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# **FOSTER HANDBOOK**

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Welcome to the DogsHome foster program!

Thank you for opening your heart to one of our homeless dogs. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under-socialized dogs a chance to grow and heal before finding their forever homes.

Fostering is a wonderful experience! It's a rewarding to know you're making a difference and helping to save a dog's life.

### **How the program works**

As an approved foster parent, DogsHome will email you a brief description of dogs needing foster homes. When you see a dog who might be a good match for your household and lifestyle, simply follow the instructions in the email.

A member of our DogsHome team will contact you to provide more information and determine if the dog is a good match. They will also arrange a meeting between you (and your own dog, if applicable) and the foster dog.

DogsHome will provide you with all the necessary supplies for fostering, and we will support you throughout the entire process. You'll be assigned a foster mentor, who will be your shoulder to lean on, and can address any questions or concerns. Also, one of our trainers will work with you to help teach your foster dog basic skills.

### **Dogs needing foster homes**

The types of dogs needing foster homes include:

- Injured dogs and/or those recovering from surgery.
- Dogs suffering from "shelter stress" in need of a calming home environment.
- Older or senior dogs that will be more comfortable in a home environment.
- Puppies and young dogs that require more socialization.
- Puppies too young and/or immature to be adopted.
- Dogs with colds or with special medical needs.
- Abandoned mothers with litters of puppies.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How long are dogs in foster homes?**

It completely depends on the dog and the situation. Most puppies and dogs with great photos and stories that are shared online may stay only a few weeks. Older dogs and those recovering from an injury may stay much longer.

### **Can I adopt my foster dog?**

YES! As long as foster parents meet DogsHome's requirements necessary for adoption, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster dog.

### **How are foster dogs promoted?**

Photos and stories of all adoptable dogs in foster homes are posted on our website, Petfinder.com, and wherever the public can view them. Foster dogs are also promoted at special events throughout the year. Foster parents may participate in various DogsHome programs and events to increase the visibility of their foster dog to potential adopters.

Foster parents can also help promote their foster dog to their family, friends, colleagues and the general public through a variety of means including flyers, emails, Facebook, Instagram, blogs, and even just by walking your foster dog in local neighborhoods while he wears his "Adopt Me" vest.

### **If I have my own animals, can I foster a dog?**

At DogsHome, we want to set every dog up for success. So we do require family dogs to do a meet-and-greet with the potential foster dog to see if it's a suitable match.

Keep in mind that it's always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals whether it's at parks, vet waiting rooms or other common animal areas. The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young.

If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before fostering since working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called *zoonoses*. A zoonotic disease (there are about 200) is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also from humans to animals. To find out more about zoonoses, talk to your doctor and/or veterinarian. Proper hygiene, preventative measures and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.

### **What supplies are needed to foster?**

Foster parents provide space, exercise, socialization and most of all ... love! We'll provide the food, any necessary medical care, and all the other supplies and equipment needed throughout your foster experience.

### **Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or expertise?**

No, but you may be asked to dispense medicine to your foster dog so you will have to be comfortable following a veterinarian's instructions if fostering a sick or injured dog.

### **What if my foster dog becomes sick?**

If a foster dog becomes sick, foster parents must contact a DogsHome team member immediately. We will authorize a vet visit, or advise you otherwise. All veterinary costs will be paid by DogsHome. Once a veterinary visit has been authorized, you can make an appointment with one of the veterinarians authorized by DogsHome. These veterinarians will bill DogsHome directly so there is no cost to foster parents.

If you visit a vet that is not on the list, you will not be reimbursed for the cost. If you have any general questions regarding the health of your foster dog, contact your mentor or Foster Coordinator.

### **How much time each day is needed to foster?**

Commitment and responsibilities depend on the individual dog and situation. It's essential that foster parents understand that the transition to a foster home can be very stressful for the dog. Foster parents must be willing to be patient and commit to the dog because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment.

Dogs between the ages of 6 months and 2 years typically have a lot of energy and require vigorous daily exercise. This means at least a 30-45 minute brisk walk/run in the morning and again in the afternoon, with plenty of playtime in between. Older dogs may only need a morning and evening stroll.

