



SoHumane

Adult Dog Foster Handbook



Guidelines for Adult Canine Care

SoHumane Foster Program

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in being an adult dog foster with SoHumane! Thanks to people like you we are able to give our dogs a chance to find their forever homes. Our main goal with fostering is to help our dogs be happy and healthy in order to be successful in our adoption program. This handbook is here to help you understand what kinds of dogs you may be fostering for us and how to help them be successful in our adoption program.

SoHumane will provide all basic supplies, medical care, and training to help you be successful. After reading this handbook please let the Foster Coordinator know what type of fostering you are comfortable with doing. Not everyone has the lifestyle fitted to foster dogs and that's okay! We need a variety of fosters to help all our animals be happy and healthy while in our care.

SoHumane's foster program is dedicated to providing the animals in our care any extra love and attention they may need during their journey towards adoption into a forever home. The reasons an animal is sent to foster care include:

- The animal is too young to be made available for adoption
- The animal is too sick to be made available for adoption
- The animal is recovering from a medical procedure
- The animal needs socialization before being adoptable
- The animal needs a break from the shelter environment
- The shelter space is at capacity

An animal's eligibility for foster care is decided by Foster staff and Foster Coordinators.



Supplies Being Provided

SoHumane will provide you with all the supplies your foster dog needs like a dog bed, blankets, food, bowls, toys, and anything extra that your foster dog may need.

Crate

Martingale Collar or Harness

6-foot Leash

Poop Bags

Food and Water Bowls

Dog Bed

High-Quality Dog Food

Toys/Enrichment Activities

Medicine (if applicable)

Business Cards



If you need any additional supplies or need to restock, please contact SoHumane!
(541) 779-3215 • adoptions@sohumane.org

Tips and Tricks for Space Preparation

- 🐾 Crate training can be helpful for housetraining as well. Animals do not usually feel comfortable relieving themselves in their dwelling area.
- 🐾 Positive association with the crate will help them adjust: give treats, food, and toys in the crate.
- 🐾 If your foster dog does not appear to be housetrained, anticipate their bathroom needs by visiting the outdoors often and reward them.
- 🐾 If you catch them relieving themselves, interrupt and put them outside.
- 🐾 Accidents should be promptly cleaned up.
- 🐾 If your foster dog is chewing on things they should not, replace the item with a toy to redirect their attention with something positive.

Preparing the Space

Your foster dog should have their own quiet space away from the majority of the activity in your home. We recommend a separate room or generally quiet part of the home to keep their belongings to start.

The Crate

You will be provided with an appropriately sized crate that will be the dog's "safe place". In the crate, lay down a dog bed and blankets in order for them to be comfortable. You may also consider covering the crate with a blanket.

The Bowls

These bowls belong to the foster dog. The only animal that has access to them should be the foster dog. All animals should be fed separately to ensure that there will not be any arguments. In the beginning, please feed the dog in their crate.

Toys

A good variety of toys include Nyla bones, Kongs, ropes, and treat dispensers. Toys should be treated the same as bowls; they only belong to the foster animal. Toys should not be available except in the animal's "safe place." Arguments often happen over toys, so be watchful and aware.



Setting Up Your Foster for Success

If you have other dogs in your home, we will require that you bring them to the shelter to meet the dog you are planning to foster. SoHumane staff will provide step-by-step instructions for the meeting.

When picking up your foster dog, we expect them to be taken straight home. They more than likely will be unfamiliar with you, and they should never be taken anywhere like pet stores, the groomer, or dog parks. SoHumane staff will notify you of opportunities to take your foster dog to offsite adoption events. You will be instructed by SoHumane staff if your foster dog has special travel needs or opportunities.

Once home, take your foster dog for a leashed walk around the exterior of your home to allow them the opportunity to relieve themselves. Keep them on leash to explore the interior of your home and establish the rules of your home. After a brief exploration, put your foster animal in their crate in a quiet part of the house with a Nyla bone or Kong for a break. You can gradually give them more access to the home over time.

At bedtime, the foster dog should sleep in their crate to prevent midnight mischief or accidents to start. As you grow more comfortable with the dog, you may grant them more access unless instructed otherwise. Following these procedures ensures that the animal will be set up to succeed in your home!



