

PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

Results for new owner

Personalised socialisation plan for Wywylwynd Juniper

By breeder MJ Rawlings

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Puppy DOB

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This assessment is used to generate a socialisation plan tailored to the needs of Poodle* puppies, and specifically to your puppy using observations and exercises carried out by the breeder to determine the puppy's temperament traits. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' outcomes to this assessment, and the intention of this profile is to provide you, the puppy's new owner, with information about your puppy and advice that will help you and your puppy achieve your new family member's full potential.

The assessment measures motivational aspects (the things your puppy is likely to want most as rewards) as well as attitudes to environmental stimuli such as people and other dogs, and breed-specific attributes concerning the Poodle and the sorts of roles and activities persons wishing to own a dog of this breed might be interested in.

This assessment does not take into account aspects of a puppy's behaviour that are believed to come about as the result of environment and have little or no genetic involvement. For example, properly raised puppies should not be terrified of their breeder, nor of other people, nor of ordinary household objects. Before acquiring any puppy, you should be given the opportunity to see it interacting with its mother and littermates and have the opportunity to handle the puppies. Puppies should appear bright and their coats should not be soiled and stained. They should interact with you and allow you to pick them up. It is normal for young puppies to wriggle and to mouth at people's hands, and it's also normal (particularly after a meal) for puppies to be relaxed and drowsy when held. Puppies should not react with fear when handled (trembling, freezing up, struggling violently).

This assessment also does not take into account other genetic factors involved in breeding decisions such as genetic diversity, pedigree research, and health tests. These are important things that your breeder should provide information on when you enquire about a puppy, but they are beyond the scope of the assessment. A simple, optional assessment of conformational aspects is provided on page six for the breeder to write notes on.

Detailed information about all of the traits covered in this assessment is included in the Appendix.

PUPPY REACTION TEMPERAMENT ASSESSMENT

Puppy's traits profile

The traits assessed are shown below for the puppy and its parents. Four traits, proprioception, attitude to play, prey drive, and mouth quality, cannot be assessed accurately on puppies at this age. Most commonly, puppies will develop traits similar to one of the parents, so looking at the parents' results for these traits may give some idea of the possible outcomes.

			DAM	SIRE
			FOOD MOTIVATION	MODERATE
FOOD MOTIVATION	MODERATE/HIGH		TOY MOTIVATION	MODERATE
			ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE	MODERATE
TOY MOTIVATION	MODERATE/HIGH		ATTITUDE TO OWNER	HIGH
			ATTITUDE TO DOGS	MODERATE
ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE	HIGH		GUNSTEADY	NO
			AFFINITY FOR WATER	LOW
ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY	LOW		PROPRIOCEPTION	HIGH
ATTITUDE TO DOGS	HIGH		ATTITUDE TO PLAY	HIGH
GUNSTEADY	YES		PREY DRIVE	MODERATE
AFFINITY FOR WATER			MOUTH QUALITY	HIGH

Refer to Appendix for more information on the traits.

Motivation

Dogs are motivated by food, toys, and interactions with people and other dogs. Each dog is different and has their own preferences as to which of these it finds most rewarding. The results of this assessment suggest that your puppy is motivated most strongly by:

FOOD

TOYS

INTERACTION

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

Your puppy appears to be quite food motivated. Use small pieces of food as rewards when training. You can also measure some of your dog's daily ration of food to give as treats during the day to provide lots of training incentives without overfeeding.

Your puppy enjoys toys, but it might not see them as something to be shared with people in the conventional way! You might be able to use toys as rewards for training, but be aware that the toys may serve as a distraction and interrupt training, such as in the case where the dog thinks it's funny to run away with the toy or try to hide it. Use another form of reward, such as a food treat, to encourage your dog to bring toys to you and to play appropriately.

Your puppy likes to interact with people, but the novelty of meeting strangers might be more exciting to it than interacting with its owner. See the socialisation section for ways to work on improving this. The puppy is likely to enjoy praise and attention as rewards. You should practice teaching recall to your puppy as much as possible, and use additional rewards such as food to reinforce your puppy's recall.

Remember that dogs are also able to learn by routine, and this method can be very helpful for young dogs who might be difficult to motivate using reward-based training. Even puppies who are easily motivated will benefit from day-to-day activities following a predictable pattern.

