



**CONTRA COSTA  
HUMANE SOCIETY**

# **Dog Foster Manual: A Guide for Dog Fosters**

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*Thank you for opening your heart and home to one of our county shelter's orphaned dogs. Your generosity will provide young and old, injured and sick, abused and under-socialized dogs a chance to grow or heal before finding their forever homes. Contra Costa Humane Society began its foster care program in 1992 and since then, the program has saved thousands of animals that might otherwise have been euthanized.*

*This manual is designed to provide foster parents with a comprehensive overview of Contra Costa Humane Society's Dog Foster Program. Along with the information included in the foster dog packet, this manual is meant to be a helpful resource for foster parents and should answer many of the questions that may arise before and during foster care. Foster parents should always consult with the Dog Foster Team members for specific help and assistance. All information is subject to change.*

## **REASONS TO FOSTER**

Fostering is a wonderful experience for you and your family because you can feel good knowing you have helped save a homeless dog's life. Even better, you've created space in the shelter to accommodate other homeless dogs in need. Foster dogs provide companionship and purpose - your act of kindness is repaid in rewards that are beyond words.

### **Dogs needing foster homes include:**

- Puppies too young and/or immature to be adopted
- Abandoned mothers with litters of puppies that require more socialization than available at the shelter
- Injured dogs and/or those recovering from surgery
- Neglected or abused dogs that need tender loving care
- Dogs suffering from "shelter stress" in need of a calming home environment
- Dogs with colds or with special medical needs
- Any dog when the shelter becomes overcrowded or a dog that has simply been there too long
- Older or senior dogs overlooked because of age, medical or behavioral needs

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL FOSTER PARENTS**

In order to become a foster parent, you will need to do the following:

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Provide a copy of your driver's license
- Agree to and sign the Dog Foster Agreement
- Pass a home safety inspection (at CCHS's discretion)
- Provide a safe, loving and stable environment for the foster animal until it is adopted
- Be willing to foster your animal from rescue to adoption (the time per animal may vary depending on its needs)
- Have patience and an understanding that all animals are rescue animals and their backgrounds and behaviours can be unknown. Be prepared for some adjustment in the beginning. It can be stressful for both you and the animal to be in a new situation. Be patient and know that things will get easier!
- Resident animals need to be current on all vaccines and spayed/neutered
- Willingness to work with behavioural concerns that require training
- If fostering a dog that will be allowed in a yard off leash, any yard area must be securely fenced and hazard free
- Transport your foster to veterinary appointments and adoption events as necessary
- Be able to separate foster and resident animals if needed (for medical or behavioral reasons, for example)
- Accommodate adoption meetings with pre-qualified potential adoptive families either at foster home or off-site

- Be prepared to be financially responsible for a portion of the dog's care. CCHS provides as much as possible but financial constraints can lead to a reduction of items provided.
- Treat the animal as a member of your family!

As a CCHS foster, you are not only helping to prepare your foster cat for a permanent, loving home, but you are also helping to represent CCHS as a respectable, reputable organization within the rescue field. Fosters are required to adhere to policies, protocols and CCHS's Code of Conduct as outlined in the Volunteer Manual.

## **HOW THE SELECTION PROCESS IS DEFINED**

On any given day, there may be hundreds of dogs residing in public shelters. These dogs are brought to the shelter for the following reasons:

- Owner surrender
- Found by animal control officers or brought in by member of the public as a stray
- Left in the after-hours depository, with or without identification or information
- Impounded for neglect or other investigation

Dogs that are brought in as strays or left in the after-hours depository are initially held as stray dogs in order to allow their guardians a chance to reclaim them. Dogs that have some form of identification (collar, tags, microchip, or tattoo) are held 3-5 business days, while dogs with no identification are held for 3 business days.

Once the stray hold is finished (or after surrender by the owner), the dog is then medically evaluated by shelter vets and temperament tested by shelter trainers to determine its suitability for adoption to the public. If the dog is medically sound and passes the temperament test, he is made available for public adoption. If the dog has a medical concern, he will be made available to rescue groups for medical reasons; if he/she doesn't pass the temperament test, he will be made available to rescue groups for behavioral reasons (or not available at all if deemed too aggressive). If the dog has an obvious medical injury, a temperament test may be omitted as the injury can affect results.

Dogs that are initially available only to the public for adoption may become available to rescue groups during their stay if they develop a medical concern (kennel cough, Parvo, etc.), a behavioral concern (kennel stress), or if they've simply been there too long with no interest from the public. Despite common belief, the shelter does not set a number of days a dog can stay before being euthanized. Dogs have been known to stay in the system longer than a month in order to maximize chances for adoption. Once available to a rescue group though, it is the last option for the dog.

Therefore, while hundreds of dogs may reside in the shelter, only a percentage is available to rescue groups. Some rescue group representatives go in and adopt dogs that are only available to the public for adoption by paying all the necessary adoption fees, but it is CCHS's first priority to help the dogs that are at risk for euthanasia.

CCHS Dog Foster Team members pull appropriate dogs from the shelter based on your lifestyle, schedule and abilities. If you happen to see a particular dog on the county website that interests you, you may let a Dog Foster Team member know and we will look into that particular to determine if he's available to rescue groups and if he is a suitable match for you.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***How long of a time frame do I need to commit to?***

Our goal is to have fosters commit to a year-long period, with breaks in between animals. That may mean that you foster, say, six animals over the course of the year or it may mean one. The time commitment per animal is completely dependent upon that particular animal's needs. It's important for fosters to understand that we cannot guarantee a time-frame for a foster, but we want them to find their forever home just as much as you do! If committing to a year-long period is more than you're able to do currently but you'd still like to help foster, perhaps consider being a Respite Foster, which allows you to temporarily foster an animal when its current foster goes on vacation, has an emergency, etc. It may also allow you to foster an animal for a temporary period of time until a full-time foster is available.

### ***Can I still foster if I have animals of my own?***

Most certainly! As you know your own animal's personality best, we take that into account when pulling animals from shelters. We ask that foster families have an area of the house where new animals can be separated as needed (a bedroom or other indoor living space), which is beneficial during introduction periods or should there be a medical or behavioral concern.

It's important to note that some dogs have not been dog-dog tested during their time at the shelter, and it is not possible to test them with cats before pulling them. Should you have a resident dog, we ask to introduce your dog to the potential foster dog at the shelter *before* CCHS pulls him or her from the shelter. If introducing a foster dog to a home with resident cats, we ask that it be done very cautiously with the dog on leash for an extended period of time, and always under supervision. We do not require that resident animals and fosters be separated throughout the foster period, but do take all steps to prevent any transmission of illnesses or personality conflicts, and do require that resident animals be current on all vaccines.

### ***How long is the dog typically in my care before being adopted?***

Typically, it takes about 10-14 days for a dog to settle into a foster home enough to give us the best picture of its disposition and personality. For that reason, it's ideal to have a dog in foster care for 2 weeks before being put up for adoption. During this time, the dog will also be spayed or neutered and receive necessary medical care. Some dogs that go into foster are immediately ready for adoption, for example, if they're already altered, microchipped and medically and behaviorally sound. On average, a dog may be in foster care for up to two months before being adopted, but many factors affect this time frame, such as breed, disposition, temperament, training and medical needs.