Rules and Guidelines

Once an animal is in foster care, there are instructions for care outlined in the Foster Care Handbooks, but the general rules are as follows:

- Foster cats will not be allowed to go outside of the home unless in a secure crate for necessary transport.
- Foster dogs and puppies are **NEVER** to be taken to the dog park, groomers, or to unauthorized veterinarian visits.
- All behavioral and medical concerns must be reported immediately.
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours of communication from any Foster staff, Foster Coordinators, or potential adopters.
- Communicate professionally and clearly with all Foster staff, Foster Coordinators, and potential adopters.
- Refer to the designated foster handbook for animal care.
- When outside of the house all dogs are to be on leash at all times unless in a secure fence.
- The Foster parents agree to arrive punctually to all scheduled greeting, medical, and intake appointments. If scheduling conflicts occur, foster parents must notify SoHumane within 24 hours of their appointment.

Foster parents that do not follow the above policies are subject to immediate removal of the foster animal from the foster home as well as permanent termination from the SoHumane Foster Program depending on the severity of the offense.



Medical Issues You May Encounter

Dog Feces

An animal's waste can be a strong indicator that something is not right. Healthy stool will be firm and brown. Diarrhea is a strong sign that something is not right, but it can be caused by anything from parasites, viruses, bacteria, food irregularities, and stress. Diarrhea needs to be monitored and treated in a reasonable amount of time to prevent dehydration. Mild diarrhea for 24 hours is not a concern, but if it persists, has blood, or parasites, please call your foster coordinator for assistance. If you notice rice-like worms in their poop whether they're moving or not, please call SoHumane's Vet Care Department.

Kennel Cough

It is incredibly common for dogs in a shelter environment to develop an upper respiratory infection; it is much like the common cold for humans. Dogs that have kennel cough may have symptoms like abnormal eye or nose discharge that is yellow/green. The dog might be coughing consistently or sneezing. They may also seem lethargic. Dogs that have kennel cough are given medication to treat the infection over an extended amount of time. Contact SoHumane if you believe your foster animal may have kennel cough.

Fleas

All animals are given flea and tick preventative when they go through their intake. Some dogs still manage to hold onto fleas! If you notice your dog scratching more than usual, use a flea comb through their fur a few times to see if you can find a flea. If you find one, please call SoHumane's Vet Care Department.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a highly contagious skin disorder that can be difficult to treat. Signs of ringworm include abnormal hair loss in circular form. They may have a red ring on the outer edge. Ringworm is highly contagious to animals as well as humans and is contracted through the air. If you suspect ringworm please call SoHumane's Vet Care Department during business hours.

Mange

More often than not, if an animal has mange, it is demodex. Demodex mange is stress induced, non-contagious skin disorder that can be treated with medication and stress-calming tactics. If you notice abnormal hair loss, please call SoHumane's Vet Care Department.

Emergencies

Emergencies are a possibility with fostering, so you should be prepared to take the appropriate action for any odd behavior changes you notice with your foster dog.

Non-Emergencies	Emergencies
Monitor First	Immediately call the foster coordinator if after hours
If worsening, call the foster coordinator	Come to the shelter during business hours
Runny discharge from nose or eyes	Continuous diarrhea for longer than 24-36 hours
Lack of appetite	Continuous vomiting longer than 12 hours
Lethargy	Loss of appetite
Diarrhea that lasts more than 3-4 feedings	Bleeding of any kind
Vomiting	Any trauma
Weight loss	Difficult breathing
Coughing	Not responsive
Sneezing	Lethargy over 24 hours
Lack of bowel movements for more than 24-36 hours or straining	
Swollen eyes	

Source: Charleston Animal Society "Health Cheat Sheet"

Dangerous Foods

Please do not feed your foster dog any food outside of training treats and dog food. Cheese, hotdogs, and chicken may be used as high value treats for training in small amounts, if applicable. If your foster animal ingests any of these foods/chemicals on the list, treat the situation as an emergency.

