



Los Angeles County  
Department of  
Animal Care and Control

**FOSTER CARE MANUAL**



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**ANIMAL CARE  
& CONTROL**

redefining  
CARE



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## **IS FOSTERING RIGHT FOR YOU?**

**FAQ - Here are some frequently asked questions that may help you decide.**

### **What is fostering?**

Fostering is providing a temporary home for a companion animal seeking an adoptive family.

### **Why should I foster?**

Fostering is a wonderful way to give back and donate your time (and love) to an animal in need. Fostering provides an opportunity for an animal who requires special care, or just some time out of the care center, the chance to thrive away from the care center.

### **What are the requirements?**

- Be willing to abide by policies and procedures in this Foster Care Manual and Foster Care Agreement
- Be able to access e-mail regularly and a willingness to communicate with Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) staff
- Be able to provide transport to and from a DACC animal care center
- Provide some supplies and food for foster animals
- Spend time with foster pets and treat them like your own animals while they are in your care
- Have up-to-date vaccinations and licensing for all animals in your home

### **What types of animals need foster care?**

- Kittens and puppies too young to be in the animal care center
- Animals recovering from illness or injury
- Animals that need a break from the animal care center environment
- Long stay animals
- Animals awaiting transport to other organizations

### **How long do animals need to be in foster care?**

Foster opportunities can range from days to months. Animals that are foster candidates have a wide variety of needs, so there are a number of long- and short-term possibilities.

### **How much time do foster parents have to devote to the animal(s) in their care?**

It depends on the situation. Foster animals need all of the same things that owned animals do and may even need more attention if they are recovering from illness, injury, or need extra exercise.

### **What are some of the potential risks of fostering an animal?**

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences that you can have, but there are some potential risks. While rare, below you will read some of the possible risks:

- Owned animals could catch a disease and/or a parasite from a foster animal
- Foster families, members of their household, or visitors could catch a disease and/or parasite from a foster animal (as a practice, we do not send animals with known diseases transmittable to humans to foster)
- Owned animals could be injured or killed by a foster animal. This is preventable if you follow procedures and guidelines recommended by DACC. We do our best to match foster homes with foster pets, however, behavior can change once in a home environment.
- Foster families, members of the household, or visitors could be injured by a foster animal
- Foster animals could die in foster care or have to return to the animal care center to be euthanized
- Foster animals may destroy personal items

### **Who provides the medical care?**

DACC provides all of the necessary medical care for fostered animals including medication, vaccinations, and exams.

### **What if a foster would like to adopt the foster animal?**

Fosters are more than welcome to adopt their foster animal and are given the first chance to do so.

## **FOSTER PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Legal Guardianship**

All animals in foster care are still subject to the conditions of gratuitous depositary pursuant to CA Civil Code §1813 et. seq. Animals fostered by DACC are subject to all applicable policies, rules, and restrictions.

### **Proper Housing and Care Requirements**

1. Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate-controlled homes with the temperature kept between 60° and 80° F.
2. Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors and/or in high-traffic areas, such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc. These areas should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be present.
3. Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. When outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced yard. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised in the securely fenced yard.
4. You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off-leash dog parks or other off-leash areas. Dogs must be on a leash, six feet in length or shorter, and under your control, at all times. Extendable leashes are not permitted.
5. You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other dogs, except those in your home.
6. Foster dogs must be fed in their crate away from other dogs and children. Any long-term, consumable treats should also be given in a crate.
7. Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secure carriers.
8. If your foster pet gets loose, contact the animal care center or foster team contact immediately.
9. If injury or illness results from interaction between your animal(s) and foster animal, DACC will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster animal for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.

10. The DACC reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.
11. If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal for any reason upon request by DACC staff or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and DACC may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.
12. Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by DACC veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the care center veterinarian.
13. Foster care providers must notify the care center immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
14. Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.

## **Supplies**

DACC will provide foster care providers with certain supplies:

- Food for puppies and kittens (this includes formula when needed)
- Collars and tags for dogs and puppies
- Any medications, supplements, or prescription diets that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff

## **Health and Temperament**

DACC will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Foster care providers are required to be as complete and accurate as possible when reporting their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the animal care center in determining the proper medical treatment, training, and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the animal.

## **Foster Animal Adoptions**

1. DACC encourages foster care providers to seek adoptive families for the animals in their care by acting as adoption ambassadors.
2. All foster animals must be spayed or neutered and microchipped before they can go to their permanent adoptive homes.
3. Potential adopters must go through standard departmental adoption procedures.

4. Foster care providers can adopt their foster animals and are given first choice until a meet and greet is scheduled with a potential adopter.

## **HOW IT WORKS**

### **Getting Started**

After your foster application has been received and approved, you will receive a welcome e-mail, and we will invite you to join our volunteer and foster software system, which is how we communicate with foster care providers.

Prior to fostering any animals, you will be required to sign the foster agreement which will be kept on file at the animal care center. In addition, within three months of completing the foster application, and prior to fostering an animal, you will be required to attend a foster program orientation, which is hosted online.

Please note: If at any time you have questions regarding the foster program, potential foster animals, etc., those questions should be directed to the [foster coordinator](#).

### **PICKING UP A NEW FOSTER ANIMAL**

If you are interested in fostering a particular animal or litter that you have seen posted on Trello, please contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. Once we receive notification of your interest, we will verify that the animal/litter is still available, answer any questions that you may have, and confirm a pick-up date and time. All questions regarding an animal's history, behavior, medical needs, special care instructions, etc., should be directed to the foster coordinator prior to pick up.

