



Puppy Assessment Chart

The chief goal in assessing a puppy to choose one to adopt is so that you interact and choose the one whose energy level and compatibility connect with you, or you and your family. Whatever their score, puppies are like clay—if you fall in love with a puppy is sensitive to touch or sound, and that concerns you, use the early socialization stage to associate good things with whatever startles your new baby.

Perform specific exercises with each puppy and rate one using the following scale:

A - Active (Assertive, confident, comical)- Will need structured routines and consistency early on)

N - Neutral (Easy going)- Will need motivation to learn and listen. Don't be fooled!

P - Passive (Timid, cautious). Needs confidence building and a gentle touch.

Puppy Assessment Chart							
Puppy	1. Observe	2. Uplift	3. Flip-Flop	4. Gentle Caress	5. Wacky Walk	6. What's That?	7. Crash Test

Perform each of the following activities with each puppy:

1. Observe

As they play with each other, observe the puppies and rate each one according to behavior or with the other dogs/puppies.

2. Uplift

After observing, take each puppy aside one at a time. Cradle their mid-body and lift them four inches off the ground. If they squirms wildly and reaches out to mouth you, give them an A. If they squirms a bit, but then they relax, give them an N. If they shudder in fear, pin their ears back, or tuck their tail in, give them a P.

3. Flip-Flop

Next, lift the puppy up and cradle their upside-down like a baby. Do they squirm and try to grab at you with their mouth? If so, give them an A. If they wiggles a bit and then settle happily, they get an N. If they whimper or pull their mouth back in tension (a submissive grin) they get a P.

4. Gentle Caress

Okay, now sit next to the puppy and pet them. Gently stroke them at least 15 times to judge their willingness to be handled. If they immediately jump toward your face or scamper away toward a more stimulating distraction, give them an A. If they relax and sit quietly or climb into your lap, give them an N. If they cower, tuck their tail, pin their ears, or pull their mouth back in tension, give them a P.

5. Wacky Walk

Stand up, shake your legs, clap your hands, and encourage the pup to follow you. Bend down like a monkey if you must; just do what you have to in order to get their attention. If they attack your legs or gets distracted by a more interesting stimulant, give them an A. If they follows enthusiastically, looking up to your face for reinforcement, give them an N. If they sit and watch you quietly or withdraw in fear, give them a P.

6. What's That?

You need two spoons for this exercise. When the puppy is distracted, tap the spoons together above their head. If they jump up and try to wrestle the spoons, give them an A. If they ignore the sound or sniff the spoons calmly, give them an N. If they cower in fear or run away, give them a P.

7. Crash Test

Walk at least six paces away from the puppy. Suddenly drop to the floor like you've fallen and hurt your knee. Don't get carried away but make it look fairly realistic. Does the puppy take this

as an invitation to play? If so, give them an A. If they walk over and act curious, give them an N. If they run away or cower, give them a P.

Young children can help out in this assessment with the Gentle Caress and Crash Test, you will see how your future puppy might get along with your children.

Tallying the Score

Count up your A's, N's, and P's. Then take a look at the following;

If you've got all A's, you've got a confident puppy on your hands! One who wants to be a part and will take charge of situations if you don't train them to listen for your direction.

All N's, and you have an easier going puppy on your hands. Sound dreamy? You'll have to moderate learning to make sure they respond to your ideas of good behavior!

All P's can mean that your puppy is easily overwhelmed and may need confidence boosting lessons to come out from behind the couch or your legs!

A mix of N's and P's? This score may mean that your puppy is likely to be passive and easy going.

A mix of A's and N's may mean that your dog, while playful and engaging, can tolerate separation without too much stress.

Like all of us, many puppies are a mix of traits and may be affected by the time of day or situational factors. If you're able to plan to spend a while selecting your puppy, go in with pre-determined characteristics that are your priority. If your heart doesn't connect with one puppy, keep looking. This opportunity is the one chance you have to choose a family member, so take your time!

For more information on dog breeds, visit AKC.org.