**Can I take my foster dog to an off-leash dog park for exercise and socialization?**

**No.** You are not allowed to take any foster dog from DogsHome to an off-leash dog park. While these parks can be fun for some dogs, there are far too many unknowns for it to be a safe and healthy experience for a foster dog. Diseases are easily transmitted and the temperaments of visiting dogs are unknown, thus creating a huge liability to DogsHome. Taking a leashed dog to a dog park is not allowed either. ***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 can I help my foster dog become more adoptable?**

There are two ways to make a foster dog more adoptable. First is marketing. If no one knows about your foster dog, or how wonderful he is, then it will be next to impossible to find them a forever home. In addition to supplying great photos and providing regular updates, giving a foster dog additional exposure by telling friends and family about them will help create a "network effect" and will speed up the process of finding a forever home. Simple steps like taking a foster dog in his "adopt me" vest on walks in local parks, outdoor shopping areas and other high-traffic areas will help find potential adopters.

Next, the dogs will benefit greatly from exercise, basic training, love and attention. While marketing provides you with applicants, it's **always** the dog that "closes the deal." Providing a foster dog with basic training and manners will increase his adoptability. Your foster dog will benefit from your patience, following a routine, consistent training, and slowly being exposed to new people and situations to build his confidence.

**Am I responsible for finding my foster dog its forever home?**

No, but we do need your help. Once a potential adopter is identified, you will be asked to schedule a meet and greet with your foster dog. Your quick response and then final input on the potential adopter is critical to finding a great match. Many times a foster parent will find a perfect match through their own network of friends, family and colleagues. DogsHome greatly welcomes these referrals! If you think you have found a perfect forever home for your foster dog, remember they still must go through the application process and be approved by DogsHome.

### **Can I return my foster dog to DogsHome if I am unable to foster any longer?**

We prefer that foster parents continue to foster until we find a permanent home for their foster dog. It's extremely stressful for a dog to change his living environment. However, we understand that situations change, and it may become necessary to transfer a foster dog. We request that a foster parent provides as much notice as possible (preferably 3-4 weeks) so that we can find another foster home. Include the following in your request-for-transfer email to [DogsHomePA@gmail.com](mailto:DogsHomePA@gmail.com):

A brief paragraph describing the dog; whether he is crate-trained, housetrained, has upcoming scheduled vet appointments; gets along with other dogs/cats; whether he is child-friendly and any other pertinent information.

### **What if I go on vacation or have a business trip?**

If given enough notice, we can usually find volunteers that can foster-sit for short durations. We ask that foster parents give us as much advance notice as possible.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL FOSTER PARENTS**

In order to become a foster parent, you will need to complete the following:

- Attend the Foster Dog Orientation and the Foster Dog Training session. Dates and locations will be provided.
- Complete a Foster Dog Application and waiver.

DogsHome approves all foster parent applications and all foster dog/foster parent matches. DogsHome may also remove a foster dog from a foster home for any reason deemed necessary.

## **IMPORTANT GUIDELINES WHEN FOSTERING**

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in this manual, foster parents **MUST** abide by the following rules:

- No off-leash park visits.
- Foster dogs must be on leash at all times and supervised when outdoors unless in your own secured fenced yard.
- No Flexi-leashes/retractable leashes.
- No aversive training techniques or tools may be used on foster dogs. Aversives include prong collars, pinch/choke chain collars, electronic collars, spray bottles, and physical reprimands including alpha rolls, collar yanking, etc.
- Foster dogs may not be left unattended at any time outside, even in a secured yard.
- You may not leave your dog loose in the house with an accessible doggie door when you're not present.
- Any behavior in which the dog growls, bares his teeth, or bites must be immediately communicated to DogsHome.
- All vet visits must be pre-approved by calling DogsHome.
- You must visit a vet that is approved by DogsHome.
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communications from DogsHome or potential adopters.
- Foster parents must have internet access and check their email daily, as this is the primary form of communication.

## **GETTING READY TO FOSTER A DOG**

### **Be physically and mentally prepared**

Fostering is a family affair, so please make sure that everyone in your household is ready, willing and able to provide a loving home for a homeless dog. Many adults and children have a difficult time adjusting to a new schedule or routine, and also have a difficult time "giving up" an animal to his forever home. Make sure everyone is ready for this new, albeit temporary, addition to your family.



Be realistic about your time commitment to a foster dog. Don't overextend yourself when starting out. If you're unsure, you may want to begin with foster sitting.

### **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 since dogs are social 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 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. DogsHome 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 dog in a new environment to try to escape, so **always** supervise your foster dog.
- Do keep your puppy indoors in a kitchen, bathroom, mudroom or laundry room (you may want to use baby gates to limit access to other parts of your home) while you are not there. Puppies should be around humans for socialization purposes and should not be isolated.

