



# The Rescue Crew

SAVE A LIFE TODAY



LIFE-SAVING

Foster **Care** Manual

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# DEAR FOSTER FAMILY

First and foremost, THANK YOU! You are about to embark on a life-saving adventure that you'll never forget. Foster homes allow us to save animals from a variety of situations by providing them with temporary care and shelter until they are adopted. By opening up your heart and home to foster a companion animal in need, you're not only helping to save their lives, you're providing the individual attention and love these animals so desperately need and deserve.

The Rescue Crew was created specifically to help fill a need in our local communities for shelter animals facing imminent risk of euthanasia without rescue support. Because of this, many of our companion animals will come from local shelters, impounds and animal humane organizations. Many of these animals may require extra care and attention, which shelters often don't have the staff or resources to provide. But in a loving foster home, every animal can get the individual attention they need to find a responsible, loving forever family. Because of you, these animals get a second chance at finding a home — a chance they may not have otherwise received. Each week, many dogs and cats are euthanized because there is simply nowhere for them to go. It's our hope, that as you continue your foster experience and help save the lives of these animals who so desperately need you, that you will share your stories and experiences with others and help us to recruit more foster homes.



Foster homes are asked to provide the necessary care and feeding, exercise, attention and positive socialization for the animals, as well as transportation to and from veterinary appointments as needed, and transportation to adoption and other marketing events we may sponsor or participate in so foster pets can get an opportunity to meet prospective adopters. When this presents a challenge, with enough notice, we can often coordinate volunteer transport to assist you with these responsibilities.

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a wonderful gift you can give to animals in need, and a very rewarding experience. It's only because of individuals like yourself — those willing to help an animal in need, that we can continue in our shared goal to "Save a Life Today."

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

## Where do the animals come from?

The animals who are in need of foster care come to us from various different situations:

**Shelters & Impounds.** The Rescue Crew takes in animals from local shelters and humane societies. These shelters are located primarily within the Twin Cities metropolitan area, but we partner with shelters across the entire state and a select group of out of state shelters.

**Tribal lands & communities.** There are a number of reservations in Minnesota and neighboring states where opportunities for housing and needed veterinary care of companion animals is poor or non-existent. As is the case in the United States as a whole, the problem of pet overpopulation on these tribal lands can be even more extreme.

**Owner surrenders & returns.** Many animals are surrendered each year by their owners. Sometimes, there are circumstances beyond one's control. An owner may become ill and is no longer able to care for their pet. Or the owner passes away, and there is no family member willing and/or able to care for their pet.

Then, there are some pets that are victims, through no fault of their own, when their owners are unable or unwilling to meet the demands of pet ownership. The puppy is too active or got too big, the cat is clawing on furniture, the dog/cat is too old, etc.

The Rescue Crew also strives to make a lifetime commitment to every animal we rescue. This means that if, for any reason, an adopter can no longer keep their adopted pet, we request they contact us so we can make every effort to secure foster placement so the pet can come back to us or another rescue organization. If one of our adopted pets ends up at a shelter, we will pick the animal up and take them back into rescue. All of our adopted pets are microchipped, and our name stays on the chip as a Guardian for the life of the animal, so we will always be notified if one of our adopted pets sadly finds its way into a shelter or impound.

**Rescue transfers.** On occasion, we may be asked to assist with placement of an animal in the care of another rescue organization. When these organizations feel they do not have appropriate and proper placement for the pet, or they have no available foster homes, they may reach out to one of the other many rescue organizations, like The Rescue Crew, requesting assistance in placing the pet. Alternatively, there may be instances where we do the same and seek help from other rescue partners.





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

## What do foster families need to provide?

Everything you may need to care for your foster pet can be provided by The Rescue Crew. What we ask of you includes:

- A healthy and safe environment for your foster pet.
- Transportation to and from all vet appointments needed and possible adoption events to help your foster's adoption options.
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach your foster positive family and pet relationships.
- Lots of exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great family pets.

## How much time do I need to spend with my foster pet?

As much time as you can. With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the pet you are fostering. It is ideal to spend around two hours a day exercising and playing with your foster pet to ensure that he or she receives adequate socialization and stimulation.

## Can I foster if I have a full-time job?

Yes. Our foster application is designed as a survey to help our team members match you with an appropriate animal for your schedule and lifestyle. For example, If you have a full-time job, a Coordinator may try to match you with an animal who may be comfortable alone during the day. You would then just need to provide ample attention and/or exercise before and after your work day.

## How long will the animal need to be in foster care?

It varies. Ideally, foster animals stay in their assigned foster homes until they get adopted. We do not have a physical location or boarding facility to house animals, so all of the animals in our care rely on foster caregivers as their home between homes. In emergency situations, we may be able to provide short-term boarding.

## Time Commitments & Responsibilities.\*

Type of Foster	Duration of Care	Daily Commitment
Sick/injured pets	3 weeks - 3 months	2 - 3 hours
Neonatal kittens	1 month - 3 months	8 hours
Adult dogs & cats	2 weeks - 2 months	1 - 2 hours
Puppies & kittens	2 weeks - 6 weeks	3 - 6 hours
Moms with litters	2 weeks - 2 months	3 hours

*\*Please understand that these examples are simply estimates to help set expectations. The daily time commitment and length of stay within the rescue will vary by each individual pet.*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

## Can I let my foster play with my personal pets?

There are a few guidelines that we ask foster families to adhere to regarding their personal pets. While foster animals playing with other pets is often fine, we advise that you consult with your veterinarian before fostering to ensure that all of your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. Again, animals in shelters are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch different diseases. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill while you are fostering, we cannot provide medical care or cover the expenses for your personal pet.

If you are fostering cats, and your personal cat is allowed outdoors, they should not interact with your foster cat. Foster cats are typically more at risk of illness and we want to limit that risk by not exposing them to anything from the outdoors.

## What if my foster isn't working out?

You are not required to continue to foster the animal if you feel it's not working out. However, we may not have an immediate alternate foster home for the animal. We don't have a physical location, so we rely on boarding partners. We will work on moving your foster animal as soon as possible, but ask for your understanding and patience. We typically will need at least two weeks to find appropriate and proper placement. Please let us know if you feel things are not working out.

Oftentimes, situations or behaviors you may be encountering with your foster animal can be addressed through training or other resources and tips we may be able to provide. Please see the "Rules of 3" information in the Resources section of this manual.

## What if I need to go out of town?

If you need to go out of town while you are fostering an animal, a Coordinator can assist in finding another approved foster home able to care for the animal temporarily, or find a boarding facility to house the animal until you return.

Please provide as much notice as possible to ensure that we can find a boarding facility for the animal. If your trip is over a holiday, it can be very difficult to find temporary housing as boarding facilities fill up extremely quickly during these times.

Under no circumstances can you leave your foster animal with an unauthorized person or pet sitter. For liability reasons it is necessary that anyone caring for our pets has signed a release waiver for the foster program. If the individual you have in mind to care for your foster animal while you are away is willing to become an approved foster, we will be happy to do our best to accommodate that request, but they will need to complete a Foster Application with us and undergo the typical approval process.





# PREPARING FOR YOUR FOSTER EXPERIENCE.

When you take your foster animal home, they may be frightened or unsure about what's happening, so it's important not to overwhelm them. Prepare a special area for the foster animal to help ease his adjustment into a new home environment. Sometimes it is better to confine the foster animal to a small room or area at first, to let him adjust before giving him free rein in your home. Equip the room with food and water dishes and a litter box for cats. For dogs, this area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and should allow the dog access to his food and water dishes and toys.

We request that all foster animals be housed indoors only. A backyard or outdoor run is not a suitable accommodation for a foster animal.

Another reason that we recommend a small room for cats is because they will typically hide in new environments. It is not uncommon for a foster cat to hide underneath a bed or in a dark, quiet place for the first couple of days. Isolating your foster cat when you first take them home allows you to know what room they are in and helps you monitor their eating, drinking and potty habits more closely. During the first couple of weeks, minimize the people and pet introductions to your foster animal, so that they are only meeting immediate family and your personal pets. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster animal a space of their own where they can stay while getting used to all the new sights, sounds and smells.

Don't leave your foster animal unattended in your home with your personal pets until you are comfortable that all of the animals can interact safely. Even then, we strongly recommend that dogs be separated when you are away.

# PREPARING FOR YOUR FOSTER EXPERIENCE.

## Supplies you'll need.

The Rescue Crew can provide you with any standard care supplies that you may need. Of course, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster animal. Here's what you'll need to help your foster animal make a smooth transition to living in your home:

- At least one bowl for food and one for water: Stainless steel or ceramic work best, however our donated bowls are often plastic and we may need to default to that when necessary.
- A supply of dry animal food: Dogs are predominantly fed dry food unless a special diet is needed, or they prove to be a picky eater and canned food may then need to be incorporated. Cats will often be fed a combination of wet and dry,
- A collar with an ID tag and a leash: Even though foster animals are microchipped, they still need an ID tag. We provide tags with The Rescue Crew name and contact information on them.
- A soft place to sleep: Old towels or blankets work just fine, as do comforters and used pillows. We are certainly happy to provide pet beds when we have them available and you feel it is best for your foster pet.
- Treats: Giving treats can be a good way to help train and build a positive relationship with your foster pet.

## Additional items for dogs:

- A baby gate: This comes in handy to keep certain areas of your home off-limits. This is one item we do not typically have a large quantity of or routinely have donated, so please give us ample notice and understanding if you are needing one to assist with keeping your foster pet safe.
- A crate or kennel: The crate should be large enough for the animal to stand up and turn around in, but not much bigger than that. We are happy to supply you with the appropriate size crate for your foster dog – just let us know if you are in need of one.

## Additional items for cats:

- Uncovered litter box: Make sure the box is an appropriate size for the cat.
- Litter: Please use clumping litter, unless there are specific reasons not to, for example with kittens pine or non-clumping litter is recommended.
- Scratching posts or trays: Try different types to see which the cat prefers.





