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PAW PATROL DAYTON
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Foster Handbook



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Introduction

Thank you so much for your interest in fostering pets for Paw Patrol Dayton. By opening up your home to foster pets, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the individual attention and love these dogs and cats desperately need.

A foster coordinator will get in touch with you to sign up for one of our scheduled orientation and training sessions. In the session, we'll go over this manual and answer any questions you have about the program. The trainer/canine behavior consultant will typically be there as well and you'll also be able to ask any behavior or training questions you may have.

Foster homes are asked to provide daily care and love for the dogs/cats. Care includes feeding according to size and needs, exercise according to energy levels, and lots of play time and positive socialization.

Although fostering can be a lot of work at times, it is a very rewarding experience. By participating in this program, you are saving lives and helping many different types of dogs and cats find the families they've been longing for. Our key to success is our network of volunteers and foster family homes. We do not operate out of a shelter or have a facility in which to house our adoptable animals; rather we rely on volunteers who lovingly open their hearts and their homes, offering temporary accommodations. Once integrated into one of our foster families, a dog or cat that may have come to us frightened, timid, or otherwise emotionally scarred, will blossom and flourish with the tender loving care it receives there, often within just a few days.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do foster families need to provide?

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster animal(s).
- When possible, transportation to and from vet appointments, meet-n-greets, adoption events and fundraisers. When this is not possible, fosters are expected to work with other volunteers on getting the animal transported to and from the necessary location.
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach dogs and cats positive family and pet relationships.
- Exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great dogs/cats. We have a trainer/canine behavior consultant you can contact for ideas on ways to accomplish this that works best for you and the foster dog. We also have an array of fosters experienced in feline behavior you can reach out to for help with any feline issues.

How much time do I need to spend with my foster animal?

As much time as you can. With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the animal you are fostering. We realize that you have other things going on outside of your volunteering/fostering for Paw Patrol and we greatly appreciate the time you are giving to your foster animal. The time you spend with your foster animal will help to make their stay easier on you and them by helping to form a bond between you.

Can I foster a dog if I don't have a fenced yard?

Yes. Even if you do have a fenced yard, we request that you supervise all outdoor activities with the foster dog. We also ask that you always keep him/her on a leash when you're on walks.

How long will the animal need to be in foster care?

Ideally, foster animals stay in their assigned foster homes until they get adopted. We do not have a building to house animals, so these dogs and cats rely on foster homes as their "home between homes." If there is an emergency or another reason you can no longer keep your foster animal, we will work with you to find another foster home. However, please understand this cannot often be done immediately and may take a bit of time.

How often will I need to take my foster to events & meet-n-greets?

The amount of meet-n-greets you may need to attend is difficult to put a number on. We begin the adoption process with an adoption application so as to only schedule meet-n-greets with potential adopters that are preapproved. This cuts down on the number of meet-n-greets you will need to do; however, we still cannot be sure of how many it will take before your foster animal is adopted.

As for adoption events and fundraisers, we would like for you to attend as many of those as possible. We realize that you will mostly likely not be able to attend them all but please do your best to attend as many as you can. The more your foster dog/cat is out there to be seen the quicker it's likely to find its forever home.

Will I need to give medication to my foster animal?

Most all of the animals we have in our foster program are rescued from shelters and various places. We do our best to ensure we are aware of all the conditions a foster animal may have prior to going to a foster home, however they may frequently need to be placed in your home prior to seeing a veterinarian. If your foster animal should need medications, we (or the vet) can show you how to administer them and are always available to help you with any questions you may have.

Can I let my foster animal play with my personal pets?

Yes, but there are a few guidelines we ask foster families to adhere to regarding their personal pets. While foster dogs/cats playing with other pets is fine, we advise that all your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. We also ask that you give your foster animal a minimum of 2-3 days to "decompress" from all the stress they've been under and to allow them to get to know their new place before introducing them to your personal pets. We suggest introducing them slowly and for short periods of time to begin with. You can contact our trainer/canine behavior consultant if you need help with how to do this dogs or reach out to other cat fosters for help with introducing cats/kittens to your pets.

