



FOSTER GUIDELINES

Welcome! Thank you for considering the lifesaving act of becoming a foster. The rescue dog has been through a difficult journey that started when s/he was given up, became lost, or never had a home. S/he was alone and scared and then may have been at a loud and scary animal shelter. It's also possible that s/he may have been on the streets and then placed with a bunch of dogs outside or in a home. S/he may have been there for weeks or months. S/he may have been in a bunch of different places. S/he may have been sick, starving, or abused. S/he has never had structure, routine, quiet, or safety. YOU are laying the foundation for the rest of his/her life.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Please read and review the following important guidelines:

Prior to fostering, all foster homes must complete a questionnaire and a foster agreement, as well as have a home inspection. All foster homes agree to accept primary responsibility for providing lodging and care of their foster dog until a permanent adopting family is found. Your own dogs should be current with their vaccinations. We also recommend that you vaccinate your dogs with a Bordetella vaccination to prevent kennel cough, a common illness in shelter dogs. Cause 4 Paws Toronto is not responsible for any veterinary bills for resident dogs. The foster home assumes responsibility for any veterinary bills that result from resident dogs becoming ill due to exposure with a foster dog. If you are planning a vacation, please notify Cause 4 Paws Toronto as far in advance as you can. We will need at least two weeks to arrange for an alternative placement for your foster dog. If you want to take your foster dog with you, even for just a weekend, you MUST notify Cause 4 Paws Toronto beforehand. Do not leave your foster dog with anyone else.

SUPPLIES

You should have the following on hand before your foster dog arrives:

Food and water bowls: It is best to have separate bowls for your foster dog and to feed your resident dogs & foster dog separately so that they can eat in a stress-free environment as they are getting to know each other.

Food and treats: We can sometimes supply food or treats depending on our receipt of donations. Otherwise, we will advise you as to what kind of food or treats is best for your foster dog.

Bed: Firm, durable bed that cannot be easily chewed or destroyed.

Toys: Kongs are excellent for stuffing. They will keep your foster dog occupied, especially while you are away from the house. Stuffed toys or balls can be good depending on your dog's temperament and age but should be used with supervision.

Collar and leash: You must have a Cause 4 Paws Toronto approved collar, leash, harness, and ID tag. At times, we are able to provide these to you. The collar and tag should stay on at all times as it will help ensure the dog is returned to you if s/he were to get separated from you.

Treatment: From May through November, heartworm and flea/tick prevention needs to be provided monthly and should start within three days of the dog's arrival. We ask you to keep track of applications and be sure to apply it monthly.

WHEN YOU FIRST BRING HOME YOUR FOSTER DOG

Many dogs are scared and nervous when they arrive. It is best to allow them plenty of space and time to get adjusted. Often they need to sleep quite a bit the first few days. It can be overwhelming for a dog to make this transition. Don't force affection on them. Let them come to you. It is especially important to remind children of this and let the dog determine when to come and ask for attention. Also with nervous dogs it is best to spend the first day or two walking them around the yard, rather than the neighborhood. Please don't have visitors over, including children, for the first week or so. It takes time to adjust. Stairs in particular may be all new to the dog and can take days, weeks or even months to get used to.

WALKING YOUR DOG

Make sure the dog is double-leashed. This means that there is a leash on his/her collar (which must be a martingale/nonslip collar) and a slip lead (a leash that ends in a noose.) You would then give the dog a walk around the neighbourhood so s/he can become familiar with the area. At first limit their interactions with other dogs until you know how they are adjusting to the change.

WHERE TO KEEP YOUR FOSTER DOG

When you first bring a foster dog home, it is best to have a large, designated area for him/her 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 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(s) to block off the entrance(s) 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 who are not housetrained, keeping them confined to one room will help start this important training as you must be able to monitor their activities. Remember, it can take a couple of months for a dog to adjust to your home.

INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO A FOSTER DOG

If possible, go for a walk around your neighbourhood with both dogs and two handlers. Walk the dogs side by side on leashes and allow them to sniff 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. Let 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 few weeks, you may determine that this is no longer necessary but when leaving the house be sure to always remove all toys, food, and chews. Remember to start slowly.

CAT INTRODUCTIONS

First, make sure that your cat has his/her own sanctuary, preferably a room where the foster dog will not be allowed to go. If you can keep the cat's food and litter box in this room and keep the door closed or use a baby gate(s), the dog and cat can sniff each other under the door for a few days before meeting face to face. This will make things go a lot smoother as they will most likely feel they have already "met." Supervise the dog's behaviour, even at the door. Reinforce playful, curious behaviour and correct any aggression or obsession.

