Puppy's developmental periods:
the complete details

1. **Neonatal period, 0 to 2 weeks:** From the age of 0 to 2 weeks, they can't move much anyways. They can't see and they can barely wriggle. Absolute zero sense of danger. Tip for predators: if you want yourself an easy meal, now's the time.

2. **Transitional period, 2 to 3-4 weeks**: Their eyes open and they take their first steps. It's the start of that oh-so-cute clumsy puppy walk. Still not much of a fear response. Top tip for predators: still an easy lunch, and a little bit fatter than last week.

3. **Socialization period, 3-4 to 12-15 weeks**

   A. **Primary socialization period: 3-4 to 5-7 weeks**

   i. **Awareness begins, 21-22 days**: They become aware of their non-social environment. They take in the sights, feels, scents and sounds around them: the surfaces they walk on, and the household sounds they hear. Still no fear. Whatever **you** expose them to now will start to be classified as normal and safe stuff. Now's the time to slowly introduce new textures and sounds into their environment. Beware though: no sudden change of environment right now. This could be hugely detrimental.

   ii. **Socialization to other dogs, 3-5 weeks**: They start interacting more consciously with their litter mates and mother, and imprint dogs as co-specifics: they learn that dogs are social companions, neither predator nor prey.
      a. They learn impulse and bite control from their mom who has started to chastise them if they hurt her with their needle-sharp teeth.
      b. They practice the whole shebang of canine social interactions through play with their litter mates.
      c. They (start to) learn to eliminate far from sleeping quarters

   iii. **5-7 weeks = curiosity period**. Pups are extremely curious and appear scared of nothing. "Hello, lion! Can I play with your mane?"
      a. Around 4-8 weeks, the mother weans the puppies. This is instrumental in teaching puppies to cope with frustration.

   iv. **Secondary socialization period: 7-8 to 12-15 weeks**

Source: https://www.canisbonus.com/2018/06/08/newsflash-dogs-have-two-fear-periods/

a. This is the period where they learn that humans are also social partners.

   a. This period is considered the golden period of socialization. This is the period that we want to cash in on to expose the dog to as many situations as possible, so he becomes bombproof later in life. Beware, though: do not overwhelm the pup in the name of socialization: this achieves the exact opposite effect. Why is it a golden period? Because it corresponds with a peak in learning abilities. Learning = associating situations, people and objects with an appropriate emotional response. In other words, the pup is a sponge at this age and whatever he repeatedly encounters that is not scary or painful is getting stored as a safe situation in his long-term circuitry. Want him to trust the vet's? Strangers? Kids? Wheelchairs? People with hats? Loud passing trams? Public transport? Car travel? Get on the road already!

      b. Socialization-wise, 8-10 weeks is a good age to rehome the puppies to their permanent home. If you have a choice, privilege leaving the pup until 10-11 weeks with his mother and littermates, though. This is to do with the fear imprint period (see below) and teaching him impulse control. If you choose for this option, be sure that the breeder is serious in his or her socialization efforts.

   b. **The fear imprint period, 8 to 11 weeks:** Because they are learning so fast and so profoundly, a traumatic encounter at this stage can have life-long repercussions. So do not push them in at the deep end, or you'll be paying for it the rest of the dog's life. This means:

      a. Avoid long and potentially traumatic trips – so much for the truckloads of Romanian puppies.

      b. Postpone any non urgent surgery or medical procedure.

   c. **The ranking period**, From about 10 weeks to 4 months: This is where they learn to stand up for themselves and try their paws at conflict resolution. They are no longer the pliable, happy-go-lucky puppy towards their littermates as they learn to become more willful. The puppy is trying to carve a spot for himself in the world.