### **The Don'ts**

- Don't place your foster dog around other strange dogs as we often do not know the dog's past history. Your DogsHome trainer will help you determine how comfortable your foster dog is around other dogs.
- 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 DogsHome. **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 to see if they are toxic. (For a list of toxic and non-toxic plants: [aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/dogs-plant-list](http://aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/dogs-plant-list))
- 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?

### **Items you may need**

Be sure to ask DogsHome about available supplies when you are picking up your foster dog. Generally, it's a good idea to have on hand:

- Food and bowls.
- Crate - DogsHome may be able to provide one.
- Bedding - a clean, old blanket or towel or a dog bed that is washable.

- Odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle); it's the best way to clean housetraining mistakes. If you clean mistakes with soap and water, your dog will still smell the urine and may go to the bathroom in that spot repeatedly.
- Toys such as: Kongs, rope toys or Nylabones. Do **NOT** give your foster dog anything made of rawhide, and do not give him hooves, pigs' ears or vinyl toys. These can cause diarrhea, choking, or intestinal blockages. Talk to your DogsHome trainer about appropriate toys for your dog. Some dogs are powerful chewers and require tougher toys.
- Collar with a DogsHome ID tag which must stay on the dog at all times, **unless he is in his crate, in which case all harnesses and collars need to be removed**. Collars and ID tags will be made available by DogsHome.
- Leash.
- Training apparatus - Freedom Harness will be provided by DogsHome.
- Training treats such as string cheese, lunch meat, or small dog biscuits. Your DogsHome trainer will discuss appropriate treats with you, since some dogs are sensitive to certain foods.
- Baby gate(s).
- "Adopt Me" vests. These will be provided by DogsHome.

### **Transporting your foster dog**

The safest way to transport your dog to your home (or anywhere else) is in a secure crate in the back of your car. The crate should be secured so that it doesn't tip over or move around. Another option is to use a grill between the back of the vehicle and the back seat. It is always a good idea to put a blanket down under your crate or in the back section of your vehicle, so that if your dog becomes car sick, or has an accident, the blanket will protect your seats and carpet.

If you can't fit a crate into your vehicle, your dog is safest in the back seat. Use either a special harness for your dog that hooks on to a seat belt, or a leash that attaches to the seat belt. Avoid letting your dog ride in the passenger seat next to you. Not only can your view be obstructed, but also if you brake suddenly your dog could get injured by hitting the windshield or by the air bag.

You might need a few treats to encourage a dog to jump into a car. Remember to always keep hold onto the dog's leash as you encourage him to enter your car.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO A FOSTER DOG**

DogsHome will assist you with introducing your dog to a foster dog; a DogsHome member must be present during the meet and greet. DogsHome will schedule a time suitable for foster parents to make introductions.

### **Once you are home with your foster dog**

Do be alert and make the reintroductions gradually and calmly.

Dogs can often be extremely territorial in the home, even if they get along with a dog outside the home.

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.

Give your *own* dog LOTS of love and praise. Make sure to 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.

Talk normally around the dogs, letting them 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.

It's never a good idea to 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. If you believe there is a valid reason to leave your dogs together (e.g. your dog suffers from separation anxiety), then talk with your mentor, foster coordinator or trainer first. If you do leave your dogs alone together, be sure to always remove all toys, food and anything they like to chew on, and start slowly.

Also, it is never recommended to feed the dogs their meals together. It's best to feed them in separate rooms, preferably with doors or gates keeping them away from other dogs.

### **Some common mistakes:**

- Holding the leash too tensely as dogs may react with defensiveness.
- Leaving toys, treats and food around the house. Remove anything your own dog puts in his mouth 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. (We can't say this too often!)
- Over-stimulating your foster dog with introductions to many people or your neighbors' dogs. Slower is better. Your foster dog is dealing with a lot trying to adjust to a new environment.

### **INTRODUCING YOUR CAT TO A FOSTER DOG**

Allow your foster dog to settle down and get to know your surroundings first before you start introductions to unfamiliar animals. Introducing a cat to a dog is similar to introducing dogs to one another. Take your time and create a stress-free environment. Begin by keeping your cat in a different room. Allow the dog to become comfortable in his own room. Once the dog is comfortable, let him explore the rest of the house for short periods each day while the cat is in another room. This will allow them to pick up each other's scent. After a few days, allow the two to meet but keep the dog on a leash. Observe their interactions. A dog that is snarling, growling, baring teeth, staring fixedly at the cat, etc., will probably never accept a cat. The cat and dog should be separated by baby gates or kept in separate rooms.