### ***Can I still foster if I rent?***

Yes, we just need written authorization from your landlord stating that it's okay for you to foster before taking a foster in.

### ***Can I still foster if I work 40 hours per week?***

Yes! The most important thing to consider is whether you feel you have the time to commit to fostering, especially if you lead a busy social life outside of work. If you feel you do, then we try to pull the most compatible type of foster for your lifestyle. Puppies would not be ideal with the amount of training and attention necessary, but perhaps an easy-going adult dog that's fine to relax while you're away at work. Oftentimes, depending on the age of the animal, a companion animal for them is beneficial while you're away, so fostering two easy-going animals may be the best fit.

***Can I foster if I have children?***

We have many foster homes with children, and they're a tremendous help in socializing the right animals. We ask that children be over the age of ten years. We do take into account specific factors, such as the kids' familiarity with animals, their activity level, etc. as this helps us to best match a foster. Depending upon the animal, they may have just undergone a tremendous amount of stress, and so placing them in a home with children would only exacerbate potential behavioral concerns. Others gravitate towards kids, so we give them what they love!

***What if I don't have a secure yard, or no yard at all?***

This is not a disqualifying factor for fostering. Foster dogs, regardless of a yard, will need routine walks as this helps bond the animal with you, gives routine exercise, and helps to make the animal more adoptable. If a yard is not secure, we ask that you do not let the dog out off-leash as we do not know enough about the dog to ensure that he won't run off.

***If I foster a dog, do I have to crate train him/her?***

We realize that not everyone is familiar and comfortable with crate-training, so while we recommend it, we do not require it. Crate training is not a punishment but a very beneficial training tool. It can help the dog to feel more secure, give him a "safe place" to go and in many cases, increase chances for adoption.

***How are the animals promoted? Am I required to bring them to weekend adoption events?***

Our dogs and cats are promoted through our website, Petfinder.com, AdoptaPet.com, and an additional 100 or so other sites as well as Facebook and Craigslist. We also hold weekend adoption events as available and foster dogs currently available for adoption are asked to be present. Advanced notice will be given to the foster families, and if they are not able to personally attend due to a scheduling conflict, CCHS will try to arrange for another dog handler to be at the event to handle your foster dog. It is best, however, if the dog's foster can bring their foster and be present as they have the most accurate knowledge of the dog on a day-to-day basis.

***Does CCHS pay for supplies and medical care?***

CCHS strives to provide all necessary supplies for fostering of the dog. Supplies such as food, treats, chew toys, leashes & collars are kept at CCHS's offices and can be requested as needed. If the item is necessary to fostering and we do not have it on hand we will get approval for purchase by a CCHS staff member. CCHS is not able to cover "luxury" items, such as baths at dog bathing stations, grooming, clothing, etc. Please check with your foster coordinator in the case of any needed supply item, allowing enough time for disbursement. Any items or supplies that the foster wishes to donate to the foster animal are tax-deductible and always appreciated!

It's in the dogs' best interest to stay on consistent food so as to avoid digestive upset. That being said, much of the food CCHS uses is donated, and therefore, doesn't necessarily remain a consistent brand. We will do our best, however!

All necessary, pre-approved medical care is covered by CCHS.

***Can I return the dog if I can't foster him/her any longer?***

Unfortunately, these are situations we try very hard to avoid as we don't operate a shelter. We ask that fosters be fully committed to fostering for the length of time necessary for that animal to find its forever home. Understand that the dog has been under an extreme amount of stress recently and may not settle in as quickly or easily as you might like, but it is not the dog's fault. Should a situation arise, we will obviously try to accommodate as best as possible, be it a respite foster or a boarding facility, but we cannot make a guarantee.

Should an emergency arise, such as the dog acting aggressively towards your resident dog, cat, or a family member, please enclose the dog in a comfortable room with food and water until you can contact your Foster Coordinator. **Do not, under any circumstances, surrender the dog to a public shelter.**

### ***The Pepper Policy: Emergency situations needing another foster home***

Should a dire emergency come up and you find that you are not able to continue to care for your foster dog, please contact your Foster Coordinator immediately to discuss your situation. **Again, do not, under any circumstances, surrender the dog to a public shelter as the dog risks being euthanized.** In cases of need, your CCHS representative will institute the following protocols to find temporary care for your foster dog until a new foster is available:

- Contact all other dog fosters to see if any are able to foster
- Contact staff and dog-related volunteers for temporary care
- Board the dog in an approved dog boarding facility
- Contact other rescue coordinators

### ***I'm worried I might fall in love and want to keep the animal!***

We won't lie... it happens sometimes! We are not opposed to fosters adopting fosters, although by allowing them to find a new forever home, fosters can help yet another animal in need. Our foster families say all the time that despite it being hard to say goodbye to a foster, it's worth it in the end when you find that perfect adoptive family and you know the animal lives happily ever after! If fosters find that they're absolutely smitten with their foster and can't bear to live without him, we ask that that decision be made and CCHS be notified before we put the animal up for adoption publicly. Once he is up for adoption and if there is an interested party, we can no longer guarantee adoption to the foster.

## **IMPORTANT RULES & REMINDERS REGARDING YOUR FOSTER DOG**

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Foster Agreement and throughout this manual, foster parents **MUST** abide by the following rules:

- All vet visits must receive verbal or written approval by CCHS before taking action
- You must visit a vet that is approved by CCHS unless otherwise arranged with a CCHS coordinator
- Foster dogs must be on leash at all times when outdoors unless in your securely fenced yard
- Foster dogs must never be tethered by leash and left unattended in public at any time
- Foster dogs must never be left unattended in your car
- No off-leash dog park visits. This is a liability to CCHS.
- Any aggressive behavior must be immediately communicated to your Foster Coordinator
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communications from CCHS staff, Dog Foster Team members, or potential adopters

### ***Should your foster dog become lost***

Despite all of your best efforts, a situation may arise where your foster dog escapes while on a walk, or from your house, your car or your yard. Should this occur, it is vital that you contact your Foster Dog Coordinator or the Adoption Program Director immediately, no matter what time, day or night. Please provide the following information during the call:

- When the dog escaped
- How the dog escaped

- Where (location/area) the dog escaped
- If the dog was wearing its collar & tags or if the dog had slipped out of his collar
- Where you think the dog may frequent (nearby park? Neighbor's house?)

Once you have notified your CCHS contact person, they will do the following:

- Notify the county shelter
- Post an ad on Craigslist
- Make flyers and distribute
- Post on Facebook
- Contact local vets
- Contact microchip company

You can help to find the dog by:

- Contacting neighbors and walking/driving through surrounding areas
- Posting flyers
- Assisting your CCHS contact person, as he/she sees fit

### ***Supervising your foster dog***

As previously noted, there are important reminders regarding your supervision of your foster dog that are deserving of repetition and explanation.