What if I want to adopt my foster animal?

If you want to adopt a foster, you will not need to complete an adoption application. However, please contact a foster coordinator right away because once the foster is up for adoption we cannot hold him/her for anyone.

Therefore, we will not place the foster animal up for adoption to the public if the foster home wants to adopt him/her.

Who will take care of my foster if I need to go out of town?

If you have travel plans while you are fostering a dog and/or cat, you will need to contact a foster coordinator as soon as possible. Since we don't have a facility and we are run on donations, we need as much notice as possible so that we may find an alternate temporary foster home. Except in emergency situations, we would like to have at least a 2-week notice. If your travel plans are over a holiday, please give us 3-4 weeks' notice as that is a much more difficult time to find a temporary foster home.

What if my foster dog bites me or shows aggression?

If any of your foster dogs bite, snap, or shows aggression, you need to contact the trainer/canine behavior consultant immediately. The law requires that we report all bites that break the skin. The teeth, not the nails, must have broken the skin. If you are unsure of whether the bite is a reportable incident, then please report to a director anyway.

What if my foster animal is not working out?

You are not required to continue to foster an animal if you feel it's not working out. However, we may not have an immediate alternate foster home for the animal. As mentioned above, we don't have our own facility to house dogs and/or cats. We rely solely on wonderful volunteer foster homes such as yours. We will work on moving your foster animal out as soon as possible but ask for your understanding and patience. We will try to find another foster dog/cat more suitable to your needs and to help get the current foster animal out sooner. If the reason it is not working out is because you are having a behavior/training issue, please contact our trainer/canine behavior consultant to help remedy the problem. If the behavior is an issue for you, then most likely it will be an issue for a potential adopter as well.

Can I also foster for another organization while fostering for Paw Patrol?

The easy answer is yes, you can. However, we ask that you do not bring an unvaccinated dog into your home until all the other dogs (foster or permanent) have been altered and vaccinated. This will avoid any breeding accidents, as well as passing on contagious diseases that the animals have not developed immunity for yet.

Preparing for Your Foster Dog/Cat

We know you are super excited to have your new foster dog or cat. However, remember they have just been through a lot. Although you know he/she is safe now, he/she does not know that yet. Your foster animal may be frightened or unsure about what's happening, so it's important not to overwhelm him/her. When possible, have a place set up before your foster dog/cat arrives. Give the foster animal a space that is quiet and away from other dogs and/or cats to give him/her time to adjust to the new surroundings slowly. This area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and access to his/her food, water dishes, and toys. If fostering a cat, a room appropriately sized to keep a litter box spaced away from the food/water dishes and access to toys. New cats are often nervous and like to hide. Cardboard boxes or sheets draped over chairs make ideal hiding spots when you first bring kitty home.

It's best to give the dogs and at times older cats a few days to decompress from all the changes and stress they've been under. A great first step is to take your new foster for a walk around the block or your yard before going inside your home. This lets him/her learn about his new environment, gets some nervous/excited energy out, and allows the dog time to use the bathroom before going inside. A good first step for a cat is to provide a box for the cat to "hide" in while getting used to the new environment.

All foster dogs and cats MUST be housed indoors only. A garage, backyard, or outdoor run is not a suitable accommodation for a foster animal.

During the first couple of days and possibly up to a week, minimize the amount of people and pet introductions to your foster dog/cat so that he/she is only meeting immediate family and your personal pets. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster a space of their own where they can stay while getting used to all the new sounds and smells. Don't leave your foster unattended in your home with your personal pets. In addition, since many of the foster dogs and cats may not have been to a vet or had vaccinations yet, we recommend they not be exposed to any new pets or places other than your own until they have seen a veterinarian and been appropriately vaccinated.

