

**A Guide for**

**Foster Dog**

**Parents**

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## PROGRAM INFORMATION

Thank you for opening your heart and home to one of our deserving dogs. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under socialized dogs a chance to grow or heal before finding their forever homes, whether it's on a farm or acreage.

### How the program works

As an approved foster parent, you'll receive emails from the Foster Dog Team providing a brief description of those dogs needing foster homes. When you see a dog that might be a good match for your household/farm and lifestyle, you simply respond to the email.

MSCA will provide you with all the necessary information about fostering, support you throughout the entire process, and will be available to address any questions or concerns.

### Reasons to foster

Fostering is a wonderful experience for you and your family - you can feel good knowing you have helped transition a dog to their new home. Foster dogs provide companionship and purpose - your act of kindness is repaid in rewards that are beyond words.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. How long are dogs in foster homes?

It completely depends on the dog and the situation. The average stay in a foster home is about 1-2 months. However, most puppies and some dogs with great photos and stories on the web may stay only a few weeks. Others, recovering from an injury, certain breeds and senior dogs, may stay much longer. \*\*Please note we very rarely get Maremma puppies in rescue.

### 2. Can I adopt my foster dog?

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

### 3. How are foster dogs promoted?

Photos and stories of all adoptable dogs in foster homes are posted on our MSCA website and Facebook page. (Petfinder?) where the public can view them. Foster dogs are also promoted at special events throughout the year. Foster parents may participate in various programs and share their foster dogs profiles (approved posts) on local FB etc pages to increase the visibility of their foster dog to potential adopters.

Foster parents can also help promote their foster dog to their family, friends, colleagues and the general public through a variety of means.

## 4. What is the process for adopting a foster dog?

The process is briefly outlined below:

- Potential adopters are required to submit an adoption application for review before they can physically meet or be considered as adopters for a foster dog.
- Suitable applicants may be contacted for additional screening.
- Once approved, meet and greets with the foster dog and foster parents will be scheduled with qualified applicants - where possible.
- After the meet and greet (and if the applicant is still interested in the dog), foster parents will make a recommendation to MSCA regarding the adoption. The foster dog stays with the foster parent until they hear from the rescue.
- Adoption is approved or rejected by MSCA. Final approval of all adoptions is at the sole discretion of the identified MSCA members.
- Once approved, the adopter pays adoption fees to the rescue and makes a spay/neuter appointment, if necessary. Foster dogs cannot go to a potential adopter's home until the adoption is official and approved by MSCA. The foster dog then goes to its new forever home.

Foster parents should stay in contact with their case manager for assistance with the adoption process. Be sure to review the section on "The Adoption Process" in this manual.

## 5. If I have my own animals, can I foster dogs?

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

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

## 6. What supplies are needed to foster?

Foster parents provide space, food, basic training, exercise and love for the dog. The rescue will provide you with all supplies and equipment needed throughout your foster experience.

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

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

## 8. What if my foster dog becomes sick?

All veterinary costs are paid by the rescue. If a foster dog becomes sick, foster parents must call their MSCA representative to authorize a vet visit, or advise you otherwise. Once a veterinary visit has been authorized, you can make an appointment with the approved vet.

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

Commitment and responsibilities depend on the individual dog and situation. It's essential that foster parents understand that rescue dogs may be stressed and moving the dog from the rescue to the foster home is also very stressful and emotional. Some of our Maremma's may have had little socialization and therefore may need more time than most dogs to decompress. Foster parents must be willing to be patient and commit to the dog because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment. The MSCA is there to help provide support and advice for any questions fosters may have.

### **10. Can I take my foster dog to a dog park for exercise and socialization?**

With Caution. While these parks can be fun for some dogs, there are far too many unknowns for it to be a safe and healthy experience for a foster dog. LGD's are generally not known to enjoy the company of strange dogs and therefore it is unlikely they will enjoy the experience. Diseases are easily transmitted and the temperaments of visiting dogs are unknown, thus creating a huge liability to the Rescue. Also, taking a leashed dog to a dog park can create barrier frustration and aggression in dogs. So, please be cautious.

### **11. How can I help my foster dog become more adoptable?**

There are two ways to make a foster dog more adoptable. First and foremost is marketing. If no one knows about your foster dog, or how wonderful it is, then it will be next to impossible to find them a forever home. In addition to supplying great photos and a bio and updating these regularly, giving a foster dog additional exposure by telling friends and family about them will help create a "network effect" and will speed up the process of finding a forever home.

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

No, but we do need your help. Once a qualified applicant is identified, you will be asked to schedule a meet and greet with your foster dog and the potential adopter. Your quick response and then final input on the potential adopter is critical to finding a great match.

