

PAWS Humane

Adult Dog Foster Guide



Everything you need to know about fostering adult dogs!



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Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to the PAWS Humane Foster Care Program!

The Foster Care Program allows PAWS Humane to take in about more dogs per year than could be housed in the shelter due to limitations of space and resources. Your help will save the lives of many dogs who would otherwise not have homes or would be euthanized.

Generally, adult dogs in the Foster Care Program have special medical conditions or are in need of socialization. Time spent in foster care is crucial for these dogs and will help them begin the journey that will lead to adoption and to their forever home!

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience. You will help dogs grow from helpless little beings to confident, well-adjusted family pets. You also get the fun of raising a dog without the responsibility of lifetime care. Most importantly, you are saving lives!



Foster family is asked to supply...

- Healthy & safe environment
- Transportation to & from PAWS Humane
- Socialization (family & pet interaction, leash walks)
- Dog food (unless special dietary need)
- Activities (potty training, correcting behavior, etc.)
- Interactions with toys & different noises around your house

PAWS can provide...

- Bowls (food & water)
- Toys
- Crates
- Newspapers to line crate bottoms
- Blankets, towels, and appropriate disinfectant

Getting Ready to Foster a Dog

After being approved by the shelter staff as a qualified foster home, but before you bring a foster dog home, we suggest you prepare yourself, your family and your home for a new canine companion.

Where to keep your foster dog

Planning where you will keep your dog before you bring your dog home will make the entire process easier for everyone. When you first bring a foster dog home, you'll want to confine them to a single room, such as a kitchen or family room. This room should not be an isolated room, but a room where you spend a large part of your day or evening, as dogs are pack animals and want to be with you. This room is especially important when you're at work or away from the house, as it will be a new environment in which they need time to become familiar and comfortable.

Use a baby gate to block off the entrances to other rooms. By keeping the dog in one room, you're helping prevent "accidents" that may occur because of stress or adjusting to your routine. (Even a house-trained dog might have an accident or two during this adjustment period.) For dogs that are not housetrained, keeping them confined to one room will help start this important training as you must be able to monitor their activities. PAWS Humane recommends you also use a crate in this room for times when you are away from the house.

The Do's

- Do keep your foster dog indoors in a location with a crate available.
- Do keep your foster dog in a warm/cool (depending on the season) and dry location.
- Do keep your foster dog on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in your secured fenced yard. When in a secured yard, you must supervise him at all times. It is very common for a shelter dog to try and escape so always supervise your shelter dog.

The Don'ts

- Do not place your foster dog around other strange dogs as we often do not know the dog's past history.
- Do not allow your foster dogs outdoors unless supervised by an adult.
- Never take your foster dog to an off-leash park. This is a liability to the shelter.
- Taking a foster dog to an off-leash park will result in the removal of the foster dog and end your role as a foster parent.

How to dog-proof a room

Walk into the room in which you plan to confine your foster dog, and ask yourself:

- Is there room for the crate (dog's safe place)?
- Is there quick access to the outside for bathroom breaks?
- Is there anything that can be chewed, such as drapes, a couch or rugs?
- Are there exposed electrical wires?
- Is there anywhere the dog can hide? Will you be able to get the dog out if hidden?
- Are there coffee tables with objects that can be knocked off by a wagging tail?
- Are there plants in the room? If so, check the list of toxic plants in this manual.
- Where will I set up the crate once all hazards are removed?
- Is the crate in a quiet, low-traffic area of the room?
- Is there a blanket in the crate to train your foster dog that it's his bed?

Introducing Your Dog to a Foster Dog

What to do once you are home with your foster dog

- If possible, go for a walk around your neighborhood with both dogs and two handlers. Walk the dogs side by side on leashes and allow them to sniff one another and become familiar with each other.
- Do give your own dog LOTS of love and praise.
- Do leave leashes on the dogs when you are in the home, so that you can get immediate control if needed. You may only need to do this for a short time.
- Do talk normally. Letting the dogs know that you are fine; they are fine; everything is fine!
- Be patient and go slowly with your foster dog as they may have been through a stressful surgery, abusive situation or a lot of recent changes.
- Don't leave your foster dog unattended with your resident dog. Even if they seem to get along well in your presence, you should separate the dogs when you leave your house. After a week, you may determine that this is no longer necessary, but be sure to always remove all toys, food, chews and start slowly.

Some common mistakes:

- Holding the leash too tensely as dogs may react with defensiveness.
- Leaving toys and chews around the house. This can cause resource guarding which can escalate very quickly. Remove all toys and chews before you arrive home with your foster dog.
- Feeding your foster dog with your resident dog. It's best to separate them initially, and to supervise always.
- Over-stimulating your foster dog with introductions to many people or your neighbors' dogs.