When picking up a new foster animal, please park and call your point of contact. Let your point of contact know that you are there to pick up a foster animal. You will need to have the animal's ID number (found in the original Trello posting or on the animal's website listing). After picking up your foster animal, you will receive a "Foster Pet Schedule" e-mail with additional details regarding its care and future medical needs. Please watch for this e-mail. It will be sent within three days from the day that you picked up the animal.

### **MEDICAL CARE**

#### **Booster Vaccines/Deworming**

All foster animals under four months of age should have their weight checked and be given booster vaccines and dewormed every three to four weeks. This means that kittens and puppies that are very young when they go to foster care may receive as many as four boosters. Foster animals over four weeks of age when they go into foster care should be returned to the animal care center for booster vaccines just once every three to four weeks after their initial shot. This will be scheduled by appointment. A schedule of vaccinations/boosters will be provided to you when you first take your foster dog or cat

home. When the due date is approaching, you must call the Foster Medical Helpline at (661) 575-2812. A medical staff member will assist you in making a medical appointment at the care center closest to you.

When you arrive at the care center at your scheduled time, please park at a designated spot and someone will come out and take your foster dog or cat to our medical team. After an exam and administration of vaccines, your foster pet will be brought back to your car. This is a quick in and out process (typically 15 - 20 minutes).

Due to the large number of animals in the foster program, it is up to the foster care providers to keep track of their foster's booster shot and preventive medication schedule and call for an appointment before the booster is due.

### **Flea and Tick Prevention**

All foster animals over eight weeks of age should be given flea/tick preventative monthly. Since these medications are based on the weight of the animal, if your foster is still growing, you will need to follow the same protocol given above for booster shots. If you are fostering an adult animal whose weight has not changed, you can simply request medication on the Foster Update form on Google Drive.

If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea, or has vomited, but is alert, active, eating and drinking well, please notify the foster coordinator so that it can be determined how best to proceed.

### **Sick or Injured Fosters**

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, lethargy, yellow/green ocular or nasal discharge, previously undocumented hair loss, straining to urinate or defecate, etc., please call the Foster Medical Helpline at (661) 575-2812. Our medical team will assist you and/or make arrangements for you at the nearest care center.

If an appointment is made for you to bring your foster pet or pick up medications, please park at a designated spot ten minutes before your appointment and someone will come out to assist you. It is our intention to have veterinary staff available to provide care for sick foster animals while you wait, and most animals coming in during these hours will be seen and discharged within one hour. However, please be aware that there are times that the veterinary staff are assigned to surgery or other tasks and may need to handle more urgent/emergency situations so wait times may be longer, or you may be asked to drop off and pick up later.

### **Fading Kitten Syndrome**

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, "crashes" and begins to fade away. Symptoms include:

- Low body temperature – the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy - not getting up, unable to stand, not responding to touching/petting
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out

### **Foster Puppies or Kittens with Fleas, Ticks, or other Parasites**

If you notice that your foster kittens or puppies have fleas on them, they can be bathed with plain blue Dawn dish soap and a small comb can be used to remove the dead and dying fleas. Kittens and puppies should be dried thoroughly after bathing and steps should be taken to ensure that they stay warm. For additional advice on how best to handle fleas/ticks and other parasites, please contact the care center.

### **In Case of an After-Hours Emergency:**

If you have an emergency outside of business hours, please contact the Foster Medical Helpline at (661) 575-2812. Our communications center staff will help direct you to the nearest care center for assistance with one of our officers. If needed, you will be directed to drop off your foster pet with the officer for transfer to an overnight medical facility for evaluation. Our medical team will contact you the following day regarding the status of your foster.

### **Scheduling Spay/Neuter Surgery and Microchipping**

Healthy animals will be altered prior to foster placement, however in some situation the animal may be too ill for surgery. In these situations, the veterinary team will determine during re-checks when the animal is healthy enough to be altered and surgery will be scheduled at the earliest possible date.

Currently, due to the COVID-19 crisis, all elective surgeries are being postponed allowing for conservation of medical supplies and practice appropriate physical distancing of our medical staff. We will reach out to you regarding spay/neuter appointments when normal medical operations resume.

Whenever possible, microchips will be implanted prior to the animal being placed in foster. If the animal is too young or too small to be microchipped, the microchip will be implanted at the time of spay or neuter.

### **HOW CAN I HELP MY FOSTER ANIMAL FIND A FOREVER HOME?**

When fostering an animal for DACC, you can be the animal's number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you will not just be a foster care provider. You will be a photographer, videographer, biographer, a marketing specialist, and an adoption counselor!

- Take at least one clear, landscape-oriented (horizontal), photo of the foster animal and e-mail it to the foster coordinator to be added to the Department's website.
- Take at least one clear, short, video of the foster animal and e-mail it to the foster coordinator to be added to the Department's website.

### **My Foster Animal has an Adopter, Now What?**

1. The adopter must go through the standard departmental approval process at the care center. Whenever possible, DACC staff will do their best to coordinate a time for the adopter to meet with the foster care providers. As the foster provider you know your foster pet the best, and we encourage you to share as much information as possible with potential adopters.
2. Once it is confirmed that someone will be adopting your foster pet, the animal care center will be in touch right away to arrange returning the foster animal to the care center and pick-up with the adopters.
3. If the animal was not altered prior to going to foster, the foster animal will be scheduled for spay or neuter before being transferred to the adopter.
4. If a potential adopter fails to pick-up at the arranged time, the foster care provider will be contacted and given the opportunity to take their pet back as a foster.

### **Off-Site Adoption Events**

Another option for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the animals in their care are adoption events. These events are typically held on weekends, at various locations throughout L.A. County. If your foster pet is deemed eligible by DACC staff to attend an off-site event, your foster animals may be brought to the care center the morning of the event and transported by DACC staff to the event, or foster care providers may bring their foster animal to the event and volunteer.

