

Visitors or Predators?

Although you are probably eager to show off your new companion, do not overwhelm him with visits from large groups of people. Invite one or two visitors over at a time. Be aware that sunglasses and hats can be frightening to wolfdogs (and skittish dogs in general). From your wolfdog's point of view, it might seem as though these scary humans have weirdly shaped heads and giant black eyes! Have visitors remove these accessories before entering your home.

If your pup is very skittish, instruct visitors to ignore him completely. Explain that they are not to look at or talk to the pup, nor to make any startling sounds. If the pup approaches to sniff, they should remain motionless. In this way, your pup can get used to people at his own pace. Instruct visitors that once your pup approaches and seeks contact, they may use slow movements to pet him on the chest or the side of the face. If your pup is obviously comfortable with visitors, give them hot dogs to feed him. This will help him to associate visitors with good things.

Until your pup is fully vaccinated, use caution when choosing walking areas and playmates. Parvo and distemper, two potentially fatal canine diseases, could be contracted by a pup who walks where infected dogs have been. To avoid spreading disease, you and your visitors should step in a mixture of bleach and water before entering your home and wash hands before touching your pup. And never let your pup down on the floor in the veterinarian's office—after all, that is the most likely place for sick puppies to have been.



Tatanka, a low-to-mid content, takes refuge among the bunnies.

Other Pups, Human and Canine

Even if you do not have children of your own, it is important to socialize your wolfdog to kids. A wolfdog who has never been exposed to children could become suspicious and fearful of them as an adult. That situation is potentially dangerous, as it could lead to fear-based aggression toward children.

Do you have friends who have well-behaved kids? Invite them over. Supervise carefully when introducing children to your pup. Be sure they have been briefed on how to interact with the pup, stressing that they should not pull the pup's tail or ears, hit the pup or try to "ride" him. If you feel your pup might overwhelm the children by nipping or jumping, keep him on a leash for safety. And no matter how well-behaved the children or your pup might be, never leave them together unsupervised.

Do you have friends who have an outgoing dog? If so, assuming he is fully vaccinated and gets along well with puppies, invite them over. The dogs will probably jump at the chance to play together. In the process, the visiting dog is likely to engage happily with you as well. Your pup will see that you are not actually the Big Bad Human he feared you might be, and might become less fearful of you with the other dog present. *Note: Although your wolfdog should socialize with other canines, limit most of his early companionship to you and your family so that he bonds with you first and foremost.*

Well-adjusted adult dogs are excellent teachers of canine manners. Puppies, wolfdog or not, do not have much in the way of manners when they play with other dogs. They hurl themselves at other dogs, teeth and paws flying with wild abandon. Most adult dogs will put up with this behavior for a short time and then put the pup in his place. The adult might curl a lip, growl, or even threaten the pup to the extent that he rolls over on his back and submits. If that occurs, let it happen! As long as no one is getting hurt, the adult is teaching your pup a valuable lesson about interacting with other dogs. Letting your pup learn these lessons now can save you both a lot of grief later. Dogs who have never been taught how to play appropriately can be perceived as aggressive by other dogs, and fights can result.

The Sound of Music...and Other Scary Sounds

Everyday noises such as those made by the garbage disposal or vacuum cleaner can be frightening to a pup. To help him get used to these noises, stand with your pup far back from the appliance and have another person turn it on. If it has a volume control (e.g., a stereo), begin on low. If your pup startles, cowers or runs away, you have begun too close to the source of the sound.