experiences shape how they see the world for life. Puppies who have many gentle, positive experiences during this time tend to grow into more confident adults.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior recommends that puppies start socialization before their vaccine series is complete, with sensible precautions. Ask your vet which places and classes are safe for your puppy right now.

6.2 Safe ways to socialize

- Carry your puppy to watch the world: a parking lot, a coffee shop patio, a school pick-up line from a distance.
- Invite calm, healthy, vaccinated adult dogs that your vet agrees are safe.
- Meet people of different ages, looks, and clothing (hats, sunglasses, uniforms).
- Explore different surfaces: grass, tile, gravel, a wobbly cushion.
- Hear everyday sounds: vacuum, doorbell, traffic, starting at low volume.
- Join a well-run puppy class that uses rewards.

6.3 Quality over quantity

Socialization isn't about meeting 100 people. It's about **good** experiences. If your puppy looks scared (tail tucked, backing away, trying to hide), make it easier: more distance, shorter time, more treats. Let your puppy choose to approach. Never force a scared puppy into a situation.

6.4 Handling and vet visits

Practice gentle handling daily: touch ears, paws, mouth, and tail for a second, then treat. This makes vet visits, nail trims, and grooming much easier for life.

6.5 Short alone times

Teach your puppy that being alone is normal: a few minutes in the puppy zone with a chew while you're in another room, building slowly. Small doses now help prevent separation problems later.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 7

First Skills

Short sessions, big rewards.

7.1 Name and "Yes!"

Say "Yes!" and give a treat, ten times, to teach that "Yes!" means a treat is coming. Then say your puppy's name, and when they look, "Yes!" and treat.

7.2 Sit

1. Hold a treat at your puppy's nose and slowly raise it up and back.
2. As their bottom touches the floor, "Yes!" and treat.
3. After a few reps, add the word "Sit" just before the hand movement.

Teach your puppy to sit to say hello. It's the start of polite greetings.

7.3 Come

1. Inside, say your puppy's name and "Come!" in a happy voice, then run a few steps away.
2. When they reach you, party: treats and praise.
3. Never call your puppy to you for something unpleasant. "Come" should always be great news.

7.4 Leash basics

Let your puppy wear a light leash indoors under supervision. Reward them for walking near you. Keep early walks short; puppies are learning about the world, not covering miles.

7.5 Four paws on the floor

When your puppy jumps up, turn away calmly. When all four paws are on the floor, bend down and say hello. Ask family and guests to do the same.

PART 2 · CHAPTER 8

Common Puppy Problems

Quick answers for the things that drive new owners crazy.

8.1 Zoomies

Sudden bursts of wild running, often in the evening or after a bath, are normal. Make sure the area is safe, keep calm, and let them run it out. If zoomies turn into biting, your puppy is probably overtired: guide them to their bed with a chew.

8.2 Barking or whining for attention

Wait for a moment of quiet, even two seconds, then give attention. If you respond to barking, your puppy learns that barking works. Make sure basic needs are covered first: potty, water, play, and rest.

8.3 Stealing things and running off

Chasing turns it into a fun game. Instead, trade: offer a treat or a toy and praise when your puppy drops the item. Then puppy-proof so there's less to steal. Teach "drop it" with trades during calm play.

8.4 Jumping on people

Turn away and wait for four paws on the floor, then say hello calmly. Ask guests to do the same. Ask for a "sit" when people arrive and reward it generously.

8.5 Pulling on the leash

Stop walking when the leash gets tight. When your puppy comes back toward you and the leash loosens, say "Yes!", treat by your leg, and walk on. Keep early walks short and sniffy.

8.6 Eating poop or random things outside

Many puppies do it. Keep your puppy on leash, clean up the yard quickly, and practice "leave it" with treats. Mention it to your vet if it happens a lot.

8.7 Car rides

Start with short, happy rides to fun places, not only the vet. Some puppies get carsick; a short drive on an empty stomach often helps, and your vet can advise if it continues. Always secure your puppy with a crate or a crash-tested harness.

8.8 Growling over food or toys

Don't take things away by force or punish the growl; the growl is a warning. Instead, walk by and drop a better treat into the bowl, so your approach means good things. If growling gets worse, or your puppy snaps, contact a reward-based trainer or behavior professional soon. Early help makes a big difference.

8.9 Crying in the crate

First check needs: potty, water, too hot or cold. Then go back a few steps in crate training and make it easier with shorter periods and you nearby. Avoid letting a young puppy cry for long periods in a crate; it can make them dislike it.

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> Luna, a 10-week-old Aussie mix, had a "witching hour" every evening: zoomies, biting ankles, stealing socks. Her family added a 6 p.m. nap in her pen with a stuffed food toy. Within a week, evenings were calmer. She wasn't naughty; she was overtired.

PART 3 · CHAPTER 9

Your 30-Day Plan

One focus at a time. Keep everything from the weeks before going too.

Days 1-3: Settle In	Safety and routine
Focus	Puppy zone, potty routine every 1-2 hours, crate with door open, lots of naps.
Skills	Charge "Yes!" and the name game, 3 minutes twice a day.
Note: potty times _____	

Days 4-7: Rhythm	House-training basics
Focus	Feed in the crate, short door-closed moments. Start a potty log.
Skills	Sit, handling paws and ears for treats.
World	Two calm new sounds or surfaces a day.
Accidents this week: _____	

Days 8-14: Gentle Mouth	Biting and chewing
Focus	Toy-in-hand play, freeze and step-away for teeth on skin, nap schedule.
Skills	"Come" indoors, leash on at home.
World	Carry your puppy to watch traffic, people, a school or store from a distance.
Biggest win: _____	

Days 15-21: Explore	Confidence
Focus	Socialization checklist, short alone times in the puppy zone.
Skills	Sit to say hello, four paws on the floor.
World	Ask your vet about puppy class.
New experiences this week: _____	

Days 22-30: Real Life	Bring it together
Focus	Stretch time between potty breaks a little, short walks, longer alone times.
Skills	"Come" in the yard, loose leash for a few steps, settle on a mat.
World	Keep two to three good new experiences a day.
Looking back at day 1: _____	

TOOLS

Appendix

Checklists to print.

A. Socialization checklist

Experience	Date	How did it go? (happy / OK / unsure)
Men with hats or beards		
Children (calm, supervised)		
Vacuum cleaner		
Doorbell and knocking		
Car ride		
Grass, gravel, tile, metal grate		
Calm, vaccinated adult dog		
Being handled: paws, ears, mouth		
Bath or towel dry		
Traffic from a distance		
Umbrella opening		
Visit to the vet just for treats		

B. Family rules

FOR THE FRIDGE

1. After naps, meals, and play: outside to potty.

2. Teeth on skin? Freeze, then offer a toy.

3. Say hi only when four paws are on the floor.

4. No punishment for accidents. Just clean and supervise better.

5. Wild and bitey? Probably needs a nap.

Sources and further reading

1. American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (AVSAB). *Position Statement on Puppy Socialization*. 2008.
2. AVSAB. *Position Statement on Humane Dog Training*. 2021. avsab.org
3. Scott, J. P., and Fuller, J. L. *Genetics and the Social Behavior of the Dog*. University of Chicago Press, 1965.
4. ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center: aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control

This book is for education only and is not a substitute for advice from your veterinarian. Results vary with every puppy. © 2026 Porchlight Dogs.