

# Giant Breed Dog Socialization Checklist General

## Support Calm, Confident, and Socially Fluent Companions

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### Foundational Experiences (8–16 Weeks or Upon Arrival)

- Gentle handling of ears, paws, tail, collar, and harness
  - Exposure to common household sounds (vacuum, dishwasher, doorbell)
  - Meeting a variety of people (gender, age, mobility aids) in low-stress ways
  - Exposure to different surfaces (grass, gravel, tile, wood, concrete)
  - Car rides with positive associations
  - Wearing gear: leash, harness, coat (if applicable)
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### Dog-to-Human Socialization

- Practice calm greetings with known and unknown people
  - Train polite refusals (teaching dog to disengage without stress)
  - Advocate space around strangers—“Let the dog come to you” rule enforced
  - Practice with guests entering the home: structure before affection
  - Exposure to people wearing hats, sunglasses, uniforms, masks
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### Dog-to-Dog Socialization

- Polite on-leash pass-bys with calm, neutral dogs
  - Structured introductions with known, balanced dogs
  - Observe and support healthy off-leash play (watch for overstimulation)
  - Interrupt and reset if behaviors like humping, pinning, relentless chasing occur
  - Reinforce permission-based greetings (“wait for the OK”)
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### Contextual Socialization (Across Social Code Settings)

- Relaxed time in safe, predictable environments
  - Calm observation in new settings without pressure to interact
  - Practice assessments of new people/places with dog waiting for cue
  - Exposure to mildly stressful settings with support (e.g. vet lobby, farmer’s market)
  - Structured decompression time after new events
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## ✓ **Special Considerations for Giant Breeds**

- Teach impulse control in large body—no leaping, leaning, pawing
  - Help dog become self-aware of their size around small children/elderly
  - Prepare and educate guests: “Giant, not scary” briefing
  - Advocate confidently and kindly for your dog’s needs
  - Narrate and guide others on how to interact respectfully
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## ✓ **Ongoing Socialization Maintenance**

- Schedule 1–2 new social outings per week (don’t overwhelm)
- Watch for social fatigue: yawning, disengagement, irritability
- Build in decompression after new or stimulating interactions
- Reinforce neutrality just as much as interaction
- Continue gentle exposure into adulthood—this process never ends!