



SUCCESSFUL FOSTERING

Thank you very much for agreeing to foster a dog for AAR. Time spent in foster care is crucial for our dogs and will help them begin the journey that will lead to adoption and to their forever home!

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience. You will help dogs grow from helpless little beings to confident, well-adjusted family pets. You also get the fun of raising a dog without the responsibility of lifetime care. Most importantly, you are saving lives!

As a foster carer, you will be assigned a case worker. This will be the person with the most knowledge of your foster dog and they will liaise with you throughout the time that you are fostering. Your caseworker is available to give you any support that you may need, so if you are unsure of anything, please ask. Meanwhile, this information sheet will hopefully provide you with some tips which will help you to settle your foster dog into his new home with you.

Introducing Your Foster Dog To Your Own Dog(s).



- Prepare to meet someone with your present dog at a neutral place - perhaps a park or street. Don't have too many people standing around, just you and your foster dog and another person and your present dog. Talk calmly and don't attempt to hurry the introduction. Allow each dog to sniff the other. Walk the dogs a distance apart, side by side, until they relax and start to feel at ease with each other.
- When you feel comfortable enough to go into your own home with both dogs, do so naturally - do not anticipate any problem.

- Do not feed your dogs together. It is a good idea to feed your foster dog in his crate. This re-enforces that the crate is a great place!
- It is a good idea to keep dogs' leads on in the house. This can be helpful if you need to separate them for a short time out.
- Never leave your dogs alone unsupervised. If you are going to be away, separate the dogs either by crating or closing them in separate rooms. We strongly encourage crating our foster dogs and in fact crate training is one of the things we hope our foster homes will do with our dogs.
- If your dogs begin to posture (standing tall and straight), growl or begin to fight, do not interfere unless you think it is getting out of control. Usually a stern 'NO' will calm the situation down. Your dogs however will begin to sort out the 'pecking order' and will usually do so much more easily without your input.
- Do be alert and reintroduce the foster dog gradually and calmly. Even if they got along great outside of the house, your dog may be extremely territorial in the home. A gentle introduction can avoid problems.

Introducing Your Foster Dog To Your Cat(s)



Before you introduce your foster dog to your cat, you may wish to wait a few days until you have confirmed or instilled basic obedience in your foster dog. You will need to have your foster dog under control and know which behaviours are appropriate when interacting with a cat. 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., may 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 a lead, but don't let go of the lead in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On lead 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 behaviours 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 the cat interact with the dog on lead 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 behaviour 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 lead 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 - lead.

Arriving Home With Your Foster Dog



- Bring your dog into your home and leave him/her alone. Briefly introduce him to the members of the household and then put him in his crate, with his meal if it is mealtime, or with a toy or bone to make him feel at home and to reinforce that his crate is a safe and happy place to be. It won't be long before your dog begins to investigate the home, he will do so when he begins to feel comfortable.
- Give your dog a few days to settle in and get to know the members of the household before you begin to invite friends and neighbours over to meet him. Life is pretty overwhelming for him after such a big change. Again, he needs to feel safe with you before he should be expected to meet even more new people.
- If you have children, don't have them invite all their friends over the meet the new dog until he has had a chance to get to know everyone in the family and feel comfortable.
- Never leave a young child alone with your dog.

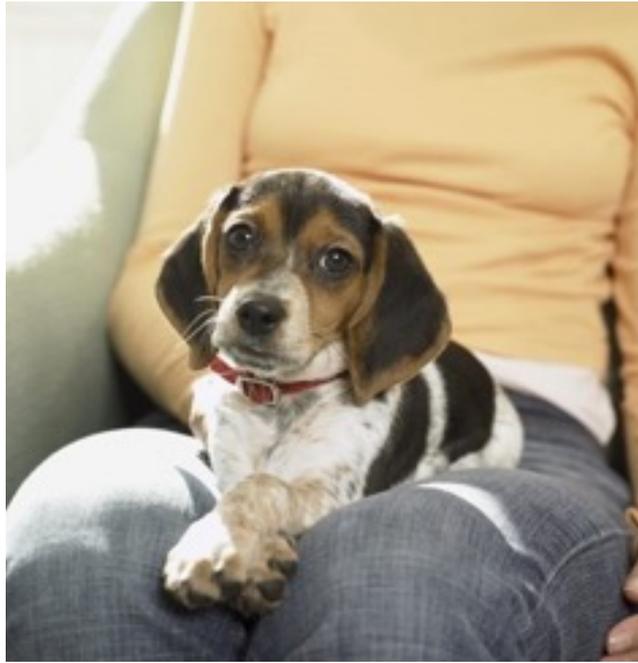
- Set a routine, both feeding and out time with your dog and stick to it as much as possible.
- Try to stay calm at all times. Remember, it is possible that your foster dog has never been in a home at all. It is certain that he has never been in your home and everything will be new and strange to him. If you maintain a calm demeanour it is more likely that your dog will too.
- Again, if you are not going to be supervising your foster dog, please put them in their crate. This can be with a bone, or a chew toy and possibly a comfortable blanket, make their crate their safe place. Putting the dog in a crate while you are gone will give you peace of mind knowing that they are in a safe place, away from harm, and not doing any damage to your belongings or themselves. For many dogs, a crate can also represent a safe and comfortable place to call their own and provides them with a sense of security. Dogs actually like having a "den" to cuddle up in. Crating should never be used as a punishment.
- If possible try to arrange doggie play dates with other dogs that you know well and who can perform slow, careful introductions with.
- Make sure your foster dog is always wearing identification. We will supply you with an ID tag.
- Never tether your dog and leave him unattended.
- Your foster dog will be looking to you for guidance. A calm and easy introduction into your family will make your foster dog feel welcome and unafraid.
- 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 behaviour closely. Remember that it can take up to a month before your foster dog bonds with you, so keep your expectations realistic. While the amount of time you have your foster dog will not be long enough to fully train him, it will be enough time to give him a good foundation for his new family.
- Begin training with some basic commands and crate training. There are some wonderful video tutorials on basic training available on You Tube. Alternatively, if you need advice, just ask your case worker. we are here for you.