# PREPARING FOR YOUR FOSTER EXPERIENCE.

## Animal proofing your home.

Foster animals typically come from a shelter environment or free-roaming tribal lands, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home environment. So, before bringing home a foster pet, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep them. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the animal to chew on, and latch securely any cupboards and doors that the pet could get into (particularly trash cans). People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by animals, as are certain house plants, so please store them in a place that the foster animal cannot access.

Never underestimate your foster animal's abilities. Here are some additional tips for animal-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins - animals tend to really like playing with toilet paper, Kleenex and other waste products often found in bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed. Many animals come from tribal lands/Indian reservations, they may not have become accustomed to having easy access to water, and may see the toilet bowl as their primary source of hydration.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops. Counter surfing is a regular occurrence, and one complaint that most often gets a foster animal returned from adoptive homes.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some animals like to play with them and may knock them over or eat them, and certain types of house plants may prove to be harmful or poisonous to companion animals.
- Remove medications, lotions or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster animal if consumed. Dogs in particular, especially puppies, tend to enjoy chewing on shoes that have been left lying around, and socks if chewed or ingested can pose a significant health risk.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster animal could knock down or perceive as a toy and want to play with, chew on or pose a swallowing hazard.

# BRINGING HOME YOUR FOSTER PET.



Taking care of a foster animal requires a commitment from you to make sure the animal is happy and healthy.

## Choosing a foster animal.

A Coordinator or other representative will work with you to help select a foster animal who meets your specific requirements. We will always do our best to match you with an animal who fits with your lifestyle, home environment and schedule.

When you have decided on a foster animal, an appointment will be scheduled so you can pick up the animal and any supplies that you will need, or we will arrange transport to bring the animal to you. Whenever possible, we like to introduce prospective foster parents to the animal at the shelter, so we can temperament test the animal together and discuss potential concerns or issues we see, so we can decide, as a team, if we feel this will be an appropriate animal for you to care for. Be honest: If you aren't comfortable with anything about the animal you may be considering fostering, please tell The Rescue Crew representative before you commit to the animal. This is particularly crucial for the shelter animals, as once we "tag," or commit to a shelter animal, we are committed to picking that animal up and taking them out of the shelter environment within a specified period set forth by that shelter (typically within 24-48 hours after the legal stray hold is over). If you commit, and then determine the animal may not be a good fit for you, or have other obligations that arise that will get in the way of your ability to foster that animal, we will have difficulty finding another appropriate place for the shelter animal to go and may be forced to place them in boarding - which essentially is little difference from the shelter environment we are taking them from, and continues to place stress on the animal and risks further deterioration and increases the likelihood of behavioral issues.

Please note: Once the animal is placed in a foster home from a shelter, the animal cannot be returned to the shelter if the person fostering the animal decides it's not working out. The Rescue Crew does not have a place to house animals overnight. If you feel you can no longer foster an animal, a new foster home must be found and we request that you communicate with your Coordinator right away so we can begin working to find another suitable home, which can typically take two weeks.

# BRINGING HOME YOUR FOSTER PET.

## Animal introductions.

If you have personal pets who are dogs, you'll want to introduce them to your foster animal one at a time and supervise their interactions at first. It's a good idea to introduce them outside in a large yard or on a walk, doing side by side leash walks, and on neutral territory. Keeping all the animals on leash and allowing them enough space to get adjusted to one another. When possible, we like to make an effort to allow your personal animals to meet the foster animal before you take the foster animal home, but this practice is not always allowable at many of the shelters our animals come from. For more details, please read "Introducing Dogs to Each Other" in the Resources section of this manual.

In addition, make sure that high-value items (food, chew toys, plush toys, Kongs, rawhides or anything else that your dog holds in high regard) are put away whenever the dogs are interacting. You don't want to allow the possibility of a fight. Those high-value items are best placed in the dogs' personal areas. Finally, never feed your dogs in the same room as the foster dog; always separate them at feeding time.

If you have personal pets who are cats, you'll need to introduce them to the foster cat. Even if you know the cat you are fostering is good with cats, you'll want to do the introductions gradually. So, before bringing your foster cat home, create a separate "territory" for them. This area should be equipped with food and water, a scratching post, a litter box, access to natural sunlight, and comfortable resting places. Your other resident cats should have their own separate territory away from your foster cat.

Over a one- to two-week period, let cats smell each other through a closed door, but don't allow them contact with each other. Exchanging blankets or towels between the areas will help them get used to each other's smells. The next step is to allow them to see each other through a baby gate or a door that is propped open two inches. If the cats are interested in each other and seem comfortable, allow them to meet. Open the door to the rooms between the cats and observe them closely. If any cat shows signs of significant stress or aggression, separate them again and introduce them more slowly.

It's a good idea to have a broom or a squirt bottle on hand to deter any fights. Never try to separate cats who are fighting with your hands or body parts. For more details on cat introductions, please read the "Introducing Cats to Each Other" in the Resources section of this Manual.



# BRINGING HOME YOUR FOSTER PET.

## Dog and cat introductions.

We can't ensure that a foster dog will do well around cats. If you have resident cats, you'll need to make introductions to the foster dog carefully and safely. Start by keeping them separated at first. You can either keep your cats in a separate room (equipped with food, water, litter boxes and beds) or confine your foster dog to a room. Over a one- to two-week period, let the dog and cats smell each other through the door, but don't allow them contact with one another. Exchanging blankets or towels between the dog's area and the cats' area will help them get used to each other's smells.

After a few weeks, do face-to-face introduction. Keeping your foster dog on leash, allow your cat out in the same area. (If you have more than one cat, introduce one cat at a time.) Do not allow the foster dog to charge or run directly up to the cat. Try to distract the dog as best you can so that the cat has the chance to approach without fear. Watch the body language of each animal closely and don't continue the interaction if either pet becomes over-stimulated or aggressive. The idea is to keep the interactions positive, safe and controlled. For more specifics, please refer to the "Introducing a Cat and a Dog" in the Resources section of this manual.

**Finally, never leave your foster dog unsupervised with any cats in your home.**

## Children and foster pets.

Since we don't always know a foster animal's history or tolerance level for different types of people energy levels and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster pet. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster pet.

- Always leave your foster alone when he is eating, chewing or sleeping. Some dogs and cats may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from a foster dog. Do not tease or rile up the foster dog or cat.
- Don't chase the foster pet around the house or run quickly around the foster animal; it may scare him or a dog's prey drive instinct may kick in.
- Pick up all toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to the kids.
- Do not allow young children to walk the foster dog because they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to handle encounters with other dogs or cats who cross their path.
- Let kids pick up a cat only when an adult is there to help. Cats can get scared when picked up and could scratch with their sharp nails.
- Be careful when opening and closing doors so the foster pet doesn't accidentally escape.



Never let a child sit on top of a dog or "ride" a dog, hug the dog, get in the dog's face or pull at their ears. This is uncomfortable for the dog and can easily be perceived as a threat.



# THE RULE OF 3s.

The Rule of 3s is a general guideline for the adjustment period of pet to their new home. Every animal is unique and will adjust at their own pace.

## to decompress and relax.

3 DAYS

Your new foster pet may feel overwhelmed with their new surroundings. Don't be alarmed if they don't want to eat for the first couple of days. They may be scared and unsure what is going on, or may be the opposite and test you to see what they can get away with.

- Feeling overwhelmed  
May feel scared or unsure of what's going on
- Not yet comfortable to be themselves  
May not want to eat or drink
- Shuts down and/or hides  
Tests your boundaries

## to learn the routine.

3 WEEKS

Your cat is starting to settle in, feeling more comfortable and realizing this really may be their forever home; figuring out the environment and getting into the routine that you have set. You may start to see their real personality. Behavior issues may start showing, so this is your time to start helping them learn what is right and wrong

- Starts settling in and feeling more comfortable
- Figures out the environment
- Gets into a routine
- Let's guard down  
beginning to show their true personality
- Behavior issues may appear

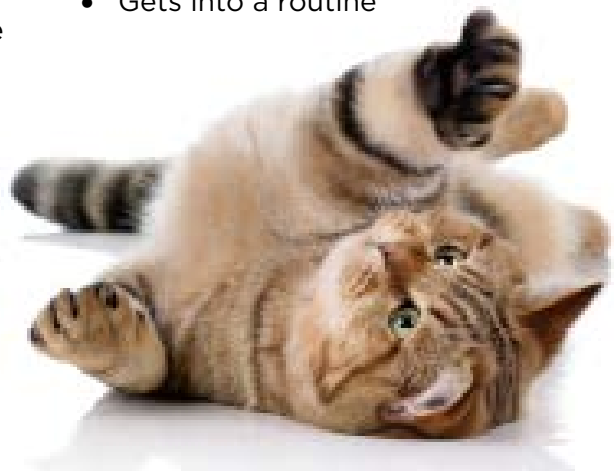
## to start feeling at home.

3 MONTHS

Your cat is now completely comfortable in their home. You have built trust and a true bond with them, which gives your cat a complete sense of security with you. They have set into a routine and will come to expect dinner at the usual time.

- Finally feels comfortable and gains a sense of security
- Begins to build trust and a true bond
- Gains a complete sense of security with their new family
- Gets into a routine

The process takes time and patience, but it's worth the wait! Give your cat a chance to become part of the family and finally feel forever home



IT DOESN'T HAPPEN  
OVERNIGHT.

# DAILY CARE.



## Feeding.

Dogs are predominantly fed dry food unless a special diet is needed, or they prove to be a picky eater and canned food may then need to be incorporated. Cats will often be fed a combination of wet and dry, as cats eating only dry food take in just half the moisture of a cat eating only canned food. We do our best to provide high quality animal food and ask that you use the same or a food of similar or better quality. Feed your foster animal once or twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster animal. Make sure the animal always has access to fresh, clean water.