Fostering - The First Week

Now that you're home with your foster dog, you should start a regular routine so your dog can begin to adjust to your household. During this adjustment period, please keep stimulation to a minimum. Some recommendations include:

- Find a quiet route to walk or run your foster dog (depending on energy level) to familiarize him with his new environment. This also helps start the bonding between you and your foster dog.
- Don't introduce your foster dog to people you meet on your walk. For the first 7-14 days (could be more or less) your foster dog should lay low while he tries to figure out just what this new situation is. You may not see any unwelcome behavior initially.
- Do not introduce your foster dog to other dogs (other than your own resident dog). This includes neighborhood dogs, and dogs belonging to your family or friends. Why? There is no way to tell how your foster dog will behave when introducing him to other dogs. If your foster dog bites a person or dog you are required to report it to the shelter immediately.
- Don't throw a party, or have a lot of people over to your home. During the first week you should try to spend quality one-on-one time with your new foster dog.
- The most important thing to do during this initial transition time is to clearly but NONconfrontationally establish the household rules. As well, take care not to indulge your foster dog's timid, tentative or fearful behavior; we understand how tempting this may be as many of our orphans have come from less than ideal situations, but in the long run it does not benefit the dog.

Additional information for the first week

If your dog is available for adoption, take new photos and write a new bio for your foster dog. One of the many benefits of adopting a dog from foster care is that the foster parent can provide detailed, personal and anecdotal information about their foster dog. Your dog will be adopted more quickly if you update this information as soon as possible.

Daily Care

Feeding

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Feed at the same times every day. Create a separate space for your foster dog to eat so they will feel comfortable. If you have other dogs at home, feed your foster in a separate room and close the door - this will help prevent any arguments over food. **Do not feed any “people” food.** You do not know what the adoptive family will want to do, so don't start a habit they will have to break; and by feeding only dog food, you are also discouraging begging.

Feeding will depend on the age and size of your foster dog.

- Adult dogs: dry adult dog food twice a day, once in the morning and once at night.
- Adolescent dogs (4 months to 1 year): dry puppy food, twice a day.

The quantity of food you provide your foster dog will vary depending on weight, age and activity level. Please refer to the suggested amounts on the dog food package you are feeding your foster dog as the amounts may change depending on the brand. Remember to reduce this amount to compensate for any treats, including chews. Obesity is an epidemic for pets in the US, and can lead to health problems, exacerbate existing health issues and reduces overall quality of life. Please do not overfeed your foster dog. **Always provide plenty of fresh water!**

Daily Routine

Exercise

Foster dogs should be exercised every day, rain or shine. The old adage, “A tired dog is a happy dog,” holds true for foster dogs. Most foster dogs will need at least two 30+ minute walks a day to release excess energy. If your foster dog is an adolescent, you may need to step up the activity level to include regular runs/hikes/or brisk walks. A dog that is exercised regularly will tend to sleep when you are not at home - and a sleeping dog cannot do undesirable things, such as bark, chew, etc. Even a 10 week old puppy that plays inside or in a yard needs numerous daily walks as part of the socialization process. The exception to this is if your foster dog is recovering from an illness or injury, then they may need rest.

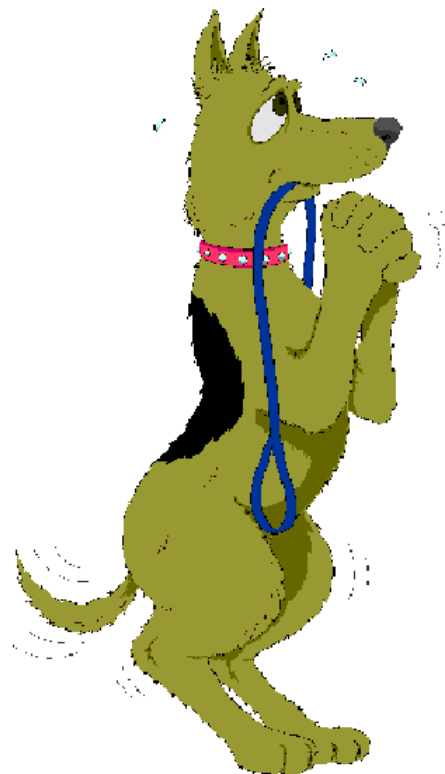
When walking your foster dog, leave at least six feet between your dog and any other dog you meet. This keeps handlers and dogs safe from possible conflicts and also reduces the transmission of diseases. Foster parents will need to be extra diligent because many dog owners seem to encourage their dogs to “greet” every dog they encounter out on a walk. This nose-to-nose greeting is particularly stressful for many dogs, as dogs typically greet each other from an angle. One simple way to avoid an oncoming dog walker is to just cross the street, or start to walk in a wide semi-circle around them. Most people recognize that this is a sign that you don't want your dogs to meet. If this isn't possible, just announce to the oncoming walker that you are walking a shelter dog, and you would prefer that the dogs don't greet each other.