Many times a foster parent will find a perfect match through their own network of friends, family and colleagues. The rescue greatly welcomes these referrals! If you think you have found a perfect forever home for your foster dog, remember they still must go through the application process and be approved by the rescue.

### **13. Can I return my foster dog to the rescue if I am unable to foster any longer?**

We prefer that foster parents continue to foster until we find a permanent home for their foster dog. It's extremely stressful for a dog, especially LGD's, to be passed from foster home to foster home. However, we understand that situations change and it may become necessary to discontinue fostering a dog.

We request that a foster parent provides as much notice as possible (minimum 5-7 days) so that we can find an alternative foster home to transfer the dog to.

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

If given enough notice, we can usually find volunteers that can foster sit for short durations. We ask that foster parents always keep their case managers aware of any temporary foster sitting situations.

### **16. Are foster dogs ever euthanized?**

Much energy, love, time and vet care is devoted to our foster dogs, and the rescue is committed to finding homes for ALL the adoptable dogs within its care. Some dogs are in foster care because they're seriously ill or injured. If, after medical attention, these dogs are too young or too weak to heal and are suffering, then the rescue will have our vet humanely euthanize these animals. Fortunately, most dogs in foster care heal beautifully. On rare occasions, a dog in foster care may start to exhibit potentially dangerous behavior that was unknown or suppressed. The rescue may determine that this dog is too dangerous and will seek an alternative facility for its care. Your safety is our #1 priority. You must always inform the rescue and your case manager if your foster dog exhibits any aggressive behavior.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL FOSTER PARENTS**

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

- Complete a Foster Dog Parent Application available on our website
- Agree to and sign the Foster Dog Parent Agreement
- MSCA approves all foster parent applications and all fosterdog/foster parent matches. Rescue may also remove a foster dog from a foster home for any reason they deem necessary.

### **Important Rules and Regulations for you Foster Dog**

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Foster Dog Parent Agreement, and throughout this manual, foster parents MUST abide by the following rules:

- No off-leash park visits.
- Foster dogs must be on leash at all times when outdoors unless in your own secured fenced yard, farm or acreage..
- Any aggressive behavior must be immediately communicated to rescue
- Any incidents with other dogs or livestock must be communicated to the rescue
- All vet visits must be pre-approved
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communications from rescue representatives, Foster Dog Team members, or potential adopters when possible.

### **Foster Dog Team**

The foster dog program could not exist without the support and dedication of the volunteer Foster Dog Team and are invaluable to the success of the Foster Dog Program. Foster Dog Team members are listed in the **Contact Information** sheet located in your foster packet.

## Getting Ready for a Foster Dog

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

### Be physically and mentally prepared

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

Be realistic about your time commitment to a foster dog. Don't over-extend yourself when starting out.

## Where to keep your foster dog

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

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

### The Do's

- Do keep your foster dog indoors in a location with a crate available.
- Do keep your foster dog in a warm/cool (depending on the season) and dry location.
- Do keep your foster dog on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in your secured fenced yard. When in a secured yard, you must supervise him at all times. It is very common for a rescue dog to try and escape so **always** supervise your rescue dog.
- Do keep your puppy indoors in a kitchen, bathroom, mudroom or laundry room (you may want to use baby gates to limit access to other parts of your home). Puppies should be around humans for socialization purposes and should not be isolated.

## The Don'ts

- Do not place your foster dog around other strange dogs as we often do not know the dog's past history. Foster dogs should not be put in a position of possibly fighting with a strange dog, reducing their chances for adoption and increasing their chances of euthanasia.
- Do not allow your foster dogs outdoors unless supervised by an adult.
- Never take your foster dog to an off-leash park. This is a liability to the rescue. **Taking a foster dog to an off-leash park will result in the removal of the foster dog and end your role as a foster parent.**

## How to dog-proof a room

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

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

## Items you may need

The Foster Dog Program often receives donated supplies, so be sure to ask rescue when you are picking up your foster dog, or your case manager when you get home!

- Crate - you can check one out at the rescue.
- Bedding - a clean, old blanket or towel or a dog bed that is washable.
- Odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle); it's the only thing to clean housetraining mistakes.; If you clean mistakes with soap and water, your dog will still smell the urine and go to the bathroom in that spot repeatedly.
- Flea comb/brush.
- Food and Bowls
- Toys such as: hard rubber balls, Kongs, fleece toys, rope toys or nylabones. Do **not** give your foster dog hooves, rawhide, pigs' ears or vinyl toys that can cause diarrhea or choke the dog.
- Flat buckle collar with a Seattle Animal Rescue ID tag which must stay on the dog at all times. Collars and ID tags are available at the rescue.
- Leash.
- Training apparatus such as Martingale collar, Sensation harness or Halti head collar. These should be used only during training periods. These are available at the rescue. Training treats such as string cheese, squeeze cheese, lunch meat or small dog biscuits. Baby gate(s).
- Bitter Apple (to spray on leashes, woodwork, drapery — anything you don't want



- chewed).
- Promotional t-shirt or bandana that says, *"I'm Available for Adoption!"* These are available at the rescue.

## SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE Rescue DOG TO FOSTER

Now that you're ready to foster, it's time to find an appropriate rescue dog to bring home. After being approved by the rescue as a qualified foster home, you will start receiving a Foster Request email. This email will describe dogs in need of foster homes based on priority. If you see one that looks like a good match, reply to the addresses in the email and the rescue will determine if this is a good match for you and your lifestyle.

The rescue will contact you directly to discuss the potential foster dog. The rescue may also recommend a different dog based on your lifestyle, experience or situation.

## INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS TO FOSTER DOGS

The rescue can assist you with introducing your dog to a foster dog. Typically dogs of the opposite sex do better together. Dogs are like people, and sometimes a dog may not like another dog for no apparent reason.

### What to do once you are home with your foster dog

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

### Some common mistakes:

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

- Over-stimulating your foster dog with introductions to many people or your neighbors' dogs.

## INTRODUCING YOUR CATS TO FOSTER DOGS

Allow your foster dog to settle down and get to know your surroundings first before you start introductions to unfamiliar animals. Introducing a cat to a dog is similar to introducing dogs to one another. Take your time and create a stress-free environment.

Begin by keeping your cat in a different room. Allow the dog to become comfortable in his own room. Once the dog is comfortable, let him explore the rest of the house for short periods each day while the cat is in another room. This will allow them to pick up each other's scent.

After a few days, allow the two to meet but keep the dog on a leash. Observe their interactions - a dog that is showing overt aggression, such as snarling, growling, baring teeth, etc., will probably never accept a cat. The cat and dog should be separated by baby gates or kept in separate rooms.

If all is reasonably calm so far, walk the dog around the room on leash, but don't let go of the leash in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On leash interactions give the cat the opportunity to approach the dog if they choose, or to find a route of escape.

During the first few meetings, the cat and dog will probably not interact face to face. A dog is a predatory animal. It's a natural instinct for a dog to want to chase a cat. Assume the dog will chase the cat so you are prepared. Never allow the dog to intimidate the cat by barking or chasing.

Each time the dog acts inappropriately (barking), let him know these behaviors are unacceptable; try using a quick sharp tone, like "Aah-Aah" to get their attention and redirect their energy. On the other hand, if the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, that's a good sign and should not be discouraged. When they set up boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a working relationship.

Let them interact with the dog on leash for about 30 minutes, then return the cat back to its safe haven and bring the dog to its dog crate or bed. Give the dog a treat and lots of praise.

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

## FOSTERING – THE FIRST WEEK

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

- Find a quiet route to walk or run your foster dog (depending on energy level) to familiarize him with his new environment. This also helps start the bonding between you and your foster dog.
- Don't introduce your foster dog to people you meet on your walk. For the first 7-14 days (could be more or less) your foster dog should lay low while he tries to figure out just what this new situation is. You may not see any unwelcome behavior initially. Eventually all will be revealed.
- Do not introduce your foster dog to other dogs (other than your own resident dog). This includes neighborhood dogs, and dogs belonging to your family or friends. Why? There is no way to tell how your foster dog will behave when introducing him to other dogs. If your foster dog bites a person or dog you are required to report it to the rescue immediately.
- Don't throw a party, or have a lot of people over to your home. During the first week you should try to spend quality one-on-one time with your new foster dog.

The most important thing to do during this initial transition time is to clearly but NON-confrontationally establish the household rules. As well, take care not to "indulge" your foster dog's

timid, tentative or fearful behavior; we understand how tempting this may be as many of our orphans have come from less than ideal situations, but in the long run it does not benefit the dog.

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

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

Please check in with your case manager to ensure that all is going well. Many times the rescue does not record your email address, so please email the [MSCArescue@gmail.com](mailto:MSCArescue@gmail.com) alias so that we can contact you.

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

### **Expectations of behavior**

Allow time for adjustment. While it usually takes about 24 hours for a dog to settle in, it will take much longer for their overall adjustment to this new environment. Watch their behavior closely. Remember that it will take up to a month before your foster dog bonds with you, so keep your expectations realistic. On the average, foster parents have their dogs for about 1 month before they're adopted. While this amount of time will not be long enough to fully train your foster dog, it will be enough time to give him a good foundation for his new family. Begin training with some basic commands and crate training. Your foster may have been traumatized before coming to you – you'll be teaching that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with your foster dog every day. If he shows any signs of aggression or fear (growling over food or toys, snapping or hiding), contact your case manager and rescue for guidance.