Puppies should learn to understand a 'correction' word, such as no. This should not be shouted or used as a punishment, but if used appropriately the puppy will come to understand that this command means its behaviour is not acceptable and can result in loss of privileges. If the puppy is playing with a person and bites their hand, saying no and stopping play helps the puppy to learn what no means as well as not to bite.

Puppies do not need to be punished when they make a mistake. At this age, the mistakes they make nearly always come from lack of understanding and not deliberate disobedience. Smacking or shouting at your young puppy is likely to hurt the bond you should be doing everything to develop positively at this stage.

The most important things to train when your puppy first comes home are its name, a recall command, and to use an appropriate place for a toilet (puppies will need to go out after every meal as well as at least every three hours during daytime).

Socialisation priorities

Socialisation is the introducing of puppies in their early months to situations, people, dogs, and other animals they might normally be expected to encounter in everyday life. It conditions the puppy to be a confident and happy dog who takes things in its stride and can accompany you safely throughout your life together. While socialising your puppy, you should try to ensure all the experiences the puppy has are positive, and avoid situations that are unpredictable while your puppy is still learning. Your dog should not walk in public places until its vaccination course is finished (consult your vet) but you can carry the puppy in these places, as long as you do not put it down on the ground. Your puppy should also attend a socialisation class run by a local obedience club.

SOCIALISATION WITH PEOPLE

Your puppy is very interested in people, but you will need to help your puppy learn to treat strangers you both meet appropriately. Most of the people you should meet should behave as if they are strangers whom you walk by in a public place. The strangers should ignore the puppy and not make eye contact, and you should encourage the puppy, using whatever motivational incentive your puppy values, to ignore the strangers and walk calmly beside you. When you meet friends, you should first greet them and encourage the puppy to remain calm while this happens, and after this the people may interact with the puppy in a calm manner. The friends should not interact with or otherwise reward the puppy for putting its feet or mouth on them. Do not allow people you do not know to interact with the puppy unless the puppy is calm and behaving on the terms you set.

SOCIALISATION WITH DOGS

Your puppy likes other dogs, but might need careful socialisation to avoid it developing habits that could become a nuisance to other dogs. You should initially only let your dog encounter dogs it does not know when both dogs are on leads. You should encourage the puppy to ignore the other dog, using anything the dog finds motivating. Your puppy should only be allowed to physically interact with dogs you know well and are trustworthy, and the dog has a good recall. Always supervise these interactions and stop the interaction if either dog is playing in an inappropriate way. If you cannot recall your puppy from playing with another dog, stop the interaction and separate the dogs.

SOCIALISATION WITH OTHER ANIMALS

Domestic dogs were developed from predatory wild animals. Poodles were developed generally as a retrieving breed, so they generally retain some 'prey drive' and may chase and attack other animals. Your puppy should be introduced to other animals on the lead in a safe environment. The puppy's eyesight and visual cortex are not fully developed at the time of the assessment, and the dog's predatory instincts may not become apparent until much later. Your dog should never be left unsupervised with other animals, no matter how well behaved it is. Puppies will tend to be similar in this respect to one of the parents, so we can look at the results of the parents' assessments for a clue. Your puppy's parents' results for prey drive are:

MODERATE

GROOMING

It is important that Poodles are introduced to grooming as puppies. Brush the puppy gently, even though its coat is unlikely to need it yet. Play with the puppy's feet and get the puppy used to grooming equipment such as dryers before it is needed. If you are intending to pay a groomer to groom your poodle, your puppy should visit this person and their usual premises before going there for grooming.

OTHER SOCIALISATION SITUATIONS

You should introduce your dog to travelling in the car, going to the vet, visiting the homes of friends and relatives, and any other situations that are likely to be a regular feature in your and the puppy's future life.

Development

This section contains some advice based on your puppy's own assessment and that of its parents to help give some ideas of what might help your puppy achieve its full potential as it develops and learns new skills.

FEEDING

Your puppy might have a tendency to be greedy. If you have more than one dog, take care not to let the puppy pester the other dogs while they are eating. Be careful not to overfeed your puppy and stick to the amounts your breeder recommends. Your breeder can probably recommend a number of different foods. Try to get a few of these foods, and try not to feed the same food for every meal so your dog can enjoy some variety and hopefully be less likely to develop food intolerances. Foods for your young puppy should be mainly complete foods appropriate for a large breed puppy (ask your breeder if you are not sure).