You can give your foster animal treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies, of course); giving treats helps you and your foster animal to bond with each other. Most dogs like to chew on things, so try rawhide chews, Greenies, antlers, Nylabones or Dentabones. Keep in mind, though, that not all animals like to share, so only give these treats when your foster animal is confined to his/her own area.

Keep in mind that some people food and house plants (which cats like to chew) are poisonous to animals, so remove any plants or food from areas that a foster animal can access.

## Daily routine.

When you first take your foster animal home, take care not to overwhelm them with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes, too much stimulation can cause an animal to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal, which is why it's a good idea to keep introductions to a minimum during the first couple of weeks after you bring your foster animal home (refer to the "Two Week Shutdown" description in the Resources section of this Manual). It's also important to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks and walk times. Animals are creatures of habit and take comfort in having a routine they can count on.

Also, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster animal's appetite and energy level. If they're not eating well or seems listless, something may be wrong medically. You might want to record your observations to make it easier to notice any health issues.

# DAILY CARE.

## House-training and litter box habits.

It's unlikely that your foster animal will be perfectly house-trained when you take him or her home. Most of the animals in our foster program have lived in a shelter for a while, often with minimal walks or chances to relieve themselves outside. At the very least, be prepared for an adjustment period until your foster animal gets used to your schedule.

Because a dog has a better chance of being adopted if she is house-trained, please help your foster dog to perfect this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (3-6 times daily, depending on age). Initially, you may need to take them out more frequently to remind them where the door to the outside is and to reassure them that you will take him/her out for potty breaks. Most dogs will give cues — such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles — to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise them indoors.

If your foster animal has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish the them. It will only teach them to fear and mistrust you. Clean up all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently.

For more about house-training dogs, read "House Training Your Dog" in the Resources section of this Manual.

You can help a foster cat be more adoptable by paying close attention to their litter box habits and making the litter box as inviting as possible. The litter box should be located in a place that the cat can easily access. If you have other cats, there should be one litter box for each at in the house, plus one extra. The litter boxes should be placed in a quiet, low-traffic spot so that the cats aren't startled when trying to take care of business.

We advise against the use of covered litter boxes because some cats don't like them, which can create litter box problems from the start. Covered litter boxes can trap odors inside the box, which is nice for you, but not for your cat. Cats are often quite fastidious; they are sensitive to the smell of urine and feces, as well as deodorizers.

You can also prevent litter box issues by keeping the litter box as clean as possible. Scoop each litter box at least once daily, and empty it completely to clean it every two weeks. When you clean the litter box, use a mild soap (such as dishwashing soap), not strong-smelling detergents or ammonia.

If your foster cat is not using the litter box, please notify your Crew Member Coordinator immediately so you can work on resolving the issue before not using the box becomes a habit. Keep in mind that a cat may miss the litter box if they have a medical issue like diarrhea or they may avoid the box if they have a urinary tract infection, which causes pain when urinating.

# DAILY CARE.

## Mental simulation and exercise.

Because play time provides stimulation, encourages socialization and releases excess energy, provide your foster animal with daily play sessions. Depending on your foster animal's age and energy level, he or she should get at least two 30-minute play sessions or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, rope toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster animal prefers. Remember to discourage the animal from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters.

You can also offer your foster animal a food-dispensing toy for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the animal has to figure out how to get the treats out. Try a TreatStik, Busy Dog Ball or Kong product, available online and at pet supply stores. You can also feel free to contact your Coordinator to see if we have an existing supply to assist you, or we can seek donations to help when we don't. Don't leave your foster pet alone with any toys that could be easily ingested or cause harm to the animal.

## Safety requirements.

Foster animals must live indoors, not outside. Please do not leave your foster animal outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard. We ask that you supervise your foster animal when he is outside at all times to ensure that he doesn't escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster animal is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in.

When walking or hiking with your foster animal, please keep her on leash at all times. This means that your foster animal is not allowed to go to off-leash animal parks or other off-leash animal areas. We do not know how your foster animal will act in these situations, or how other animals will react, and we need to ensure that all animals are safe at all times.

In addition, we don't know if the other animals they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster animal does not meet any unknown animals. Having recently come from a shelter setting, foster animals can be vulnerable health-wise.

Also, your foster animal cannot ride in the bed of an open pickup truck. When you're transporting foster animals, please keep them inside the vehicle safely secure.







# HELPING YOUR FOSTER PET GET ADOPTED.

## When is my foster pet ready to go to an adoption event?

All animals up for adoption at an adoption event are spayed or neutered and deemed healthy enough to go to a home by a veterinarian. When you pick up your foster animal the Crew Member coordinator should go over the medical records for the animal and determine what medical appointments the foster animal still needs before he/she can go to a The Rescue Crew adoption event to help find a new home.

Before coming to an adoption event, all foster animals must have a basic wellness check with a veterinarian. If your foster animal has any medical issues beyond the wellness check, they will need to be treated and fully resolved before your foster animal comes to an adoption event. Medical issues could include treatment for kennel cough, dental surgery or spay/neuter surgery.

## How can I help my foster pet find a great home?

As you get to know your foster animal, we ask that you stay in constant contact with your Crew Member Coordinator so that he/she can update the foster animal's biography online to reflect accurate information about the animal's preferences and quirks. Some people write their own biography for their foster animals, which we encourage, though they may be edited. We also welcome any quality photos that you take of your foster animal in your home. Send the info about your foster animal and photos directly to your Coordinator at the [rescuecrew.org](mailto:rescuecrew.org) email address, or you can also email [info@rescuecrew.org](mailto:info@rescuecrew.org).

In addition, we have adorable "Adopt Me" bandannas that can increase the chances of your foster animal finding a home along with "Adopt Me" leash sleeves. Simply tie the bandanna around your animal's neck before a walk and keep the leash sleeves on your foster animals leash, and everyone who sees him will know he's looking for a home.

Please keep in mind that anyone who shows interest in adopting your foster animal will need to go through the adoption screening process and complete an adoption application and agreement, along with paying appropriate adoption fees, prior to being able to take the animal home.

# MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.



When you pick up your foster animal, our Vetting Manager will know the dates that vaccines are due and any known medical conditions to treat. They will work closely with you and your Crew Member Coordinator. You are responsible for scheduling appointments for your animal's vaccines and vetting appointments as coordinated between yourself, your Crew Member Coordinator and our Vetting Manager. If you are fostering an animal who is on medications, please make sure that he/she gets all prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If your foster animal has not responded to prescribed medications after five days (or in the time instructed by a veterinarian), please contact the foster coordinator. Remember, before bringing your foster dog to an Adoption Event, the animal will need to have a medical exam performed by a veterinarian. This appointment can be coordinated with you, your Crew Member Coordinator and our Vetting Manager.

## **Veterinary care.**

The Rescue Crew provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinics. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster animal's wellbeing, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster animals at our approved veterinary partners. When one of our preferred partner clinics is not available or inconvenient, we will work with you to select a closer or more convenient vet clinic of your choosing. If your foster animal needs to go to the veterinarian, please notify your Crew Member Coordinator by email or phone as soon as possible. The coordinator will work with our Vetting Manager to schedule the appointment. For non-emergency situations, please understand that our veterinary partners book quickly and may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you schedule basic non-emergency appointments (drop-off, pick-up, vaccines and supply pick-ups) at least 24 hours in advance. And again, when one of our preferred partner vet clinics is unavailable or inconvenient, we will work with you to find a more suitable location that meets your needs and can provide the necessary care for your foster animal. Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from their Crew Member Coordinator or Vetting Manager.

# Medical and Emergency Situations.

## Signs of illness and what to do next.

Animals generally do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if your foster animal is under the weather will require diligent observation of the animal's daily activity and appetite levels. It's a good idea to keep track of these levels in a journal. You'll also want to record any of the following symptoms, which could be signs of illness.

### Eye discharge.

It is normal for animals to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. But if your foster animal has yellow or green discharge, or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact your Crew Member Coordinator and/or Vetting Manager to schedule a vet appointment.

### Coughing and nasal discharge.

Coughing can be common if your foster dog is pulling on leash. If the coughing becomes more frequent, however, watch for discharge coming from the nose. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be needed, but check with your Crew Member Coordinator and/or Vetting Manager to find out if a vet appointment is necessary. If the discharge becomes colored, make a vet appointment because the animal may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the animal's breathing. If the animal seems to struggle to breathe or starts wheezing, call your Crew Member Coordinator immediately and follow the emergency contact protocol. Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the animal's eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating.

### Loss of appetite.

Your foster animal may be stressed after arriving in your home and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the animal hasn't eaten after 24 hours, please notify your Crew Member Coordinator. Also, if the animal has been eating well, but then stops eating for 12 to 24 hours, call your Crew Member Coordinator to set up a vet appointment. Please do not change the animal's diet without contacting us. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration.

### Lethargy.

The activity level of your foster animal will vary depending on age and personality. Keeping an activity log and journal will help you notice whether your foster animal is less active than he normally is. If the animal cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, it's an emergency, so start the emergency contact protocol.

### Dehydration.

Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the animal's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the animal is dehydrated. Please call your Crew Member Coordinator the next business day to schedule a vet appointment.



# Medical and Emergency Situations.

## Vomiting.

Sometimes animals will eat too quickly and will immediately throw up their food. Occasional vomiting isn't cause for alarm, but if your foster animal has thrown up two or more times in one day, please notify your Coordinator or our Vetting Team. It could be indicative of infection.

## Pain or strain while urinating.

When an animal first goes into a foster home, he or she may not urinate due to stress. If the animal hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours, however, please contact your Crew Member Coordinator. Also, if you notice the animal straining to urinate with little or no results, signs of blood in their urine, or crying out when urinating, please contact your Crew Member Coordinator immediately because it may be indicative of an infection or an obstruction.

## Swollen or irritated ears.

If your foster animal has irritated, swollen or red or pink ears that smell like yeast, he may have an ear infection called otitis. This type of infection is more common in animals who have very floppy ears, like basset hounds or Labradors. These animals may need to have their ears cleaned more often to ensure that the infection does not re-occur.

