



SoHumane

Puppy Foster Handbook



Guidelines for Canine Care from Newborn to 8 Weeks

SoHumane Foster Program

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in being a puppy foster with SoHumane! Thanks to people like you we are able to give our puppies a chance to grow and develop in a safe environment before they are ready to find their forever homes. Our main goal with fostering is to help our animals be happy and healthy in order to be successful in our adoption program. This handbook is here to help you understand what is entailed in fostering puppies, challenges that might arise as a puppy foster 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 fitting for puppy fostering 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 puppies need. Listed below are common items that will be provided to each foster.

Crate

Exercise Pen

Bed and Blankets

Food and Water Bowls

Puppy Pads

High-Quality Puppy Dry/Wet Food

Formula (if applicable)

Bottles and Replacement Nipples (if applicable)

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

- 🐾 Puppies are messy! If you have a room with hard surface flooring, such as laminate or linoleum, clean-up is a breeze!
- 🐾 Positive association with the crate at an early age can assist with ongoing crate training as the puppies are made available for adoption and are placed in their permanent homes.
- 🐾 Accidents should be promptly cleaned up.
- 🐾 Provide clean linens and toys daily.
- 🐾 Toys are great tools to help your puppy become socialized!



Preparing the Space

When picking up your foster puppy or puppies, we expect you to take them straight home. No dog parks, stores, or groomers. Your foster puppies 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 away from other pets if applicable.

The Crate and Exercise Pen

You will be provided with an appropriately sized crate or X-Pen depending on how many puppies you are fostering. This will be the puppy's "safe place". In the space, lay down a dog bed, blankets, and puppy pads in order for them to be comfortable and easy to clean up after.

The Bowls

These bowls belong to the foster puppies. The only animals that should have access to them should be the foster puppies. They should be washed and sanitized daily.

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.



Bottle Feeding a Puppy

What to Feed

Never give a neonate puppy anything other than their specified formula! This includes, but is not limited to, cow's milk and formula intended for human babies.

Puppies who are less than three to four weeks old are fed a combination of liquid or powder formula. After a feeding, unused liquid formula can be stored for up to three days in the refrigerator or frozen for future feedings. Frozen formula will last for 6 months.

Powder formula must be mixed for feedings. It is important to closely follow mixing directions: one part powder into two parts warm water (as it can cause diarrhea or constipation if not mixed correctly). When mixing do not use a blender. Any reconstituted powder formula can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. After that point, it must be discarded.

Feeding Etiquette

- 🐾 Only use clean nipples and bottles!
- 🐾 Bottles should be warmed up before feeding. The formula should be warm to the touch, but not hot enough that it would be painful. Test the temperature on the inside of your wrist
- 🐾 Feed puppies one at a time. Place them on a countertop and allow them to feed with four paws on the counter and with a level head. This emulates how they would nurse from their mom.
- 🐾 Do not feed a puppy while he/she is on their back. This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in the lungs.
- 🐾 Gently open the puppy's mouth with your finger and place the nipple on the tongue.
- 🐾 Stroking the puppy on their throat can help them to eat.
- 🐾 Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- 🐾 Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the puppy from inhaling too much air.
- 🐾 Do not squeeze the bottle to force formula into the puppy's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- 🐾 After feeding, burp your puppy by gently massaging their back.
- 🐾 Be sure to stimulate the puppy after or before feeding. Use a warm cloth to gently rub their bottom until they have urinated and defecated.
- 🐾 Before finishing the feeding and stimulation routine, make sure the puppy's face and bottom are all cleaned up to prevent irritated skin
- 🐾 Fill out the Daily Weight and Feeding Record. Take notes of any abnormalities, and call your Foster Coordinator if it persists.



Feeding Chart and Milestones

WEEKS	FEEDING	DEVELOPMENT
0-1	Bottle feed ½ tablespoon of formula every 2-3 hours. If there is a mom dog, make sure that all puppies are nursing.	Puppies should be handled minimally. Puppies will sleep about 90% of the time and eat the other 10%.
1-2	Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until the puppies' bellies are full but not bloated. Overnight feeding can be every 3-4.	Healthy puppies should wiggle energetically when picked up. Eyes will open between 8 and 14 days.
2-3	Bottle feed formula every 3-4 hours, until their bellies are full but not bloated.	Puppies begin to crawl around and should be almost standing. They should begin to play with each other and teeth at this point.
3-4	Bottle feed formula every 4 hours until the puppies are full but not bloated. Puppies may start to lap from a bowl.	Puppies begin to see well. Puppies will begin to clean themselves. Puppies enter socialization period, if they have siblings allow them to play with one another.
4-5	Bottle feed as needed to keep puppies from crying with hunger. Weaning should be done gradually. (See Weaning in Puppy Care section.)	Begin housebreaking. This can be done by using training pad. After each feeding place puppy on pad. Be patient!
5-6	Feed gruel 4 times a day. Thicken gruel gradually by reducing the amount of liquid mixed with it. Introduce dry food/water.	Puppies can begin to roam around the room with supervision. Allow different types of toys and exploration on different surfaces!
6-7	Puppies should be eating dry food. Feed at least 3 meals per day as they may not eat as much at a single sitting.	By this time, you will have "mini-dogs." Continue socializing, potty-training after meals, play sessions, or naps.
7-8	Offer dry food 3-4 times a day. Leave a bowl of water down at will.	Continue playing and socializing with the puppies. You can even begin training such as sit, down, and come.
8+	Offer dry food 3 times a day. Leave down a bowl of water for them to drink at will.	By this time, the puppies should be ready for spay/neuter surgery and adoption.