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Your puppy was not concerned by sudden loud noises in this assessment. If you would like to train your Poodle to the gun, always introduce the new sounds in a safe and familiar environment.

Proprioception is a dog's awareness of its own momentum, position, etc. This is an important instinct in sports such as agility, and it seems to be largely innate. Proprioception cannot be assessed accurately in your puppy at this age, but your puppy is likely to be similar to one of the parents. The parents' assessments are:

HIGH

Discourage your puppy from jumping on you and other people -- not only is this annoying, but particularly dogs with poor proprioception if they do it on hard floors and slip could hurt themselves or the person.

All young puppies mouth at things and chew objects, so it is not possible to assess your puppy's tendency to be destructive with toys. The parents' results for mouth softness are:

HIGH

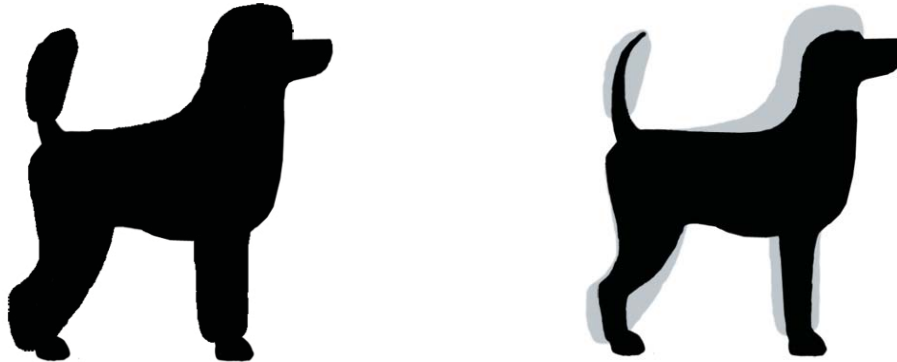
Your puppy should have a variety of toys of different types or textures to play with. Take away any toys that the puppy has damaged. Try to encourage appropriate types of toy for rougher play.

Poodles developed to be companions to people. They are not 'pack' dogs as such. It's not uncommon for a Poodle to love being with people, but not play so nicely with other dogs. A great deal of play behaviour is learned, so if you have an older dog who plays gently, this may help your puppy. Alternatively if a friend has a dog who plays nicely, it may be worth your puppy spending time with this dog to learn play skills. Your puppy's parents attitude to playing is:

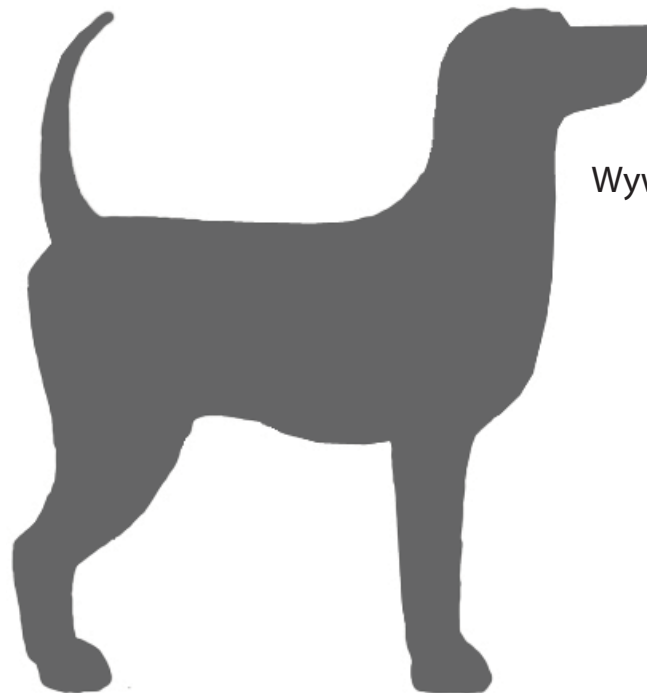
HIGH

Conformation

Conformation is about how closely a dog *conforms* to its breed standard. Breed standards in different countries vary slightly. This section is included so your breeder can provide some basic information about your puppy's conformation. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the puppy's structure, and if you would like more information on this aspect of your Poodle you should ask the breeder.