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**EXERCISE, TRAINING AND ATTENTION****Exercise**

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

**Leash walking and the six foot rule**

MSCA requires that all rescue dogs are walked using “the six foot rule.” When walking your foster dog, leave at least six feet between your dog and any other dog you meet. This keeps handlers and dogs safe from possible conflicts and also reduces the transmission of diseases. This rule is easy to follow at the rescue because all volunteers are trained to use it. However foster parents will need to be extra diligent because many dog owners seem to encourage their dogs to “greet” every dog they encounter out on a walk. This nose-to-nose greeting is particularly stressful for many dogs, as dogs typically greet each other from an angle. One simple way to avoid an oncoming dog walker is to just cross the street, or start to walk in a wide semi-circle around them. Most people recognize that this is a sign that you don’t want your dogs to meet. If this isn’t possible, just announce to the oncoming walker that you are walking a rescue dog, and you would prefer that the dogs don’t greet each other. Sometimes you must broadcast this loudly if their dog is off-leash or on a retractable leash. Keeping your dog to your side (rather than at the end of the leash) and creating a “body block” with your own body is also helpful. Sometimes it’s impossible to avoid another dog, so just stay calm, walk between your foster dog and the oncoming dog and move past quickly. Also try talking to your dog, “Fido, keep with me” and giving them treats as you pass an oncoming dog will help keep their attention on you, not on the other dog.

Please do not use retractable leashes when walking or running your foster dog. It’s impossible to have control with a retractable leash, and they can easily tangle or break. (We have long line training leashes available for foster parents to practice recalls.)

**Training**

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

**Training Tip: Building a positive relationship with your foster dog.** *Andrea Kilkenney, for Pit Bull Rescue Central.*

Establishing leadership: A leader in a dog pack is not the biggest dog, not the meanest dog and not necessarily the oldest dog. It is the one who controls the resources! Within a pack of dogs, strong canine leaders rarely use physical means to control other dogs; this is true in both wild and domesticated dogs. Humans can apply this concept of hierarchy by controlling all the resources in the home and doling them out contingent upon desirable behavior.

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

**Why positive training?** Many times, owners ask why one should use positive based methods. Please understand that force-based methods including "alpha rolls," "flooding" techniques (i.e., forced exposure at an uncomfortable distance to the object or being that the dog has an issue with), the use of choke chains, prong collars, electronic shock devices, and "correction" can all be problematic for a number of reasons. First, if a dog has aggression issues, using force can further exacerbate an already potentially dangerous situation. Second, using "correction" only or force does not teach the dog what you WANT him to do; only what you don't want him to do. Third, a foster parent can damage his relationship with the dog if they are always correcting the dog or using aversive methods.

Recently, the public has become enamored with the supposed results of certain high-profile trainers, however, we must keep in mind that what we see on TV is also presented via the magic of editing! In addition, force based methods can often temporarily suppress undesirable Behaviors, but under certain stressors, when a dog feels threatened and has no other options, he may resort to aggression to remove the unpleasant stimulus or to escape the situation. Positive training methods, on the other hand, are very unlikely to yield such undesirable and unsafe results. Using positive training methods can in fact, increase the likelihood of your dog wanting to respond correctly, increase your dog's motivation to work, and they are fun for you and the dog! If you would like to find out more about positive training methods, how they work, and why they work, visit [www.pbrc.net/training\\_nfl.html](http://www.pbrc.net/training_nfl.html) for an explanation of this type of non-confrontational leadership

## **Housetraining**

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

You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 8 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog that is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

- Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate - it could be the backyard, side yard or an indoor substrate such as a Pup Head, litter system or one you have designed.
- When you have determined where he should do his business, take him to the same place every time, and tell him to "do his business." Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or

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drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!

- Supervise the puppy closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Ah-Ah", scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes.
- If he goes in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him - it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle) to get rid of the smell. **Never** put the dog's face in his mess, or yell at him, he won't understand you, and you will only be teaching him to fear you.

## Crate training

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and housetraining mistakes. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old, plus one. For example, a 4 month old should not be crated longer than 5 hours. How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, it has never been required to hold it for any period of time. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it and you will need to start slowly. Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time.

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

Crates should **never** be used as a means of punishment for your foster dog. If used for punishing, the dog will learn to avoid going in the crate. Crates are not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog play rooms - just like child play rooms, with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure when they are there.

## Introducing the crate

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

If your foster still refuses to go near the crate, put the smelliest, tastiest wet food (or a steak!) in the crate and shut the door. Let the dog hang outside the crate for a while, smelling the food inside. Soon he should beg you to let him in!