When introducing the dog and cat for the first time, put the dog on a leash and allow the cat to walk by if s/he wants to. At this point, you're looking to evaluate both the dog and the cat. Is the cat fearful or curious? Is the dog happy/playful or chomping at the bit?

After introductions have occurred, keep in mind the following tips:

- Never leave the cat and foster dog unsupervised, even if it looks like they get along great. A playful dog can still unintentionally harm a cat.
- In each room, make sure your cat has access to places that s/he can jump up to or hide under where the dog can't get to him/her.
- Playful chasing is normal but always remind the foster dog to play nicely/slowly and to not run.
- Don't allow the dog to stare down the cat. The dog should know that s/he is not allowed to obsess over the cat.
- The cat may swipe at the dog or hiss in order to correct the dog's behavior. This is usually a great help in ensuring the dog knows his/her place but keep an eye on interactions to ensure the cat doesn't injure the dog.
- With all your resident pets, allow the animals to accept one another on their own time. Never push them toward each other or force interaction. Many animals become companions and playmates, while others simply tolerate each other.

SOME COMMON MISTAKES

- Holding the leash too tensely. The dog 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. Remember to always supervise.
- Over-stimulating your foster dog with introductions to many people or dogs.

FOSTERING - THE FIRST WEEK

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/her with his/her 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 to 14 days (could be more or less), your foster dog should lay low while s/he tries to figure out what this new situation is. You may not see any unwelcome behaviour initially.
- Do not introduce your foster dog to other dogs (other than your own resident dog). This includes neighbourhood dogs and dogs belonging to your family or friends. There is no way to tell how your foster dog will behave when introducing him/her to other dogs. **If your foster dog bites a person or dog, you are required to report it to Cause 4 Paws Toronto 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.
- Every day or two, take lots of photos and send it to Cause 4 Paws along with information on how the dog is doing. It keeps us-up-to-date and lets us know how he or she is doing.

FEEDING

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Feed at the same times every day. Create a separate space for your foster dog to eat so s/he will feel comfortable. If you have other dogs at home, feed your foster dog in a separate room and close the door. This will help prevent any arguments over food. Do not feed any "people" food. Feeding amounts will depend on the age and size of your foster dog but s/he should always be fed twice daily (morning and evening). Always provide plenty of fresh water!

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 but some dogs need two 45 to 60 minute walks depending on energy level and age. If your foster dog is an adolescent, you may need to step up the activity level. A dog who 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. The exception to this is if your foster dog is recovering from an illness or injury. In this case, s/he may need rest.

When walking your foster dog (double-leashed), 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. Foster parents will need to be extra diligent because many dog owners seem to encourage their dogs to “greet” every dog they encounter 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 to start walking in a wide semi-circle around them. Most people recognize this as 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 shelter dog and that 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 by saying something like, “Fido, keep with me” and give him/her treats as you pass an oncoming dog. This will help keep their attention on you and 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. The dog could also run away or cause injury to itself or the person holding the leash.

ATTENTION AND PLAYTIME

Lots of human contact is important for your foster dog. S/he is recovering from trauma and may have been sick, injured, or neglected. Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give him/her several minutes of playtime periodically throughout the day. As a general rule, children under 13 should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with any dog, 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 s/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. Children under age 18 are NOT to walk foster dogs under any circumstances.

SWIMMING POOLS

You must take extra precautions with introducing the foster dog to your swimming pool. Do it gently and slowly. You need to give him/her the understanding that it is not a solid walking surface. Once s/he realizes that, s/he will more than likely stay away. However, that is not a reason to leave the dog unattended near the pool. The foster dog can easily walk too close to the pool and be bumped or just slip near the edge and fall in. If the dog is interested in getting in the water, please spend some time making sure that you teach him/her where the stairs are so s/he

can get out. **We know dogs who have fallen in and drowned in a person's home, even ones who have lived with the pool for years!**

HOUSETRAINING

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they've been at the shelter 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" their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately with a calm "ah-ah," followed by escorting your foster dog outside to finish his/her business. You will then want to use some kind of odour neutralizer on the areas the foster dog "marked" to ensure s/he will not smell and mark that area again. Even if you bring home an adult dog who is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until s/he adjusts to this new situation and to your schedule. Even adult dogs may not be able to hold it for longer than 4 to 6 hours so a dog walker may be needed if you work outside of the home.

HOUSETRAINING TIPS

Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate. It could be the backyard, side yard, etc. When you have determined where s/he should do his/her business, take your foster dog to the same place every time and tell him/her to "do your business." Take your foster dog out when s/he wakes up, after s/he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Stand with him/her for 5 minutes. If s/he eliminates, reward him/her (with treats, praise, a favourite game, and your own special happy dance). If s/he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him/her back inside and try every 15 minutes until s/he goes. Every time s/he goes, make sure you reward him/her! Supervise the dog closely while you're inside. If s/he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "ah-ah." Scoop him/her up quickly and take him/her to the approved spot. A larger dog can be taken outside by leash as quickly as possible. Praise your foster dog when s/he finishes.