### **RETURNING FOSTER ANIMALS TO THE CARE CENTER**

If you need to return a foster pet to the care center for any reason, please contact the foster coordinator so that we can make arrangements for you to do so. When returning foster pets to the care center, you will park when you arrive at the care center and someone will come out to assist you. Please have the pet's animal ID number available.

You must complete a Pet Profile for each animal that you are returning.

### **ANIMALS THAT HAVE PASSED AWAY**

In some cases, sick or weak pets may die in foster care. If your foster animal passes away, please contact the foster coordinator immediately. You will be asked to provide

detailed information as to what happened at the time of the death so that we can determine if other foster animals in your care or elsewhere may be at risk. You will be asked to bring the body back to DACC and a necropsy (animal autopsy) may be performed.

## **SHORT-TERM FOSTERING**

### **Short term and Weekend Fosters**

DACC has two different options for short-term fostering—short-term and weekend.

Short term: Fostering for only a designated amount of time

Weekend Fostering: Take a dog home for the weekend and bring it back Monday morning.

*Please note: Volunteer interested in short-term fostering opportunities are required to complete additional training. Please contact the foster coordinator for additional information.*

### **Requirements:**

- You must be an approved foster and have a completed and signed Foster Agreement on file.
- You must have completed the additional training that is required for short-term fostering opportunities.
- You must be available to pick up and return the dog during regular business hours.
- You must review the “Public Outings and Walks - Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog”

### **Steps:**

1. If you are interested in taking a specific dog for short-term or weekend fostering, please contact the foster coordinator to verify that the dog is available, review the dog’s behavior records, and to confirm a pickup date and time.
2. Once you have confirmed with staff that you will be picking up a specific dog, staff will make a note in the dog’s record concerning where it is going and when it will be returning.
3. When you arrive for your pick-up appointment, please call your point of contact and they will bring supplies and the pet out to your car.

4. They will need to see a valid ID, get your Driver's License Number, confirm your current address/contact information, and have you sign a Foster Agreement if you have not already.
5. If you are a current DACC volunteer who wishes to short term foster an animal, you must sign a Foster Agreement and watch the DACC Foster Orientation Video.

## **SAFETY TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR FOSTER DOG**

### **Before Public Outings and Walks**

- Make sure you have the appropriate supplies. These include: a cell phone, poop bags, a bottle of water, a collapsible bowl, and a list of emergency numbers.
- Choose your location wisely. Do not take your foster dog to crowded areas, areas where they may be off-leash dogs, or other high-traffic locations.
- Make sure the dog is properly fitted with a collar. If needed, a harness can be used in addition to the collar. If you are not sure whether or not the dog is properly outfitted, please e-mail us a photo, and we can help with adjustments.
- The dog should have a leash properly attached to their collar or harness. Check to be sure that all equipment is fastened, and no equipment is frayed, worn, or has stitching coming out.
- Do not wrap the leash around your hand. It would be terrible for a dog to get loose, but much worse if the dog were to drag you, the handler, into a dangerous traffic situation. If you feel that a dog is pulling you off your feet or that you are at risk of losing control of the dog, please return it.
- Walk your dog on a short leash – a long leash gives the dog more strength and leverage. Your foster dog should not be walked on a flexi/retractable leash at any time.
- Be visible! Wear bright colors so that you can be easily seen by oncoming traffic.

### **During the Outings and Walks**

- Be aware of other dogs, bicyclists, runners, and walkers that might cross your path and give them the right of way. Keep your distance, at least six feet away, from other animals, and do not introduce foster dogs to privately owned dogs.
- Keep from other dogs. Your foster dog should not be allowed to meet dog while on walks.

- Cross safely. Look both ways when you cross traffic and remember that the prey drive of any dog can kick in at any time. Be aware of your surroundings, and do not let the dog walk far in front of you or far behind you.
- Do not use headphones or talk on a cell phone while walking the dog. Use all of your senses to ensure that you, those around you, and the dog remain safe.
- Pay attention to the dog's respiration rate and overall appearance and attitude. Since many of the dogs have been relatively non-mobile for weeks or months, they may become fatigued quite quickly. Make sure to offer water regularly and take breaks periodically so the dog can catch his breath.
- If you notice the dog acting strangely or you find yourself in a dangerous situation, do not hesitate to contact the Communication Center for assistance:

Agoura (818) 991-0071  
 Baldwin Park (626) 962-3577  
 Carson/Gardena (310) 523-9566  
 Castaic (661) 257-3191  
 Downey (562) 940-6898  
 Lancaster (661) 940-4191  
 Palmdale (661)575-2888

- If there is an emergency, such as a person being bitten, call 911 for assistance.

### **Additional Tips**

- Use distance or distraction to reduce aroused behavior.
- Keep two hands on leash for best control.
- Let faster traffic pass on left, keep slower traffic on your right.
- Reward and praise the dog for calm behavior, easy walking or jogging, and sitting for greetings. Also bring dog treats with you and reward your dog for good behavior!
- Have fun!

### **SHARE THE FOSTER EXPERIENCE**

Complete a behavior profile for the dog documenting your experience online. Share fun pictures and details with DACC staff and volunteers by e-mailing them to [Foster@animalcare.lacounty.gov](mailto:Foster@animalcare.lacounty.gov)

## **BEHAVIOR BASICS**

- If the dog will be visiting a place other than your home during your time together, consider whether it will truly benefit from and enjoy the particular environment to which you will be taking it. Think about the surroundings, the traffic (both people and other animals), and whether or not the environment may cause further stress to your foster dog.
- Crowded public areas should be avoided, including school grounds.
- You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash and under your control at all times.
- You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other animals, except those in your home.
- Ride in the car, walk in the neighborhood, play, watch TV, whatever you want to do within the limits outlined above. Use structure, kindness, attention, training, and snuggling as needed. Some dogs will want to spend their time resting and some will want to do lots of fun things. Keep in mind the dog's safety and needs and yours and have fun!