## Frequent ear scratching.

Your foster animal may have a bacterial or yeast infection, or ear mites if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently. These conditions can often be treated by us, so please our Vetting Team so we can assess the severity of the condition and determine the necessary treatment plan.

## Hair loss.

Please contact your Crew Member Coordinator if you notice any hair loss on your foster animal. It is normal for animals to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm, dermatitis or the early stages of mange. It is important to check your foster animal's coat every day.

## Diarrhea.

It is important to monitor your foster animal's pooping habits daily. Soft stool is normal for the first two or three days after taking an animal home, most likely caused by stress and a change in food. If your foster animal has liquid stool, however, please contact your Coordinator so that an appointment can be scheduled to ensure that the animal doesn't need medications. Keep in mind that diarrhea will dehydrate the animal, so be proactive about contacting your coordinator or our vetting department. If your foster animal has bloody or mucoid diarrhea, please contact your Coordinator immediately.





# Medical and Emergency Situations.

## Common ailments in animals from shelters.

Shelter animals may suffer from kennel cough, giardia or intestinal parasites. Symptoms of kennel cough include a dry hacking cough, often with phlegm discharge, discharge from the nose and/or eyes, decrease in appetite, dehydration and slight lethargy. Symptoms of giardia or intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea (often with a pungent odor) and/or dehydration. If your foster animal is displaying one or more of these signs, please contact your Crew Member Coordinator. These ailments can worsen if left untreated.

## Criteria for emergencies.

What constitutes a medical emergency in an animal? A good rule of thumb is any situation in which you would call 911 for a person. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency

- Not breathing or labored breathing.
- Symptoms of parvovirus: bloody diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, high fever (above 103.5 degrees).
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry mucous membranes, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there).
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand.
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up.
- Cold to the touch.
- Broken bones.
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on.
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied.
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours.

If your foster animal displays any of these symptoms, please contact Affiliated Emergency Veterinary Service ([aevs.com](http://aevs.com)) along with your Coordinator immediately.

In critical situations like this, and if you are unable to contact anyone with The Rescue Crew, you are authorized to take the animal to an emergency clinic and we will reimburse you for any out of pocket expenses if the clinic is unable or unwilling to bill us directly. If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help.



# BEHAVIOR AND TRAINING SUPPORT.



One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster animal for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster animal to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement training, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pet. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

You must not punish an animal for a behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If the animal is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your foster animals, which will help them to learn faster.

When interacting with your foster animal, refrain from wrestling or engaging in play that encourages the animal to be mouthy and “play bite” on your body. Also, while we don’t require this, try to refrain from inviting animals up on the couch or bed. Not all adopters find this habit acceptable.

Some foster animals will have behavioral issues, which we are aware of at the time of their rescue. Some of these behavior challenges are separation anxiety, destruction of property, fear issues or aggression toward other animals. We will only place animals with behavioral issues with a person who feels comfortable working with the animal on his/her particular issues. We will do our best to provide that person with all the necessary information so that proper care and training can be given to the foster animal.

If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster animal is exhibiting, please contact your Crew Member Coordinator to discuss the issue. We will guide you and help in every way that we can. If the behavior is extreme enough to warrant use of a trainer, we will provide one for you. Please understand that we have limited resources, so for basic training and minor behavior problems, we will personally work with the animal.

# RESOURCES.



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# INTRODUCING DOGS TO EACH OTHER.

If you have a resident dog and a new one will be entering or visiting your home, there are things you can do to ensure that the meeting goes off without a hitch. A new dog can mean you are bringing home a foster or a new family member, someone who has a dog is moving into your house, or someone is visiting with a dog.

If you know that both dogs are very social with a variety of other dogs, the meeting should be easy. However, some dogs don't get out and mix with other dogs that much or may have only had one or two dog friends in their lives. These dogs may seem to have better social skills than they actually do, so introducing them to new dogs may require more care and effort. Another factor to consider is whether or not the dogs have been spayed or neutered; if not, the meeting may be more difficult.

If you are uncertain how one (or both) of the dogs will react, be cautious. First, plan to have the dogs meet on neutral ground. Choose a place where neither dog is likely to feel territorial. Even your dog's favorite park is not a good spot, unless it is a dog park (since dogs are often used to meeting other dogs there). If you are adopting a dog from a rescue (like The Rescue Crew) or a shelter, ask the foster, volunteer or staff member if they can help to introduce the dogs. If your dog is accustomed to meeting dogs at a pet supply store, you can ask the store's trainer to help with the introduction. The dogs could casually meet while you are on a shopping trip. If either dog has a history of difficulty getting along with other dogs, the best strategy would be to hire a certified professional behavior consultant to help you gradually introduce the two dogs to each other.

When the meeting occurs, have each dog on leash, each with a calm relaxed adult handler. Keep the leads loose, since tension on the leash communicates to the dog that you are fearful or anxious about their meeting. They can sense this and it will in turn make them more fearful and anxious. Walk the dogs side by side with a safe distance between the dogs.

Then, cross paths (still maintaining that distance) and allow the dogs to smell where the other has walked. If either of the dogs barks, snaps and lunges toward the other, consider hiring a certified professional dog trainer or behavior consultant to teach you how to do the "Look at That" game to help the dogs feel calm



Next, let the dogs meet. As the dogs approach each other, watch their body language closely, paying attention to the entire body. The dogs may need to do a little posturing or make a little noise, but if you don't know how to tell the difference between dogs getting to know each other and dogs who don't like each other, have someone there who does.



# INTRODUCING DOGS TO EACH OTHER.

If the dogs have shown no signs of hostility toward each other up to this point, take them to an enclosed area, drop their leashes, step back and give them space to get to know each other. We have a tendency to micro-manage these interactions, but in general it's best if we allow the dogs to work it out with minimal interference. Humans hovering and getting too involved can be frustrating to the dogs, which can make them tense and spoil the interaction.

For the most part, dogs in this situation respond well to verbal feedback from humans. For example, if the dogs are getting too tense around each other, saying something in a soothing tone of voice (such as "It's OK, guys, cool your jets") can help them to take it down a notch, shake off and start fresh. If one dog is getting too overbearing and the other isn't correcting her, we can often help out by saying something like "Hey, knock it off!" If the dogs do shake off their tension and engage with each other in polite, appropriate ways, we can reward them for those behaviors and encourage more of them by speaking in a happy tone ("Good dogs! Well done!"). In most cases, that kind of verbal guidance is all the interference they need from us. We must only step in and physically separate them when they are becoming too excited and cannot give themselves a break, or when it becomes clear that their relationship is headed for conflict.

## **Here are some general body language signs to look for to get a general idea of where the interaction is headed:**

- If they stiffen their bodies and stare into each other's eyes with their hair up and their teeth bared, they probably aren't going to become fast friends. If they lunge at each other and try to fight, separate them and don't try further introductions without help from a certified professional behavior consultant. Some dogs cannot safely interact with other animals and therefore should be the only pet in the home. Most of these dogs can be taught to ignore other animals while out in public, but they may never be able to safely interact with them.
- Be wary of nose-to-nose meetings. This type of greeting is very stressful for many dogs, particularly those who are fearful or feel threatened by eye contact. For these dogs, nose-to-nose greetings may cause them to make a bad decision and bite out of fear and defensiveness. When dogs first look into each other's eyes, the appropriate behavior is to give a glance and then look away. A hard stare into another dog's eyes is a challenge— not a friendly way to greet. If the dogs practice inappropriate behavior like stiffening or staring, try to get the dogs to calm down by offering verbal feedback. If that doesn't work, you can pick up their leashes and walk them around until they shake off and loosen up, then try again.

# INTRODUCING DOGS TO EACH OTHER.

- If the dogs rush up to each other — with or without the hair raised at their shoulders and at the base of the tail — and engage in loud, raucous play, stay alert. This type of play can often escalate to fighting if the dogs do not know how to calm themselves down.
- If one dog pursues the other continually and ignores the other dog's corrections (e.g. lip curls, growls or air snaps) or requests to take a break, it can turn from play into bullying. These kinds of corrections are frequently mistaken for aggression, but they are actually part of healthy, normal dog communication. Dogs should be able to correct each other when one is being inappropriate; likewise, they should be able to pay attention to another dog's corrections. It is also important for dogs to take turns being the chaser and the one being chased, and to take breaks when they get too amped up. If they are not able to do that for themselves, pick up their leashes and walk them.
- If the dogs try to play by pawing or play-bowing with their legs stretched out in front of them, they may want to be best buddies. Allow them to get to know each other, and give praise for each nice interaction.
- If the dogs seem fine with each other, drive them home, preferably in separate crates or cars so that the close quarters of a vehicle won't create unnecessary tension between them. At home, let them settle in, but make sure you've put away your dog's toys, bones and food bowls first, since these items may be sources of conflict. Whenever you feed the dogs, and certainly if you're going to offer high-value items like Kongs or chews, it may be best to separate them while they eat. Once the dogs are good friends, they may be more willing to chomp side by side on food and high-value items.



To introduce a puppy to a dog, use the same procedure as above. If the puppy is under six months old, both the dog and the puppy may need frequent breaks from each other. Some adult dogs will quickly lose patience with puppy energy. If the dog does not like the puppy, do not leave them alone together.

Finally, if you are not confident or comfortable at any point, please seek help from a relationship-based trainer who has ample experience with dog to dog interactions.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE A DOG TO A CAT.

Some dogs do fine living with cats; others simply cannot live safely with felines. Sometimes, a dog can live with certain cats (depending on their age, temperament and activity level), but not others. Even if your dog has successfully lived with cats in the past, it is important to remember that each dog and each cat is an individual and therefore each introduction is different.