- Your foster may have been traumatized before coming to you - you'll be teaching him that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with your foster dog every day. If your foster dog shows any signs of aggression or fear (growling over food or toys, snapping or hiding), contact AAR for guidance.

Prepare Your Dog For A Successful Future

- As a foster care, it's important to think about how to prepare your dog to succeed in his new home and new life.
- Remember, most of us in the dog rescue community are truly "dog people." We don't mind fur on the sofa or paw prints on the bed but it is possible that the new owners will feel differently and your foster dog needs to be prepared for that! Much as you want to give your foster dog the best ever home, you will also want him to be happy in his forever home. You need to set him up for success! You don't know if new mum will want him sleeping on the sofa, so it would be great if you teach him to be happy in his own bed. You don't know whether his new family will want him loose in their house overnight, so it would be great if you could teach him to be content sleeping in a crate.



- As much as you love your foster dog, he will be moving to a new home and you will want him to be happy there. It is fine to treat him differently to your own dogs, caring for them kindly and fairly but not letting them get too attached to yourself or your other pets. Train him and teach him that people are gentle and trustworthy. Teach him that good things happen when people handle his paws, mouth, or ears, that wonderful things happen when people reach towards his food or toys, that crates are comfortable and safe places to rest quietly, that sitting and looking at people works wonders, and that calm behaviour in the house results in great rewards. Take him out on trips and introduce him to new people and places. He will learn so much.
- Then your foster dog will get adopted, and go to his new home. The new family will give him more privileges than he had from you, and they will quickly become attached. He will bond with his new owners, and soon learn who he belongs to. This way your foster dog will not be heartbroken when he leaves you and you will have done a terrific job! There is no bigger service you can do for that dog!

Helping To Get Your Foster Dog Adopted

- If your foster dog doesn't already have a home to go to, there are things that you can do to help. 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 he is, then it will be next to impossible to find him a forever home. It will help AAR greatly if you can supply great photos and a bio, and keep updating regularly. It is very much the photos that "sell" the dog. Keep trying for that really cute one that is going to grab someone's heart.
- You can give your foster dog additional exposure by telling friends and family about him and sharing his photos on Facebook. This will help create a "network effect" and will speed up the process of finding a forever home.



- Simple steps like taking a foster dog on walks in your local area and beyond, outdoor shopping areas, and other high - traffic areas will help find potential adopters. AAR will supply you with an "Adopt Me" coat to make your foster dog highly visible. You will find many people will stop to chat to you and this is a great opportunity to spread the word about what we do.
- Secondly, our rescued dogs benefit greatly from the exercise (with the exception of those with some medical conditions), basic training, special love and attention you give them. While marketing provides you with applicants, it's always the dog that "closes the deal." Providing a foster dog with basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy dogs will benefit from your patience, routine and slowly exposing them to new people and experiences to build their confidence. Boisterous adolescents who learn good manners will help show off their trainability and long term potential. Teach your foster dog simple manners, like walking nicely on a lead and not jumping up at people and let people see how lovely our dogs can be.

- Puppies in particular, need a lot of love, attention and hand - holding from humans to develop properly and feel secure. It is essential for their future well being that puppies are exposed to as many different experiences as possible during the first six months of their lives.

Saying Goodbye!

Giving up a dog you've fostered, even to a wonderful new home, can be difficult emotionally. It helps to remember that you have contributed to that dog enjoying a new start in life and that many more dogs are in need of your loving care. A lot of foster families get photos and updates of their old charges enjoying their new homes. Knowing you were part of saving a life and helping your foster dog find a loving home is tremendously rewarding. We at AAR would like to say a massive thank you to you, for giving your foster dog the very best start to his new life.



THANK YOU VERY, VERY MUCH