## **DECOMPRESSION PERIOD**

Remember that this is more than likely a confusing time for your new foster pet. They have just left the chaotic environment of the care center and are bound to be feeling a little overwhelmed. It can be tempting to bring them with you to shop or visit friends or go out to eat, but your foster pet should go straight to your home and be allowed to settle in before taking them anywhere.

It can take days to several months for an animal to become comfortable in your home and with your routine. Be patient and allow the animal to have some time to decompress. You should plan to create a quiet space for your foster pet with a crate setup that is "den like" or give them a room like an unoccupied bathroom. If the foster pet you bring home appears stressed out or shut down, allow it to have a space that is entirely its own. Allow your foster pet to relax before immediately subjecting it to social situations.

For cats, starting with a small space can make them feel much more comfortable about their new dwelling. Often, they will want a place to hide and make sure the environment is safe to move in. Allow them to have a space that belongs to them without intrusion from other pets. As they begin to get more comfortable, you can allow them to have more free roaming time.

For dogs, when you first arrive home, walk them around outside on their leash to allow for a chance to go to the bathroom. Keeping them on leash at first can be helpful, especially when entering a new environment with so many smells and potentially scary

new sounds. A leash will keep them from running away from you or chasing objects that could be potentially harmful.

Once you are inside the house, it might take a bit of time for your new foster pet to relax. The more you can relax into a routine, the more your foster pet will, too. Please also note that all animals are individuals; they all have different adjustment and decompression periods.

## **FOSTER PET ISOLATION**

When you take a foster pet home, we recommend that you keep them separated from your personal animals for at least 24 - 48 hours. This is recommended for the safety and protection of your personal animals. We can give no guarantees about the health and behavior of an animal coming from our facility into your home.

Animals are fully vetted upon intake when arriving to one of our care centers, but it is always a good idea to be on the safe side when it comes to your personal animals. Please note that some diseases will not always appear within the first 24 - 48 hours of arrival at the care center or your home and can incubate in the body for longer than that time frame. An enclosed area or separate room with no carpet will often work best for your foster pet during the isolation period (such as your laundry room or an unoccupied bathroom).

## **INTRODUCING DOGS**

The following is meant to be a guide for introducing two social dogs to each other. Do not use this procedure if either dog has had a history of dog aggression and/or displays On-Leash Reactivity (OLR) or Barrier Reactivity (BR) to other dogs. This reactivity refers to dogs who bark, lunge, and even fighting or biting, and can be displayed while the dog is either on the end of a leash or behind a barrier (fence, gate, etc.). While OLR and BR are not indicators of canine aggression, it can cause on-leash introductions to go poorly. If you are attempting to follow this procedure and either of the dogs seems uncomfortable or begins to display OLR or BR, please cease the introduction and contact the foster team.

Many dogs have forgotten or never learned how to properly greet other members of their own species. Dogs are mostly on leashes, behind fences, rushed into greetings by their well-meaning people, and kept from situations that would have otherwise helped them learn canine greeting etiquette. Leash reactivity is one of the biggest dog behavioral issues caused by humans.

Tight leashes can create frustration when your dog sees other dogs on the street. This can cause body language in your dog that may look offensive to other dogs. Other behavior often facilitated by humans—pulling, hard stares, and running up to other dogs head-on—can turn greetings sour.

Before you set up a new-dog introduction, consider your own dog's general attitude towards other dogs. Some dogs are uncomfortable with or reactive to new dogs and need very slow introductions. Realize that dogs do not necessarily like every single dog they meet, and some do best as an only dog. If your dog has a history of reacting negatively to the company of other dogs, then it is probably best to just have them as an only dog.

It is a must to properly introduce your current dog to a new dog, especially if the new dog is meant to become part of your family. Do not just walk a new dog into your home with your current dog waiting inside. Your dog will naturally feel the newcomer is an intruder, not a new friend. First impressions matter! Properly introduced dogs are more likely to become buddies.

To properly introduce your dog to a new dog, you will need two people, one person per dog, and some high-value treats. These can be pieces of chicken, hot dog, or cheese—anything that will get the dog's attention and that the dog does not get normally. Start by walking the two dogs on-leash in the same direction in neutral territory. If you find that they pull toward each other, stare at each other or are overly excited, then you are too close too soon.

Put some distance between the dogs and have them just hang out for a bit at that distance before continuing to walk. Use your treats to reward your dog for remaining calm and focusing on you. This gives them something to do while they get used to each other's presence. Be patient and relaxed so the dogs can relax too. As the dogs begin calming down in each other's presence, begin to move them closer to each other. At some point they should become more relaxed, and you can proceed with your walk. What you are looking for is calm, relaxed, and confident behavior. Neither dog should be overly aroused, nervous, stiff, or fearful.

If the dogs do not seem to be able to relax and be friendly, it might be best to separate them until you can speak to the foster team. If they are relaxed and nicely interested in each other, then go ahead and let them get close enough to sniff. As they sniff, watch carefully.

Warning signs include stiffening, low growling, avoidance, or hard stares. If you see these behaviors, calmly move the dogs away from each other. Remember, some dogs do not like the company of other dogs, and they should never be forced into a greeting. Some dogs may need more time or a few more intros to get used to another dog. If the dogs remain relaxed and pleasantly interested in each other, one or both of them may gesture to play. Keep the leashes loose and let them interact on leash for a bit to make sure all goes well.