When introducing your dog to a cat, pay attention to the body language of both animals. If the cat's ears are pinned back or her tail is swishing back and forth, this is a good indicator that she is displeased. You particularly want to be aware of dog body language that could be potential warning signs. If your dog has a strong prey drive (the inclination to seek out, chase and potentially capture animals seen as prey — usually smaller animals such as cats or rabbits), she might become very focused on the cat. She'll stiffen, stare, and may start barking or whining. If you see these signs, do not let her near the cat. Ideally, her body language will be loose and relaxed around the cat. It's OK if she pays attention to the cat, but you don't want to see her fixated on him.

In addition, a dog's interaction with a cat can change depending on the environment. Just because your dog is OK with the cat inside the house doesn't mean she'll exhibit that same behavior outdoors. She might fixate on the cat and start stalking her when they are outside together. So, be aware of her body language around the cat in each new situation, until you know how she is going to respond toward him.

There are many different ways to introduce a dog to a cat. If the first method of introduction you try doesn't work or you don't feel comfortable with it, try a different option. Even if the dog has had experience with cats and the cat has lived with a dog before, proceed cautiously during the introduction. It's best to have two people present— one to intervene with each animal, if necessary. If you have more than one dog, introduce each dog separately to the cat.

## **Option 1: Slow and steady desensitization.**

If your dog is too fixated on the cat, you can try desensitization, the goal of which is to reduce your dog's reaction to the cat by gradually increasing her exposure to him. Put the cat in a room (e.g., a bedroom, a bathroom or a spare room) with a tall baby gate across the door. The room you choose should be one the dog cannot access and doesn't need to access. For example, if the dog sleeps in the bedroom with you at night, don't pick that room for the cat. The idea is to separate them and only allow them to view each other during specific times.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE A DOG TO A CAT.

In his room, give the cat all needed supplies: litter box, toys, food and water. Keep in mind that cats are good at squeezing through small gaps and are also good climbers and jumpers. So, make sure your cat can't get past the gate you put up. The gate needs to be a barrier that allows the cat and dog to see one another but does not allow them to access each other.

To begin desensitization, let the dog view the cat briefly through the gate, and then get the dog to focus on something else, such as playing with a toy or practicing cues. Sometimes it helps to keep the dog on leash so that you can move her away from the cat when you try to refocus her attention. Praise and reward the dog for being able to focus elsewhere. Continue to give the dog short viewings of the cat throughout the day.

Sometimes, even seeing the cat at first is too exciting for the dog. If this is the case, close the door and begin feeding each animal on his or her side of the door: The cat eats his food in his room, right next to the door, and the dog eats her meal on the other side of the door. This allows each animal to associate the smells of the other with something good: food. You can also swap out the blankets and bedding of each animal, giving it to the other. That way, the dog can get used to the cat's smell and the cat can get used to the dog's smell, without overstimulating either of them.

Hopefully, through this process of slowly letting the dog see the cat and get accustomed to the cat's presence, the dog will eventually become desensitized and lose interest in the cat. In some cases, the dog will lose interest in the cat within a couple of hours, but it can take days, weeks or even months. Each dog (and each cat) is an individual and will learn at his or her own pace.

With that said, though, it is possible that your dog may not ever be able to safely share space with a cat. If you don't feel you can trust your dog around your cat, you should keep them apart. Many dogs can injure or kill a cat very quickly, and your dog can also be injured by the cat. Your first priority should be ensuring that everyone stays safe.

## Option 2: Face-to-face introduction.

This is a faster-more paced introduction. One person should hold the dog on a loose lead and watch the dog's body language. Someone else should watch the cat's body language. If the cat is not raising his back or hissing around the dog, he can be allowed to move around freely. A cat is rarely a threat to a dog, but some cats will be on the offensive when meeting dogs.

If the dog is calm around the cat, you can ask the dog to sit, or lie down and stay, if she has been taught those cues, while the cat moves about freely, sniffing the dog if he wishes. The dog should be praised and rewarded if she ignores the cat. If the dog is too fixated on the cat (e.g., staring at the cat, has stiff body language, will not listen to you when you call her name) or if she lunges and tries to chase the cat, you should try a different strategy for getting them to share space, such as Option 1 or Option 3.



# HOW TO INTRODUCE A DOG TO A CAT.

## Option 3: Look at that.

If the quick introduction did not work and your dog is not becoming desensitized to the cat, you might need to try some more structured training. By playing “Look at That (LAT)” with your dog, you can help to teach her not to fixate on the cat. You’ll be teaching her to look at the cat and then look back at you for a treat. Essentially, she’ll learn that it is more rewarding to not pay attention to the cat.

To start working on LAT, you need to figure out the dog’s threshold while on leash: At what point does she notice the cat, but still respond to you when you say her name? That is her threshold. Each dog has a different threshold. For one dog, five feet away from the cat might be her threshold; for another dog, it might be 25 feet. You’ll know you have gone past the threshold when she starts barking or lunging at the cat. Another sign that you’re getting too close to the cat is if she starts moving more slowly, staring and stiffening her body. If you call her name and she doesn’t respond to you, move a few feet away from the cat

Once you’ve figured out the dog’s threshold, grab a clicker and some really delicious, pea-sized treats. If you don’t have a clicker, a verbal marker (a word like “yes” or “good”) will work just fine. Put ten treats in your hand and keep the bag close by for later.

When you see the dog looking at the cat, click the clicker or use your verbal marker and give her a treat. The first few times, you might have to put the treat right in front of her nose, but fairly soon she should start looking expectantly at you as soon as she hears the marker. That’s because the marker (either a clicker or a word like “yes”) always means a treat is coming. Use up the ten treats, clicking as soon as she looks at the cat.

The 11th time, before using marker, wait and see if she will look at the cat and then look right back at you. If she does that, either click or use the verbal marker when she looks at you and then give her a treat. If that doesn’t happen, go back a step. Mark her 10 more times for looking at the cat and then try again. Once she is reliably looking at the cat and then looking back at you, you can slowly start moving closer and closer to the cat. If the dog becomes fixated on the cat when you move closer, you’ve gone past the threshold and need to move back.

As you train, her threshold decreases, which means that the two of you will be able to move closer and closer to the cat. Continue practicing LAT with your dog until she can be right next to the cat without an issue. How quickly your dog’s threshold decreases will depend on you (how much you practice and the types of treats you use), your dog (since every dog learns at a different pace) and your cat’s comfort level.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE A DOG TO A CAT.

## Introducing kittens and puppies

If you are introducing a kitten to a dog, keep in mind that kittens may not have any fear of dogs, so you must watch the dog carefully. Because kittens are small and want to run and play, dogs with a strong prey drive may be very excited by a kitten's movements.

Even if your dog is OK with your adult cats, it is important to watch her closely when she's with a kitten. If your dog is young and high-energy, she could hurt or kill the kitten simply by trying to play. So, for safety's sake, keep kittens and dogs apart any time you are not watching them.

Introducing adult cats to puppies can sometimes be easy, since a well-socialized adult cat might be fine with a puppy acting like a puppy. However, if your rambunctious puppy is chasing your shy cat, it is up to you to intervene. Until the puppy is old enough to have more self-control and has had some training, you will want to manage their interactions. You don't want your puppy to learn that chasing the cat is a fun game. Baby gates can be used to keep the animals safely and comfortably apart. To help you keep an eye on your puppy, you can also put her on a leash. That way, if she begins to chase the cat, you will be able to easily direct her away from that behavior.

## Seeking help from a professional

Animals with good past experience often adjust well and quickly to a new pet in the house. But if introductions don't go well, seek help from a professional dog trainer or behavior consultant. Don't ever use punishment: It will not help, and it could make matters much worse.



# INTRODUCING CATS: CREATING A FELINE FRIENDSHIP.

## 1: Set up Home Base for the New Cat.

Set up a bathroom, large closet, or spare bedroom for your new cat to start in. The room should be quiet but somewhere the entire family can access. Food, water, litter, toys, a scratching post and a bed should all be in this space. If possible, place each cat's food bowls close to the door. This is a great way for the cats to form positive associations with one another.

## 2: Allow Scent Introduction.

Exchanging scents is an important step in the introduction process. Doing this before meeting face-to-face can help reduce stress of the initial meeting. Take a towel, blanket or bed from your resident cat's space and place it in with the new cat and vice versa.

## 3: Have the Cats Swap Spaces.

If both cats are eating well and appear relaxed on their sides of the door, try making a larger scent exchange. Confine the resident cat in the room, while the new cat is allowed to roam. Both cats should use the other's beds, bowls and litter box. Only exchange the cats themselves.

While the new cat is exploring your home, you may want to close bedroom and bathroom doors to limit access. You can open more spaces over time; slowly increasing the amount of space the new cat has access to.

## 4: Allow Visual Contact.

If both cats are relaxed, eating, drinking and using the litter box as normal, you are doing great! Now you want to open the door separating the two cats, but have a gate blocking so they can see and smell one another.

A baby gate typically works well, but you may want to stack two on top of one another. Continue feeding both cats on their respective sides of the door, and continue switching them back and forth.

## 5: Let them Meet.

If both cats are relaxed, eating, drinking and using the litter box as normal, then it's time to take down the gates. There may be some hissing or swatting, but cats often will work things out by themselves. If the cats seem to tolerate, ignore, enjoy or interact with each other - that is great news!

## 6: When to Leave Them Alone.

It is a good idea to separate the cats at first when you will not be around to supervise them. You want to ensure that you see all their interactions and know exactly what is going on. After you feel that the cats are getting along, you can ease up on this step.

# CHILDREN AND DOGS: TEACHING APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS.

Children can have the most amazing relationships with dogs if both are taught how to properly interact and respect each other. Proper training and management of both children and dogs can prevent tragedies from ever happening.

When a child is bitten, both the child and the dog pay a high price. Even if the child is not physically damaged, he or she is still emotionally affected. The dog may end up homeless (and a poor adoption prospect) in a shelter or be destroyed as a future safety precaution. What does my child need to know to prevent dog bites?

Teach your children that they should never tease or throw things at a dog. Teach them to be especially gentle and calm around dogs that they don't know.