If all is reasonably calm so far, walk the dog around the room on leash, but don't let go of the leash in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On-leash interactions give the cat the opportunity to approach the dog, or to find a route of escape. During the first few meetings, the cat and dog will probably not interact face to face. A dog is a predatory animal. It's a natural instinct for a dog to want to chase a cat. Assume the dog will chase the cat so you are prepared. Never allow the dog to intimidate the cat by barking or chasing.

Each time the dog barks or chases the cat, try using a verbal interrupter, like "Oops" to get their attention and redirect. If you notice the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, that's a good sign and should not be discouraged. When they set up

boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a working relationship.

Let them interact with the dog on leash for about 30 minutes, then return the cat back to his safe haven and bring the dog to his dog crate or bed. Give the dog a treat and lots of praise. Increase the amount of time they are together a little each visit. It's important to be patient and encouraging in their interactions. If you're relaxed, they will be more at ease. Always praise friendly behavior. Don't rush the introduction or force them to interact more than either is willing. Pressing them to accept each other will only slow down the adjustment process. When the cat and dog seem to be getting used to each other, let the dog go, but keep his leash attached to his collar. Let him drag it around the house as he wanders; that way you can control him at any time. The cat will probably hide at first. You should use your best judgment as to when they can begin supervised sessions with the dog off-leash.

### **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:

- As much as possible, try to have a set routine. Dogs like consistency.
- Find a quiet route to walk or run your foster dog (depending on his 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. Give your foster dog lots of time and space initially. He needs a chance to adjust to his new surroundings. You can't go too slowly!
- Don't 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. Remember, we are trying to set these dogs up for success! 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 DogsHome immediately. Please note: If there is a particular dog outside your

family whom you want your dog to meet, discuss this with your DogsHome trainer. Do not do the introduction alone.

- Don't throw a party or have a lot of people over to your home during the first week. Try to spend quality one-on-one time with your new foster dog.

Remember, your DogsHome trainer will be working with you right from the start to help both you and your dog adjust to this new situation and set everyone up for success.

### **Additional information for the first week**

Remember to take a lot of photos of your dog. This will help when he's available for adoption.

Please make use of your DogsHome foster mentor. He or she is there to help you every inch of the way and ensure everything goes smoothly. Don't worry about "bothering" them. That's why they're there!

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ON FOSTERING A DOG**

### **Expectations of Behavior**

Be patient and allow time for adjustment. The dog is the one who will determine how long it takes to get comfortable in his new environment. We can't say it enough: The greatest skill you can offer your foster dog is patience!

A DogsHome trainer will provide instructions on how to begin training with basic cues and crate training. You should spend time with your foster dog every day. If he displays any behavior that concerns you, contact your mentor, your DogsHome Foster Coordinator, or your DogsHome trainer for guidance.

### **What to feed your foster dog**

DogsHome will provide food for your foster dog. If you should need to purchase additional food, you will be reimbursed by DogsHome, provided it is a brand we recommend. Please do not feed your dog any dog food other than what you're given, as this can cause digestive problems for the dog.

## Feeding Schedule and Quantity

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 he 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; 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

*Weaned puppies (6-8 weeks to 4 months):* dry puppy food three to four times a day. Can be moistened with water or puppy formula.

*Nursing mothers with puppies and unweaned puppies (4-8 weeks).*

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. Remember to reduce this amount to compensate for any treats. 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.

## EXERCISE, TRAINING AND ATTENTION

### Exercise

Foster dogs should be exercised every day, rain or shine. The old adage, "A tired dog is a good 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 particularly active, 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.

### **Leash walking and the 6-foot rule**

The DogsHome Foster Dog Program requires that all foster dogs are walked maintaining a safe distance from other dogs or people as necessary. When walking your foster dog, leave an appropriate and safe distance 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 encourage their dogs to "greet" every dog they encounter out on a walk. This nose-to-nose greeting is particularly stressful for many dogs.

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 foster dog, and you would prefer that the dogs don't greet each other.

### **Training**

DogsHome provides a trainer to work with every foster family. We are committed to using only positive, reward-based training methods. That means we do not allow choke collars, prong/pinch collars, shock collars or any kind of aversive treatment (punishment).

Here's the easiest way to understand what our training philosophy is all about:

**Reward the behavior you want; ignore the behavior you don't want.**

Your trainer will work with you one-on-one to ensure the dog is being handled consistently and that the training program is effective. The trainer may ask to meet with you once a week or more often, depending on the dog.