Sometimes you must broadcast this loudly if their dog is off-leash or on a retractable leash. Keeping your dog to your side (rather than at the end of the leash) and creating a “body block” with your own body is also helpful. Sometimes it’s impossible to avoid another dog, so just stay calm, walk between your foster dog and the oncoming dog and move past quickly. Also try talking to your dog, “Fido, keep with me” and giving them treats as you pass an oncoming dog will help keep their attention on you, not on the other dog. Please do not use retractable leashes when walking or running your foster dog. It’s impossible to have control with a retractable leash, and they can easily tangle or break.

Attention and Playtime

Lots of human contact is important for recovering, sick, injured or neglected dogs. Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of playtime periodically through the day.

As a general rule, children under 16 years old should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with any dog, but specifically a foster dog. Do not allow children to behave with the foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a dog alone when he is eating, chewing and sleeping. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other “prized” possession from a dog. A child will not differentiate between a foster dog and a dog they have grown up with, so you must make sure to keep everyone safe.



Housetraining

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they've been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may "mark" out their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately with a calm "Ah-Ah" and escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer on the areas where the foster dog "marked" to insure he will not smell and mark that area again.

Even if you bring home an adult dog that is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

- Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate - it could be the backyard, side yard, etc.
- When you have determined where he should do his business, take him to the same place every time, and tell him to "do his business." Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!
- Supervise the dog closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Ah-Ah", scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes.
- If he goes in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him - it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer to get rid of the smell. **Never put the dog's face in his mess, or yell at him, he won't understand you, and you will only be teaching him to fear you.**

Crate Training

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and housetraining mistakes. How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, it has never been required to hold it for any period of time. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it and you will need to start slowly.

Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time.

Rigorous exercise should be given before and after any long periods in the crate, and good chew toys should be in the crate at all times. You may want to crate your new foster dog for the first few nights in your bedroom - most of them feel more secure in their crate and it protects your house from accidents.

Crates should never be used as a means of punishment for your foster dog. If used for punishing, the dog will learn to avoid going in the crate. Crates should be thought of as dog play rooms - just like child play rooms, with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure when they are there.

Crate & Confinement Training Pointers

- Begin crate training right away — first day home
- Practice going in for small, tasty food treats
- When he is comfortable going in, practice waiting a few seconds inside before getting treat — then practice closing door
- Gradually extend time in crate to 10 minutes with door open and closed
- Put crate next to sofa, rent video and keep puppy in crate next to you while he works on stuffed Kongs and other approved toys/chewies
- Put dog in crate for 30 minutes with chewies while you're home going about routine — visit him at crate every 5–10 minutes to reassure
- Start leaving puppy alone in crate — the first few times you do this, he should be tired (just exercised), the time should be short (15–30 minutes) and he should have a good chewie
- Get dog out to eliminate as soon as you come home after an absence

Behavior Issues

Some foster dogs will have specific needs regarding behavior, training or socializing. The shelter staff will advise you if your foster dog has a behavior problem that may require your help, such as an abused or fearful dog who needs socializing or confidence-building with other dogs or people. A dominant puppy may benefit from an adult dog in your home to “show them the ropes” and appropriate behavior. A dog with an unknown/questionable history may just need to be observed in someone’s home before being adopted. Many times it is the foster parent that is the first to learn about a foster dog’s specific behavior so constant communication with your case manager is important. There are many resources that we can provide to help you manage most behavioral issues.

We don’t expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, the best solution for you and your foster dog might be a different foster home or to be returned to the shelter.

Regardless of the issue, we don’t recommend punishment as this is rarely effective in resolving behavior problems. Punishment will not address the cause of the behavior, and in fact it may worsen any behavior that’s motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs that aren’t currently fearful. Never discipline your dog after the fact. People often believe their dog makes this connection because he runs and hides or “looks guilty.” But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away, or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn’t know what he’s done wrong; he only knows that you’re upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioral issues, ask yourself the questions below:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples include telling a fearful dog that “It’s ok”, verbally scolding a dog when they are seeking attention, etc.
- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on its breed?