- **Your foster dog must be under your supervision at all times**
- It is mandatory to keep your foster dog **on leash at all times when outside of your home or fenced yard**
- Your foster dog must **never be tethered in public while not under your direct supervision**
- **Foster dogs are not allowed in off-leash dog parks**, as should a dog fight ensue, you do not have direct control of your dog and CCHS could be liable.
- **Foster dogs should not ever be left outside in the yard or in your garage while you are gone.**
- **Your foster dog should not ever be left unattended in your car, even if it's "just for a minute"** while you run an errand. On a warm day (70-80 degrees), the temperature in a parked car can reach between 100-120 degrees in just minutes, even with partially opened windows. On a 90 degree day, the interior temperature can reach as high as 160 degrees in less than 10 minutes. Parking in the shade does little to amend this scenario. When exposed to such high temperatures, your foster dog can quickly suffer brain damage or die from heatstroke in just 15 minutes. Dogs can only cool themselves by panting and sweating through their paw pads, so baking in such a warm environment leaves them no opportunity to effectively cool themselves.

**Should dangerous situations occur due to the foster family's negligence, CCHS is not liable for any damages done to persons or property.**

### **DOG FOSTER TEAM**

The dog foster program could not exist without the support and dedication of the volunteer Dog Foster Team, who are invaluable to the success of the Dog Foster Program. Specific Dog Foster Team members are listed on the **Contact Information** sheet located at the end of this packet.

- Adoption Program Director: The CCHS staff member assigned to oversee the foster program
- Foster Coordinator: An individual assigned to you and your foster dog to support you throughout the entire foster care process

- Home Safety Inspection volunteer: The person who conducts the potential adopters' home safety inspection to ensure that the home meets CCHS' safety standards, if required by CCHS

## **PREPARING TO FOSTER A DOG**

After being approved by CCHS staff as a qualified foster home, but before you bring a foster dog home, we suggest you prepare yourself, your family and your home for a new canine companion.

### ***Be physically and mentally prepared***

Fostering is a family affair, so it's important that everyone in your household is ready, willing and able to provide a loving home for an orphaned dog. Many adults and children have a difficult time adjusting to a new schedule or routine, and also have a difficult time "giving up" an animal to its forever home. Make sure everyone is ready for this new, albeit temporary, addition to your family. Be realistic about your time commitment to a foster dog. Don't over-extend yourself when starting out. You may want to begin with foster-sitting. Even if you have experience with big adolescent dogs, starting with an older dog, a small dog or even a puppy is a great way to build your foster parenting experience.

### ***Where to keep your foster dog***

Planning where you will keep your dog **before** you bring your dog home will make the entire process easier for everyone. When you first bring a foster dog home, you'll want to confine them to a single room, such as a kitchen or family room. This room should not be an isolated room, but a room where you spend a large part of your day or evening, as dogs are pack animals and want to be with you. This room is especially important when you're at work or away from the house, as it will be a new environment in which they need time to become familiar and comfortable. This safe space will allow them adjustment without being thrown into the mix.

Use a baby gate to block off the entrances to other rooms. By keeping the dog in one room, you're also helping to prevent "accidents" that may occur because of stress or adjusting to your routine. (Even a house-trained dog might have an accident or two during this adjustment period.) For dogs that are not housetrained, keeping them confined to one room will help start this important training while you monitor their activities.

### ***The Do's***

- Do keep your foster dog indoors in a location with a crate or safe space available.
- Do keep your foster dog in a warm/cool (depending on the season) and dry location.
- Do keep your foster dog on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in your secured fenced yard. It's been known for a shelter dog to try and escape so it's important to **always** supervise your foster dog.
- Do keep your puppy indoors in a kitchen, bathroom, mudroom or laundry room (you may want to use baby gates to limit access to other parts of your home). Puppies should be around humans for socialization purposes and should not be isolated.

### ***The Don'ts***

- Do not place your foster dog around unknown dogs as we often do not know the dog's past history. Foster dogs should not be put in a position of possibly fighting with an unknown dog, reducing their chances for adoption and increasing their chances of euthanasia.
- Do not allow your foster dogs outdoors unless supervised by an approved adult foster caretaker. Do not allow your foster dog to be supervised by a child or teenager. This is a liability to CCHS should an incident occur.
- Never take your foster dog to an off-leash park. This is a liability to CCHS.

## ***How to dog-proof a room***

Walk into the room in which you plan to introduce your foster dog, and ask yourself:

- Are there exposed electrical wires?
- Is there anything that can be chewed, such as drapes, a couch or rugs?
- Are there tables or desktops with objects that can be knocked off?
- Is there anything you're worried about being ruined-breakable, rugs, antiques, etc.? It is wise to remove these things or determine a new introduction room.
- Are there plants in the room? If so, check the list of toxic plants in this manual.
- Is there anywhere the dog can hide? Will you be able to get the dog out if hidden?
- Is there quick access to the outside for bathroom breaks?
- Is there room for the crate (dog's safe place)?
- Where will I set up the crate once all hazards are removed?
- Is the crate in a quiet, low-traffic area of the room?

## ***Items you will need***

The Dog Foster Program often receives donated supplies, so be sure to ask CCHS when you are picking up your foster dog, or contact your Foster Coordinator when you get home, if any of these items are available:

### **Needed**

- Food and water bowls
- Leash and collar with a CCHS ID tag which must stay on the dog at all times. Collars and ID tags are available thru CCHS.
- Bedding - a clean, old blanket or towel or a dog bed that is washable
- Toys such as: hard rubber balls, Kongs, fleece toys, rope toys or Nylabones. Do **not** give your foster dog hooves, rawhide, pigs' ears or vinyl toys that can cause diarrhea or cause choking or perforations.
- Training treats such as small dog biscuits, bits of boiled chicken or cheese (not in excess so as to cause diarrhea). Regular kibble can also be used.
- Promotional vest or bandana that says, "I'm Available for Adoption!" These are available at CCHS.

### **Optional**

- Crate
- Odor neutralizer (such as Nature's Miracle) for any "mistakes"
- Flea comb/brush
- Training apparatus such as Martingale collar, Sensation harness or Halti head collar. These should be used only during training periods.
- Baby gate(s)
- Bitter Apple (to spray on leashes, woodwork, drapery — anything you don't want chewed)

Items provided by CCHS include all items listed in the "Needed" list. CCHS may have other available items as well, including those in the optional section. **All items loaned are to be returned to CCHS.**

## ***Transporting your foster dog***

The safest way to transport your dog from the shelter to your home (or anywhere else), is in a secure crate in the car. The crate should be secured so that it doesn't tip over or move around. Another option is to use a grill between the back of the vehicle and the back seat. If you have a sedan, then you may be able to secure a crate on

the back seat. It is always a good idea to put a blanket down under your crate or in the back section of your vehicle, so that if your dog becomes car sick, or has an accident, the blanket will protect your seats and carpet.

If you can't fit a crate into your vehicle, your dog is safest in the back seat. Use either a special harness for your dog that hooks on to a seat belt, or a leash that attaches to the seat belt or that can be secured around the head rest. Avoid letting your dog ride in the passenger seat next to you. Not only can your view be obstructed, but if you brake suddenly your dog could get injured. You might need a few treats to encourage a dog to jump into a car. If you can get a dog to put his front paws up, then you can lift his back end by supporting his hind quarters (as if he were sitting on your crossed arms). If you need to completely lift your dog, the best way is by putting one arm behind his hind legs and one arm in front of his front legs – essentially a scoop. Another way is to have one arm just behind his front legs, and one hand behind his hind legs. (This way the dog's weight is being supported in the same general area of its legs.) Keep in mind that some dogs don't really like to be lifted and so may try to get away. Remember to always keep a handle on his leash.