- 🐾 Alcohol
- 🐾 Avocado
- 🐾 Chocolate, Coffee, and Caffeine
- 🐾 Citrus
- 🐾 Grapes and Raisins
- 🐾 Nuts
- 🐾 Milk/Dairy
- 🐾 Onions, Garlic, Chives
- 🐾 Raw/Undercooked Meat, Eggs, and Bones
- 🐾 Xylitol (found in some Peanut Butter)
- 🐾 Yeast Dough
- 🐾 Household/Outdoor Chemicals



Behavior Problems You May Encounter

Housetraining

Dogs that live in a kennel environment tend not to be housetrained. It's best to keep the dog on leash at first until you are comfortable that the animal is housetrained. Use the crate provided for you to keep your foster dog in when you cannot supervise them. Punishing a dog for having an accident is counterproductive. Punishing them creates fear, and they may be more likely to have an accident when you're not around. Listen and watch for signs that your foster dog is looking for a place to go to the bathroom. They may whine, bark, pace, sniff the ground more than usual, or even stand next to a door. If the dog is still having accidents, contact the foster coordinator.

Excessive Barking

It is important to understand and expect dogs to bark at least a bit. It is a way for them to communicate. When it is excessive, there are ways to address the issue. First ask yourself, "Is there a reason the dog is barking?"

Are they bored/lonely, seeking attention, protecting, fearful/alerting, playing, or displaying separation anxiety? If none of these seem to fit why the dog is barking, contact the SoHumane Behavior Department for a training plan.



Destructiveness

Digging and chewing are natural behaviors that dogs like to do. When bringing your foster dog in your home, make sure all enticing items are picked up and out of reach. SoHumane will provide you with toys for them to play with and chew on. Exercise is extremely important, especially for dogs that have high energy. An appropriate amount of exercise helps prevent dogs from feeling the need to be chew. If SoHumane has prior knowledge of an animal with destructive tendencies, we will provide explicit instructions for you to follow in order for the animal to be successful.

Socialization

Shy dogs are a big commitment that not everyone can take on. Dogs being sent to foster that are shy require specific socialization training to be successful in the adoption program. Fearful behavior takes time to correct and requires an immense amount of patience. Use positive reinforcement when socializing.

Provide the dog with a quiet place to stay. Always leash them to relieve themselves. Use high value treats like cheese or hot dogs. SoHumane will review all knowledge we have of dogs

that are shy and how to help them adjust. You may be provided a socialization checklist to help your foster dog warm up.



Training Tips and Tricks

- 🐾 Supervision is the key to success with housetraining.
- 🐾 Give them routine bathroom breaks!
- 🐾 Clean up AND sanitize any accidents and reward them for going outside!
- 🐾 Raising your voice at a dog that is excessively barking only encourages them to continue barking.
- 🐾 Keep your voice calm, yet firm when addressing behavior, and reward for good behavior.
- 🐾 Always crate your foster dog when not home. This is reassuring for you, and the dog can be in their safe place.
- 🐾 When you pick up your dog, make sure you understand all behavior issues they may have. Ask questions! We're here to help!
- 🐾 Be patient!
- 🐾 If you have guests visiting your home, put your foster dog in their safe place.
- 🐾 With multiple dogs in the home, it is important to remove all toys and food in order to prevent an argument between the dogs. They can have toys and food when separated.

Dog-Dog Introductions

If you have other dogs in your home, we will require that you bring them to the shelter to meet the dog you are planning to foster. SoHumane staff will provide step-by-step instructions for the meeting.

Dog-Cat Introductions

Some dogs do well with cats, some do not. We do not have a way to test dogs with cats at our facility, so it is up to you to follow these instructions on properly introducing your foster dog to your cat. If a foster dog has restrictions for cats, SoHumane will not send a dog to a foster home that has cats. Keep your household pets updated with us, so we can ensure proper placement.



Keep the dog on leash when introducing, and pay attention to each animal's body language. If the cat has a swishing tail, and their ears are pinned back, they are uncomfortable. A dog with a prey drive will be hyper-focused, stiff, and may whine. Keep the animals separated until you are comfortable with their interaction. SoHumane can provide additional training tips.

Food and Toy Guarding

Resource guarding is an important issue that should not be handled lightly. Dogs that guard their food and toys must be fed alone. They need to be left alone until they are finished eating. When they are chewing on their toys, do not pet them or try to take the toy away from them. Resource guarders cannot be fed with other animals, and they cannot share toys with other dogs in the home. Dogs have stronger noses than humans, so it is possible they will find something they are not supposed to have. Do not try to take the item away from them. Instead, offer another item like a favorite toy or treat in exchange.