DogsHome is committed to setting our dogs up for success - and an effective training program is an integral part of that. Don't worry if you've never trained a dog before.

The most important skill required is one you already have: patience! Remember, it's the dog who will determine the pace of the training program. If you are clear and consistent in your handling, you will be amazed at the results!

**Please note:** DogsHome is legally responsible for all our foster dogs. Any questions, concerns or general guidance regarding the care, training and treatment of your foster dog must be directed only to a DogsHome trainer. Seeking advice from any trainer not affiliated with DogsHome will result in the foster dog being removed from your home.

### **Housetraining**

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may "mark" their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately with a calm "Oops" and escort him outside where he can finish. Do not yell at the dog or tell him "No." Not only has this been proven not to be effective, but in all likelihood, he won't understand why you are angry with him, and this will just increase his anxiety. Use some odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle) on the areas where the foster dog "marked" to ensure he will not smell and mark that area again. You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 8 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog who 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. Most dogs like to eliminate in or around the same area each time.

When you have determined where he should go to the bathroom, take him to the same place every time, and tell him, "Do your business." Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game). 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 puppy closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Oops", 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 (like Nature's Miracle) to get rid of the smell. **Never** put the dog's face in his mess, yell at him, or swat him, however gently. 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. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old. For example, a 4-month-old should not be crated longer than 4 hours. How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, he 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. 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, the dog will feel more comfortable and relaxed in a room with you, and the crating will protect 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 are not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms - just like child playrooms, with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure when they are there.

### **Introducing the crate**

**IMPORTANT: Remove all harnesses and collars from your dog before crating him.**

Place the crate (with a blanket inside) in a central part of your home. Introduce your foster dog to the crate after a good walk, when he's tired and sleepy. Keep toys in the crate so that he can go in and out as he pleases, selecting toys to play with. Feed your dog in the crate with the door open. If the dog hesitates going in, place the bowl inside the door so his head is in and his body is outside.

Now that the dog is familiar and willing to go near the crate, throw some of his favorite treats in the crate. Let him go in and get them and come right out again. Do this exercise three or four times. Then, throw more treats in and let him go in and get them. When he is in, shut the door and give him another treat through the door. Then let him out and ignore him for 3 minutes. Repeat this several times. Then, place treats, peanut butter, etc. (see what your trainer or mentor recommend) in a Kong , so it is time-consuming to get the food out of the toy, and put the Kong in the crate. After your foster dog has gone in, shut the door and talk to him in a calm voice. If your dog starts to whine or cry, don't talk to him or you will reward the whining/crying/ barking behavior. The foster dog must be quiet for a few minutes before you let him out.

Gradually increase the time in the crate until the dog can spend 3-4 hours there. We recommend leaving a radio (soothing music or talk radio) or TV (mellow stations: educational, art, food) on while the dog is in the crate and alone in the house. Rotate the dog's toys from day to day so he doesn't become bored with them. Don't put papers in the crate - the dog will instinctively not go to the bathroom where he sleeps/lives. Instead, put a blanket in his crate to endorse the fact that this is his cozy home.

To help your foster get accustomed to the crate, place his favorite bed inside it and place it in your bedroom. Make sure the sides of bedding are tucked in firmly so the puppies don't get lost or suffocated in a fold of the bedding. Be wary of dog crates during hot weather - a dog may want to lie on the cool floor, instead of the crate. Make sure the crate is not in direct sun.

### **Attention and playtime**

Gentle and calming human contact is important for all dogs - especially those who are recovering, sick, or injured. Human handling is especially important for the healthy

development of puppies. Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give your foster dog several sessions 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 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.

Do not play tug of war or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw the toy toward the dog, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away. When giving the dog a toy or treat, have him sit before giving it to him. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat - making the toy a reward. Your trainer will assist you in all of this.

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 your dog, 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. But always be aware of your surroundings. 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 or something on your walk, do NOT yell at your dog or comfort him by saying, "It's OK." Simply interrupt the behavior by crossing the street or walking in a different direction. If you're a jogger, start off slowly and do only a short distance. Even an adult dog may not have had long periods of exercise for weeks or even months. Always keep an eye on your foster dog and see how he reacts. 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. Again, your trainer will help you with this.

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. Puppies under 6 months old should not run with you and only occasionally, for short distances after 6 months. 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.