Take away all food from this point forward, as it can be a trigger for an argument. Watch the play for a while to be sure everyone is minding their manners: no rude behavior or pushy type of mounting behavior allowed initially.

Every few minutes, before the dogs reach a state of high arousal or overexcitement, stop the play and get the dogs calm again or walk them. Then let the play resume. End the play on a good note; do not let them play into crankiness. With you as their leader to give them guidance and direction, the dogs will get to know each other and build a trusting bond.

The next step, after they have successfully played for some time, is to bring both dogs into your house or yard. If the new dog is going to be a member of your family, it is best to crate the new dog often and not let it just roam around.

Make sure that both dogs are fed in separate rooms or areas, and avoid introducing high-value objects like chew toys or bones too quickly.

We understand that sometimes it is just not a good fit. If that is the case, please contact the foster team. This does not necessarily mean you will not be allowed to foster another dog with us. We encourage following the steps outlined in this document or contacting the foster team for more tips to ensure the greatest success.

## **DOG TO CAT INTRODUCTIONS**

The best long-term results for a dog and cat introduction are to take your time and go through a step-by-step process of slowly acclimating the animals. With all animals, we highly recommend following the isolation protocol before doing any introductions. The dog and cat(s) should not meet or see each other for at least a day so that the dog has time to get used to the new house and the scent of the cat.

To give your cat(s) a break and also acclimate to the smell of the new dog, you can rotate “free” time in the house by kenneling or putting your dog in a secured closed off room and then allowing the cat(s) loose in the house. If you have multiple dogs, you should do this with them individually. Multiple dogs can overwhelm a cat and create a “pack mentality” in the dogs that could make introductions extremely difficult.

The introductions should not last for hours on end. It is best for both animals to do several short 15 - 30 minute “introduction sessions” a day. Use the following steps to slowly introduce your new foster pet:

1. Grab some stinky treats, put your dog on leash and bring the cat into the same room using a crate or baby gate to separate them.
2. Reward your dog with food for staying calm while the cat is visible across the room. Do not move the dog any closer until you are able to get your dog's attention in the presence of the cat.
3. Reward the dog any time they look away from the cat and especially if the dog looks at you.

4. If the dog lunges or gets over excited, say “no” or “uh-uh” and back the dog away or remove it. Be sure to reward your dog if it chooses a calmer behavior afterwards. Your dog can look at the cat but should be heavily rewarded for choosing to look away from the cat.
5. If your dog is showing appropriate/calm behaviors from across the room, begin to move closer and repeat the process. Only choose to move closer after your dog has successfully shown only positive behaviors at the previous distance for three sessions in a row. If your dog is still showing too much interest or aggressive type behavior around the cat, keep them separated and alert the foster team.

**Next Steps:** Assuming your new dog is remaining calm around the cat and you have moved closer in proximity to the cat in the crate or on the other side of a baby gate, you will start these exercises over again with the cat out of the crate or baby gate.

1. Start with your dog on leash across the room with the cat loose on the other side. This will look different to your dog since the cat can move more freely and normally.
2. A common trigger for dogs is when the cat runs across the room so be sure to heavily reward your dog if the cat does move quickly or jumps up on something and your dog remains calm.
3. Work up to a closer proximity to the cat but not allowing the cat to approach the dog or for the dog to have access to the cat.
4. If the dog is doing well on leash and is responsive to you around the cat, you can try them loose. Keep a leash on your dog but allow it to drag on the ground beside them like an extended handle that you can step on or quickly pick up if you need to interrupt your dog.

Allow your cat to give appropriate warnings like hissing or swatting to indicate that he needs space. Your dog should respond to this by moving away, reward him when he does this. If your dog does not understand the cat’s warning or thinks it is play, help your dog by calling or guiding him away by the dragging leash.

Continue to reward your dog for relaxed behavior and for any time your dog looks at the cat but chooses to look/move away.

**Reminders:**

- Even dogs that respect cats indoors may chase or lunge toward cats outdoors, so be very careful having your dog and cat(s) in the backyard together.
- New dogs and cats should not be left alone together for at least the first six months you have the dog. You are still getting to know your new dog and what he/she will do in every circumstance.

- Every animal might have a different reaction to the other, so please be mindful and aware of your animal's comfort level.

## **CAT TO CAT INTRODUCTIONS**

As a species, cats tend to need more time to adjust to changes in their environment, and like us they can vary in their social personalities. When introducing one cat to another, consider things such as energy level, history with other cats, and/or behavior when viewing another cat. None of this can ever predict 100 percent of your cat's reaction when you bring home another pet, but it could give insight into how they might react when they smell or see another animal in your home. With all animals, we highly recommend following the isolation protocol before doing any introductions.

To aid in a successful first meeting, it is best to separate your resident cat from the new cat when it is first brought home to control the initial introduction. While separated, the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other, but not see or touch to prevent any negative interactions. This can be done either by placing your new cat in a spare bedroom, laundry room, a walk-in closet, or even a bathroom.

To prevent negative touch, a baby gate is highly recommended to place in front of any door, but also a rolled towel place against the space under the door can substitute for this. During separation, each cat should be provided with their own necessary items (food and water, litter box, scratching post, bed, and toys) to alleviate any stress. After a few days, we recommend allowing the cats to rotate between the two rooms. This allows your new cat to be able to explore, but also lets your two cats separately investigate the other's smell.