Basic Training

Most potential adopters are looking for dogs with basic manners. You might feel it's appropriate to let your own dog jump on people, sleep on the bed, or beg for food, but please don't let your foster dog have these same indulgences. Set boundaries for your foster dog, and be consistent.

We suggest positive, rewards based training for dogs. Increasing your foster dog's obedience skills has many benefits. Not only will the future adopter appreciate these skills, but your foster dog will "show" better when visiting with potential adopters and you will have a much happier fostering experience. Some basic obedience cues that your foster dog should learn are: sit, down, come, crate/bed, stay, heel, and an attention cue such as "watch me." These are very helpful in managing any dog. If you have a dog that does not like other dogs, these cues will be helpful on walks as well. For example, a dog that can heel nicely and that has been taught to "watch" you has less likelihood of making eye contact with another dog and getting aroused.

Additional training tips:

- Short 5 minute training sessions 4-6 times a day is more effective than one long session.
- Dogs need and respond to positive rewards when learning new behaviors. Remember, most behaviors that we want are boring to a dog, so it's important to make it more interesting to them. A positive reward is a tasty treat, or a game of fetch.
- You provide the guidance and information he needs to succeed and build his confidence. Always praise your foster dog when he is doing something good.
- Be consistent with your terminology and routine. Your foster dog will become confused if you let them steal your socks sometimes, but not others.
- Start small and easy and slowly build from there. Most people jump too quickly into advanced environments (outside on a walk, etc.), so make sure you start inside in a safe and quiet location.
- Use Aak-Aak or Ah-Ah instead of the word "no." The canine mother would use this type of sound to correct her pup. Only use "no" for very serious matters, if it is overused the canine will no longer respond.
- Be patient and calm. Dogs respond to your tone of voice and facial expressions as well as your emotions. Dogs were once predators, and can read your body language quickly. Don't try to fake your emotions as your foster dog will know.
- Never lose your temper with a foster dog or strike him- EVER. We want to create and support a harmonious canine/human relationship.

Socialization

After your foster dog has settled in and has acclimated to his new home, it's time to get him out into the world. The more you can do this, the better socialized he will be. Get him used to different people and different environments. Start slowly and don't over stimulate as many foster dogs may not have had exposure to what seems like a "normal" environment. When you are out and about, you should remain calm as this will help your foster dog key off of your behavior. But always be aware of your surroundings. Always keep a good handle on your leash and be extremely careful around busy streets, or in parks where there are squirrels or birds or other distractions. If your dog reacts to someone/ something on your walk, interrupt the behavior by crossing the street or walk in a different direction.

If you're a runner/jogger, start off slow and keep an eye on your foster dog and see how they react. Many dogs pull when they are in front of you, and running can intensify this behavior. Keeping them at your side, rather than in front can help eliminate this pulling behavior. You may need to start and stop many times, but be patient. Remember, these runs should be about the dog, not about your own exercise. Also, remember your foster probably is not used to running regularly, and like a person, will have to improve his conditioning and stamina over a period of time to avoid injury.



General Criteria for Emergencies

Emergency situations include:

- Continuous weight loss
- Continuous diarrhea
- Continuous vomiting
- Bleeding of any kind—nose, urine, stool
- Any trauma—hit by a car, dropped, limp, stepped on, unconscious
- Difficulty in breathing/blocked airway
- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- If the animal has vomiting or diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, it can probably wait until the next day to receive help. however, if the animal is lethargic and shows no interest in food or water, it is wise to seek emergency help at the time.
- Coughing or sneezing should pose no immediate problems unless accompanied by blood or symptoms



If an emergency occurs outside of PAWS Humane hours and it needs to be immediately addressed, please contact:

The Animal Emergency
Center
(706) 324 - 6659

You will be reimbursed up to \$200 of the cost. Please contact the PAWS Humane Vet Clinic the following day.

Illness

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your dog closely each day. Call the PAWS Humane Vet Clinic if you see abnormal behavior; unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings, abnormal lumps, limping, difficulty getting up or down, loss of appetite or abnormal waste elimination.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including stress, change of diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites and viruses. If your foster dog has diarrhea and has no other symptoms, rule out change of diet by feeding your dog 2 cups of cooked rice mixed with one cup of cottage cheese for a day or two, and then reintroduce dry kibble.

Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it snaps back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, then the dog is dehydrated and needs fluids.

Injured Dogs

Injured foster dogs will have specific needs. They'll most likely be recovering from surgery and will come with veterinary orders. Generally fracture, cast or other surgery patients may need to be confined to a crate or a small room to limit mobility.

As with all foster dogs, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited, but cuddling, petting, talking, brushing and massaging are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

Thank you for fostering
with PAWS Humane and
choosing to save lives!



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