It is a requirement of CCHS fosters that they hold both a current driver's license and car insurance and provide CCHS a copy of both.

## **SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE SHELTER DOG TO FOSTER**

Now that you're ready to foster, it's time to find an appropriate shelter dog to bring home. After being approved by CCHS as a qualified foster home, we'll begin looking for a foster dog that matches your lifestyle, experience or situation. Once found, we'll contact you to schedule a meet and greet with the potential foster dog. After meeting the dog in person, you and CCHS representative will decide if it is a good match.

## **INTRODUCING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO YOUR RESIDENT ANIMALS**

When introducing a foster dog to your own companion animals, we suggest you have both your resident dogs and cats vaccinated for rabies, as well as DHLPP and Bordetella for dogs, and FVRCP and FeLV for cats. Always keep a collar on your foster dog with identification tags in case he gets scared and tries to escape.

Allow your foster dog to settle down and get to know his surroundings first before you start introductions to unfamiliar animals. Take your time and create a stress-free environment.

Make sure your foster dog has a safe room in which to stay before introducing her to your resident animals, and to where he can escape if desired. This allows both your foster dog and your resident animals some time to get used to one another's scents before they first meet.

### **Introduction basics**

- Do be alert and make the reintroductions gradually and calmly. Understand that your resident animals may be extremely territorial in your home.
- Do give your own animals LOTS of love and praise.  
Do leave leashes on the dogs when you are in the home, so that you can get immediate control if needed.
- Do not allow children to be involved during introductory periods as this may cause additional confusion or stress.
- Do talk normally, letting the animals know that you are fine; they are fine; everything is fine!
- Be patient and go slowly with your foster dog as he may have been through a stressful surgery, abusive situation or a lot of recent changes.

- Don't leave your foster dog unattended with your resident animals in the first few days. Even if they seem to get along well in your presence, you should separate them when you leave your house. After a week or more, you may determine that this is no longer necessary.

### **Some common early mistakes**

- Allowing the animals to freely interact right away
- Holding the leash too tensely as dogs may react with defensiveness
- Leaving toys and treats around the house. This may cause resource guarding with your resident animals which can escalate very quickly. Remove all toys and treats before you arrive home with your foster dog.
- Feeding your foster dog with your resident animals. It's best to separate them initially, and to supervise always.
- Over-stimulating your foster dog with introductions to many people or animals.

### ***Introducing your foster dog to your resident dog***

We'll be happy to assist you with introducing your dog to a foster dog. You should bring your dog to the shelter for a meet and greet in the outdoor corrals before you bring a foster dog home, even if your dog has many different canine playmates. Dogs are like people, and sometimes the personalities simply don't mesh well.

### **Initial Introductions**

- Allow the dogs to meet on neutral territory for both.
- If possible, try taking them on a "happy walk" where they interact in short bouts, sniffing one another briefly, which is normal canine greeting behavior. Keep your tone upbeat and positive and use positive reinforcement.
- Look at body posture when introducing two dogs.
  - One indicator of things going well is a play-bow, where a dog crouches down with his front legs on the ground and his hind quarters in the air with tail wagging. This is an invitation to play and typically elicits a positive reaction from the other dog.
  - Watch for any aggressive responses, such as hair standing up on one dog's back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff-legged gait and/or forward in posture, or a prolonged stare. If you see such behavior, interrupt the interaction immediately by distracting the dog and getting him interested in something else. After some distance, you can try re-introducing the dogs again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

### **Continuing these introductions**

- Once home, try re-introducing the dogs again on neutral territory such as in the quiet street or down the road (walking to the house together). Even if they got along great at the shelter, your dog may be extremely territorial in your home.
- If possible, go for a walk around your neighborhood with both dogs and two handlers. Walk the dogs side by side on leashes and allow them to sniff one another and become familiar with each other.
- Continue to give your own dog LOTS of love and praise.
- If the dogs have a positive interaction, allow them time to investigate one another or play together, but leave leashes on the dogs so that you can get immediate control if needed. You may only need to do this for a short time.

## ***Introducing your foster dog to your resident cat***

Before you introduce your foster dog to your cat, it is best to wait a few days until you have confirmed or instilled basic obedience in your foster dog. You will need to have your foster dog under control and know which behaviors are appropriate when interacting with a cat.

### **Initial Introductions**

Allow your foster dog to settle down and get to know your surroundings first before you start introductions to unfamiliar animals. Introducing a cat to a dog is similar to introducing dogs to one another. Take your time and create a stress-free environment.

- Begin by keeping your cat in a different room and allow the dog to become comfortable in his own room.
- Once the dog is comfortable, let him explore the rest of the house for short periods each day while the cat is in another room. This will allow them to pick up each other's scent.
- After a few days, allow the two to meet but keep the dog on a leash. Observe their interactions - a dog that is showing overt aggression, such as snarling, growling, baring teeth, etc., will probably never accept a cat.
- If all is reasonably calm so far, walk the dog around the room on leash but don't let go of the leash in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On-leash interactions give the cat the opportunity to approach the dog if they choose, or to find a route of escape.

During the first few meetings, the cat and dog will probably not interact face to face. It's a natural instinct for a dog to want to chase a cat, so it's safest to assume the dog will chase if given the opportunity. A few important points to remember during these introductions include:

- Never allow the dog to intimidate the cat by barking or chasing. Each time the dog acts inappropriately (barking or pulling), let him know these behaviors are unacceptable; try using a quick sharp tone, like "Aah-Aah" to get his attention and redirect his energy.
- On the other hand, if the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, that's a good sign and should not be discouraged. When they set up boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a working relationship.
- Let the two interact (with the dog on leash) for about 30 minutes, then return the cat back to its safe haven and bring the dog to its dog crate or bed. Give the dog a treat and lots of praise.

### **Continuing the introductions**

- Increase the amount of time they are together a little each visit.
- It's important to be patient and encouraging in their interactions. If you're relaxed, they will be more at ease. Always praise friendly behavior profusely.
- Don't rush the introductions or force them to interact more than either is willing. Pressing them to accept each other will only slow down the adjustment process.
- When the cat and dog seem to be getting used to each other, let the dog go, but keep his leash attached to his collar. Let him drag it around the house as he wanders; that way you can control him at any time. The cat will probably hide at first. You should use your best judgment as to when they can begin supervised sessions with the dog off-leash.

## **FOSTERING – THE FIRST WEEK**

Now that you're home with your foster dog, you should start a regular routine so your dog can begin to adjust to your household. During this adjustment period, please keep stimulation to a minimum. Some recommendations include:

- Find a quiet route to walk or run your foster dog (depending on energy level) to familiarize him with his new environment. This also helps start the bonding between you and your foster dog.

- Do not introduce your foster dog to other dogs (other than your own resident dog). This includes neighborhood dogs, and dogs belonging to your family or friends. Why? There is no way to tell how your foster dog will behave when introducing him to other dogs. If your foster dog bites a person, dog or cat, you are required to report it to CCHS immediately.
- Don't throw a party or have a lot of people over to your home right away. **During the first week you should try to spend quality one-on-one time with your new foster dog.**
- The most important thing to do during this initial transition time is to clearly, but NON-confrontationally establish the household rules. As well, take care not to "indulge" your foster dog's timid, tentative or fearful behavior. We understand how tempting this maybe as many of our foster dogs have come from less than ideal situations, but in the long run it does not benefit the dog.