Experiment with removing the barrier that has been preventing touch at this point and notice if either cat's reactions to each other under the door is positive. Once you begin to see no aggression (swatting, growling, etc.) between the two cats under the door, you can begin to introduce the cats to the sight of each other. A tall baby gate can be extremely helpful here, or even to rotate time in an extra-large wire crate if you have an agile cat.

After viewing each other without any direct swatting, you can open the door to allow for the cats to interact with each other. Do not force the cats to interact, allow them to approach each other on their own terms. It is normal during this time for cats to hiss at or low growl at each other.

The cats should not charge at or bite each other. If this happens and the cats begin to fight, do not attempt to pick them up or grab them. Try to separate them by using your voice or something that you can put in between them. You can also prepare yourself with a spray bottle filled with water to squirt them. Once separated in their own rooms, go back to the beginning of this process to work on a slower integration process.

## YOUR FOSTER PET AND INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

# How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

<p>Avoid taking people's food</p> 	<p>Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating</p> 
<p>Avoid stealing other people's toys</p> 	<p>Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys</p> 
<p>Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face</p> 	<p>Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face</p> 
<p>Avoid bothering when asleep</p> 	<p>Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.</p> 
<p>Avoid pestering</p> 	<p>Avoid grabbing tail/ears</p> 
<p>Avoid climbing on or trampling</p> 	<p>Avoid climbing on or trampling</p> 
<p>Avoid pinching</p> 	<p>Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.</p> 
<p>Avoid screaming around</p> 	<p>Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.</p> 

**Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS**  
*The Art and Science of Animal Behavior*

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit [www.drsophiayin.com](http://www.drsophiayin.com).



## **COMMON BEHAVIORAL TIPS FOR DOGS**

Mouthing and play-biting are common ways in which dogs utilize their mouths in play. It is up to us to teach them that doing so is not acceptable when engaging with people.

1. Redirect: As with chewing, you want to teach your dog what IS allowed. So always have toys nearby. When it comes to mild mouthing, simply engage them with a toy and continue playtime. You will probably have to repeat this several times even within the same stretch of playtime to help your dog understand.
2. Remove all attention: If your pup is not responding after several attempts to redirect, and/or the mouthing/play bites become more intense, say “no” and then immediately walk away. Do not talk to them further, do not interact with them in any way. Simply remove yourself from them. To your pup, suddenly the game has stopped. With enough repetitions, they will come to understand that being mouthy is what causes the fun to go away. Following this, if you see your dog go to a toy or politely (not jumping or mouthing) approach you, you can give them lots of praise and re-engage them in playtime. (Note: Ignoring is also a great tactic for attention-seeking barking.)

Dogs use their mouths to eat, play, explore, pick things up, etc. Not only is chewing natural for dogs, but it has health benefits as well (so long as they are chewing the right things). Your dog can not chew on what it cannot reach. Keep shoes, kids’ toys, remotes, and other curious and chewable items out of your dog’s reach.

If you need to cook dinner, make a phone call, or get involved in some other task that takes your attention away from your dog, have a dog-proof area. This can be a penned-off area or even the dog’s crate. It is not a punishment, so make sure your dog has plenty of positive things to keep it occupied. (One of the many benefits of crate training is to prevent destructive behaviors like chewing.)

We want to teach them what they ARE allowed to chew. If you catch your dog chewing on something it should not, interrupt it with a neutral (non-praise, but also non-punishment) noise that gets their attention. A mild “no” or a light clap of your hands are a couple of ideas. Offer them an appropriate toy or chew instead as a means of redirecting the chewing behavior.

While your dog is in the process of learning, offer lots of praise any time your dog picks up something it can chew. It is important to make sure your dog has not only plenty of physical stimulation, but mental stimulation as well. Mental stimulation can include training games, puzzle toys, even a Kong toy stuffed with treats.

## **JUMPING UP**

Puppy jumping is usually greeted with enthusiasm and affection. Then, one day that same behavior is greeted with irritation or worse—all because the puppy grew up. Never reward any dog for jumping. In fact, we want to engage them as little as possible when

they are displaying rude behaviors, such as jumping. They jump for attention, and even a stern “no” is attention. And many dogs consider you pushing them away to be play.

Teach an incompatible behavior: A dog cannot jump if they are expected to do something that requires all four paws on the ground (what we call having four on the floor). Give your dog a solid foundation of sit. If your dog wants your attention, it must sit for it. It only gets attention as long as it has all four on the floor.

The moment the dog jumps up, remove all attention: Again, this means not even scolding it. Stand up and either a) turn around and walk away, or b) walk “through” (or past) them and keep walking.

If turning away from and walking “through” the jumping are not enough to get the message across, try tethering your dog to a piece of heavy furniture or another stable object/fixture. Have one individual, either a family member or a guest, approach at a time. If the dog keeps all four on the floor, it gets attention and affection. The moment it jumps up, the person walks away out of the reach of the tether. This way the dog cannot pursue attention.

If your pup is prone to jumping, always have them wear a lightweight leash. We call this a “dragging leash” or “drag line.” When your pup starts to jump, tack the leash to the floor with your foot. The length between your foot and their collar should be enough that, if they have four on the floor, there is no tension; but as soon as they jump up, there is automatic and immediate pressure. This gives the dog instant feedback that jumping up is a) unsuccessful and b) uncomfortable.

## **HOUSE TRAINING**

Puppies under six months of age are typically unable to forgo going to the bathroom for more than a few hours. A healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for 8 - 10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions. Frequent outings are necessary to avoid accidents. You will want to make sure the dog has plenty of opportunities to go outside. You also want to give them ample time. Walk them for at least 15 minutes to encourage them and give them plenty of time to eliminate. When they do go outside, you want to reward and praise this wanted behavior.