The above images show how the puppy's coat can change its appearance. Below is an image that the breeder may use to note any points about the puppy's conformation. Be aware that the breed standard is an ideal and no Poodles are perfect in all respects, and that puppies can change as they grow.



Wywylwynd Juniper

There are a few superficial faults that might be of relevance if you want this puppy to do conformation showing with, but are likely to be irrelevant if you want the puppy for another purpose. You should discuss any cases of this nature with the breeder. Puppies of incorrect colours should not be promoted as being rare. Some colours atypical to Poodles might be linked to health problems.

- The puppy is a solid colour
- The puppy is a solid colour, but the colour might not be specifically mentioned in the breed standard
(some breed standards do not specifically recognise blue or cream, for instance)
- The puppy is a solid colour, but has a pigment fault
(brown pigment on a cream or white poodle)
- The puppy is not a solid colour, but it might even out to a solid colour by maturity
(e.g. white marks on a pale cream dog, some agouti patterns)
- The puppy is not a solid colour
(e.g. white marks on a coat of another colour, agouti patterns. These colours are usually not acceptable in conformation)
- The puppy is an atypical colour that might be linked to health problems
(e.g. albinism, d dilution, merle)

Appendix

This Appendix provides information on the different traits described in the assessment. The traits are described in such a way as to make it (hopefully) easy for the owners of adult dogs to identify easily which version of the trait most resembles their dog.

The colour coding on the traits denotes closeness to ideal based on the function of a Poodle as an ancient breed with a modern, versatile function, with the 'ideal' traits being the ones most conducive to the modern Poodle fulfilling all these functions: **ideal**, **less ideal**, **unfavourable**. Some breeders and owners may have different priorities as to which traits are ideal or more important than others depending on their lifestyles and the activities they want to pursue with their dogs.

FOOD MOTIVATION

HIGH

Greedy, eats like a swine. Steals food and gets in owner's face at mealtimes. Becomes overexcited at feeding time and will jam head in other dogs' bowls potentially triggering aggression and fights. 'Dustbin Dog' who will eat anything with great enthusiasm, even though what it eats won't necessarily agree with it. Becomes overstimulated by training treats which in some cases can actually make training difficult as the dog can't focus on the behaviour asked of it and instead fixates on the rewards. May also hand bite out of greed when feeding treats, which is difficult to correct and annoying to work with.

MODERATE

Eats food calmly and at a steady pace. Will growl or show other defensive behaviour if other dogs approach while eating, but will not try to take from other dogs nor start fights over food. May steal food if not supervised, and this may become a habit if allowed to occur often. May have preferences and value some food more than others. Easily motivated by training treats.

LOW

Picky or slow eater with little interest in food. May leave food uneaten or allow other dogs to steal meals. May consistently refuse to eat some kinds of food. Hard to motivate when training as does not value food treats as a reward. Often this lack of interest in food, particularly if it is exhibited at a young age, accompanies lack of vigour and general failure to thrive.

COMMENT

Dogs in the first and third categories may need to be fed in isolation. Note that there is no connection between a dog's eating habits and its gut sensitivity. Greedy dogs can often have diarrhoea due to the things they eat and picky dogs can have guts of steel. These traits are probably hardwired to a greater extent than not, nevertheless there are some things that can be done to help modulate the extremes. Careful breeders will feed pups from separate bowls once they are weaned to discourage squabbling over food and learning food aggression habits. Dogs should be fed a variety of different food to avoid pickiness and food intolerances. Avoid feeding your dog any food that may have gone off or has suspect origins to avoid food poisoning.

TOY MOTIVATION

HIGH

Loves toys and interacting; will use toys both with other dogs and with owner. May become overexcited if toys are waved around. Brings toys to owner of own volition. Toys and playing can be used as rewards for training.

MODERATE

Plays with toys, and may be highly motivated by them, but plays in an inappropriate way, such as running away with toys or hiding them. Can be difficult to 'reprogram' this behaviour to get the dog to retrieve, or use toys in a constructive way during training.

