

FOSTER PARENT GUIDELINES

YOU ARE A VIP →

Our fosters are so important to us that we've put together a list of common Q & As to make sure you **enjoy your fostering experience and that your foster dog thrives!**

CAN I BUNK WITH *you* FOR A BIT?

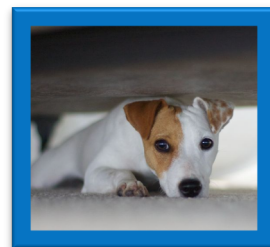
🐾 THE MOST IMPORTANT THING A NEW FOSTER PARENT SHOULD KNOW 🐾

Decompression

#1

Understand **decompression**. Decompression means that a dog needs to actually **recover both medically and emotionally**. That's right: Recover. The vet's offices are noisy, chaotic, and stressful for dogs. The longer a dog has been in the shelter or vet, the more traumatized she can be. And remember, **their lives have been turned upside down**. They don't realize that their **life has now gone from bad to good**. They just know that it has changed and they're afraid of this new life that is unknown to them.

Having a **regular routine** and a **quiet environment** can really help a dog recover from this trauma and get back to being a dog again. This **typically** takes a **minimum of two weeks**.



🐾 PREPARATION FOR YOUR FOSTER DOG'S ARRIVAL 🐾

Preparing your home for your foster dog before arrival means you can spend **more time with the dog** and less time setting things up. Sleeping, feeding, and introductions to other pets should be **structured and planned**.

Think about the dog's various "stations." Decide where the dog will:

EAT. Make sure the dog has a safe, quiet, and – if possible – private place to eat, especially if you have other pets. Feed the dog in the same spot in your house at every meal.

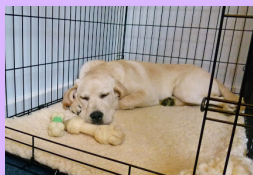


DRINK. Ditto. Make sure that the dog has access to fresh water at all times. There should be water bowls both indoors and outdoors.

PEE & POOP. Know where the dog is allowed to relieve himself on your property and be prepared to praise him when he gets it right.



SLEEP. Your dog should be able to sleep in a place where he feels safe. This should ideally be in a crate the first few weeks (see more about crates later in the guide), but it could also be a nice cushy dog bed or even on a pile of blankets arranged into a comfy bed. Don't let the dog sleep in a human bed with kids or other pets until you learn more



about the dog and feel comfortable with him and he feels comfortable with you. As this is a foster dog, we need to set him up for success in his forever home.



PLAY. If you have a backyard, the dog should associate that space with comfort and fun. The backyard is also a good place to train your dog, but training should happen indoors, too.

I wish I may I wish I might, find a foster home tonight.



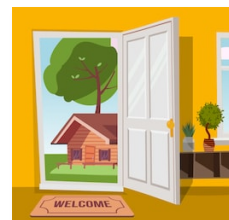
FOR MORE STEPS CHECK OUT OUR BLOG



What’s the first thing I should do when the dog arrives at my home? Walk her. Taking the dog on a walk around your neighborhood not only lets the dog burn off steam, but it also allows for much-needed exercise and sensory stimulation. Make sure the dog pees (and, ideally, poops) on the walk, which will reduce the chance of accidents when you get home.

More importantly, walking the dog first establishes a connection with the person at the end of the leash. The dog will see you as her guide to the neighborhood. That initial trust will translate well when you take the dog onto your property.

How do I initially show my dog around my home? The dog should be on a leash during its initial entry into your house. This is because he will feel safer with you on the other end of the leash. Plus, he might have unknown triggers – e.g. statues, grandfather clocks, and new people can make dogs nervous. The leash provides security for both the dog and humans. But please try to not tense up when holding the leash. If you’re nervous, the dog will feel that nervous energy and may react in a negative way.



How should I introduce the dog to my family? The dog will probably be excited - sometimes TOO excited! - to meet everybody. The key is for everyone in the family to be seated - on a couch, chair, step, or on the ground. Wait for the dog to approach each person - not the other way around! - and allow the dog to sniff everyone. Smell is their strongest sense, and they will befriend each human based on smell.