Supplies You'll Need

Paw Patrol will provide you with any supplies that you may need. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster animal. Here's what you'll need to help your foster dog/cat make a smooth transition to living in your home:

- At least one bowl for dry food and one for water.
- A supply of dry dog/cat food. All foster animals are fed dry food unless a special diet is needed.
- A collar with an ID tag and a leash. Even though fosters are microchipped, they still need an ID tag
- A soft place to sleep. (Shy cats would prefer a box or tented area.)
- A baby gate is always useful to keep a foster dog in an area or out of an area.
- A crate: The crate should be just large enough for the dog to stand up and turn around in, and not much bigger than that. This will help house train the dog and often helps them feel safe. If using a crate to contain a cat, the crate should be large enough to keep a litter box and food/water bowls away from each other as well as a soft area to lay.
- Treats: Giving treats is a good way to help train and build a positive relationship with your foster. Just be sure you don't overfeed with treats and make them sick.
- Toys: Make sure the toys are durable and appropriate for the size of your foster dog or cat. If fostering a cat, a scratching post/pad is highly recommended.

Pet-proofing your home

Foster animals often come from a shelter environment and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home or what their rules were in the old home. So, before bringing home a new foster, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep your foster. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for a dog to chew on or a cat to potentially scratch, and latch securely any cupboards and doors that the foster could get into. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by animal, so please store them in a place the foster animal cannot access.

Never underestimate your foster animals abilities!! Here are some additional tips for pet-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered/ latched or kept in a cabinet or closet (Don't forget about bathroom cans, too!).
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some dogs and cats like to play with or eat them, and some plants can be toxic to animals (these can vary between harmful to dog or harmful to cats).
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster animal.
- Remove medications, lotions, or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs and even cats may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuable that your foster animal could knock down or that you do you want to accidentally get broken or damaged. Remember, cats climb!

Dog Introductions

If you have personal pets that are dogs, you'll want to introduce them to your foster dog one at a time and supervise their interactions at first. It's a good idea to introduce them outside in a large yard or on a walk, keeping all the dogs on leash and allowing them enough space to get adjusted to one another. (See the additional handout "Introducing Dogs to Each Other")

Make sure that high-value items such as food, special toys, bones, chew toys, or anything else your dog holds in high regard, are put away while the dogs are getting used to each other. It's best to always feed your foster dog separately from your personal dogs.

Cat Introductions

We can't be sure that a foster dog has been "cat-tested" and even if a dog has been "cat-tested" it's best to use caution when introducing your foster dog to your cat(s). Start by keeping them separated at first. You can either keep your cats in a separate room or confine your foster dog to a room. Over a one- to two-week period, let the dog and cats smell each other through the door, but don't allow them contact with one another. Exchanging blankets or towels between the dog's area and the cat's area will help them get used to each other's smells.

After a week or two, do the face-to-face introductions. Keep your foster dog on a leash, allow your cat out in the same area. If you have more than one cat introduce them one at a time. Do not allow the foster dog to charge or run directly up to the cat. Try to distract the dog as best you can so that the cat has the chance to approach without fear. Watch the body language of each animal closely and don't continue the interaction if

either pet becomes over-stimulated or aggressive. The idea is to keep the interactions positive, safe, and controlled. (See the additional handout “Introducing a Cat and a Dog”)

Never leave your foster dog unsupervised with any cats in your home.

Cat to Cat Introductions

DO NOT and we repeat DO NOT try to introduce your foster cat to your resident cat(s) immediately upon arrival. You may initiate fear, anger, aggression, spraying and litter box problems in the new cat and/or resident cat(s). Successful introductions take time.

Let “smell” be the first introduction as the cats sniff each other from under the “safe room” door. This helps familiarize the cats with each other’s scents. Let the sniffing continue. If there are no marked signs of aggression from the cats, such as hissing and growling, the next step is to confine your resident cat to a room and let the foster cat explore your house for a couple of hours each day for several days.

Place your foster cat in a carrier and put the carrier in a location of your home outside of the safe room (for example, the living room). Allow the cats to look at each other and sniff through the carrier door.