LOW

Disinterested in toys. Can usually be taught to retrieve, but will not do it for its own sake, and toys and playing with them will not be valued by the dog as a training reward.

COMMENT

Aggression over toys should be considered abnormal and is not typical of poodles.

MOUTH QUALITY

HIGH

Soft mouth: carries toys gently. Does not chew, rip, or destroy items.

MODERATE

Moderate: carries toys but frequently if unsupervised chews them up and destroys them.

LOW

Hard mouth: bites, rips, and squeezes toys and balls, frequently destroying them. May be more interested in destroying toys than interacting with toys and owner.

COMMENT

First category is most appropriate for a retriever. Third category may make a good ratter, but should not be trusted near livestock.

PREY DRIVE

HIGH

Birdy, obsessed with prey. Will try to grab small animals. Will escalate to full-blown predatory behaviour (chasing, killing, eating) if precautions are not taken. Will chase wildlife and may lose sense of direction and become lost as a result.

MODERATE

Interested and greatly entertained by small animals, but if properly socialised will not attempt to chase or harm. May chase wildlife.

LOW

Disinterested or fearful of small animals. May still chase wildlife.

COMMENT

Dogs of any breed, however gentle, should never be left unsupervised with smaller animals. Dogs are more likely to be tolerant of animals if introduced to them in an environment that is safe and calm to both the dog and the other animals from a young age.

ATTITUDE TO PEOPLE

HIGH

Loves to meet strangers. Runs up to people who may not want to interact. Tends to be a nuisance to work with, as it finds the excitement of meeting new people very rewarding, and will get distracted by people. Potentially at risk from opportunistic dog thieves.

MODERATE

When accompanied by a family member or familiar person, is calm and confident around unfamiliar people. May bark and show defensive posturing if strangers approach without owner present.

LOW

Fearful of strangers. Hides behind owner or attempts to flee when strangers approach. Will panic and become extremely afraid if it encounters strangers outside of owner's presence.

COMMENT

Any aggression towards people should be considered utterly abnormal in poodles. First two traits are ideal for a therapy dog. Introducing puppies to many people when young should help to develop confidence around new people. Introduce young puppies to sensible dog people who will ignore inappropriate behaviour such as running up and leaping. Try to avoid allowing puppies and young dogs to meet people who scream and run (such as unfamiliar children) or silly adults who say 'I don't mind' and play with the dog and reward it for running at them.

ATTITUDE TO OWNER/FAMILY

HIGH

Becomes very attached to one particular person, a 'velcro' dog. These tend to be the most enjoyable and easiest dogs to work with -- if you are that person who is their lodestar, in which case they want to work just to please you. May be disdainful of obeying commands of other family members! Beware that dogs with this trait are likely to become very stressed if taken from their owner and put in a strange environment, even if their stress is not outwardly obvious. They may also become jealous of other dogs in the family, and rarely also of people. Loves to be held and stroked by owner in particular. Tends to have a very easy recall, even with little training.

MODERATE

Bonded to family and likes to spend time with everyone in it. Makes friends with familiar people outside the family. An easygoing dog who is enjoyable to work with. A reliable recall can be easily trained. Tactile and likes physical affection from family.

LOW

More independent dog that is not so closely bonded to human family. May get distracted by environment and disappear on walks. Recall may be unreliable in some circumstances despite putting a lot of work into training. Can be difficult to train and a chore to work with, because it does not see the work as a priority. May like physical affection, but only on its own terms! This trait may be desirable in other dog breeds, but it is not ideal for a poodle.

COMMENT

These traits are largely innate, although aggression or fear towards owners and failure to form any sort of bond with family can result from prior abuse by caretakers.

GUNSTEADY

YES

Little reaction to the noise made when a shotgun or similar is fired at close quarters.

NO

Response of agitation or fearfulness to the sound of a gun.

COMMENT

Steadiness to the gun is a desired characteristic if a dog is to be used for hunting. Dogs should not be introduced to this stimulus at any point where there is upheaval or anything that could be a source of stress going on in their lives. Socialisation to gunshots should always be carried out in a familiar safe location. Small puppies can be introduced to sudden loud noises for example by bursting a bag filled with air.