Teach your children the proper ways to pet a dog and tell them not to pet strange dogs without asking permission. Tugging on a dog's ears or tail can be painful, and the dog might feel the need to bite. It is also important to teach your children not to hug dogs, especially dogs you don't know. That type of "confinement" can be scary to a dog and it brings the child's face close to the dog's face, which can make the dog uncomfortable. Tell your children not to run, jump or scream around an unfamiliar dog, since you are unaware of what actions may cause fear or predatory behavior in that animal.

Remind your children not to stare at a dog when interacting with the animal. Children are often the same size as dogs and may stare into a dog's eyes without meaning to or without understanding that the dog may feel threatened. Tell your children not to wake up a sleeping dog. The dog may be startled and react defensively.

Tell your children not to climb on any dog, even the family dog. It may be perfectly safe with your own dog, but children may try this with another dog and get bitten. Tell your children not to take things out of a dog's mouth and to leave an eating dog alone. Even though your own dog may not guard toys or food, another dog may. Therefore, it is safer to teach a child to leave all dogs alone during mealtime or while they're eating treats. In addition, when around a strange dog, your child should not take away the dog's toys.





# CHILDREN AND DOGS: TEACHING APPROPRIATE INTERACTIONS.

## What does my dog need to know?

Socialize your puppy or dog to children. Watch your puppy or dog as she plays with children; stop the play if the child or the dog gets too rough. First, handle all of his body parts. If your dog objects to any part of his body being handled, go to an area of his body that he likes to have touched. As you talk soothingly to him, begin touching him there and then move over to the area that he does not like. Praise him if he does not react and do this over and over until the dog is fine with touch everywhere. Use treats in addition to praise if necessary.

## What do I need to know?

Have your whole family go to training classes with the dog. Everyone in your family should have some understanding of acceptable dog behavior.

Don't stare into a dog's eyes, since this can be threatening to him. Watch your dog carefully around other people's children, since he or she does not know those children, and you can't be certain of how your dog will react.

Get your dog checked out by a vet if your dog's behavior suddenly changes (i.e., she becomes more irritable). Sudden negative behavior change may mean your dog is in pain and needs medical attention.

Finally, if you have a dog that is not okay around children, it is your responsibility to protect your dog from her tendencies. Never allow her to be in a situation where she might bite a child. If you teach both children and dogs how to properly interact, they will enjoy a wonderful, safe, fun relationship.



# LITTER BOX TRAINING.

## House-training and litter box habits.

When kittens are about four weeks old, they will begin to play in, dig through and explore loose, soft materials such as dirt or litter. As a result of this investigative digging, kittens begin to relieve themselves in these materials. So, kittens do not have to be taught by either their mothers or humans to relieve themselves in soft, loose materials, or to dig and bury their waste. Kittens are simply born knowing how to do it.

It's not necessary to take kittens to the litter box and move their paws back and forth in the litter. Doing so may be an unpleasant experience for them, causing them to have some negative associations with the litter box.

However, litter boxes that don't provide an acceptable place to eliminate (from the cats' point of view) may cause cats to relieve themselves elsewhere. That's why it's important to provide a litter box that meets the kittens' needs. You want the kittens to like the box and use it consistently.

## Location.

Most people want to put the litter box in an out-of-the-way place so they can minimize odors and loose particles of cat litter around the house. Often, the litter box ends up in the basement, possibly next to an appliance on a cold cement floor.

But that type of location is often undesirable to cats. Young kittens may not be able to get down a long flight of stairs in time to relieve themselves. And adult cats new to a home may not remember where the litter box is if it's hidden away in a distant location

Another thing to keep in mind is that if your litter box is next to a sometimes-noisy appliance, such as a furnace, washer or dryer, cats may become startled when the appliance turns on. This may cause them to associate the litter box with the frightening noise, and they may then refuse to use the box in that location. Also, some cats like to scratch the surface surrounding their litter box and they may find a cold cement floor unappealing.

You can compromise by placing the litter box in a location — such as a closet or spare bathroom — that gives the cat some privacy but is also conveniently located. If you place the litter box in a closet, make sure the closet door is wedged open from both sides to keep the cat from being trapped inside or outside of the closet. If the litter box sits on a smooth, slick, or cold surface, consider putting a small throw rug or mat underneath the box. The cats will have something to scratch, and less litter will be tracked through your house.

# LITTER BOX TRAINING.

## Type and depth of litter.

Research has shown that most cats prefer fine-grained litters. Clumping litters are usually finer in grain than typical clay litter. With kittens younger than eight weeks, though, use only non-clumping litter. The reason for this is that very young kittens tend to taste their litter and play in it. If you use clumping litter, the dust from the litter can solidify in their respiratory or digestive tracts. Different cats prefer different depths of litter, but most cats don't like litter that's more than about two inches deep. Cats don't choose areas for elimination where they sink into several inches of litter or dirt. It's not true that the more litter you put into a litter box, the less often you will have to clean it. Regular cleaning is essential, regardless of the depth of the litter.

## Number of boxes.

Try to have at least as many litter boxes as you have cats. That way, no one can be prevented from using the box because it is already occupied. It also keeps one cat from "guarding" the litter box and preventing other cats from accessing it. Litter boxes can be placed in several locations around the house. This practice helps to train young kittens because there's always a box nearby that they can get to in time to eliminate.

## To cover or not to cover.

Many cats don't show any preference for a covered versus a non-covered litter box. But if a cat is very large, a covered litter box may not allow sufficient room for him to turn around, scratch and dig, and position himself in the way he prefers. It's better to use uncovered boxes when training kittens because it is easier for them to get into and out of the litter box.

A covered box tends to provide more privacy and may be preferred by shy, timid cats. It's a good idea to offer both types of litter boxes to discover which one the cat prefers. If you don't want to buy a covered box in order to find out which one your cat prefers, a litter box cover can be made from an upside-down cardboard box with the flaps and one side cut away.

## Cleaning the box.

Litter boxes should always be kept clean. Feces should be scooped out of the litter box daily. The number of cats and the number of litter boxes will determine how often the litter needs to be dumped and completely changed. Twice a week is a general guideline, but you may need to change it often, depending on the circumstances. If you notice any odor or if much of the litter is wet or clumped, it is time to change all the litter.

When washing the litter box, do not use strong-smelling chemicals or cleaning products because the smell of vinegar, bleach or pine cleaners may cause the cat to avoid using the litter box. Washing with soap and water should be sufficient. Letting the container air-dry is also a good idea, but it will be necessary to have a back-up litter box while the other one is being cleaned.

# HOUSETRAINING YOUR FOSTER PUPPY.

When you get a new puppy or dog, you'll need to show him or her what is acceptable in your home. Different people may have different rules: Some want to train their dogs to eliminate in litter trays or on paper, while others want all "bathroom" business to occur outdoors. For your dog to know what you want, you have to establish a predictable routine.

## **Potty training your dog or puppy.**

For the first couple of weeks, a new dog of any age should be supervised when he has the full (or even partial) run of the house. During those times when you cannot supervise him, it is wise to restrict the movement of a new animal during the house-training phase. You can potty train your dog by using a crate. Or, for limited periods of time, you can confine the dog to a small, easy-to-clean room, like the bathroom, equipped with a child gate.

Your dog should consider this space a safe place, so add the dog's bed, water and things to chew on to create a comfortable den. The dog should be fed in this space as well. To keep this space safe, make sure that nothing that would cause her discomfort happens here and keep children out of this area.

Set up a daily schedule where you walk your dog on lead (or carry her) to the desired elimination spot after meals, after naps, and every couple of hours in between. To reinforce that the trip has a purpose, you should not play with the dog during trips to eliminate. Use a word or phrase (like "do your business") to remind the dog of her duty. As soon as she has produced, praise her lavishly and give her a treat.

## **What do I need to know about potty training a puppy?**

Puppies cannot hold their bladders and bowels for more than a few hours. Even the most intelligent and well-intentioned puppy has to wait until its muscles develop before it can exercise appropriate bladder and bowel control, just like a human infant. If you must be away for more than two or three hours, and you are training the puppy to eliminate outdoors, you will need someone to help by walking the puppy for you.

If you are training a puppy to eliminate on paper or in a litter box, the space the puppy is contained in will need to be large enough for a sleeping area away from an elimination spot (dogs don't like to eliminate where they sleep). Keep in mind that a puppy, if trained to eliminate on paper or a litter box, may have a lifelong surface preference; that is, even as an adult, he may eliminate on paper if it is lying around the house. Having a puppy eliminate in the house will prolong the process of teaching him to eliminate outdoors.



# HOUSETRAINING YOUR FOSTER PUPPY.

## How long does house-training take?

After a week or so of no accidents, you can begin allowing the dog freedom in the house after each successful trip outdoors. Supervision will still be needed, however, as well as praise and an occasional reward. Supervise the dog anytime he is given free run of the house, watching for signs such as circling and sniffing corners.

## How do I deal with “accidents”?

If an “accident” happens and you catch the dog in the act, stop him and escort him to the correct spot. Praise him if he stops eliminating when you ask him to. Be sure not to yell when you catch him in the act because this can cause him to discontinue eliminating in front of you, thus prolonging the potty-training process. If you find the results of an accident after it’s happened, again, do not punish the dog, since punishment could make him afraid to eliminate in your presence. It’s more effective to clean up the mess and put it in the designated elimination spot, so the smell will help your dog recognize that this is where to go.

To clean up accidents, use an enzymatic cleaner. Urine contains pheromones, chemical markers that say essentially, “Go potty here.” Only enzymatic cleaners break down the pheromones, which keeps dogs from sniffing out and using the inappropriate potty area. If you’re training a puppy, keep in mind that a puppy’s muscles are still developing, so he may not be able to control himself when he eliminates in an inappropriate spot. Puppies mature at different rates, and some will take longer to develop bladder and bowel control.