### ***Expectations of behavior***

Allow time for adjustment, understanding that your foster dog has been through a tremendous amount of stress and change recently. Initial undesired behaviors will often calm down after an appropriate adjustment period. While it usually takes about 24 hours for a dog to settle in, it will take much longer for their overall adjustment to this new environment. Typically, a dog's true personality emerges 10-14 days after introduction to a foster home. On the average, foster parents have their dogs for about 2 months before they're adopted. While this amount of time will not be long enough to fully train your foster dog, it will be enough time to give him a good foundation for his new family. Begin training with some basic commands and crate training. Your foster may have been traumatized before coming to you – you'll be teaching that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with your foster dog every day. If he shows any signs of aggression, fear (growling over food or toys, snapping or hiding) or separation anxiety, contact your Foster Coordinator for guidance.

## **FEEDING**

### ***What to feed your foster dog***

The food you feed your foster dog is important because, as the saying goes, "You are what you eat!" and this applies to dogs as well as humans. It especially applies to dogs that have been sick, injured or found as strays. High quality dog food is preferred over grocery store dog food (i.e. Kibbles N' Bits, Beneful, etc.). CCHS will pay for pre-approved food associated with your foster dog, up to \$30 per month.

The *Whole Dog Journal* suggests looking for specific words and ingredients on food labels such as:

- "Chicken" is better than "poultry"
- "Chicken meal" is better than "chicken by-products," which is better than "chicken digest," which is better than "animal digest" (which is the worst!)
- Good sources of protein (whole meats or single-source meat meal, like "chicken meal" rather than "poultry meal")
- Whole-meat source as one of the first two ingredients (chicken or chicken meal)
- Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables and other foods (unprocessed food has a greater chance of having its nutrients and enzymes intact)

Food should NOT contain:

- Meat by-products
- Fat or protein named generically (animal, poultry fat, meat meal), it should instead read beef or chicken fat or lamb meal
- Food fragments (brewer's rice, corn gluten, etc.)
- Artificial preservatives (BHA, BHT or ethoxyquin)

- Artificial colors
- Sweeteners
- Propylene glycol
- Corn (this is rocket fuel for your dog)

### ***Diet change***

Some dogs react to a change in diet with diarrhea or gas. If your dog has diarrhea, feed him cooked rice mixed with cottage cheese or boiled chicken (skin & fat removed) - two cups rice to one cup cottage cheese - for a day or two. Then slowly reintroduce the dry kibble by mixing it with the chicken & rice.

### ***Feeding schedule and quantity***

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Feed at the same times every day, or if your dog is capable of free-feeding without scarfing it all down at once, free-feeding is okay, too. Create a separate space for your foster dog to eat so they will feel comfortable. If you have other dogs at home, it's best to feed your foster in a separate area.

**Do not feed any "people" food.** You do not know what the adoptive family will want to do, so don't start a habit they will have to break; and by feeding only dog food, you are also discouraging begging. Feeding will depend on the age and size of your foster dog.

- *Adult dogs:* dry adult dog food twice a day, once in the morning and once at night.
- *Adolescent dogs (4 months to 2 year):* dry puppy food, twice a day
- *Weaned puppies (6-8 weeks to 4 months):* dry puppy food three to four times a day. Can be moistened with water or puppy formula.
- *Nursing mothers with puppies and unweaned puppies (4-8 weeks):* Be sure to review the section for "Puppy Care" in the appendix of this manual.

The quantity of food you provide your foster dog will vary depending on weight, age and activity level. Please refer to the suggested amounts on the dog food package you are feeding your foster dog as the amounts may change depending on the brand. Remember to reduce this amount to compensate for any treats, including chews. Obesity is an epidemic for pets in the US, and can lead to health problems, exacerbate existing health issues and reduces overall quality of life. Please do not over feed your foster dog.

### ***Food allergies***

If your foster dog is experiencing hot spots (red patches of hairless skin) or generally itching a lot, it may be due to food allergies. We recommend sticking to simple, easy-to-digest diets of dry dog food kibble with chicken as the protein ingredient. If your dog appears to be allergic to chicken, look for dog food made with potatoes and duck, or fish.

## **EXERCISE, TRAINING AND ATTENTION**

### ***Exercise***

Foster dogs should be exercised every day, rain or shine. The old adage, "A tired dog is a happy dog," holds true! Most foster dogs will need at least two 30+ minute walks a day to release excess energy. If your foster dog is an adolescent, you may need to step up the activity level to include regular runs, hikes, brisk walks or games of fetch. A dog that is exercised regularly will tend to sleep when you are not at home - and a sleeping dog cannot do undesirable things, such as bark, chew, etc. Even a 10 week old puppy that plays inside or in a yard needs

numerous daily walks as part of the socialization process (\*only in known areas, unless they are complete on their vaccine series). The exception to this is if your foster dog is recovering from an illness or injury, then they may need rest.

### **Leash walking and the six foot rule**

CCHS requires that all shelter dogs are walked using “the six foot rule.” When walking your foster dog, leave at least six feet between your dog and any other dog you meet. This keeps handlers and dogs safe from possible conflicts and also reduces the transmission of diseases.

Foster parents will need to be extra diligent because many dog owners seem to encourage their dogs to “greet” every dog they encounter out on a walk. This nose-to-nose greeting is particularly stressful for many dogs, as dogs typically greet each other from an angle. One simple way to avoid an oncoming dog walker is to just cross the street, or start to walk in a wide semi-circle around them. Most people recognize that this is a sign that you don’t want your dogs to meet. If this isn’t possible, just announce to the oncoming walker that you are walking a foster dog, and you would prefer that the dogs don’t greet each other. Sometimes you must broadcast this loudly if their dog is off-leash or on a retractable leash. Keeping your dog to your side (rather than at the end of the leash) and creating a “body block” with your own body is also helpful. Sometimes it’s impossible to avoid another dog, so just stay calm, and walk between your foster dog and the oncoming dog and move past quickly. Also try talking to your dog, “Fido, keep with me” and giving him treats as you pass an oncoming dog, which will help keep his attention on you, not on the other dog. Please do not use retractable leashes when walking or running your foster dog, as it’s more difficult to have control.

### ***Training***

Most potential adopters are looking for dogs with basic manners. You might feel it’s appropriate to let your own dog jump on people, sleep on the bed or beg for food, but please don’t let your foster dog have these same indulgences. Set boundaries for your foster dog and be consistent.

### **Training tip: Building a positive relationship with your foster dog**

Establishing leadership: A leader in a dog pack is not the biggest dog, not the meanest dog and not necessarily the oldest dog. It is the one who controls the resources! Within a pack of dogs, strong canine leaders rarely use physical means to control other dogs; this is true in both wild and domesticated dogs. Humans can apply this concept of hierarchy by controlling all the resources in the home and doling them out contingent upon desirable behavior.

We require positive, reward-based training for dogs. Increasing your foster dog’s obedience skills has many benefits. Not only will the future adopter appreciate these skills, but your foster dog will “show” better when visiting with potential adopters and you will have a much happier fostering experience. Some basic obedience cues that your foster dog should learn are: sit, down, come, crate/bed, stay, heel, and an attention cue such as “watch me.” These are very helpful in managing any dog. If you have a dog that does not like other dogs, these cues will be helpful on walks as well. For example, a dog that can heel nicely and that has been taught to “watch” you has less likelihood of making eye contact with another dog and getting aroused.