Now that the dog is familiar and willing to go near the crate, throw some of his favorite treats in the crate. Let him go in and get them and come right out again. Do this exercise three or four times. Then, throw more treats in and let him go in and get them. When he is in, shut the door and give him another treat through the door. Then let him out and ignore him for 3 minutes. Then, put some more treats in the crate, let him go in, shut the door and feed him 5 bits of treats through the door, and then let him out and ignore

him for 5 minutes.

Next time, place treats, peanut butter, freeze-dried liver or frozen food and honey in a Kong , so it is time-consuming to get the food out of the ball, and put the Kong in the crate. After your foster has gone in, shut the door and talk to him in a calm voice. If your dog starts to whine or cry, don't talk to him or you will reward the whining/crying/barking behavior. The foster dog must be quiet for a few minutes before you let him out.

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

To help your foster get accustomed to the crate, place his favorite bed inside it and place it in your bedroom. If you're fostering a puppy, you can try placing a warm hot water bottle wrapped in a towel next to him. Warmth makes puppies sleepy. Make sure the sides of bedding are tucked in firmly so the puppies don't get lost or suffocated in a fold of the bedding. Be wary of dog crates during hot weather - a dog may want to lie on the cool floor, instead of the crate. Make sure the crate is not in direct sun.

### **Attention and playtime**

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

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

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

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

If you're a runner/jogger, start off slow and keep an eye on your foster dog and see how they react. Many dogs pull when they are in front of you, and running can intensify this behavior. Keeping them at your side, rather than in front can help eliminate this pulling behavior. You may need to start and stop many times, but be patient. Remember, these runs should be about the dog, not about your own exercise. Puppies under 6 months old should not run with you and only occasionally, for short distances after 6 months. Also, remember your foster probably is not used to running regularly, and like a person, will have to improve his conditioning and stamina over a period of time to avoid injury.

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

## BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

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

It's important to recognize that dogs are not humans with fur. Based on DNA evidence, dogs were domesticated from wolves about 15,000 years ago in East Asia. A few basic breed types have evolved gradually during the domesticated dog's relationship with humans over the last 10,000 or more years, but all modern breeds are of relatively recent derivation.

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic, such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals are really just normal dog behaviors and can be explained as "dogs truly being dogs." In many ways, modern or urban dog training is what we do to decrease normal dog behaviors and increase those behaviors we, as city dwelling humans, prefer. But we should keep in mind that these behavioral "problems" are usually only problems to us. And remember that historically these behaviors were usually bred by humans into a particular breed of dog. For example, Siberian Huskies and others in the Spitz breeds are descendents of sled dogs and typically pull when on a leash. Australian Cattle Dogs drive cattle by nipping at their heels or tails and may do the same to children, bikes and cars. Terriers (everything from the diminutive Yorkshire Terrier, to the large Airedale Terrier) were bred to hunt and kill vermin and typically have a high prey drive and like to dig. The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate (aka - human accepted) outlets for these behaviors.

Some of the most common behavioral issues include:



Barking  
Humping Digging Begging  
Attention seeking  
Garbage hunting  
Leash pulling  
Greeting manners  
Destructive chewing

Puppy nipping and rough play Submissive and/or excitement urination Urine marking behavior  
Fearfulness Separation anxiety Resource guarding Prey drive

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

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

Additional training resources to help deal with these behavioral issues are listed in the appendix of this manual and included in your foster dog packet. You should also talk with your case manager and rescue about any behavior issues. We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, the best solution for you and your foster dog might be a different foster home or to be returned to the rescue.

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

## VETERINARY AND MEDICAL CARE

**All veterinary care must be pre-authorized by MSCA**

Once a visit has been authorized, call to make an appointment at Cypress Street Animal Hospital.

**Please note:** The rescue has a policy that it **will not** reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals if you do not receive pre-approval or go to our approved vet office.

Emergency/nighttime clinics are incredibly expensive and should only be used in cases of dire emergencies and only after pre-approval.

### **General guidelines for seeking vet visits**

Puppies younger than 12 weeks must see a vet for the following:

- Diarrhea that lasts for more than a day
- Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 6 hours
- Vomiting more than once in an hour
- Not eating for more than 12-24 hours
- Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours
- Lethargy with fever

Dogs older than 12 weeks must see a vet for the following:

- Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days
- Diarrhea and occasional vomiting for more than a day
- Vomiting more than 2-3 times in an hour
- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Lethargy without fever for more than a day
- Lethargy with fever

### **Illness**

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

### **Diarrhea**

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

Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it snaps back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, then the dog is dehydrated and needs fluids. Dehydration can kill a puppy so call the vet and your case manager if you suspect your foster is dehydrated.

### **Fleas**

Most foster dogs have been treated when arriving at the rescue. But additional flea treatments are available if needed. Puppies younger than 4 months should NOT be treated with toxic chemicals. Puppies over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs can be treated with Advantage or Revolution.

