

Sensory Enrichment

Sensory enrichment involves stimulating the senses of dogs sight, sound, and smell. While some dogs enjoy being inside the comforts of their “safe place” adding visual toys that are still and moving may add interest and curiosity to help the pup become more exploratory and less frightened of new surroundings. Sometimes sounds can be over-stimulating, loud and scary for a young pup. This can be a very unpleasant experience for a pup and can sometimes scare to the point that it causes adverse effects. Gunfire or fireworks are an example of that. Being exposed to sounds should be done in a very strategic manner and very gradual. Most times paired with feeding or birds (for hunters) to pair a noise in the distance with something good or fun. This implements a good feeling with a new noise. In some less frightening cases, other noises become stressful to a pup, for instance when trying to socialize them with sounds from the home they can be exposed at a distance with a buffer such as music at a low level while running the dishwasher. Classical music has shown many great effects such as reduced stress levels, increased resting, and longer sleeping. Stimulating the sense of smell on a pup can have both exciting and calming effects. New smells from food sources can make our pups turn into little wiggle butts. If there’s anything a Labrador loves besides people, it’s FOOD! Other smells such as lavender have shown beneficial effects that mitigate distress and gives them a calming effect..