Why positive training? Many times, owners ask why one should use positive based methods. Please understand that force-based methods including “alpha rolls,” “flooding” techniques (i.e., forced exposure at an uncomfortable distance to the object or being that the dog has an issue with), the use of choke chains, prong collars, electronic shock devices, and “correction” can all be problematic for a number of reasons. First, if a dog has aggression

issues, using force can further exacerbate an already potentially dangerous situation. Second, using “correction” only or force does not teach the dog what you *want* him to do; only what you don’t want him to do. Third, a foster parent can damage his relationship with the dog if he is always correcting the dog or using aversive methods.

Recently, the public has become enamored with the supposed results of certain high-profile trainers, however, we must keep in mind that what we see on TV is also presented via the magic of editing! In addition, force based methods can often temporarily suppress undesirable behaviors, but under certain stressors, when a dog feels threatened and has no other options, he may resort to aggression to remove the unpleasant stimulus or to escape the situation. Positive training methods, on the other hand, are very unlikely to yield such undesirable and unsafe results. Using positive training methods can in fact, increase the likelihood of your dog wanting to respond correctly, increase your dog’s motivation to work, and they are fun for you and the dog!

### **Additional training tips**

- Short 5 minute training sessions, 4-6 times a day, is more effective than one long session.
- Dogs need and respond to positive rewards when learning new behaviors. Remember, most behaviors that we want are boring to a dog, so it’s important to make it more interesting to them. A positive reward is a tasty treat, or a game of fetch, or anything that your foster dog enjoys.
- You provide the guidance and information he needs to succeed and build his confidence. Always praise your foster dog when he is doing something good.
- Be consistent with your terminology and routine. Your foster dog will become confused if you let him steal your socks sometimes, but not other times.
- Start small and easy and **slowly** build from there. Most people jump too quickly into advanced environments (outside on a walk, etc.), so make sure you start inside in a safe and quiet location.
- Dogs respond more frequently to “Aak-Aak” or “Ah-Ah” instead of the word “no.”
- Be patient and calm. Dogs respond to your tone of voice and facial expressions as well as your emotions.
- Never lose your temper with a foster dog or strike him- EVER. We want to create and support a harmonious canine/human relationship.

### **Housetraining**

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they’ve been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may “mark” out their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately with a calm “Ah-Ah” and escort him outside where he can finish, then using positive reinforcement when he goes outside. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer (like Nature’s Miracle) on the areas where the foster dog “marked” to ensure he will not smell and mark that area again.

You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 4-6 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog that is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

- Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate outside.
- When you have determined where he should do his business, take him to the same place every time, and tell him to “go potty.” Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn’t go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. **Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!**

- Supervise the puppy closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Ah-Ah", scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes.
- If he goes in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him - it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle) to get rid of the smell. **Never put the dog's face in his mess, or yell at him;** he won't understand you and you will only be teaching him to fear you and go places where you can't see him.

## Crate training

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and housetraining mistakes. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old, plus one. For example, a 4 month old should not be crated longer than 5 hours. How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, he has never been required to hold it for any period of time. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it and you will need to start slowly. Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time.

Rigorous exercise should be given before and after any long periods in the crate, and good chew toys should be in the crate at all times. You may want to crate your new foster dog for the first few nights in your bedroom - most of them feel more secure in their crate and it protects your house from accidents. Crates should **never** be used as a means of punishment for your foster dog. If used for punishing, the dog will learn to avoid going in the crate. Crates are not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms - just like child play rooms, with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure when they are there.

## Introducing the crate

- Place the crate (with a blanket inside) in a central part of your home. Introduce your foster dog to the crate after a good walk, when he's tired and sleepy. Keep all chew toys in the crate so that he can go in and out as he pleases, selecting toys to play with. Feed your dog in the crate with the door open. If the dog hesitates going in, place the bowl inside the door so his head is in and his body is outside.
- If your foster dog still refuses to go near the crate, put the smelliest, tastiest treat in the crate and shut the door. Let him hang out outside the crate for a while, smelling the food inside. Soon he should beg you to let him in!
- Now that the dog is familiar and willing to go near the crate, throw some of his favorite treats in the crate. Let him go in and get them and come right out again. Do this exercise three or four times. Then, throw more treats in and let him go in and get them. When he is in, shut the door and give him another treat through the door. Then let him out and ignore him for 3 minutes. Then, put some more treats in the crate, let him go in, shut the door and feed him 5 bits of treats through the door, and then let him out and ignore him for 5 minutes.
- Next time, place treats (or peanut butter, freeze-dried liver or frozen food and honey) in a Kong, and put the Kong in the crate. After your foster dog has gone in, shut the door and talk to him in a calm voice. If your dog starts to whine or cry, don't talk to him or you will reward the whining/crying/ barking behavior. The foster dog must be quiet for a few minutes before you let him out.
- Gradually increase the time in the crate until the dog can spend 3-4 hours there. We recommend leaving a radio (soothing music or talk radio) or TV (mellow stations: educational, art, food) on while the dog is in the crate and alone in the house. Rotate the dog's toys from day to day so he doesn't become bored of

them. Don't put papers in the crate - the dog will instinctively not go to the bathroom where he sleeps/lives. Instead, put a blanket in his crate to enforce the fact that this is his cozy home.

- To help your foster dog get accustomed to the crate, place his favorite bed inside it and place it in your bedroom. If you're fostering a puppy, you can try placing a warm hot water bottle wrapped in a towel next to him. Warmth makes puppies sleepy. Make sure the sides of bedding are tucked in firmly so the puppies don't get lost or suffocated in a fold of the bedding. Be wary of dog crates during hot weather - a dog may want to lie on the cool floor, instead of the crate. Make sure the crate is not in direct sun.

### ***Attention: Socialization & playtime***

Lots of human contact is important for recovering, sick, injured or neglected dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies. Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give your foster dog several sessions of playtime periodically through the day.

As a general rule, children under 16 years old should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with any dog, but specifically a foster dog. Do not allow children to behave with the foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a dog alone when he is eating, chewing and sleeping. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other "prized" possession from a dog. A child will not differentiate between a foster dog and a dog they have grown up with, so you must make sure to keep everyone safe.

Do not play tug of war or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw the toy toward the dog, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away. You are controlling the toy and the playtime. When giving the dog a toy or treat, have him sit before giving it to him. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat - making the toy a reward.

After your foster dog has settled in and has acclimated to his new home, and provided that he is current on vaccines, it's time to get him out into the world. The more you can do this, the better socialized he will be. Get him used to different people and different environments. Start slowly and don't over stimulate as many foster dogs may not have had exposure to what seems like a "normal" environment. When you are out and about, you should remain calm as this will help your foster dog key off of your behavior. But always be aware of your surroundings. Always keep a good handle on your leash and be extremely careful around busy streets, or in parks where there are squirrels or birds or other distractions. If your dog reacts to someone/ something on your walk, interrupt the behavior by crossing the street or walking in a different direction.