Weaning Puppies

Transitioning

Weaning can occur at 4 to 5 weeks and should be conducted gradually. Create a gruel by mixing moistened dry food with water or canned food.

Introduce them to solid food by offering warmed can food, mixed with a small amount of water into gruel, in a shallow dish. Begin by placing the puppy to the side of the plate, he or she should start to eat, though it may take a few tries for puppies to understand. If they are not interested, wait a few hours and then try again. After they have accepted the gruel, gradually thicken it by adding less water. Begin to also offer dry food on a free feeding basis.



If the mother is present she will usually begin weaning the puppies by discouraging them from nursing; however, some dogs will allow the nursing to continue until the puppies are old enough for spay/neuter surgery. Some nursing activity is the canine equivalent to thumb-sucking, that is, for comfort only. Even if the puppies appear to be nursing, they may not be getting all of the nutrition they need from mom. Make sure the puppies are eating food and gaining weight.



Amount of Food

Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding. Feed puppies until they are full but not bloated.

Cleaning Equipment

Keeping the puppies' supplies clean is vital as this will help prevent diarrhea, vomiting, or infection. Cleaning the bottles and nursing nipples is quite easy. Using hot, soapy water clean the bottle with a bottle brush. If you do not have a bottle brush you may wash the bottle and nursing nipple in the dishwasher. You may place them in the silverware rack or in a dishwasher basket.

Additional Feeding Considerations

The digestive systems of puppies are fragile. Do not offer puppies treats. Only feed them the food provided by the Foster Coordinator.

If puppies are fighting over food, start to feed them separately. Contact the Foster Coordinator for support.

Never take food away from a puppy that is growling. Simply remove the other puppies and wait for food bowl to be unattended.

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.



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



Source: ASPCA "People Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pets" Article

Medical Issues You May Encounter

On occasion, we bring in animals that require special medical attention. There are times when foster care is the most appropriate option for the animal until they are healthy enough to be in the adoption program. If you foster a dog with medical needs, you will be informed of the full extent of the care needed for the animal which could be minimal or extensive depending on the animal. You will have scheduled checkups as well. SoHumane also expects fosters that have healthy dogs watch out for anything that can be medically concerning.

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.

UTI

Urinary tract infections can be common, but luckily they can be treated fairly easily. Signs that your foster dog may have a UTI include high frequency bathroom breaks, strong odor urine, and/or unhealthy color. If you believe your foster dog has a UTI, please call SoHumane's Vet Care Department.

Vomiting

Vomiting is not serious unless it is continuous or if the animal has diarrhea as well. If vomiting occurs multiple times in a row, 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.

Parvovirus and Distemper

Parvovirus is deadly to dogs, and puppies are particularly susceptible. It is a virus that attacks a dog's gastrointestinal tract, and is very difficult to treat successfully. It is transmitted through direct contact with contaminated feces. The key signs to look for are lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, dehydration, abdominal pain/bloating, fever, and particularly, severe diarrhea with or without blood. Distemper is a fatal disease similar to parvo, but also attacks the respiratory and nervous system. Look for a severe URI, lethargy, seizure activity, convulsions and paralysis, as well as symptoms of parvo.

Fading Puppies

There are times when a puppy appears healthy, yet may suddenly stop thriving. They stop growing, socializing, and crawling. They may cry continuously, and could only survive for another 48 hours even with medical treatment. There is no known cause of this, but contact SoHumane Vet Care if you are concerned or if you have a puppy that has passed.

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.