If your foster dog does his/her business in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him/her as it's not his/her fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odour neutralizer to get rid of the smell. Never put the dog's face in his/her mess or yell at him/her. S/he won't understand you and you will only be teaching him/her to fear you.

BEHAVIOUR ISSUES

Some foster dogs will have specific needs regarding behaviour, training, or socializing. 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 who is the first to learn about a foster dog's specific behaviour so constant communication with us is important. There are many resources that we can provide to help you manage most behavioural issues. We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers.

Regardless of the issue, punishment will not address the cause of the behaviour, and in fact, it may worsen any behaviour that's motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. Your dog doesn't know what s/he has done wrong. S/he only knows that you're upset.

If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioural issues, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is s/he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does s/he have interesting toys to keep his/her mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is s/he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behaviour? Some examples include telling a fearful dog that "It's OK" and verbally scolding a dog when s/he is seeking attention.
- 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?

ADDITIONAL TRAINING TIPS

Short 5-minute training sessions 4 to 6 times a day is more effective than one long session. Dogs need and respond to positive rewards when learning new behaviours. Remember, most behaviours that we want are boring to a dog so it's important to make it more interesting for them. A positive reward is a tasty treat or a game of fetch.

You provide the guidance and information s/he needs to succeed and build his/her confidence. Always praise your foster dog when s/he is doing something good. Be consistent with your terminology and routine. Your foster dog will become confused if you let him/her steal your socks sometimes but not all the time.

Start small and easy and slowly build from there. Most people jump too quickly into advanced environments (outside on a walk, etc.) so make sure you start inside in a safe and quiet location. Use "aak-aak" or "ah-ah" instead of the word "no." The canine mother would use this type of sound to correct her pup. Only use "no" for very serious matters.

Be patient and calm. Dogs respond to your tone of voice and facial expressions as well as your emotions. Dogs were once predators and can read your body language quickly. Don't try to fake your emotions as your foster dog will know.

Never lose your temper with a foster dog or strike him/her - EVER. We want to create and support a harmonious canine/human relationship.

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 us if you see abnormal behavior such as listed below but not limited to the following:

- Unusual discharge from the eyes, nose, or other body openings

- Abnormal lumps
- Limping
- Difficulty getting up or down
- Loss of appetite or abnormal waste elimination
- Parasites and worms are common for rescue dogs and while they likely have been treated, they might not all have been eliminated. Watch their stool for signs of blood or worms and also if they rub their butt on the floor/grass/ground or are licking their anal area a lot.

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 WHITE rice mixed with ¼ to ½ cup of boiled (plain and small) pieces of chicken breast 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.

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

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.

Emergency situations include:

- Continuous weight loss
- Continuous diarrhea
- Continuous vomiting
- Bleeding of any kind - nose, urine, stool
- Any trauma - hit by a car, being dropped, limp, stepped on, unconscious
- Difficulty in breathing/blocked airway
- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- If the animal has vomiting or diarrhea but is still active, eating, and drinking, it can probably wait until the next day to receive help. However, if the animal is lethargic and shows no interest in food or water, it is wise to seek emergency help right away.
- Coughing or sneezing should pose no immediate problems unless accompanied by blood or other symptoms.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFO

- Do not leave a dog in a car unattended.
- Do not allow the dog on grass after weed killer has been applied as it can be transferred through licking from the paws and can be lethal.
- Do not leave the dog outside for long periods of time especially in cold or hot weather.
- Never chain a dog.
- Never allow a dog to ride with its head out the window or in the back of a pickup truck.
- Beware of antifreeze in the garage and toilet cleaner in the toilet as both are attractive to dogs and both are deadly.
- Beware of hazardous plants and chemicals that the dog may get to inside and outside the house.
- Beware of chocolate, grapes, onions, and other hazardous foods and medicines.
- Beware of rawhide bones, bones that splinter, and products made outside of Canada.

HELP WITH THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

The most rewarding part of fostering a dog is to see the end result. When you have nurtured the dog into becoming a very good house pet and see that it is ready for its "Forever Home," you also get to play a very important role in the placement and adoption process. In order to do this in an efficient manner, you may be asked to be available for Meet-n-Greets, talk to prospective families, and to drop off or pick up dogs from overnight visits.

I have read and understood these guidelines:

Name of foster/adopter (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____