

Fear Period

The “**fear period**” in puppies is a normal stage of development when they may suddenly become cautious, anxious, or startled by things that previously went unnoticed.

These phases typically occur between 8–10 weeks and again around 6–14 months of age, as the puppy’s brain rapidly matures and begins distinguishing between safe and unsafe experiences.



1. Understand What’s Happening

Puppies go through developmental stages where they’re suddenly more cautious or fearful.

These are normal, temporary, and part of growing up.

Key ages: 8–10 weeks, 4–6 months, and 8–14 months.

2. Spot the Signs

Startling at everyday noises.

Avoiding people or dogs they previously liked.

Hesitation to explore new environments.

Sudden clinginess or nervousness.

3. Build Confidence

Practice simple training commands they already know to give them “wins.” Rotate safe toys and games to keep them engaged. Pair new experiences with something they love (like a favorite treat).

4. Long Term Impact

How you handle fear periods shapes whether your dog grows into a confident adult or develops lingering fears.

Gentle, consistent support during these stages is just as important as early socialization.



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www.NewEnglandLabradorRetrievers.com