Finally, there’s a difference between a dog who “marks” his territory and a dog who isn’t house-trained. Early neutering will reduce a dog’s inclination to mark surfaces with his scent. But, if a dog who is already potty-trained starts having accidents, check with your veterinarian because there may be a medical cause.



# THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR FOSTER DOG.

If you want a well-trained, well-mannered, well-socialized dog, interact multiple times every day with your dog, with the goal of building a foundation of trust and a healthy relationship.

All dogs benefit from learning and practicing skills daily. Keep all interaction fun; if you are stressed on a particular day and will not play nicely with your dog, skip spending time with your dog that day. Dogs are sensitive to your emotional state and will pick up on your stress.

## House-training.

Add the words “Go potty” right away. I set each dog up for success by walking him or her outside about every 45 minutes on lead to allow the dog many opportunities to get it right. I supervise the dog inside the house because it’s much easier and faster to help her learn where to go potty before she starts having “accidents” in the house.

## Name recognition.

Use the dog’s name often when you’re praising and playing with her, and always with a happy tone. Dogs should have only positive associations with their names and nicknames.

## Recall.

Call the dog to you often; again, always using a happy tone. Add treats sometimes to pleasantly surprise her and keep her coming to you fast. Remember to practice recall frequently, not just when something fun is about to end. People often lose great recall because they only call the dog for negative reasons or use a negative tone. Why would any dog want to come running to you if you seem angry or if the fun at most always ends when she runs to you?

## The joy of touch.

Teach your dog to enjoy being touched on all body parts. Start with getting your dog to enjoy your touch and work toward the goal of getting him comfortable with being touched by people he doesn’t know. It is important that dogs allow us to touch them because they may need to be handled by various people: strangers, rescuers after an emergency, the vet, the groomer. They may need to be picked up off the ground or floor for grooming or medical reasons. If you can lift the dog’s body up off the floor, practice this to help him relax and realize that nothing bad happens when he is lifted.

Can you trim your dog’s nails? Is he comfortable having his feet touched? Grooming has many benefits for dogs, so teach your dog to enjoy grooming. Make sure that anyone who grooms your dog is kind and gentle to help ensure that you have a dog that is safe for others to handle. You can help him to feel more relaxed by adding positive experiences to his grooming memories.

# THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR FOSTER DOG.

When you have a new dog in the home, try massaging the dog every day, touching his entire body and continuing to touch him until he relaxes. Many dogs are so excited and reactive to our touch that this is a challenge. To help the dog learn to relax and enjoy touch, do the massage in a quiet room without a lot of human or non-human traffic.

## Rest and relaxation.

Dogs don't know how to control their own energy and the result can be destructive, nuisance or rough behaviors. There are dogs that bark incessantly, chew up everything within reach, dogs who mount, pull humans around by the limbs or hair, knock down children, and decapitate Barbie! People must teach their dogs to have an "off" switch. Many dogs are dropped off at shelters because their people became frustrated and felt they could no longer control their dogs.

You can help your dog by teaching her how to rest and relax in your home and during outings. Going on walks or riding in a vehicle should be relaxing for both human and dog. Practice R&R daily by having the dog either tethered to you or crated for a while.

They also enjoy walking on lead without pulling. How? Because they are taught to walk without pulling: simply stop walking until they ease up on pulling. Going for walks is much more enjoyable if the dog isn't yanking you along. Also, any dog will be more welcome in public settings if she has manners. Her energy will be more focused and calmer in if she is not in emotional overdrive while out walking.

## Retrieve.

The retrieving game is not for every dog; those who enjoy it will let you know. Start with a toy tied on a lunge whip. Drag the toy around excitedly and the dog will probably chase it. If he does, this can be the game for a while. Then start throwing one toy tied with a thin line a short distance and have another toy in your hand. If the dog goes to the thrown toy, guide her back with the line and show her that you have another toy.

The two-toy method helps many dogs learn to interact instead of just taking a toy and going off to play with it. The dog also learns to trade the toy in his mouth for the toy you have in your hand, which is more fun because you can keep that toy moving to entice him to continue to play with you. I add words for trading toys; "trade," "drop it" or "give" are common words used.

## Tug.

The game of tug, with rules, is a very healthy, educational game. You start and end the game, and if the dog ever puts her teeth on your skin, the game is over. Use an emotional tone to say “Ouch!” if you feel teeth. This helps dogs learn to play within limits. Self-limiting behavior is normal for dogs: Watch well-socialized adult dogs play with puppies or senior dogs. They sense what is appropriate and play accordingly. Again, you can use two toys to help the dog learn to drop the one she is holding, signaling the end of one game and the start of another.

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR ADOPTERS EXPECT.

Be proactive by teaching your dog to perform the behavior you want! We can reward any behavior we like and want to see more of, including being calm and gentle. The most effective way to squelch unwanted behavior is to ignore it. Why? Because giving any attention (even negative forms of attention, such as saying “no!”) for unwanted behavior is still seen by the dog as a good thing because he’s getting attention. You can immediately ask for another wanted behavior while ignoring what the dog has offered.

## Hand-feeding.

Taking treats gently from all human hands is a valuable lesson and, of course, dogs love practicing it. Hand-feeding a dog is a great way to raise the value, in his mind, of interaction with all people. This simple human behavior builds trust in fearful or shy dogs. For all social dogs, we can hand-feed while practicing all known cues.

## Lure training and capturing.

These are primary ways to train easily and quickly. In lure training, I guide the dog with a treat or toy — the lure — into a sit, down, stand, or up (jumping or climbing up on something). You can use lure training to teach a dog to use his paws to touch an object. For example, in my house I have a bell on the door to the yard. I show new dogs that the bell ringing causes the human to open the door. I teach dogs to ring the bell to go outside, which is helpful once a new dog has been house-trained.

Use capturing to reward any behavior I like, such as sneezing. You can capture any behavior and cause the dog to repeat it by assigning a word to the behavior and rewarding the dog whenever she does the behavior. Give it a word right away and use the word every time they do the behavior. Many dogs may sneeze as a way to request things they want; this is preferable to barking as a way of asking for things. Teach “Speak” and give it that word (speak) from the beginning. However, be careful to only reward “speaking” (barking) when it is wanted. Otherwise, “request barking” can become a problem behavior; if a dog believes that barking will get her what she wants, it can easily be overused by the dog.

# GETTING THE BEHAVIOR ADOPTERS EXPECT.

## Teaching “wait.”

I teach every dog to wait. I use wait at doors before going in or out, in the car, when I’m giving a dog a bowl of food, if I drop something I do not want the dog to pick up. The cue I use is a hand signal: palm up, facing out toward the dog. I say “au auat” (a sound more than a word); my tone is firm but not harsh. The dog can be standing, sitting or lying down. If the dog tries to move forward, I physically block him with my hand, trying not to touch him but clearly communicating that he needs to pause briefly.

## Teaching “stay.”

Once a dog has learned to wait, it is easier to teach stay, which is used for longer periods of time than wait, times when you don’t want the dog to move. To start learning to stay, the dog should be in a sit or down position, since standing for long periods can be physically difficult, causing the dog to break position to get more comfortable.

Start very close to the dog and reward often for non-movement. I build up the length of time the dog stays still before I start to move away. Start very close to the dog and reward often for non-movement. Build up the length of time the dog stays still before you start to move away. When you do start to move during the stay, take baby steps around the dog, not away from him. Many dogs want desperately to be near us, so go slow when teaching stay. If we cause a fear reaction, it is much more difficult for the dog to learn. Just like us, dogs learn best when they are enjoying the learning experience and aren’t stressed, emotional or distracted.

## Teaching social skills with other animals.

Most of us want to take our dogs out in public. Going places, of course, means that our dogs meet a variety of people and other animals, and they get to practice their social skills. Please protect your dog by not letting her have negative experiences. One way to help dogs learn to have more socially acceptable behavior is to have people meet you with their dog- friendly dogs to allow the dogs to have positive experiences. Some dogs require more management than others, but with our help they can go out safely and enjoy a bigger life than the house and yard offer.

## Providing medical and dental care.

All dogs need regular medical and dental care. They need a family doctor just like us — one we trust to oversee their general health. Routine visits allow your doctor to see changes through examinations, blood tests and x-rays. Different parts of the country have different parasites, for example; your veterinarian will be able to keep your dog safe in your area. Please report any change in behavior to your family veterinarian. Often, changes in behavior are related to changes in the dogs physical health.



# CRATE TRAINING: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT.

## Why should I consider crate training my dog?

Dogs are hard-wired by their genetic history to be den animals. A den is a small, safe, well-defined space. It is a place in which dogs feel instinctively safe. It is also a place that they instinctively avoid soiling. The combination of these two native traits are what make crate training, done in the right way, a kind and effective component in house-training your new puppy or dog.

A crate can also be a place for your dog to rest or have “down time.” If you have just acquired a dog, a crate can limit access to the entire house until your new dog knows the house rules. A crate can help with house-training by setting up a routine. For example, you can feed the puppy in the crate and, afterwards, carry him or walk him on a lead straight out to an elimination site where you can use a word or phrase to remind the dog what the trip outside is for.

There are other benefits of crate training. At some point in your dog's life, it may be necessary to use a crate when you are traveling with your pet or when your dog is recuperating from an injury. Such potentially traumatic situations will be much less stressful if your dog is already familiar with and comfortable in a crate. Crates are also useful for keeping destructive dogs out of mischief when you're not home to keep an eye on them.

## Where do I purchase a crate and how do I know which one to buy?

Most pet-supply stores carry dog crates; pet catalogs sell them as well. Considerations when buying your crate: Make sure the crate is big enough so that the dog can stand up, turn around and lay flat on his side in comfort, but small enough that there isn't enough room for the dog to sleep and eat at one end and eliminate at the other. If you are training a growing puppy, you can buy a larger crate with a divider for adjusting the crate as he grows.