Flea treatments contain insecticides that can cause nerve and liver damage, impair the immune system and even cause cancer. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least every 2-3 to three days.

Fleas usually are found on dogs that are ill and so, as with any illness, you'll want to strengthen the overall health of the dog. As a rule, healthy dogs are less likely to get fleas than sick ones. Good food, minimal stress, proper hygiene and TLC will most likely keep the dog from getting fleas or an illness.

To check for fleas, inspect your dog daily - inspecting the rear groin, belly, and tail, under the chin and head, and neck (common places for fleas). Look also for black specks of flea dirt, which is actually digested blood. Before you begin combing, get a bowl of tap water and put a few drops of dish soap in it. You can put any fleas you find in the water and they will drown.

If you don't use soap, the fleas may swim to a fluff of fur and jump out of the water. If fleas are present, treat as soon as possible. Change bedding and vacuum the floors daily. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs and dirt.

### **Injured dogs**

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

This type of foster situation may require you to schedule follow up appointments with the dog's veterinarian. As with all foster dogs, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited, but cuddling, petting, talking, brushing and massaging are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

### **Kennel cough**

The Shelters are much like a child day care - as soon as one dog has a cold; most all the dogs in the shelter get a cold. Just like people who have colds, kennel cough develops when the dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised. Kennel cough usually goes away as soon as the dog has a warm, quiet and soothing place to sleep, and where they can drink lots of water, eat healthy food and receive lots of TLC!

Kennel cough is typically a dry, hacking cough. There may be some discharge from the nose and a clear liquid that is coughed up. It's generally a mild, self-limiting illness of the trachea and bronchi encountered in all age groups of dogs, but especially in those under unusual stress, crowding or close confinement. Kennel cough exists in shelters, boarding kennels, groomers, veterinary offices, off-leash areas, etc.

Because kennel cough is contagious, infected dogs should NOT be around other dogs until they're over their cough. If you have a dog at home and plan to foster a dog with kennel cough, we have found that if your own dog is healthy and has been vaccinated annually, then your dog will most likely not get sick.

Talk to your vet about giving your own dog the Bordetella nasal vaccination. Immunity to kennel cough

is usually established 3-4 days after vaccination. We can compare this situation with humans in an office atmosphere - if you're healthy, well-rested and your immune system is not compromised, and a coworker has a cold, then you will not catch the cold. But if you're worn-down, stressed out and not eating or sleeping well, you probably will catch the cold. So if your own dog is ill or older, we would not recommend fostering a dog with kennel cough.

### Poisonous foods and household items

Many household products can be toxic to dogs. Remove any rat or mouse poisonings, antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid from your home before fostering! And store cleaning products and other items listed below out of reach of pets. Please see a more complete list of Toxic Plants in your foster dog packet

The following common food items are poisonous for dogs.

Chocolate	Caffeine	Grapes/Raisins
Macadamia Nuts	Mushrooms	Onion and Garlic

The ten most common poisonous plants are:

Azalea/Rhododendron	Castor Bean	Cyclamen
Kalanchoe	Lilies	Marijuana
Oleander	Sago Palm	Tulip/Narcissus bulbs
Yew		

## GETTING YOUR DOG ADOPTED

Many dogs that go into foster are already available for adoption. If not, and you are unsure if your foster dog is ready to be adopted, ask yourself the questions below:

- Did your foster dog or puppy gain or lose enough weight?
- Is your foster dog healthy? (Some dogs can be adopted with kennel cough)
- Has the dog recovered fully from an illness?
- Is your foster puppy at least 10 weeks old and weaned from its mother?
- Is your foster dog or puppy successfully socialized with no major behavioral issues?
- Does your foster dog or puppy have good basic manners?

If your foster dog is ready for adoption or is already available, the first step is to create or update his bio and take new photos. Once you have your bio and photos ready, send this information to your case manager. Make sure that you include the following specific details:

- Name
- Gender
- Breed
- Weight
- Age
- Has your foster dog been spayed or neutered?

Also very helpful – is your foster ok with cats? Ok with other dogs? Ok with children (indicate appropriate ages)? If you are unsure, contact your case manager for assistance.

If you are fostering a dog that does not have a name, select a happy and positive name rather than one with negative connotations. The Foster Dog Team may edit or expand your bio based on past experience. If you need help writing a bio for your foster, please contact your case manager for assistance.

## TIPS FOR TAKING GREAT PHOTOS

### **We can't stress this enough...a picture is worth a thousand words.**

The picture is the first thing people see when they visit the rescue's listing on Petfinder.com or if they view the bio in the rescue. If the dog has a poor picture, visitors may move on to another dog without clicking or reading your dog's description. If you want to give your dog the best chance possible, take large, clear, good quality (high resolution) pictures of the dog alone. A good picture is often the difference between a dog who generates inquiries and one who doesn't.