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

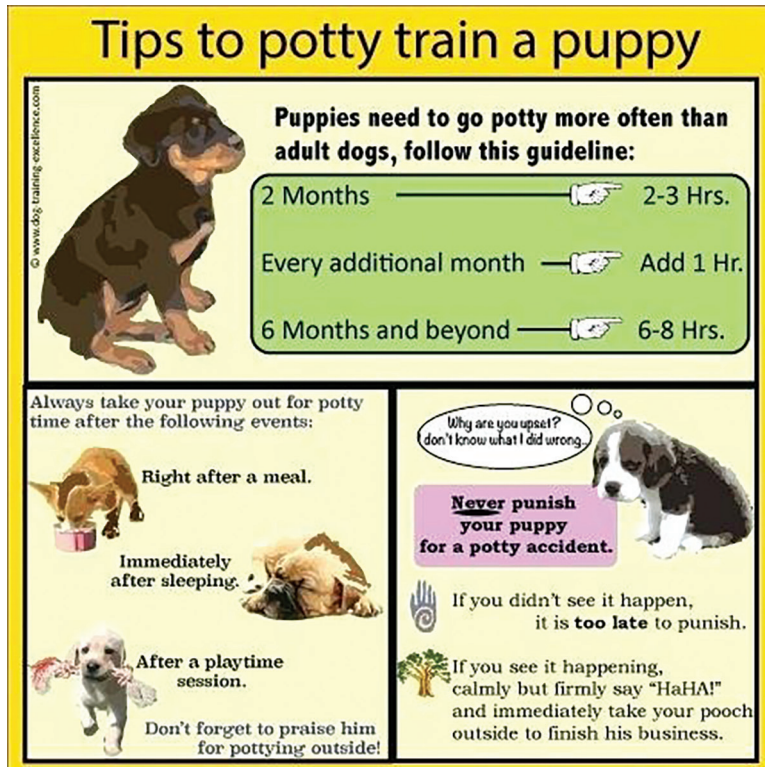
Non-Emergencies	Emergencies
Monitor First	Immediately call the foster coordinator if after hours
If worsening, call the foster coordinator	Come to the shelter during business hours
Runny discharge from nose or eyes	Continuous diarrhea for longer than 24-36 hours
Lack of appetite	Continuous vomiting longer 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"

Training and Socialization for Puppies

Housetraining Schedule

Puppies under 8 weeks of age are unable to hold their bladder for more than a few hours at most and should have a safe area set up that they can potty in indoors (ex pen with potty pads). Once the puppy is 6 weeks old you can begin house training by following this simple chart:



Excessive Barking

It is important to understand and expect dogs and puppies 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 puppy is barking?" Are they bored/lonely, seeking attention, alerting, or playing? Typically the best thing to do is ignore the behavior and give attention when the puppy is calm. Never yell at, hold the mouth shut or strike the puppy for barking. If ignoring the puppy does not work and you are needing additional help, contact SoHumane for training information.

Chewing

Digging and chewing are natural behaviors that puppies like to do. When bringing your puppy 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 also extremely important. An appropriate amount of exercise helps prevent puppies from feeling the need to be mischievous.

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 or keep your puppies contained when not able to supervise.
- 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!

Socialization

Dogs have several critical time periods for socialization. You will likely experience the first 2 periods during the time you have your foster puppy. For information on how to properly socialize your puppy, please speak with SoHumane.

Canine Socialization Period: 3-7 weeks

This is when your dog learns the species-specific behaviors that make him/her a dog. Through interaction with mother and littermates, the pup learns the body language, facial expressions and vocalizations of canine communication. It's important that puppies remain with their littermates for this entire period. In the absence of the opportunity to experience this entire timeframe, appropriate interaction with other dogs can mean the difference between a normal dog and one that does not have normal canine interaction.

Human Socialization Period: 8-12 weeks

This is the time during which the pup must be socialized with a variety of people and new experiences. Lack of socialization during this time period results in neo-phobic dogs – frightened of the “new” people, places, objects, and activities. This is the ideal time for play with other puppies with the understanding that puppies need rest and can become over stimulated. This is a good time for the introduction to a broad range of experiences, positive training, and a positive introduction to being groomed – including gentle, light brushing, introduction to clippers if appropriate, with lots of treats, praise and patience.

Fear Impact Period: 8-11 weeks

A sub-set of the Human Socialization Period, this is a time when a painful, traumatic experience can have a lasting effect. This doesn't mean isolate the puppy – but it does mean exercise care and avoid frightening, potentially painful experiences: physically painful, not just new and different.

Seniority Classification Period: 13-16 weeks

This is an important pre-adolescent period of testing when puppies develop self confidence. During this time-frame puppies work through a variety of interactive issues such as learning bite inhibition. This is an important time for puppies to play together with the following caveats: It is especially crucial to supervise puppies at this age, making sure no puppy is being bullied. Puppies must not be successful in their attempts to bully, or this can become a learned behavior; and puppies must not be the recipients of bullying, or they can develop fearful responses to other dogs.

Conclusion

It is important to understand the critical periods of emotional development. It can make all the difference between a dog that is comfortable and easy to handle and one that is terrified and reactive. Without question, early socialization is one of the most critical components for a dog's mental and emotional well-being.

Modified from: Important Socialization Periods of a Puppy's First 16 Weeks Written by Gail Fisher, Dog Trainer in Manchester

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	

Adoption through Foster

We will encourage you to promote your foster puppies 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 puppy 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 puppy(ies) back.



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