If you're fostering puppies, make sure they have lots of new experiences, so they are well socialized and will be adaptable as an adult. Since it's best not to take puppies out in public until they are fully vaccinated, bring new experiences to them. Find out from your Foster Coordinator or mentor if there are other puppies in foster care and schedule a puppy play date. Expose them to men and children as much as possible. Have friends over and invite children over to play. Always supervise playtime with children and dogs closely! Take your foster puppy in car rides (crate them for safety) to get used to the car. Keep in mind that puppies need to go to the bathroom frequently so be sure they eliminate before you go on a car ride, and keep the ride brief, since they will have to go again soon.

### **NO Off-Leash Parks—No Exceptions**

All foster dogs are required to be on leash at all times if outside of your secured yard. You are not allowed to bring your foster dog to an off-leash park even if you keep them on a leash. There are no exceptions to this rule. **Do not** bring puppies to any public parks. Puppies are not yet fully vaccinated and can pick up viruses, particularly the Parvovirus, through contact with feces and urine in areas where other dogs congregate.

### **BEHAVIORAL ISSUES**

Some foster dogs will have specific needs regarding behavior, training or socializing. Your Foster Coordinator and DogsHome trainer 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. 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 Foster Coordinator, mentor and trainer is

important. There are many resources we can provide to help you manage most behavioral issues.

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic, such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals are normal dog behaviors. The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate (in other words: behaviors we like!) outlets for these behaviors.

Regardless of the issue, DogsHome does not condone 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. People often believe their dog knows when he's done something wrong because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away, or hiding to defuse any potential conflict. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset.

## **VETERINARY AND MEDICAL CARE**

**All veterinary care must be pre-authorized by calling the DogsHome Foster Coordinator at 610-574-8275.**

**Please note:** DogsHome **will not** reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals if you do not receive pre-approval or go to an approved vet office. Emergency/nighttime clinics are incredibly expensive and should be used only in cases of dire emergencies and/or after pre-approval.

### **Vaccination and worming**

Your foster dog's vaccination and worming history will be given to you. Your dog has most likely been vaccinated for Distemper, canine Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parainfluenza, Parvo, and Bordetella. All foster dogs will have their rabies vaccinations as well.

## **GETTING YOUR FOSTER DOG ADOPTED**

If your foster dog is available for adoption, make sure to take plenty of photos and send them to your DogsHome Foster Coordinator.

Also, it's important to keep notes of your dog for his bio. For example: Is your foster OK with cats? OK with other dogs? How is he with children (indicate appropriate ages)? If you are unsure, contact your DogsHome Foster Coordinator for assistance.

### **Promoting your foster dog**

The more you network your foster dog, the more quickly you are able to find it a great forever home. Here are some simple ways to promote your dog:

- Send an email to your family, friends and colleagues. Let them know about your foster dog and ask them to help you spread the word and to tell their friends and colleagues.
- Post a flyer of your foster dog at your workplace or put one on your office door or outside your cube.
- Spread the word at your child's school, your place of worship, or other organization that you belong.
- Record a video of your foster dog or create a slideshow with more photos and have them posted on your foster dog's Petfinder.com bio.
- Make sure you always walk your foster dog with an "Adopt Me" vest.
- Create business cards for your foster dog and keep them in your pocket or purse. These are great to use when you are on your walks.
- Post your foster dog on some of the social networking sites. There are even social networking sites specifically for dogs!
- Many companies have newsletters, email lists, blogs or intranets where you might be able to post information about your foster dog. See if you can bring your foster dog to work!
- Blog about your foster dog, or find a local community blog and blog about your foster dog there!
- Take your dog for a walk around local family parks and any other places that have a lot of foot traffic. Do this with a friend so that someone can be the "spokesperson" while you handle the dog.
- Post a flyer about your dog at local dog parks. Most have a bulletin board for flyers.
- Even though you can't take them to the park, you can still promote them at the park!



- If you have a purebred, or a close to purebred, find out if you can cross-post your foster dog on the local breed rescue website. Most breeds have their own rescue organizations.
- If you're a runner, enter a local 5K race and bring your dog. Check with the race rules first, but many will let you run with a dog. Don't forget your dog's "Adopt Me" vest!
- Participate in DogsHome events that will help you promote your foster dog.

### **THANK YOU!**

DogsHome greatly appreciates your time, energy and dedication. Please let us know, at any time, if there's anything we can do to help make your fostering experience more successful. On behalf of all the dogs of DogsHome and our entire team, we thank you!

"Saving one dog will not change the world. But surely for that one dog, the world will change forever." Karen Davison