It is vital to successful housetraining that we NEVER scold a dog for going potty inside, even—especially—when we catch them in the act. Often, the dog will not understand that you are scolding them for going inside. They are more likely to think you are scolding them for going at all, and as a result they will want to hide from you to do their business. This means sneaking off to quiet, isolated corners of the home or behind furniture, and no one wants to play “Find the Smell!” Instead, our focus should be on praising and treating every time the pup goes outside.

If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you have eyes on your pup at all times. The second they start to go, quickly walk them outside. Remain neutral until they are outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there you can reward! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please. If you are having difficulty with frequent inappropriate urination or bowel movements, contact us for an appointment to rule out possible medical causes.

We will do our best to give you as much information as we have on each animal we send home; however, we do not have extensive background information on many of the pets that are in our care centers. Because of this lack of information, we recommend housing your pet in a secure manner whenever you need to leave home.

We cannot guarantee that a foster pet is housetrained or will not chew on furniture and belongings when you are not home supervising. If needed, we can provide a crate for your foster animal.

## **CRATE TRAINING**

Dogs are, by nature, denning animals. This does not mean every dog will take to the crate with ease, but it does mean you should not feel guilty about crating your foster dog. For a puppy, a warm crate can work as an aid to housetraining and a temporary play-pen when they cannot be directly supervised.

Crates can offer a safe space all to their own for recuperation, whether it is from an injury or simply just to get away from the kids. As long as we do not use crating for punishment, it can also help correct some undesirable behaviors such as destructive chewing. More importantly, crates can help prevent problem behaviors before they even start by helping establish a routine for your dog.

It is completely reasonable to crate our pups for up to 8 - 9 hours each day, so long as we set them up for success with the crate. The most fundamental and vital thing to remember about crate training is the crate is never a punishment.

Plastic and metal wire crates each have their pros and cons, but the choice largely comes down to preference of either the dog or the human. As for size, the crate should be big enough for your pup to stand up, lay down, and easily turn around uninhibited.

Encourage your dog to investigate the crate. Toss some treats or a favorite toy in to begin the positive association. Work on this until your dog goes in and out of the crate without displaying any nervous body language. This could take a few minutes or several days.

Start feeding your pup around the crate. Begin by setting the bowl in front of the crate and over the next several days (or longer, depending on the dog's comfort level) gradually move the bowl further into the crate. Do NOT work on closing the gate until your dog has eaten a few meals, while relaxed, completely inside the crate. Once they have reached

this point, you can begin closing the door while they are eating. At first, open the door once they have finished. Lengthen this over several mealtimes until they can stay in the crate calmly for up to ten minutes after eating.

If at any point they begin to bark or cry or paw at the gate, DO NOT open the gate until they have stopped. Otherwise they will think complaining will make the gate open. After you get to this point, you can start crating your pup outside of mealtimes. In the beginning, it should be able to see you while in the crate. Wait a minute or two (this does not have to be while you are standing right in front of the crate, so long as your pup can see you) and then let them out.

Once you have worked up to at least thirty minutes of calm, you can start leaving the home for short periods of time with your pup crated. Even if your pet loves the crate, it might whine a little when you first leave. Avoid an emotional departure, as it can increase the nervousness of your dog. By being a source of excitement, we reinforce that our being away was something to be upset about in the first place. As much as we want to see how excited our dog is when we come home, we can intensify its stress when we leave by making a big to-do of our comings and goings.

If your pet is tired, it will be faster to lay down and go to sleep when you leave, versus anxiously waiting for you to return home. Giving it plenty of exercise before it is crated will help it relax. Ideally, we do not want to crate a dog for longer than it is used to.

You can keep your dog in a bathroom or laundry room where it cannot get into anything that might hurt it. Tiled and linoleum floors are also much easier to clean up than carpet. Another option is to buy a plastic playpen or metal "x pen" to keep it contained in a specific area of the house.

## **RESOURCE GUARDING**

This is a broad-spectrum term that means showing possessive, or "guarding" behavior over any object. Guarding food and/or edible objects can be defined as "food guarding." When guarding behavior occurs towards a variety of objects, not specifically only food or toys, it may be referred to as "generalized guarding."

An easy way to describe resource guarding with others is that "the dog does not like to share." This behavior may present itself towards other animals, people, or both. However, showing resource guarding towards one is not indicative of the other. For example, a dog showing food guarding towards another animal in the household is not guaranteed to show guarding towards a human in the house. Contact the foster team if you see resource guarding in your foster.

## **ON-LEASH REACTIVITY**

This is a behavior that occurs usually in the form of barking towards something while the dog is on-leash. This is not a necessarily an indicator of aggression, but more indicative

of the dog feeling excitement, fear, arousal, and/or frustration towards the object or individual. When a dog is displaying on-leash reactivity towards an individual, it is advised to not allow a dog to engage with them until they have shown more relaxed behavior.

Environment can play a big factor in a dog's behavior on-leash. If a dog displays this behavior in the care center environment, it does not necessarily mean it will display it while in a home. Some dogs display this behavior only when in close proximity to an individual or object, others at a greater distance. Providing the appropriate equipment for your foster can provide greater control of a foster that is showing this behavior.

## **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Typically, a dog with separation anxiety will display a dramatic response within a short time of their person leaving. This can range in intensity, depending on the dog or the length of time that the dog is left alone. It is important to note that most symptoms of boredom share characteristics with minor separation anxiety, but dogs who are bored might display these behaviors less consistently. Addressing boredom first could eliminate the unwanted behavior.