Any signs of aggression? Keep the visit short and return the foster cat to its safe room. Repeat this phase 2 to 3 times daily (if possible), until cats are more comfortable with each other. If there are no signs of aggression between cats, leave the door to the safe room open a crack. This will allow your foster cat to explore and/or your resident cat to visit. Supervision is necessary for the safety of both cats.

In case of aggression, have a spray bottle filled with water or a towel handy. Always stop serious threats and/or aggression immediately.

You may notice some occasional hissing, swatting and grouchy behavior. This is normal. Much like humans, all cats have the occasional “off” day.

Children and dogs

Since we don’t always know a foster dog’s history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster dog. Key things to remind your children:

- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing, or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.
- Do not tease the foster dog.
- Do not chase the foster dog around the house or run quickly around the foster dog as it may scare him.
- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to distinguish between what is allowed to be chewed on and what isn’t.

Do not allow young children to walk the foster dog because they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to handle encounters with other dogs or cats that cross their path.

Daily Care

Feeding. All foster animals should be fed a diet of dry food, unless otherwise specified by the foster coordinator. Feed your foster once or twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster animal. Make sure the animal always has access to fresh, clean water. You can give your foster treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies); giving treats helps you and your foster to bond with each other. Most dogs like to chew on things, so try Greenies, antlers, Nylabones, or Dentabones. Keep in mind, though, that not all dogs like to share, so only give these treats when your foster dog is confined to his/her own area. Rawhides are not recommended as the dog may choke on small pieces that break off.

Daily Routine. When you first take your foster home, take care to not overwhelm him/her with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes, too much stimulation can cause an animal to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal, which is why it is a good idea to keep introductions to a minimum during the first couple of weeks after you bring your foster animal home. It's also important to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks and walk/play times. Dogs and even cats take comfort in having a routine they can count on.

Also, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster animals appetite and energy level. If he/she's not eating well or seems listless, something may be wrong medically. You might want to record your observations to make it easier to notice any health issues. Cats may not eat for the first 24-48 hours of arriving in your home; be aware of this but also watch for an extended period of not eating.

House Training. It's unlikely that your foster dog will be perfectly house-trained when you take him or her home. We usually don't have a lot of information about the history of most of the dogs that come into our foster program. Even if they are said to be house-trained they may still have a few accidents from changing living quarters or until they know the bathroom routine and you know their bathroom needs. Since a dog has a better chance of being adopted if he/she is house-trained, please help your foster dog to perfect this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (3-6 times a day for adults and 10-12 times a day for puppies, possibly more). Initially, you may need to take him/her out more frequently to remind her where the door to the outside is and to reassure him/her that you will take her out for potty breaks. Most dogs will give cues, such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles, to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise him/her indoors.

Many cats' instinct is to dig and bury their "business." This does not mean from time to time you won't need to do some litter box training or reminding. Show your new foster cat the litter box right away and don't move it. Set your foster cat in the box following meals or after waking up from a nap.

If your foster animal has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish him/her. It will only teach fear and mistrust. Clean up all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently. However, do use positive reinforcement to help teach where it is proper to eliminate. Always keep treats on hand and stay outside with your foster dog when he/she is learning. That way as soon as he/she uses the bathroom you can provide praise and give a treat.

Crate Training. Crate training, done in a positive way, can be an effective component of house-training. A crate can be a safe place for your foster dog to have “down time” and can also limit his access to the entire house until he knows the rules. A crate should never be used as a form of punishment and a dog should never be left in a crate for an extended period. You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your foster dog up for success. He/she should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him/her to go in. Some dogs warm up to the crate slowly. If he/she is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he/she is willing to go. After he takes the treat, place another treat a little farther back in the crate. Keep going until he/she is eating treats at the very back, then feed him/her his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that the dog can walk in and out at will. Keep a special bone or chew toy in the crate that the foster dog can only have while in his/her crate, this will make it more enjoyable and special for your foster dog.

Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your foster dog will happily enter and settle down.

Cats can be crate trained, too!

