

Fostering Dogs for the CASPCA

First, you are amazing! Thank you! We hope this information makes your fostering experience more enjoyable for you and more valuable for the dog.

Second, the dogs you will foster probably will not be perfect. Some may need to be housetrained. Some dogs may be un-schooled in other ways. For example, they may be rambunctious or shy, they may be inclined to jump up on people or on furniture. To some degree, these things will depend on the dog's age and breed, but problem behaviors may be what landed them in the shelter in the first place. Fostering will require some patience, love and TLC.

But these issues are far outweighed by the benefits and rewards of fostering. The addition of a dog brings immeasurable richness and joy to the household. Foster dogs will repay you for your patience and love by giving back ten times more love of their own. And when the dog goes off to a loving new home for life, your heart will swell with joy. What could possibly be more gratifying than to save a life and create a "happy ever after" ending?

Questions? Call 434-964-3310 or email foster@casPCA.org.



The Basics

- Make sure your dog's collar is snug and secure.
- Offer him a few treats to establish trust
- Take your dog directly home if possible.
- Keep your dog on a leash anytime it is outside unless in a secure fenced area. Foster dogs don't know you or your home yet and won't come to you if called. Whenever a dog gets away from a new home – whether it is a permanent or foster home – it is often in the first few hours or days. Be extra vigilant.
- Do not take your dog out of jurisdiction without prior permission.
- Be careful when introducing your foster dog to any resident pets. Make sure you monitor all play time and crate or otherwise separate your animals when you are gone.
- Keep your foster dog crated. Foster dogs with run of the house can escape very easily. Do not lose your foster dog.

Barking

Desensitize your dog to the stimulus that triggers the barking. Teach him that the people he views as intruders are actually friends and that good things happen to him when these people are around. Ask someone to walk by your yard, starting far enough away so that your dog isn't barking, then reward him for quiet behavior as he obeys a "sit" or "down" command. Use a very special food reward such as little pieces of cheese or meat. As the person gradually comes closer, continue to reward his quiet behavior. It may take several sessions before the person can come close without your dog barking. When the person can come very close without your dog barking, have them feed him a treat or throw a toy for him. If your dog barks while inside the house when you're home, call him to you, have him obey a command, such as "sit" or "down," and reward him with praise and a treat. Don't inadvertently encourage this type of barking by enticing your dog to bark at things he hears or sees outside. Have your dog neutered (or spayed if your dog is a female) to decrease territorial behavior.

Crates

If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his access to the house until he learns all the house rules – like what he can and can't chew on and where he can and can't eliminate. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car, as well as a way of taking him places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he'll think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed. Always provide water for your dog anytime he is in the crate. Spill proof bowls, or bowls that attach to the kennel gate, work best.

Housetraining

While at the shelter, however, they may not have gotten enough opportunities to eliminate outside, and consequently, they may have soiled their kennel areas. This tends to weaken their housetraining habits. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking.

Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if he was housetrained in his previous home, if you don't recognize his "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors. Therefore, for the first few weeks after you bring him home, you should assume your new dog isn't housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's supposed to eliminate.

Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed.

Praise your dog lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he's finished and not wait until after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that's what you want him to do.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise. Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he's indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are.

Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat

Confinement. When you're unable to watch your dog at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around in. This could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your dog and use the crate to confine him. If he has spent several hours in confinement, when you let him out, take him directly to his bathroom spot and praise him when he eliminates.

Medical Problems. House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.

Leash issues

Remain Calm and remember to use a happy tone when approaching other on-leash dogs even though you are on guard and aware. Be prepared to move away, even across the street, from the other dog. Keep the leash loose. If you seem tense or uneasy and yank on the leash, the dog will usually respond by barking.

Play the "FIND IT!" game. Have a handful of yummy treats, tell your dog "Find it!" and throw a treat in front of the dog. Continue to say, "Find it!" and throw treats until you are safely past the other dog. This exercise distracts your dog from the other dogs by keeping him focused on treats. Instead of staring at the other dog, your dog's eyes will be searching for treats. Eventually your dog will associate the sight of other dogs with yummy treats!

Make mealtime at night, after you and your dog retire for the evening. If you don't feed your dog before leash walks, you'll have a hungry dog who will be much more motivated to focus on you and the goodies in your treat bag!

Basic training

Remember that the first thing adopters' look for is a dog that seems to care about them and that pays attention to them. We need to teach the dog that it pays to respond to human attention.

The SPCA encourages positive, reward based training methods. If you want to work on training your foster dog (sit, stay, come and leave it are good commands for any dog to know) and need help, contact Laura Jones at Ljones@caspca.org for tips.