The most common of these behaviors are: chewing or knocking down easily accessible items, and howling, barking, and/or crying. Depending on the severity, we are looking for an adopter and/or foster care provider who either has a flexible schedule, is home most of the time, or works from home. She/he should be willing and able to devote time to crate-training and working on the separation anxiety. We may need to counsel the foster care provider if (s)he lives in an apartment or are renting (due to possible noise complaints, destruction to rental property, etc.). Depending on severity, anti-anxiety medication and/or an indestructible crate may be recommended.

# DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"  
look away/head turn



STRESSED  
yawn



STRESSED  
nose lick



"PEACE!"  
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"  
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"  
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED  
scratching



STRESS RELEASE  
shake off



RELAXED  
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"  
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE  
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"  
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"  
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"  
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"  
play bow



"READY!"  
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS  
head tilt



HAPPY  
(or hot)



OVERJOYED  
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,  
DON'T STOP"

## **COMMON BEHAVIORAL TIPS FOR CATS**

Most cats will instinctively gravitate towards using a litter box from an early age. However, inappropriate elimination outside of the litter box can occur for many reasons, creating stress between you and your new cat.

When you are placing the litter box, it should be in a location that can give your cat a bit of privacy. Avoid placing it next to your cat's food or water dish, and/or loud or suddenly startling noises (such as the washing machine or dishwasher). If you have adopted a young kitten, we recommend starting it off in a small room with the box until you see the kitten consistently using it.

We recommend having one litter box per cat, plus one more. This means that in a house with two cats, we recommend at least three litter boxes in various locations in the house.

Keep the box clean. No one likes a filthy toilet, and your cat will agree. Solid waste and clump should be scooped daily, and a complete wash of the box should happen at least once a month.

We suggest using a litter that is plain and unscented, but the choice is ultimately up to your cat. If you have a cat that is used to a certain type of litter, we recommend sticking with it. Cat's prefer a routine and stability and changing the type of litter can cause stress and inappropriate elimination. If you are struggling with litter box issues, there could be several factors at play.

We recommend doing the following:

1. **Rule out illness:** The first step to take if you notice your cat is not using the litter box is to discuss this with a veterinarian to rule out medical issues as the underlying cause. Contact the foster team to schedule a medical appointment.
2. **Clean up all messes:** Any area that has been soiled should be cleaned properly with an enzyme-based cleaner. Cleaners that have this will break down the urine/stool traces in areas that you might not be able to see, but the cats can smell.
3. **Prevention and Redirection:** If you are still in the process of housetraining, or if you have already followed the above steps, make sure you limit the access to the house. This could mean a large crate or a small easily cleanable room (such as a bathroom or laundry room) to help re-train the cat to use the litter box.

## **MANAGING INAPPROPRIATE SCRATCHING**

Cats like to scratch. They scratch during play. They scratch while stretching. They scratch to mark territory or as a threatening signal to other cats. And because cats' claws need regular sharpening, cats scratch on things to remove frayed, worn outer claws and

expose new, sharper claws. All this scratching can cause a lot of damage to furniture, drapes, and carpeting!

Trying to stop your cat from scratching is not the best tactic when dealing with scratching. Instead, teach where and what to scratch. An excellent approach is to provide appropriate, cat-attractive surfaces and objects to scratch, such as scratching posts.

Provide a variety of scratching posts with different qualities and surfaces. Try giving your cat posts made of cardboard, carpeting, wood, and sisal. Once you figure out your cat's preference for scratching, provide additional posts of that kind in various locations. Keep in mind that all cats want a sturdy post that will not shift or collapse when used.

Encourage your cat to investigate posts by scenting them with catnip, hanging toys on them, and placing them in areas where they will be inclined to climb on them. Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering other desirable objects.

Put plastic, double-sided sticky tape, sandpaper, or upside-down vinyl carpet runner (knobby parts up) on furniture or on the floor where your cat would stand to scratch your furniture. Place scratching posts next to these objects, as "legal" alternatives.

Clip your cat's nails regularly. Consider putting plastic caps on your cat's claws so that they will not damage if they scratch on something in your home. These special caps attach to claws with an adhesive. They are temporary, lasting four to six weeks.

If you catch your cat in the act of scratching an inappropriate object, you can try startling it by clapping your hands or squirting it with water. Use this procedure only as a last resort, because your cat may associate you with the startling event (clapping or squirting) and learn to fear you.

Do not hold your cat near the scratching post and force them to drag claws on it. This practice could seriously frighten your cat and teach them to avoid the scratching post completely.

Do not throw away a favorite scratching post when it becomes unsightly. Cats prefer shredded and torn objects because they can really get their claws into the material. Used posts will also appeal to your cat because they smell and look familiar.

# CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED

**MARKETING YOUR FOSTER**

Foster care providers are strongly encouraged to let others know about their foster pet, if their foster pet is available for adoption. Please use resources such as friends, family, work colleagues, and social media networks like Facebook and Instagram, to let them know about your foster pets.

Fosters of adult dogs may bring their foster pets to public places on leash to show off their foster pet as available for adoption when they are ready to be adopted. Please do not bring your foster dog to crowded areas or areas where there is likely to be off leash dogs. The Department can help market your pet for fostering and transports when you send updated photos and videos of your pet to the foster team.

**YOUR DACC CONTACT’S INFORMATION**

Contact’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact’s E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact’s Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Call Center Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Care Center Address:

Foster Medical Helpline: (661) 575-2812

\* \* \* \* \*

**VACCINATION/DEWORMING SCHEDULE**

Animal ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Canine  Feline

DHLPP  FVRCP  Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Bordetella (if applicable) Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Rabies Vaccine Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Deworming Due: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please call the Foster Medical Hotline at (661) 575-2812 to schedule an appointment for booster vaccines and deworming.