Grooming. A clean and well-groomed animal has a better chance of getting adopted, so bathe your foster as needed and brush regularly especially if it has longer hair or requires more frequent grooming. Contact a foster coordinator if you feel your animal needs to see a professional groomer. To bathe a cat (only if needed), use a washcloth and warm water to gently clean the fur. Cats will generally clean themselves but at times they may need some help.

Mental stimulation and exercise. Depending upon your foster animals age and energy level, he or she should get at least two 30-minute play sessions and/or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, rope toys, laser pointers etc.) to see which ones your foster prefers. Remember to discourage a dog from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters. You can also offer your foster dog a food-dispensing toy for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the dog has to figure out how to get the treats out. There are many varieties of these toys out there that you can use and these will come in handy as you continue to foster. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw a toy toward the dog, because he/she may think you are throwing things at him/her and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away so that you are controlling the toy and the playtime if you have a dog that has trouble listening, otherwise leave toys where the dog can get to them easily. This saves your other household items from being chewed because there are no other choices. When giving the dog a toy or treat, have the dog sit before giving it to him/her. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat – making it a reward.

Safety requirements. Foster dogs and cats must live indoors, not outside. Please do not leave your foster dog outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard and do not allow cats to wander outside at all. We ask that you supervise your foster dog when it is outside at all times to ensure it doesn't escape or have any negative interaction with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in. When walking or hiking with your foster dog, please keep him/her on leash at all times. Since we do not know how your foster dog will act in these situations, or how other dogs will react, we need to ensure that all animals are safe at all times. In addition, we don't know if the other dogs they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster dog does not meet any unknown dogs. Having likely come from a shelter setting, foster dogs and cats can be vulnerable

health-wise. Also, your foster animal cannot ride in the bed of an open pickup truck. When your transporting foster animals, please keep them inside the vehicle.

Helping your foster animal get adopted

You play a big role in helping to get your foster adopted. Since you are the one who lives with the foster you know him/her better than anyone. As you get to know your foster, we would like you to keep us updated about their personality, temperament, training, and more by posting in our Facebook group “Paw Patrol Fosters.” If you do not use Facebook then please send an email with your foster animals name in the subject line. This interaction should take place at least every other week, if not more often. At times, the trainer/canine behavior consultant may post questions about how your foster dog is doing regarding a certain issue (house/litter box training, aggression, leash skills, cuddling etc) – please answer these questions promptly and honestly. When potential adopters are looking for a new family member, they want to know as much about the animal as they can to try and make the right decision for them. We want to know what the foster animal is like so we can be sure to match them up with the right adopter to minimize the chances of the animal being returned and having to go through the whole process again.

Things adopters frequently ask:

- Is the dog house-trained and/or crate-trained?
- Is the cat litter box trained?
- Is the dog/cat good with kids/men/women/cats/other animals/dogs?
- Does the dog know any basic commands?
- What is their energy level?
- What does the dog/cat like to play with?
- Does the dog have separation anxiety or aggressive issues towards food/people/dogs/cats etc?
- Is the cat shy?

Feel free to write a little bio about the dog or cat in the Facebook group, we encourage this, though it may be edited for publishing. We also need any quality photos that you take of your foster in your home; we can use those photos to create photo albums to accompany the online bio of the animal. Photos should also be posted in the Facebook Foster group or emailed (only if you don't use Facebook).

We would like you to attend as many adoption events and fundraisers where foster animals are welcome to help get your foster “out there.” (Watch for “cat only” or “dog only” events.) It's much easier to fall in love with the real thing than on the internet with just a picture and some words. We realize that you have busy lives outside of your fostering and understand that you can't make it to them all, but please do your best to make it to the ones that you can or arrange for a volunteer to bring your foster to the event for you. We want to find these pups the home they are so deserving of as quickly as we can and we can't do that without you! Plus, we like seeing your smiling faces here and there 😊

Signs of Illness and What to Do Next

All vet visits must be pre-authorized by the executive director!