ATTITUDE TO DOGS

HIGH

Loves to meet other dogs. May run up to other dogs who do not want to interact with it. Likely to be a nuisance to owner and other dogs' owners, as the dog finds meeting new dogs very rewarding, and might ignore owner's commands and disrupt training

MODERATE

When an unfamiliar dog approaches, greets the dog appropriately without leaving owner.

LOW

Fearful when strange dogs approach. Hides behind owner or attempts to flee. May be so frightened of dogs it refuses to work with owner when other dogs are present. May exhibit fear aggression.

COMMENT

Socialise young dogs with calm and well-behaved adults and encourage appropriate interaction. Inappropriate socialisation with bad-mannered dogs will make fearfulness worse.

PROPRIOCEPTION

HIGH

Agile, swift, and surefooted. Can leap onto a bed easily without standing on a person in it. May be very lively and stand up on hind legs when excited, but will not kick or scratch.

MODERATE

May be active, but clumsy. Tends to climb on things and fall off. Runs at people and jumps up, kicking them in the guts. Tramples on people and dogs who may be lying down/sleeping. Jumps on people and loses balance, falls over while playing chasing games. Puts foot and nose carelessly in owner's face. Does not seem to think before it throws itself about.

LOW

Steady, rarely jumps on people or climbs on objects. If dog seems to be uncomfortable or unusually inactive, check there is not a medical condition underlying.

COMMENT

Dogs in the first category are the best candidates for sports such as agility. Dogs in the third category lack the enthusiasm for sports, and dogs in the second are more likely to fall from equipment and hurt themselves. The first and third categories can make good therapy dogs.

ATTITUDE TO PLAYING

HIGH

Play nearly always appropriate, uses play 'bow' to initiate playing, plays reciprocal chase. Respects and understands other dogs physical differences and comfort level; plays gently with puppies and smaller dogs, and yet can play in a physical, boisterous manner if the other dog is game for this. Knows when other dogs have had enough.

MODERATE

Usually plays appropriately with other dogs. May get overexcited in some circumstances or with particular dogs. May sometimes ignore signals given by other dogs that they have had enough, or play inappropriately roughly with small or timid dogs. Might not realise that smaller dogs need to be treated gently, and has to be separated from pups until they are bigger. Might have to be removed from other dogs and given time on its own to calm down in such instances.

LOW

Overconfident, too forward with other dogs. Gets in their personal space and 'lords it'. May want to play but have trouble with reciprocity -- might want to chase but not to be chased, exhausting and intimidating the other dog. Can make other dogs stressed and trigger fights if care is not taken. Attempts to initiate play may be inappropriate, such as grabbing at, barking at, or shoving other dogs, rather than the appropriate playing 'bow'. Sometimes this behaviour is labelled as 'dominance' and the dogs are said to be experiencing an emotion called 'alpha'. Others prefer to think of it as the dog wanting to play but lacking social skills for appropriate interaction.

COMMENT

Playing forms the foundations of relationships between dogs in a multiple-dog household. Unfamiliar dogs should always be introduced in a controlled environment. Where there is a significant disparity in size or build, dogs should never be left unattended, however well they seem to get on. Generally, problems with dogs cohabiting occur where more than one dog comes from the second or third categories. Dogs of the first category are usually able to live together harmoniously. Socialising puppies with older dogs who play appropriately helps to teach appropriate ways to play. Note that it is normal for dogs who live together to occasionally 'have a harsh word' to each other when one tries to take another's food/toy/bed. There is not necessarily any correlation between each category and how often or with whom a dog plays. A dog in the LOW category may only play occasionally and appropriately with one friend, and a dog in the HIGH category may try to play inappropriately with all dogs.

AFFINITY FOR WATER

HIGH

Innately loves water to the point where it does not mind or even actively enjoys being washed. Plays and splashes in bodies of water. Will readily venture out of its depth and swim.

MODERATE

Initially suspicious of water, but will wade when given incentives. Will not venture out of its depth, but can be taught to swim with sympathetic training.

LOW

Fearful of water. Will not wade. Will not and should not be made to enter water in an attempt to train it to swim.

COMMENT

Poodles are meant to be water dogs, although a true water-loving poodle can present coat care difficulties. Exercise caution with very water-oriented dogs -- they should not be allowed in water where a dangerous situation could develop, such as becoming caught on a submerged object or coming into contact with strong currents/riptides.

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