If you're a runner/jogger, start off slow and keep an eye on your foster dog and see how they react. Many dogs pull when they are in front of you, and running can intensify this behavior. Keeping your foster at your side, rather than in front of you can help eliminate pulling behavior. You may need to start and stop many times, but be patient. Remember, these runs should be about the dog, not about your own exercise. Puppies under 6 months old should not run with you and only occasionally, for short distances after 6 months of age. Also, remember your foster dog is probably not used to running regularly, and like a person, will have to improve his conditioning and stamina over a period of time to avoid injury.

If you're fostering puppies, make sure they have lots of new experiences, so they are well socialized and will be adaptable as an adult. Since it's best not to take puppies out in public until they are fully vaccinated, bring new experiences to them. Find out from your Foster Coordinator if there are other puppies in foster care and schedule

a puppy play date. Expose them to men and children as much as possible. Have friends over and invite children over to play.

Always supervise playtime with children and dogs closely! Take your foster puppy in car rides (crate them for safety) to get used to the car. Keep in mind that puppies need to go to the bathroom frequently so be sure they eliminate before you go on a car ride, and keep the ride brief, since they will have to go again soon.

### ***NO off-leash parks - No Exceptions***

All foster dogs are required to be on leash at all times if outside of your secured yard. You are not allowed to bring your foster dog to an off-leash park even if you keep them on a leash as this can create leash aggression. There are no exceptions to this rule. **Do not** bring puppies to any public parks. Puppies are not yet fully vaccinated and can pick up viruses, particularly the Parvovirus, through contact with feces and urine in areas where other dogs congregate.

## **BEHAVIORAL ISSUES**

Some foster dogs will have specific needs regarding behavior, training or socializing. CCHS or your Foster Coordinator will advise you if your foster dog has a behavior problem that may require your help if it is known beforehand, such as an abused or fearful dog who needs socializing or confidence-building with other dogs or people. A dominant puppy may benefit from an adult dog in your home to “show them the ropes” and appropriate behavior. A dog with an unknown/questionable history may just need to be observed in someone’s home before being adopted. Many times it is the foster parent that is the first to learn about a foster dog’s specific behavior so constant communication with your Foster Coordinator is important. There are many resources that we can provide to help you manage most behavioral issues.

It’s important to recognize that dogs are not humans with fur. Based on DNA evidence, dogs were domesticated from wolves about 15,000 years ago in East Asia. A few basic breed types have evolved gradually during the domesticated dog’s relationship with humans over the last 10,000 or more years, but all modern breeds are of relatively recent derivation.

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic, such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals are really just normal dog behaviors and can be explained as “dogs truly being dogs.” In many ways, modern or urban dog training is what we do to decrease normal dog behaviors and increase those behaviors we, as city dwelling humans, prefer. But we should keep in mind that these behavioral “problems” are usually only problems to us. And remember that historically these behaviors were usually bred by humans into a particular breed of dog. For example, Siberian Huskies and others in the Spitz breeds are descendents of sled dogs and typically pull when on a leash. Australian Cattle Dogs drive cattle by nipping at their heels or tails and may do the same to children, bikes and cars. Terriers (everything from the diminutive Yorkshire Terrier, to the large Airedale Terrier) were bred to hunt and kill vermin and typically have a high prey drive and like to dig. The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate (aka - human accepted) outlets for these behaviors.

Some of the most common behavioral issues include:

- Barking
- Humping
- Digging
- Begging
- Attention seeking
- Garbage hunting
- Leash pulling
- Greeting manners

- Destructive chewing
- Puppy nipping and rough play
- Submissive and/or excitement urination
- Urine marking behavior
- Fearfulness
- Separation anxiety
- Resource guarding
- Prey drive
- Dog/dog or dog/cat aggression

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

- Is my foster dog 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 telling a fearful dog that “It’s ok”, verbally scolding a dog when they are seeking attention, etc.
- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on its breed?

You should also talk with your Foster Coordinator and about any behavior issues. We don’t expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, the best solution for you and your foster dog might be a different foster home (again, this is why it’s very important to consider the type of dog you feel would be best suited to your lifestyle, as a replacement foster home cannot be guaranteed).

Regardless of the issue, we don’t recommend punishment as this is rarely effective in resolving behavior problems. Punishment will not address the cause of the behavior, and in fact it may worsen any behavior that’s motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs that aren’t currently fearful.

**Never discipline your dog after the fact.** People often believe their dog makes this connection because he runs and hides or “looks guilty.” But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away, or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn’t know what he’s done wrong; he only knows that you’re upset and is then fearful of you. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

If you would like to further research any specific behavioral concerns, we recommend visiting the Humane Society of the United States’ website at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

## **VETERINARY AND MEDICAL CARE**

CCHS is able to pay for necessary medical care for foster animals as our budget allows. **All veterinary care must be pre-authorized.** Once a visit has been authorized, call to make an appointment at the vet office determined by your dog Foster Coordinator. Veterinary contact information is listed on the Contact Information page at the end of this packet. Please arrange to have your foster dog seen during regular business

hours. (CCHS may have some basic supplies and medications available such as flea and parasite treatments, antibiotics & ointments that can be used to help save expense.) If you would like to research any specific medical conditions, we recommend visiting Mar Vista Vet's comprehensive website at [www.marvistavet.com](http://www.marvistavet.com).

**Please note:** CCHS has a policy that it **will not** reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals if you do not receive verbal or written pre-approval or go to an approved vet office.

Emergency/nighttime clinics should only be used in cases of dire emergencies after-hours. In such cases, if you cannot reach a dog Foster Coordinator, please use your best judgment. Reimbursement is available for Emergency Clinic visits in the case of true emergencies.

### ***General guidelines for seeking vet visits***

- Puppies younger than 12 weeks should see a vet for the following:
  - Persistent diarrhea that lasting for more than 2 days
  - Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 1 day
  - Vomiting more than once in an hour
  - Not eating for more than 12-24 hours
  - Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours
  - Lethargy with fever
- Dogs older than 12 weeks should see a vet for the following:
  - Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days
  - Vomiting for more than a day or more than 2-3 times in an hour
  - Not eating for more than 24 hours
  - Lethargy without fever for more than a day
  - Lethargy with fever

**For all of the above, you still must call the Dog Foster Coordinator before seeking medical treatment. If a situation arises after-hours and you are not able to reach your Foster Coordinator or a CCHS Dog Foster Team member, please use your best judgment when taking your foster dog to an emergency clinic, as noted above.**

### ***Levels of emergencies***

- True, life-threatening emergency (needs to be seen ASAP):
  - Seizures, hit by car or other blunt force trauma, total inability to stand up, severe respiratory distress with frantic gasping for air, profuse bleeding or large open wound, minimal movement with pale white gums
- Emergency (should be seen same day or within a few hours):
  - Difficulty breathing, vomiting more than 4 times in 1 hour, possible broken limb with no other signs of trauma, bloody diarrhea, extreme and unusual lethargy
- Minimal Emergency (can wait 12-24 hours):
  - Limping, sneezing, runny nose, coughing, intermittent diarrhea, open mouth breathing that coincides with upper respiratory infection, congestion, intermittent vomiting, single episode of a seizure.
- Non-emergency (can be monitored before making veterinary appointment):
  - Cold symptoms (sneezing, runny nose or eyes), conjunctivitis of eyes, small bout of diarrhea for a day, vomiting once or twice, decreased appetite, minor limping.