There is an excellent video on our website, www.caspca.org, about working with shy dogs.

- Reward a dog every time it looks you softly in the eye.
- Reward a dog if you call its name and it looks at you.
- Reward a dog for allowing touch (touching/holding collar, touching ears, touching feet)

Shy / needs socialization

Hot dogs or other yummy, smelly treats are your best ally in the effort to get a shy dog to trust and like people. Be patient and expose him or her to new situations slowly and always offer plenty of treats. If a dog won't eat, the new stimulus may be too much. If he or she is not actively trying to get away, try just sitting with your dog and acting calm.

A foster dog may not know her name and certainly doesn't know your home or neighborhood. He may not even know you are a wonderful person, but undoubtedly he will figure it out quickly. Dogs are smart....

Health issues

- 1) Loose stools are normal, particularly when a foster dogs comes into a new environment and/or changes food. Try mixing in plain white rice with your dog's food and feeding smaller meals until it resolves.
- 2) Do not over feed your dog.
- 3) Fleas – we treat for fleas, but if you notice a problem, bathe your dog if you can and then make an appointment with the clinic at 964-3310 and we will re-treat.

If Your Dogs is Lost

- 1) Call the SPCA immediately.

- 2) Put up flyers and set out food.
- 3) Post on Craigslist and Facebook and any other social media outlet.
- 4) Let your neighbors know
- 5) Be prepared to take time off of work and search, but don't expect your dog to come to you.

Introducing dogs:

If you regularly let your dogs work it out among themselves, you give them a clear signal that you do not want to be involved when there is social conflict. If there is then an emergency, and you need to get your dogs' attention, they will be less likely to look to you for guidance.

Dogs will frequently compete over resources. Resources include your attention, eye contact, affection, and praise; locations in the house and in the car; toys, balls, bones, food, and beds. A little preparedness on your part can go a long way toward preventing conflict. Your dogs should wait their turns for affection and food, respond to their names, and know how to sit, stay, look at you, and leave or drop objects.

◦Teach your dogs that all toys, affection, games, play, and petting come from you only when they are nice to each other. If they misbehave or bully each other for resources and your attention, give them a time-out or remove what triggered the behavior. Make sure the situation is managed so the problem does not reoccur.

◦Provide plenty of resources for your dogs so that there is little competition between them. If you have only one food bowl, dog toy, or dog bed, your dogs will be forced to take turns or fight over them.

◦Say your dogs' names routinely so each dog can figure out who is being focused on. If other dogs get involved when you are focusing on an individual, turn your back on the intruders or look away from them.

◦Do not give your dogs attention for being nudgy, barking at you, jumping on you, or bullying each other. Don't pet your dogs when they barricade you or push themselves on you. Teach your dogs impulse control, and reward polite manners.

◦All dogs should wait for treats and meals or have places to go when they eat so that they do not intrude on each other.

◦Dogs should wait or be taught to sit before they go outside. Please do not ask an older dog to sit; older dogs frequently have hip and knee problems, and sitting can be painful for them. Ask older dogs to wait or stay instead. The goal is not for your dogs to sit, but for them to not barge

through doors when you open them. If you have a young dog who regularly hesitates when you ask him to sit, take him to a veterinarian.

◦When you pet one dog and another dog intrudes so that he becomes the center of attention, if you reward him you are rewarding that behavior. The dogs then compete for your attention, and one dog will inevitably be driven away. This does not set a good precedent for you as a leader.

◦If you are petting a dog and another dog barges in and pushes that dog away, ignore the dog who intruded by looking away or turning your back to him. Continue petting the other dog. If he begins to nudge or growl at the dog who is receiving attention from you, stand up and look away from both dogs. When the dog who growled or nudged his way in sees that his behavior did not work for him and loses interest, go back and pet the dog you had been giving attention to.

◦If dogs growl at each other over an object or a bone, remove it. If a dog has a toy or other object and another dog intimidates him by staring at him, interrupt the stare and direct that dog to another behavior. If one dog takes a toy or an object from another dog or makes that dog drop the object or leave the area, remove the item from the dog who took it and give it back to the dog who originally had it. You may have to do this multiple times, but your dogs will get a message from you: bullying behavior doesn't work. You will notice a remarkable change in your dogs' behaviors. The dog who may be regularly harassed or bullied will thank you, and there should be less conflict between the dogs in the future.

THANK YOU FOR FOSTERING!

(Some of this information came from the Dumb Friends League.)