Source: Charleston Animal Society "Crate Training, Housetraining, and Training: Positive Reinforcement" Articles

Adoption through Foster

We will encourage you to promote your foster dog while in your care. Tell the people in your life about them! While they are in your care, you are their biggest supporter, and they are counting on you to get the word out about what they are like in a home. Because they are not in the shelter, they are not being seen by our customers. We will supply you with our business cards, so potential adopters have the ability to contact us and process an adoption. We can inform you about our adoption policies, so you are aware of what we look for in potential adopters. You will be aware of any restrictions a dog may have in order for them to be placed in the most appropriate home.

We may send a dog to foster to create space for other animals needing to be rehomed. Animals adopted out of foster are less likely to be returned because you, the foster, will have a stronger understanding of how they act in a home.

When it is time for the animal to return to the shelter for whatever reason, please provide us with notes and pictures about their personality. These help us when going over an adoption. If you absolutely fall in love with your foster animal, you have the opportunity to adopt them! Standard adoption policies and procedures will apply.

If you are no longer able to foster your animal, contact SoHumane to arrange a time to bring the dog back.



Source: Charleston Animal Society "Ready for Adoption" Article

Works Cited

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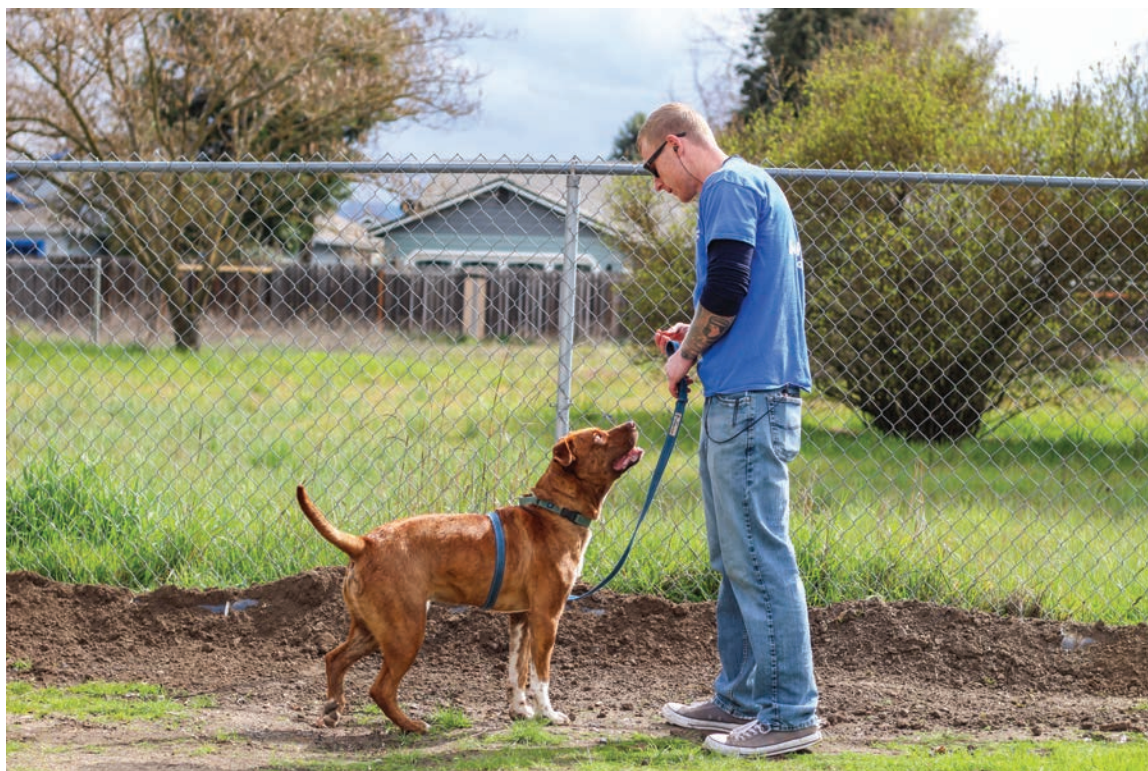
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Socialization Checklist



Animal Name _____

Task	Notes
Men	
Women	
Children	
Laughing	
Talking Loudly	
Walking	
Running	
Jogging	
Vacuum-off	
Mop	
Broom	
Bicycles	
Lawnmower-off	
Grass	
Concrete	
Stairs	
Carpet	
Tile	
Hardwood	
Nail Clippers-not used	
Feet Being Touched	
Ears Being Touched	
Tail Being Touched	