



WEEK 1 – THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

Welcome to the Beginning of Your Puppy's Life

During the first week, puppies rely entirely on their mum. This is a protected, peaceful time in the Dog House where the seeds of trust, resilience, and neurological development begin.

Development Milestones This Week

- Eyes and ears closed
- Crawling movements begin
- Rooting and seeking warmth
- Sleep + feeding cycles dominate
- Early neurological pathways forming

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 1)

- Gentle daily handling
- Early Neurological Stimulation (ENS)
- Warm, dim, calm whelping environment
- Daily weight monitoring
- Supporting mum with high-quality nutrition
- Soft voices and quiet soundscapes

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

Week 1 is the foundation for stress tolerance, confident bonding, and emotional stability later in life.



WEEK 2: EYES OPEN, WORLD OPENS (7–14 DAYS)

A Week of Awakening Senses

Puppies begin opening their eyes and developing stronger responses to touch and scent. This is the start of awareness and gentle human bonding.

Development Milestones This Week

- Eyes begin to open
- Early visual awareness
- Improved crawling
- Beginning to recognise scents
- Early attempts at weight-bearing

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 2)

- Continue ENS
- Begin Early Scent Introduction (ESI)
- Introduce gentle natural scents
- Maintain soft lighting
- Increase calm human interaction
- Monitor mum's nutrition + hydration

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

Science shows that early scent and neurological exposure improves problem solving, emotional regulation, and adaptability.

WEEK 3: AWARENESS & STARTLE RECOVERY (14–21 DAYS)

The World Comes Into Focus

Puppies can now see and hear, and their personalities begin to bloom. This week is essential for building emotional resilience.

Development Milestones This Week

- Hearing develops
- Eyesight strengthens
- First wobbly steps
- Startle reflex appears
- Play begins
- Cutting teeth

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 3)

- Gentle sound exposure
- Light environmental enrichment
- Soft object introduction
- Early grooming touch
- Encourage healthy startle recovery
- Begin early problem-solving setups

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

By pairing novelty with safety, puppies learn to bounce back from surprises and develop confidence.

WEEK 4: THE SOCIALISATION WINDOW OPENS (21–28 DAYS)

Curiosity Begins to Lead the Way

This is the start of the crucial socialisation window. Puppies grow rapidly and begin forming positive associations with the world. Puppies experience their first fear period – they suddenly become more sensitive and easily startled, so scary experiences can leave a stronger imprint than usual. Fear periods happen because a puppy's brain is rapidly developing—especially the systems for risk detection and learning—so during certain windows they're biologically “tuned” to notice novelty and remember scary things, which is an evolutionary safety feature that helps young animals avoid danger as they become more independent.

Development Milestones This Week

- Rapid mobility growth
- Intentional play behaviours
- Interaction with environment
- Greater awareness of people
- Early toileting patterns

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 4)

- Transition puppies to larger enrichment area
- Introduce varied floor textures
- Begin crate familiarisation
- Start basic training foundations
- Encourage gentle outdoor exploration
- Continue building confidence around people

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

The richer the environment now, the stronger the neurological development – leading to confident, adaptable family dogs.



WEEK 5: PROBLEM SOLVING & SOCIAL SKILLS (28–35 DAYS)

Little Brains Begin Lighting Up

Cognitive development takes a big leap this week. Puppies start learning patience, communication, and how to navigate frustration.

Development Milestones This Week

- Bite inhibition develops
- Learning from littermates
- Intentional play
- Improved physical coordination
- Beginning to experiment with communication

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 5)

- Teach Puppy Culture Mandering
- Introduce simple puzzle challenges
- Add tunnels, ramps, and obstacles
- Play-based learning sessions
- Begin short crate intervals
- Introduce raw food tastings (if appropriate)

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

These challenges build emotional control, persistence, and problem-solving skills — ideal foundations for therapy or companion dogs.



WEEK 6 – EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKYROCKETS (35–42 DAYS)

The Thinking Brain Comes Alive

Training becomes meaningful, exploration expands, and puppies begin showing their learning style and strengths.

Development Milestones This Week

- Better coordination
- Enhanced attention span
- Problem-solving improves
- Social relationships deepen
- Begin showing preference in interactions

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 6)

- Marker/clicker training
- Shaping games
- Gentle leash-pressure exposure
- Safe outdoor adventures
- Short car rides
- Visits with calm adult dogs

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

Positive, choice-based learning at this age builds puppies who love engaging with humans and feel confident trying new things.



WEEK 7: CONFIDENCE IN THE REAL WORLD (42–49 DAYS)

Preparing Puppies for Everyday Life

This week we introduce safe, controlled real-world elements that help puppies stay calm and optimistic in new environments.

Development Milestones This Week

- Confidence grows quickly
- Curiosity about novelty peaks
- Play becomes more complex
- Emotional learning deepens
- Beginning to handle mild independence

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 7)

- Controlled exposure to real-world objects
- Short alone-time sessions
- More crate practice
- Expanded sound desensitisation
- Grooming practice: nails, brushing, ears, teeth
- Temperament testing

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

This week lays the foundation for calm, confident companions who can handle busy households, travel, or therapy environments.



PAGE 8 — WEEK 8: PREPARATION FOR NEW FAMILIES (49–56 DAYS)

Week 8 is a beautiful transition point.

Puppies are confident, and, curious. Our goal during this final week is to reinforce independence, confidence, and emotional stability.

Development Milestones This Week

- Increased independence
- Stronger memory and learning retention
- Confident exploration of new spaces
- Improved ability to adapt to novelty
- Deepening social bonding potential

What We Do at Sixty Acres (Week 8)

- Puppy University micro-training sessions
- Confidence Course completion
- Crate sessions with positive association
- Car rides + recovery games
- Grooming and handling experience

How This Shapes a Resilient Puppy

Week 8 builds the skills your puppy needs to transition smoothly into their new home. We focus on optimism, adaptability, calm behaviour, and human bonding — the foundations of a lifelong learner.



WEEK 9: THE SECOND FEAR PERIOD

Supporting Your Puppy Through a Critical Emotional Stage

Between 8 and 10 weeks puppies experience a fear period. This is completely normal and part of healthy development – but it's a stage where puppies need support. The goal isn't to avoid everything, but instead to help puppies build safe, positive associations.

What This Stage Looks Like

You may see your puppy:

- Hesitating around new objects
- Becoming cautious with strangers
- Showing fear of things they were fine with before
- Startling more easily
- Suddenly "forgetting" new skills
- Experiencing increased need for reassurance

This is not a regression – it's a brain growth stage.

How This Shapes a Lifelong Learner

Handled correctly, this stage strengthens resilience.

Puppies learn:

- the world is safe
- humans provide clarity and security
- new things are okay
- calm behaviour works
- they can choose and recover

This becomes the emotional backbone of a stable adult dog.



Welcome to the
Family