



## Pup Culture Welcome Packet Fostering

Welcome to Pup Culture Rescue and thank you for fostering! By opening your home and heart, you've taken a dog out of the shelter/off the streets and given them their first home. Fostering is a life changing experience for both dog and human and we are so excited to be on this journey with you!

The main focus of our foster program is to help dogs transition from living in a shelter/on the streets to living in a home for the first time. Your duty as a foster is one of the most important roles in this dog's new life. Tasks may include: vet visits, adoption events, meet & greets, training sessions, supply pick up, etc. Most importantly, we look to our fosters to give these dogs the love and attention they deserve and have likely never had.

Although we have some general background, your foster dog's personality will blossom throughout their time with you. We rely on the communication between coordinator and foster to find the home that best suits their needs. Behavioral issues may unexpectedly arise and we are committing to providing our fosters with the proper tools to overcome them.

Many of our dogs have never been in a home so we ask that you please be patient with them and remember that everything is new! It often takes at least a week for them to start coming out of their shells, and a month for them to start to really feel at home and comfortable. We are always here to support you, so if you have any questions, please reach out to your foster coordinator (during business hours pending emergency). Below are some tips/tricks that will help you succeed as a foster parent.

### Welcoming your foster dog home/first day:

Imagine yourself moving to another country where the language and culture are different than you are used to. This is how your foster dog feels when you bring them home. Everything your foster dog experiences on the first day is brand new. There's a good chance they will be frightened and overwhelmed, so here are some tips to help:

- Prepare an area just for them. Initially, have their crate set up in a room or small area off to the side. Giving them free reign over the whole place can be overwhelming at first (and can lead to potty accidents and destruction).
- Plan an introduction with the other pets in the household. If you have another dog, have them meet outside on leash before entering the home. It's best to go for a pack walk together to have them meet and get comfortable with one another. Don't leave your foster dog unsupervised with another pet until you feel 100% confident that they'll interact safely together.
- Be mindful of children. If you have children, teach them how to safely and respectfully interact with the dog. This goes for both adults and children, but don't pet the dog while they are eating or sleeping because this may scare or startle them. Do not chase, tease or take away toys from your foster dog. Children's toys and dog toys look very similar, so make sure to pick up your children's toys or there's a good chance they will get destroyed.
- Be patient! The first few days are the hardest because everything will be new to you both. Remember that it may take at least a week for a routine to be established and for them to start to feel comfortable.

### Crate Training:

We recommend that all dogs use a crate. Not only will this be a comfortable space for your foster dog to decompress but it will also be a place that ensures their safety. Crate training can also help with potty training and will ease the transition into their forever home when the time comes. Note: The crate should be their "safe space", a space to call their own, and should by no means be used as a punishment.

Here are some crate training tips:

- Start by getting your dog comfortable with the crate. It can help to put a crate pad or soft blanket inside and to cover the outside with another blanket to create a cave-like environment.
- While crate training, keep the crate somewhere your family spends a lot of time so that your foster dog doesn't feel abandoned or punished while in their crate.
- Lure your foster dog into their crate with treats and speak to them in a positive, happy yet calming voice.
- Start crating your dog for short increments during the day while you're home. Start with 10 minutes and work your way up.
- Feeding your dog in their crate helps create a positive association with the crate. This is important to do at first especially if your personal dog or foster dog have food aggression.
- Once you're ready to crate them for a longer period of time, make sure to give them proper exercise and take them out to the bathroom beforehand. Giving them a toy can also help occupy them in their crate while you're away. Come and go quietly and calmly.

- Give them a treat and reward them every time they go in so they learn that this isn't a bad place. Make sure to say "crate" when you want them to go in so they can learn the command.
- Never use the crate for punishment! We want our dogs to like their crates and feel safe there.
- If your foster dog cries in the crate, it's important to leave them alone. The goal is for them to learn how to self soothe and entertain themselves.

**Do not leave your foster dog unattended outside of the crate. Pup Culture Rescue is not liable for cleaning and damage costs.**

### Feeding your foster dog:

Lots of our dogs haven't yet formed healthy relationships with food because of their past situations. Here are some tips to help with that.

Tips for feeding:

- Feed your dog in their crate. Allow 20-30 minutes for your foster dog to eat and digest. Whatever your dog doesn't finish can be added to their next meal. We do not recommend letting them graze all day. It is normal for dogs to skip a meal or two due to nerves. Mixing in broth or a spoonful of wet food can help.
- Give your foster dog space while eating. If you have another dog in the home, feed your personal dog and your foster dog in separate rooms.
- We will provide you with food. Please feed them according to the instructions given on the bag. Puppies under a year must be fed three times daily while dogs over a year can be fed twice daily.

### Mental and physical stimulation:

In addition to exercising your foster dog, it is important to provide your dogs with mental stimulation. Here are some tips and ideas:

- While every dog's needs are different, they should have a minimum of two thirty minute walks a day. If your dog isn't ready to walk on a leash yet, you can substitute this with playtime (i.e. throwing a ball, rope toys, etc.)
- If your dog is afraid of walking on leash, start getting them comfortable with the leash by attaching it to their collar and having them drag it around your home. Work your way up to longer walks as you see suitable.
- Since many of our dogs come from traumatic situations, we recommend using a flat collar and not a prong/choke collar.
- Mental stimulation can be anything from sniffing around on walks to puzzle toys stuffed with treats.

### Separation Anxiety:

It is easy for your foster dog to become attached to you since they have likely not experienced the love and attention you provide. Separation anxiety can easily worsen if not addressed.

- Don't make hellos and goodbyes a big deal. When you come home, try to ignore them until they calm down. Once they're calm (not barking or jumping) you can greet them happily and calmly and reward them for matching your energy. Getting overly excited to see them or visibly sad to say goodbye will work them up and make them feel anxious. Dogs feed off their humans' energy.
- Practice rewarding your foster dog for being calm in as many situations as possible. (i.e. wait to feed them until they're calm, wait to take them out until they're calm, etc.)
- Physical and mental stimulation can only improve your foster dog's behavior. A tired dog = a happy dog.
- As difficult as it may be, refrain from letting your foster dog sleep in bed with you and use the crate you are given. The first night may be tough and they will probably cry, but we promise it will get easier!

### Potty Training:

We can not guarantee that any of our dogs are potty trained. A new environment calls for new rules that must be learned.

- Take them outside every 1-2 hours the first few days. We don't want them to make a habit of going to the bathroom inside. Most dogs will give cues if they need to go out (i.e. sniffing and circling, standing by the door, etc.) If you catch them going inside, tell them "no" in a firm voice (don't yell) and immediately take them outside.
- Use a happy, excited voice to praise them when they go to the bathroom outside. Reward them with treats so they will affiliate going outside with treats.
- Make sure you take them out first thing in the morning and right before you put them in their crate at night.

### Medical Protocols:

- If your foster dog is currently on medication please give it to them exactly as prescribed unless told otherwise by your foster coordinator. If you don't think your dog is responding to the medication after 3-4 days please contact your foster coordinator.
- If you feel that your dog needs to see a vet, please reach out to your foster coordinator and they will set up the appointment. Fosters can not schedule vet appointments.
- If there is a medical emergency, meaning life or death, call your foster coordinator immediately. If you aren't able to get ahold of them, call the other numbers located on your foster dog's tag. If all fails, take them to your closest emergency vet clinic.

Thank you again for opening up your home to one of our dogs! We are here to support and guide you, so please don't hesitate to reach out (within business hours) to your foster coordinator if you need anything!