- Take a lot of digital pictures. You may have to take 50 pictures to get 1 or 2 really great shots. If you don't have a digital camera, borrow one from a friend or contact your case manager and we can arrange for a special photo session.

- Pictures taken outside in natural light are usually much better than those taken inside or with a flash. Lighting is very important for accurately capturing a dog's coloring and detail. Have the sun or light source behind you and check to make sure you're not casting a shadow on your subject.
- Use treats and/or a squeaky toy to capture the dog's best expression. Sometimes having two people makes this process easier.
- Try taking pictures using a neutral backdrop. Select a background that contrasts with the dog's coloring. Darker-colored dogs will show up better against a lighter backdrop. Most dogs look great against a lush green lawn.
- Try different props. If the dog likes to fetch, you might get a picture of the dog with his favorite ball. Wrap a bandana around the dog's neck to add a streak of color (especially good for solid and darker-colored dogs). A bright, cheerful collar is a nice touch. Avoid having chain and prong collars in your pictures.
- The dog is the subject of your picture so the dog should take up the majority of space in your picture. Avoid excessive amounts of background. The dog's eyes should be focused on you. Try to capture at least one "hero" shot, where the focus is on the dog's face. A full body picture is also a great way to show size and scale.
- Exercise the dog before your photo shoot. A calmer dog is easier to photograph, and a panting dog looks like she's smiling! Before snapping the photos, take the time to get the pet as calm and relaxed as possible, so the photos don't show an animal that looks anxious or scared.
- Check out the competition. Visit [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com) and look at the photos of similar dogs and see which ones pop out to you. Then try to mimic these shots with your own foster dog.
- If your first attempts fail, don't be discouraged. Just keep trying and have fun.
- When you are having fun, your foster dog will probably be having fun too and it will show!

### TIPS FOR WRITING A GREAT BIO

**Accentuate the positive and let potential adopters know why they should consider your dog.** You will improve your dog's chances of finding a home if you write a thorough description. A good bio is part press release, part story telling. Don't turn it into a lengthy restaurant review, but instead try to pull the reader into the bio so that they can start to imagine a life with this new canine friend. It can be very helpful to read the bios of other similar dogs on [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com).

Tell it from the animal's perspective - the most compelling thing you can write on behalf of an animal is what you imagine the animal is thinking, feeling or remembering. Most bios start off with the basics - but the most appealing bios are written so that they are not just a list of facts. One intro paragraph on "who your dog is" can help a potential adopter visualize the dog. Your second paragraph might go into personality traits, and provide information about any training, tricks or cute behavior. Your final paragraph should outline the required forever home environment.

Tell potential adopters what you know about your dog. Be honest and avoid negative statements. Choose wording carefully. A dog that is not potty-trained might instead be, "working on her house manners." A dog that doesn't get along with other dogs or cats merely "wants to be your one and only." A dog that desperately needs obedience training is really "looking forward to attending class with his adopter."

If dog has special needs, mention them, but don't dwell on them. You can go into these details once

you have someone hooked on your dog.

## PROMOTING YOUR FOSTER DOG

Even though hundreds of people visit the rescue Facebook and the rescue website every week, the more you network your foster dog, the more quickly you are able to find it a great forever home. Here are some simple ways to promote your dog:

- Send an email to your family, friends and colleagues. Let them know about your foster dog and ask them to help you spread the word and to tell their friends and colleagues.
- Post a flyer of your foster dog at your workplace or put one on your office door or outside your cube. Your case manager can supply you with an electronic version of the flyer we post at the rescue.
- Spread the word at your child's school or other organization that you belong.
- Record a video of your foster dog or create a slideshow with more photos and have them posted on your foster dog's Petfinder.com bio.
- Make sure you always walk your foster dog with an "I'm available" bandana
- Create business cards for your foster dog and keep them in your pocket or purse. These are great to use when you are on your walks. Include a small picture and link to his Petfinder.com bio.
- Post your foster dog on some of the popular free online classified sites and social networking sites. There are even social networking sites specifically for dogs!
- Participate in any rescue events that will help you promote your foster dog.

**Please review any of these activities with your case manager to ensure that you are consistent with rescue policy.**

## THE ADOPTION PROCESS

As a foster parent, your involvement in the adoption process is both extremely important and essential.

After a potential adopter sees your foster dog's bio on the website or at the rescue on the foster board, and is interested in meeting the foster dog, the potential adopter is required to submit a completed dog adoption application. This application is available for download from the rescue website, from a foster dog's petfinder.com bio, or can be picked up at the rescue.