## How do I introduce the crate?

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your dog up for success. Your dog should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him to go in. Some dogs may need to warm up to the crate slowly. If your dog is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he is willing to go. After he takes the treat, place another treat a little further back in the crate. Keep going until he is eating treats at the very back, then feed him his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that he can walk in and out at will. Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your dog will happily enter and settle down.

# CRATE TRAINING: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT.

## Should the crate be used at night?

Sure, you can use the crate at night. Put the dog in with a treat and a cue like “kennel” or “kennel up” delivered in a cheery tone of voice. The crate should be situated close to you so that you can hear the dog whine or whimper if he needs to eliminate during the night. (Dogs will usually make some kind of noise rather than make a mess where they sleep.) If you are training a puppy, be prepared for one or two trips outside at night to eliminate. If the puppy goes outside and doesn't produce, do not allow any extra time for play or long drinks of water when you come back inside. Instead, encourage the pup to return to the crate. He may whine a bit, but if you have given him ample opportunity to eliminate, try to ignore the protest and the puppy should settle down quickly.

## How much time in the crate is okay?

No dog, young or old, should be living in a crate full-time. Dogs are social animals, so for a dog to have a good quality of life, social isolation should be kept to a minimum. All dogs need daily exercise and some interaction with others. Even four hours in a crate without a break during the day is a long time for many adult dogs. If you must crate your dog when you're not home, arrange to have someone stop in and let her out for a potty break and to stretch her legs. Except for nighttime, crating a dog for long periods of time is not advised.

Puppies, especially, should not be left in a crate for long periods of time (more than two hours). It is important that puppies not be neglected and forced to break their instinctive aversion to soiling their sleeping area. Unfortunately, this is what happens to many pet store puppies and it can lead to serious house-training difficulties. Also, since they are still developing, puppies have even more need for social interaction than adult dogs. If they aren't socialized to the world while they are young, they can develop fears and aberrant behaviors of many kinds.

Most adult dogs can stay in a crate for the entire night without a trip outside. However, young puppies and some old dogs cannot physically hold their bladders and bowels through the night.

## When should a crate not be used?

A crate should not be used as a form of punishment. As mentioned earlier, your dog should have only warm, fuzzy feelings about her crate. Even though a dog can come to see her crate as a safe place, it is not the solution for a dog with separation anxiety, since she could injure herself trying to get out.

# THE TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN: GIVE THEM A BREAK.

The big secret to many foster homes' success with a new dog that came from unknown or even not so good homes is often what we refer to as the "Two-Week Shutdown." What does this mean? Essentially, it means giving the new dog time to adjust to you and our family and the resident animals in the new environment.

## Why the Two-Week Shut Down?

The Two-Week Shut Down is a time familiar to a dog's mind, as it mimics the whelping box when first born, as the puppy's eyes are not open and it relies totally on the mother's ability to take care of it. By smelling, sensing, listening the puppy starts his journey into the new scary world. New adult dogs come into our home the same way, "a journey into a new and scary world." By giving the dog a "time out" the dog can learn its new world, its new people and begin to relax and blossom under the care of the new care giver.

Why we all want to run out with our new dog, show everyone our new pet, we forget that even an adult dog is now back to a puppy newborn like mind, all is new, the voices speak a new language, cars might be new, leashes and handling under nice people might be new.

Even petting and acceptance of a pet is stressful on a new dog, "Who are you? Where did we come from? Where are we going? What is expected of me?" - the dog thinks!

Just like a new born baby we wouldn't rush out and pass the baby from person to person, we set up a stable and safe environment, our new dogs are just like that, our newborn baby. We also give the rescue dog a bit of time to heal, mentally and physically.

Step back for a minute and think how you might feel if you were never going to go back to your home and that you were expected to live with new people who didn't understand your language. What if these new people took you to all sorts of different places expecting you to greet everyone happily and feel comfortable with an overload of attention all at one time? How might you feel after all of that, to have to go to your new "home" and interact with a bunch of strangers? It's very likely that you'd feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and ready to retreat but really have no place to go to. You might begin to act out and yell at people for coddling you and insisting that you do this and do that. Well, many dogs are put in the very same position and the only way they know how to get their point across is to act out or "misbehave." The dog may act out by nipping at children for he didn't understand them and was corrected harshly before knowing how he was to be around them! when being moved off furniture -" he didn't know he couldn't be here. What is expected? Where am I allowed?" Starting fights with the other animals in home -that dog here was giving me the evil eye my new humans are not leaders, I must defend myself!"

# THE TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN: GIVE THEM A BREAK.

## How to do a “shut down” period.

For the first two weeks, (sometimes even longer depending on the dog) a dog takes in the new environment, who is the top persons, dogs, who are these people? By pushing a dog too fast and throwing too much at the dog we look like we are not the leaders and the dog can feel like it needs to defend itself, as the leader is surely no one he has met so far. We coo, coddle, drag the dog from home to home to person to person, and the dog has no idea who anyone is. Just think of the things you do physically once you get to know a person, you wouldn't run up to a stranger and hug them and squeeze them! Imagine, if on the first date, this new person was all over you touching you and having their FRIENDS hug you and pat you on top of the head, and jostle your shoulders, then he whisked you off to another stranger's home and they did the same thing. Would you think this person normal and safe? Likely not. Would you feel invaded and defensive and begin to get a bit snarky yourself? Probably yes. Wouldn't you think to push these people away for obviously they are out of their mind and they aren't going to save you from these strange people and places. Yet we do this to our dogs, and then get upset or worried that they aren't relaxed and accepting of everything instantly!

Why do we expect a dog to accept a situation when we ourselves could not? By shutting down the dog, it gives the dog necessary time to see you, meet you, hear and take in the new sounds and smells of your home. Crate the dog in a room by itself if possible. Dogs are sensory animals, they know more than you think without seeing it, it will be okay.

Leash the dog when he's out of his crate and inside the home. If possible, leash the dog right to your belt/waist so that they are forced to follow you wherever you may go in the household. This also stops the dog from reacting if you have to get him off of something like the couch, you are not reaching in and grabbing onto him, just tug gently on the leash, say "come on" and there you go. no conflict!

Don't concern yourself with obedience training during this two week shutdown period. It's all just fun and exercise. Maybe throw some toys in for fun.

When outside, always have the dog on a leash. It's often best to not leave your yard at all during this period. That means no car rides, no other dogs, (unless crated beside them), no pet stores, no walks even, nothing but you, your home and your yard. Unless of course the dog needs to go to the veterinarian or you don't have a yard and need to go for short walks to allow the dog to relieve themselves.

# THE TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN: GIVE THEM A BREAK.

It will be difficult to control this impulse, but don't go crazy petting and handling the dog. Our tendency is to immediately shower the dog with love and affection, particularly a shelter dog that was likely facing imminent euthanasia. But try your best to avoid doing this. Even petting and being outside of the home puts pressure on a dog, as everything is so new. Allowing the dog time to absorb and the decision to come to you for petting and affection can do a lot in taking pressure off a new dog.

It's okay to allow the dog some time to exercise, but do it in your yard or on a lunge line if no fence. Remember to just have fun, let the dog run and explore.

Again- no walks yet! Walks are stressful for there is so much coming at you. Being a new person to this dog you have no clue how the dog is reacting to the walking environment. The dog may react to something and we start correcting it with the leash and we just installed a very stressful situation to the dog in what should be a fun and happy walk.

Teach your foster dog by doing the shut-down period, that you are the one to look to. That they can trust in you and look to you as its new leader. Then, on walks you will see the dog look to you when he sees something like a kid or a dog to see what your reaction is, lessening his mind about having to defend or control the environment. He has you. The dog now can relax and enjoy the walk more.

In the house, have the dog out only for about 20-40 minutes post exercise/yard times. And always on a leash. Then put them away. Let the foster dog absorb and think. Even if just for a little bit. If the dog goes to his crate on his own, he is telling you "I need a time out" allow him this time. By having the dog out for long periods of time we are forcing the dog to keep accepting all new things, by putting the dog away we are asking him to accept a few things, then go think and absorb, when we get him out later we introduce a few more things, so the three new things are three new things, not 3 x 3 x 3 - possible overload for the poor pooch.

No new buddies! Do not introduce the dog to other resident or new animals for these two weeks. They can be side by side in their crates if you cannot totally separate, (not nose to nose for they can feel defensive). Some dogs will bond instantly with the other dogs if you don't bond first with the dog, and this can lead to some other issues, as the dog will look to the other dog(s) for guidance and not you.

You will see in the way they start to look to you for guidance that you have gained their trust and showed them, calmly and fairly, what this new world is like, they literally relax and feel safe. There is no need to force that you are the leader. Slow easy guidance, patience, showing them what we want them to do in a new home instead of correcting them when they do wrong. We instill that we are worthy to the dog to be its leader.



# THE TWO WEEK SHUTDOWN: GIVE THEM A BREAK.

## Ignore bad behavior.

Ignore crying and/or barking. If you run to the dog each time they bark, whine, or cry, you are teaching the dog that doing those things gets your attention. The dog must learn to be secure when you are not there. Use the leash to correct jumping, exploring counter surfing, garbage diving, etc.

## Praise gently good behavior.

As an example, the dog is sitting nicely next to you, touch or softly pet the dog "good boy/girl" let them know you appreciate good, calm behavior. This makes naughty behavior not so fun if you ignore that but praise the good.

Literally in two weeks you will see a change in the dog and begin to see its honest and true personality. Just like a house guest. They are well behaved and literally shut down themselves these first few weeks, then post this time, they relax and the true personality begins to shine thru!

So, please, if nothing else for your new dog, give it the time to learn about you as you are learning who they are. This method works on shy dogs, confident dogs, abuse cases, chained dogs that come in, rowdy dogs, all temperaments.

You will see in the way they start to look to you for guidance that you have gained their trust and showed them, calmly and fairly, what this new world is like, they literally relax and feel safe. There is no need to force that you are the leader. Slow easy guidance, patience, showing them what we want them to do in a new home instead of correcting them when they do wrong. We instill that we are worthy to the dog to be its leader.

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