Dogs and cats generally do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if your foster animal is under the weather will require diligent observation of the animals daily activity and appetite levels. It's a good idea to keep track of these levels in a journal. You'll also want to record any of the following symptoms, which could be signs of illness:

- **Fleas.** Foster animals will be treated for fleas as soon as possible upon receiving the dog or cat. Additional flea treatments are available if needed. Puppies and kittens younger than 4 months should not be treated with toxic chemicals – blue dawn dish soap should be used on puppies and kittens to kill fleas. Puppies and kittens over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs/cats can be treated with topical flea treatment. Flea treatments contain insecticides that can cause nerve and liver damage, impair the immune system, and even cause cancer. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least every two to three days. To check for fleas, inspect your foster, including rear, groin, belly, tail, neck and under the chin and head. Look also for black specks of flea dirt, which is actually digested blood. Before you begin combing, get a bowl of tap water and put a few drops of blue dawn dish soap in it. You can put any fleas you find in the water and they will drown. (If you don't use soap, the fleas may swim to a fluff of fur and jump out of the water.) If fleas are present, treat as soon as possible. Change bedding and vacuum the floors. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs, and dirt. If your foster had fleas, watch the stools for short pieces of white rice that are tapeworms, which come from ingesting fleas. Tapeworms can cause diarrhea. If you see tapeworms, call a foster coordinator, who can provide you with medication.
- **Eye discharge.** It is normal for animals to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. But if your foster has yellow or green discharge, or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the executive director for her recommendation on how to proceed.
- **Coughing and nasal discharge.** Coughing can be common if your foster dog is pulling on leash. If the coughing becomes more frequent, however, watch for discharge coming from the nose. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be needed, but check with the executive director to find out her recommendation on how to proceed. If the discharge becomes colored, be sure to report that to the executive director as soon as you can as a vet appointment may be needed. This could mean a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the dog's breathing. If the dog seems to struggle to breathe or starts wheezing, contact the executive director immediately. Once you notice a nasal discharge, monitor the dog's eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating.

Just like humans, cats can suffer from a runny nose, or nasal discharge. A runny nose is common in cats and fairly easy to spot. It may occur in one or both of a cat's nostrils, and the discharge may be clear or have color, depending on the underlying cause. Be sure to monitor the cats breathing. If the cat seems to struggle to breathe or starts wheezing, contact the executive director immediately. Once

you notice a nasal discharge, monitor the cats eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating and drinking.

- **Loss of appetite.** Your foster may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the dog/cat hasn't eaten after 3 days, please notify the executive director. Many animals when they first arrive in a new home are too stressed to eat and that's okay. Offer the food at every meal and let them make the choice to eat or not eat. Usually by the third day, their survival instincts kick in and even if the dog/cat is still nervous they will eat. If the animal has been eating well but then stops eating for 12 to 24 hours, notify the executive director. Please do not change the animal's diet without contacting the executive director. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration. If you must change the animal's food, please try to do so gradually by incorporating the new and old food together so as not to cause a large disruption in their digestive system.
- **Lethargy.** The activity level of your foster will vary depending on age and personality. Keeping an activity log and journal will help you notice whether your foster is less active than he normally is. If the animal cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, it's an emergency – please contact the Executive Director right away.
- **Dehydration.** Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the dog's/cat's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the dog is dehydrated. Please call the foster coordinator the next business day to schedule a vet appointment. Pedialyte can be given in the meantime to help hydrate the animal.
- **Vomiting.** Sometimes dogs and cats will eat too quickly and will immediately throw up their food. Occasional vomiting isn't cause for alarm, but if your foster has thrown up more than two times in one day, please notify a foster coordinator. It could be indicative of infection and the animal may need to see a vet.
- **Pain or strain while urinating.** When a dog or cat first goes into a foster home, he or she may not urinate due to stress. If the animal hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours, however, please contact the foster coordinator. Also, if you notice the animal straining to urinate with little or no results, or crying out when urinating, please contact the foster coordinator immediately because it may be indicative of an infection or an obstruction.
- **Diarrhea.** It is important to monitor your foster's pooping habits daily. Soft stool is normal for the first two or three days after taking a dog or cat home, most likely caused by stress and a change in food. Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including stress, change of diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites, and viruses. If your foster dog has diarrhea and has no other symptoms, rule out change of diet by feeding your dog 2 cups of cooked rice mixed with one cup of cottage cheese for a day or two, and then reintroduce dry kibble. If your foster dog or cat has liquid stool, however, please contact a foster coordinator so that an appointment can be scheduled to ensure that the animal doesn't need medications. Keep in mind that diarrhea will dehydrate the animal, so be proactive about