If the dog seems happy & relaxed, your family members can feel free to pet the dog UNDER her chin since hands above the head can be scary for under-socialized dogs. As the dog relaxes & gets more curious, you can drop the leash (but leave it on) and allow the dog to explore without trailing her. She’ll need a bit of time to learn her way around.

When can I introduce the foster dog to my [fill-in-the-blank] - boyfriend, niece, uncle, neighbor, etc.?

Try to wait a full 3 weeks. This will ensure that you establish yourself as the Pack Leader and the dog will take its cues from you.



Never let the dog greet a stranger at the door, as it could try to “protect” you. Always let the dog meet guests (especially children) when the dog is on a leash and can greet the “stranger” in a controlled setting. If the dog has displayed nervousness or aggression, crate the dog or confine it to a comfortable room with the TV on and a nice chew bone when you have guests over.

- [10 Tips for Introducing Children to New Dogs](#)
- [How to Introduce a Puppy or Adult Dog to Your Children](#)
- [How to - Safely! - Introduce a Dog to Your Children](#)
- [Introducing Your Foster Dog to Strangers in Your House](#)

LINKS TO ARTICLES ON PEOPLE INTRODUCTIONS



LINKS TO ARTICLES ON INTRODUCTIONS TO OTHER PETS

- [Introducing Dogs to Each Other](#)
- [Introducing Your Foster Dog to Cats](#)



What about other pets? How do I introduce a new dog into the pack? We have two words: Neutral. Territory. The worst thing you can do is take a new dog into a home with an existing dog and hope for the best. Most trainers recommend walking the dogs together first and then initially separate them in the home for a period of time. There are lots of proven tips on how to introduce a new dog to other pets in the home.

Click on the articles to the left.

Am I responsible for the foster dog's vet care?

If you're a Poodle and Pooch foster, we will handle routine veterinary care. Your Foster Coordinator will arrange all vet appointments and any medical issues that may come up while you have your foster dog.

Please DO NOT call the vet's offices directly.



FOSTERS SHOULD NOT CALL THE VET'S OFFICE DIRECTLY!

Should I try CRATE TRAINING?

We strongly recommend crate training, as it not only presents a comfortable place to sleep but a **safe space for the dog to go when you need to sequester her or when she needs a break.**

Most people think crate training is for housebreaking a dog. While it can be useful for preventing accidents, a **crate can serve as a refuge for a dog**, bringing her back to primitive habits of sleeping in caves or other enclosed, protected spaces. **The more fearful the dog, the more important crate training is**, but any dog will benefit from crate training.

Put soft, comfortable bedding in the crate and leave the door wide open. Don't force the dog into the crate but throw some yummy treats in to encourage the dog to enter the crate in a positive way. **Leave the crate door open so the dog can come and go.** This means the association is comfort and safety, not punishment. Never force the dog into the crate.

Trust us, crate training is worth the extra time and discipline. When the gardener, pool service, or UPS driver shows up, the crate will be an invaluable tool.

What FOOD guidelines do you recommend?

Typically, meals will be given twice a day in the **same location** and outside the line of sight or hearing of other pets in the house. Even feeding the dog in a hallway or bathroom, **separating it from commotion & noise**, will make sure the dog can relax and enjoy his meal.



Click Below for More on Crate Training

- [How to Crate Train Your Dog](#)
- [9 Tips for Crate Training a Rescue Dog](#)
- [Crate Training 101](#)

TOYS AND FOSTER DOGS

Many dogs "claim" their toys as their property, inviting a **behavior called "resource guarding."** Dogs must understand that **toys are the HUMAN'S property and can be given and taken away.** This should be a gradual process that happens only after the dog has acknowledged that you are the Pack Leader.