Once the application is completed, the potential adopter can submit the application online to the adoption review email alias ([rescue@maremmaclub.com](mailto:rescue@maremmaclub.com)).

Every foster dog available for adoption is assigned an adoption screener who reviews all incoming applications for their assigned foster dog. Suitable applicants may be contacted for additional screening by the adoption screener if the application was submitted online.

Once a qualified applicant is identified, the adoption screener or case manager will contact the foster parent and ask them to schedule a meet and greet with the applicant. Meetings can take place at a

mutually agreed upon location. Once you have scheduled a meet and greet, please let your screener or case manager know the date and time of the meeting.

The rescue also requires that all family members of the potential adopter (including family dogs) must be present for the meet and greet, or final adoption. Sometimes a home visit is sometimes necessary to ensure the safety and compatibility of the foster dog to a new home. These home visits are scheduled by the screener, in conjunction with the foster parent and the potential adopter. For example: to ensure a foster dog's compatibility with a resident cat, or other animals.

After the meet and greet (and if the applicant is still interested in the dog), foster parents should make a recommendation to the rescue regarding the adoption. If the foster parent feels that it is a good match, they need to let the rescue know.

The foster dog always stays with the foster parent until they hear from rescue. Please remember that all adoptions must be approved by rescue. Final approval of all adoptions is at the sole discretion of MSCA. Please do not make any promises during a meet and greet. You should always let the potential adopter know that final decisions are made by the rescue.

Once the adoption is approved by the rescue, the adopter pays the adoption fees and makes a spay/neuter appointment, if necessary. Foster dogs cannot go to a potential adopter's home until the adoption is finalized by rescue.

Foster dogs may never have to go back to the rescue and can be adopted straight from the foster parent's home once the rescue has approved and completed the adoption. You should keep all of the supplies provided to you from the rescue and return them at your earliest convenience. This includes collars, leashes, crates, bowls, etc. You should provide the new owner with any medication that your foster dog is taking, along with instructions and a few days' worth of food. You may also want to give them your foster dog's favorite toy, or anything else that will help with transition.

When it's finally time to hand over your foster dog, please be emotionally prepared. Even if you feel sad, the new parents are excited and happy about finding a new companion. Please remember to rejoice and celebrate that you have helped to find a forever home for your foster dog.

### SCREENING QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

Foster parents often say their goal is to find a home even better than their own! The rescue will screen for qualified applicants, but your input is critical to finding an appropriate forever home for your foster dog. Remember, this can be a very emotional experience, but it's important to stay neutral. Some additional guidelines:

- This should be a two-way dialog, rather than just a one-sided Q&A session. Instead of just answering a question, use this as an opportunity to learn more about the potential adopter and find out if they are a good match. For example, if they ask you how much exercise does he get, turn this around "he gets a fair amount of exercise< how do you plan on exercising him?" And



probe for specifics.

- Don't over-sell, or under-sell your foster dog. This should be an open and honest discussion about what the potential adopter is looking for and how this matches the needs of your foster dog.
- Be objective about personality traits. The best way to approach this is to ask about what they are looking for in personality **before** you talk about what type of personality your foster dog has (beyond what is already mentioned in the bio). This way you can find out if they really are a good match, or if they are going on appearances alone.
- Ask a lot about their past experiences with dogs. Even if this is their first dog, how do their friends or family approach dog ownership? Most people are greatly influenced by those around them.
- Find out how they would approach training and/or behavior problems. Again, don't tell them what you are doing, but find out how they would handle this. Better yet, find out how they handled this with previous dogs! This is where the hypothetical questioning can come in handy. "What would you do if you came home to find out she just chewed your brand new Jimmy Choo sandals?"
- What are the family's expectations of a "rescue" dog? How are they going about finding a dog? Is this a thoughtful process?
- On a final note: Just because the potential adopter might approach something differently than you, this doesn't mean that they won't be a great home for your foster dog. Even if you hate/love clicker training, doesn't mean that everyone must hate/love clicker training. That said, trust your instincts. If you don't feel good about the potential adopters, then let the rescue know your concerns.

Don't hesitate to contact the Foster Dog Team for assistance or guidance. If the potential adopter isn't suitable for specific reasons (they are couch potatoes and your foster dog needs to run 10 miles every day, etc.) Please let us know and we can change the dog's bio to better reflect its needs. See additional information in your foster packet.

## CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!

Your foster dog has been adopted! You've found him a permanent home that might even be better than yours - if that's possible!

The and volunteers at the Seattle Animal Rescue greatly appreciate your time, energy and dedication. Please let us know if there's anything we can do to make fostering easier and even more rewarding. On behalf of all the graduate dogs of the Seattle Animal Rescue, we thank you!

**A D D I T I O N A L T R A I N I N G A N D I N F O R M A T I O N R E S O U R C E S**