contacting the foster coordinator. If your foster has bloody or mucoid diarrhea, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

- **Frequent ear scratching.** Your foster may have a bacterial or yeast infection (or, in rare cases, ear mites) if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently. These conditions can be treated by a veterinarian, so please call the foster coordinator to schedule a medical appointment.
- **Swollen, irritated ears.** If your foster has irritated, swollen or red or pink ears that smell like yeast, he may have an ear infection called otitis. This type of infection is more common in dogs who have very floppy ears, like basset hounds or labradors. These dogs may need to have their ears cleaned more often to ensure that the infection does not re-occur.
- **Hair loss.** Please contact a foster coordinator if you notice any hair loss on your foster. It is normal for dogs to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm, dermatitis, or the early stages of mange. It is important to check your foster animal's coat every day.

Common Ailments in Shelter Animals

Shelter dogs may suffer from kennel cough, giardia, or intestinal parasites. Symptoms of kennel cough include a dry hacking cough, often with phlegm discharge, discharge from the nose and/or eyes, decrease in appetite, dehydration, and slight lethargy. Symptoms of giardia or intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea (often with a pungent odor) and/or dehydration.

If your foster dog is displaying one or more of these signs, please contact the foster coordinator. These ailments can worsen if left untreated.

Criteria for emergencies

What constitutes a medical emergency in a dog or cat? A good rule of thumb is any situation in which you would call 9-1-1 for a person. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Symptoms of parvovirus: bloody diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, high fever (above 103.5 degrees) □
Signs of extreme dehydration: dry mucous membranes, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours

If your foster displays any of these symptoms, please contact the executive director, followed by the trainer/canine behavior consultant and any other board member. If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help.

Behavior support

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement training, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pet. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic – such as barking, whining, digging, scratching furniture, chewing, scavenging, and hunting other animals – are really just normal dog and cat behaviors. The easiest way to coexist with our canine and feline companions is to provide more appropriate outlets for these behaviors.

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

- Is my foster getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples include verbally scolding a animal when he is seeking attention or engaging the animal when he uses bad manners to get you to play.
- Does my foster have a safe place that is pet-proofed with appropriate toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on his natural instincts and drives?

We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster requires more attention, exercise, or training than you can provide, talk to your Coordinator – another foster home might be best for both you and the animal.

You must not punish a dog/cat for a behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If the animal is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your fosters, which will help them to learn faster.

When interacting with your foster dog, refrain from wrestling or engaging in play that encourages the dog to be mouthy and “play bite” on your body. Also, try to refrain from inviting dogs up on the couch or bed. Not all adopters find this habit acceptable.

Some foster dogs will have behavioral issues, which we may or may not be aware of at the time of their rescue. Some of these behavior challenges are separation anxiety, destruction of property, fear issues or aggression toward other animals. We will only place dogs with behavioral issues with a person who feels comfortable

working with the dog on his/her particular issues. We will provide that person with all the necessary information so that proper care and training can be given to the foster dog.

If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster animal is exhibiting, please contact the trainer/canine behavior consultant to discuss the issue. We will guide you and help in every way that we can. If the behavior is extreme enough to warrant use of a trainer, we will provide one for you. Please understand that we have limited resources, so for basic training and minor behavior problems, we will personally work with the dog.

Thank you for opening your heart and home to a dog and/or cat in need!!!!