If your foster dog is showing possessive behavior, check out this link:

[5 Strategies for Handling a Highly Possessive Dog](#)

DOG PARKS

In general, we are not fans of dog parks since they can over-stimulate dogs. **Neighborhood walks or leash hikes should be enough exercise for your dog and will reinforce his connection with you as its Pack Leader.** Dog parks and other unstructured play can actually exacerbate bad behavior.

If you know for a fact that your dog is dog-friendly, and you really, really want to take your dog to the dog park, **please check with your Foster Coordinator before you take him.**

PLAYING WITH YOUR FOSTER DOG

As your dog relaxes and becomes more comfortable, **he'll try to engage you in play.** That might look like stretching or bowing in front of you, or even running toward you to get you to chase him. The dog might get "the zoomies" in your house to burn off energy.

As dogs calibrate what's acceptable play, the dog might get "mouthy." **That doesn't mean he wants to bite you; it's typically a way for him to connect with you. Be sure to discourage mouthiness** since the dog might try to "test" how far he can go.

Oh, and by the way, **we're big fans of bones and chew toys.** They actually engage the dog's brain. You can give your foster dog a bone. **Leave it in his crate so he can relax in his safe place**, then leave him alone to enjoy his bone.

There are also food puzzles, snuffle mats, DIY agility, or even car rides to **make sure your dog is engaged and entertained.** When in doubt, **get the leash out and take a nice walk.**

🐾 HOW LONG WILL I FOSTER BEFORE THE DOG GETS ADOPTED? 🐾

This is such a difficult question to answer. **It depends on so many factors.** The dog's health, temperament, age, breed play the biggest role in how long it will take before a dog gets adopted. **It also depends on you as the foster.** How much you communicate with your FC so that we can write an accurate bio. How good the pictures are of your dog. How quickly you get in touch with approved applicants. **There is really no average timeframe.** It can be as little as a week and as long as several months.

You might also decide you would like to adopt your foster dog. Maybe you like having the dog around while you work from home, or you appreciate the additional exercise with your morning and evening walks. That's fine. Just let us know. **And remember, as the dog's foster, you have first dibs on him if you decide to adopt him.**



How can I help Poodle and Pooch with finding the foster dog a forever family?

Fostering is by far the best way to get information about a dog that can be useful when finding her a forever family. **YOU are the reason the dog got a second chance!** Now we can use your help marketing the dog for its forever family.

4 WAYS TO HELP

1 Send us fun videos! Videos should feature the dog in your home or yard, ideally doing something funny or sweet. Show the dog's personality – even if the dog is just sleeping and snoring like a freight train! Pictures with kids, with other dogs, or the dog displaying a funny habit get dogs lots of interest. Roly-polies and zoomie videos are always popular.

2 Pictures! Post pictures and videos to your own social media account. Your friends could be potential adopters or your friends might have interested friends. We call this the "relationship ripple effect" and it saves lives! Also, take lots of pictures of your foster dog for our donors and the adoption listing. See the "[Foster Photo Guide](#)" on the Volunteer web site for tips.



3 Attend adoption events. Adoption events are great opportunities to get your foster dog seen by people looking for a new dog. You might know of adoption events in your area or we can recommend some. Let us know if you're interested in this and we can give you some cute "Adopt Me!" apparel.

4 Fill out our BIO FORM (see the [link](#) on the Volunteer page). This is needed when it's time to list your foster dog for adoption. It's an invaluable way for us to get detailed information about the dog's likes, dislikes, and behaviors and highlight the right information on our adoption page!



The app team will approve applications based on the bio information that we have from you. It is not first come first serve. Please review and call the potential applicants to see if they are a good fit for your foster dog. If it sounds like it will be then you can set up a meet and greet so that your foster dog can meet the applicant and their family. Please communicate with your FC throughout the process. If at any time you do not feel comfortable with the app or think that they will not be a good match, please DO NOT adopt the dog to them.

PLEASE NOTE...

need help?

I READ ALL THIS, BUT I MIGHT FORGET STUFF. WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?



No problem. **Your Foster Coordinator will be there to answer any questions you have along the way.** You can also reach out to any Board Member (Contact info for them is in the Welcome email that was sent when you first started).