

# Appropriate Socialization for Your Fila

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Socialize your puppy! You will hear this repeatedly from various breeders/owners/trainers of Filas. Be aware of this one fact however.... “Socialize your puppy” in the world of the Fila Brasileiro is NOT the same thing as it pertains to most other breeds.

Socialize – adjust to cooperative living. This is the definition which most aptly suits the needs and intentions when applied to the Fila.

To socialize your Fila does not mean the following:

- to take your dog to places such as Pet Smart, off leash dog parks, any place where you cannot devote attention to ensure his safety, security, and the potential for provocation.
- in any way diminish your dogs natural Ojeriza or temperament.
- to force your dog to accept petting and/or treats from strangers.
- taking your puppy to a dog park or other such places before their vaccinations are completed.

To socialize your Fila does mean the following:

- build confidence in a variety of situations
- strengthen the bond between the two of you
- clarifies normal human interaction for the dog (If your dog approaches someone asking for a pat...then and only then it is okay. But you must keep a vigilant eye on your dogs posture during this time)
- gives the dog a broad basis of what constitutes a threat and what is normal noise/bustle/activity involved in every day life lived in community situations.

In today’s times and changing populace, it is highly unlikely that your fila will have the same situation as those early colonists who developed this breed and lived on great plantations or fazendas. Most of us will have the need to have our fila be able to accompany us in varying situations. Appropriate situations like a walk around our neighborhood, a park, the lake, etc. Properly socializing your Fila will not in any way detract from their Ojeriza or temperament but will instead give them a good foundation on which to correctly interpret what constitutes a threat and what does not.

Below are some excerpts from a [Whole Dog Journal](#) article titled “The Social Scene” written by Pat Miller. While much of the information found in this article would not be applicable to the Fila, the following excerpts are wonderful in explaining the need for socialization and the guidelines that should be followed.

- In the wild, the lessons learned during the first few months of a pup’s life are critical to his survival. As he ventures out of his den he learns to be bold where it counts – pouncing on prey, for example – and cautious where prudent. Pups who don’t learn to avoid poisonous snakes, rushing floodwaters, and precipitous cliffs don’t live to pass on their genes!
- During this period, puppies who live with humans need to learn that the world is a good and safe place. Their general assumption then becomes that people and other animals, places, and things are okay unless proven otherwise. (This is appropriate in that filas are to dislike and distrust strangers but not go lunging after them just because they see them. They are to react only when perceiving a threat.)
- In contrast, puppies who are not socialized tend to be suspicious of everything except for a very narrow range of experiences they encounter in their very limited environment – a basement or backyard, for example. The rest of the world terrifies them, and any positive exposures they get later in life must struggle against this early, very strong programming.
- often a lost cause – or at least, a huge challenge for someone who is well-prepared, educated, and equipped to deal with him or her.
- ...recently, we have come to realize that, although pups do seem to go through periods during which they are more fearful than others, that time can vary from one pup to the next. Rather than

wrapping your pup in cotton wool for a designated period, it makes more sense to watch him closely and ensure that he has mostly good experiences, especially if he seems to be going through a cautious stage.

Although there is no possible way to include a list of every do and every don't you may encounter....with a small amount of common sense you can build your filas confidence. Beware of taking your fila into situations in which they may perceive a threat, feel there is no way of handling a intimidating circumstance except to lunge/bite, or you cannot control/anticipate a problem developing.....places such as Pet Smart for example.

At Outrageous Shadow Filas we make it a priority to properly socialize all our filas. It is a thrill to watch young puppies grow into mature confident dogs that possess the ability to rightly discern the activities going on around them.

We strongly encourage you to do the same.