## ***Illness***

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness initially. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your dog closely each day. Call your Foster Coordinator if you see abnormal behavior; unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings, coughing, sneezing, abnormal lumps, limping, difficulty getting up or down, loss of appetite, abnormal waste elimination or vomiting.

## ***Vaccination and de-worming***

Adult dogs are vaccinated once every 2-3 years (dependent upon the vaccine), while puppies may be vaccinated starting at 4-6 weeks of age and should be given boosters until they are 16 weeks old. If you are fostering a very young orphaned puppy, we will refer you to a Vet to determine age and vaccination schedule.

If you're fostering a puppy, you need to return the pup to the vet for the following vaccination boosters:

- 6-9 weeks: DHLPP and de-worming
- 9-12 weeks: DHLPP and de-worming
- 12-15 weeks: DHLPP and de-worming
- 16 weeks: Rabies vaccine
- Annual or bi-annual boosters are recommended in conjunction with veterinary protocols.

## ***Spay and neuter***

Some foster dogs are altered prior to going into foster care. However, for those who aren't CCHS will have them spayed/neutered during foster care or just before going into their new adoptive homes.

If your foster dog is unaltered at the time of adoption, CCHS has adopters sign a Sterilization Agreement, which gives adopters a date by which the dog must be altered. Adoption is not official until spay/neuter has happened. Both male and female pups can be neutered or spayed as early as 8-10 weeks of age, but CCHS aims to wait until dogs are 4-6 months of age to ensure proper growth and development, both of which are affected by hormones.

## ***Fleas***

Fleas are common parasites that feed on mammals. They are very common with dogs and cats, and the shelter typically sprays incoming dogs and cats with a topical flea treatment upon entry. Puppies over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs can be treated with Advantage or Frontline (younger puppies are treated with smaller doses). Fleas can kill when left untreated, especially in small puppies, as they can cause flea anemia. When your foster dog is ready to be adopted, he should be clean and flea free. Topical treatment is a preventative measure CCHS strives to provide as financially able.

To check for fleas, inspect your dog daily - inspecting the rear, groin, belly, and tail, under the chin and head, and neck (common places for fleas). 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 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 daily. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs and dirt.

Two common results of fleas are Flea Allergy Dermatitis and Tapeworm, both of which are easily treatable and not contagious to people or cats.

## **Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)**

Flea Allergy Dermatitis is an allergic reaction to the saliva deposited by fleas when they bite. It presents itself as a reddened rash with small crusty lesions, particularly above the tail, on the inner thighs, abdomen, neck & ears. The dog will be very itchy and the fur in those areas will typically be stained red from licking. FAD is treated by applying flea control prevention and bathing the dog in the interim.

## **Tapeworm**

Tapeworm is an intestinal parasite that attaches to the intestinal walls of a dog (or cat) and feeds on nutrients entering the animal's system. Tapeworm comes from ingesting infected fleas. As the tapeworm grows, it will shed its non-reproductive tail end segments, which are shed in the animal's stool. Segments will look like small, moving pieces of white rice. If you see tapeworms, call your Foster Coordinator to discuss a vet visit. Tapeworm is easily treated with a one-time injection or an oral pill. Tapeworm is not contagious to other pets or people. The only way to get tapeworm is to ingest an infected flea at a particular stage of the tapeworm lifecycle.

## **Parasites**

Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating or vomiting. Parasites include tapeworms, round worms, hookworms and mange. Tapeworms will look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster dog's anus or in his stool (see above). Round worms and hookworms may be vomited, and roundworms look like spaghetti (hookworms are smaller and rarely distinguishable without the aid of a microscope). Mange is an infestation of tiny mites that bite and cause intense scratching, reddened skin and loss of fur. Only rare cases of mange (sarcoptic) are contagious to humans. If you suspect your foster dog has parasites, call your Foster Coordinator to discuss. Once diagnosed, parasites are easily medicated and treated.

## **Diarrhea**

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 two cups of cooked rice mixed with one cup of cottage cheese or boiled chicken for a day or two, and then reintroduce dry kibble slowly by mixing it with the chicken & rice. Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it snaps back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, then the dog is dehydrated and may need fluids. Dehydration can be very dangerous for a puppy so call your Foster Coordinator if you suspect your foster dog is dehydrated, or if you notice other unusual symptoms along with diarrhea, such as extreme lethargy, vomiting, etc.

## **Kennel cough**

One of the common reason dogs go into foster care is because they have kennel cough (the equivalent of a human cold). The shelter is much like a child day care - as soon as one dog has a cold, most all the dogs in the shelter get a cold. Just like people who have colds, kennel cough develops when the dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised.

Kennel cough may resolve itself as soon as the dog has a warm, quiet and soothing place to sleep, and where they can drink lots of water, eat healthy food and receive lots of TLC!

Kennel cough is typically a dry, hacking cough. There may be some discharge from the nose and a clear liquid that is coughed up. It's generally a mild, self-limiting illness of the trachea and bronchi encountered in all age

groups of dogs, but especially in those under unusual stress, crowding or close confinement. Kennel cough is common in shelters, boarding kennels, groomers, veterinary offices, off-leash areas, etc.

Incubation of kennel cough is 5-10 days; its course is 10-20 days with symptoms generally more marked the first week. Fever, lack of appetite and a yellow-green-brown nasal discharge can indicate secondary infections. Call your Foster Coordinator if any of these symptoms occur.

Because kennel cough is contagious to other dogs, infected dogs should NOT be around other dogs until they're over their cough. Kennel cough is not contagious to people or cats. If you have a dog at home and plan to foster a dog with kennel cough, we have found that if your own dog is healthy and has been vaccinated routinely with the Bordetella vaccine (which lasts six months), then your dog will most likely not get sick.

Talk to your vet about giving your own dog the Bordetella nasal vaccination. Immunity to kennel cough is usually established 3-4 days after vaccination. We can compare this situation with humans in an office atmosphere - if you're healthy, well-rested and your immune system is not compromised, and a coworker has a cold, then you will not catch the cold. But if you're worn-down, stressed out and not eating or sleeping well, you probably will catch the cold. So if your own dog is ill or older, we would not recommend fostering a dog with kennel cough.

### **Kennel cough treatment**

Kennel cough is a virus and will eventually resolve on its own, but dogs with kennel cough are typically given both antibiotics to prevent against secondary infections as well as a cough suppressant. At home treatment of kennel cough involves the following:

- Bed rest and TLC
- Plenty of fresh water and healthy food. If your dog is not eating, try cooking up something special and smelly such as eggs, chicken or steak.
- Taking short, leashed walks as needed.
- If your dog's energy is good and the cough seems mild, try some Vitamin C (5-10 mg/lb, 2-3 times a day with food), and Vitamin E (3-5 mg/lb, once a day).
- Bringing your foster dog into the bathroom while you're taking a shower can be helpful as the steam can help loosen mucus.

If you don't see improvement of the cough or cold after 3 days, OR if the condition worsens, call your Foster Coordinator. Dogs rarely develop a fever and lethargy with kennel cough. In fact, it can be difficult to keep them quiet. Strenuous activity can bring on coughing episodes, so limit activity and encourage rest. Even baths can be stressful to the system and should be avoided.

### ***Distemper***

Distemper is an extremely contagious and often fatal viral disease. It is contagious to other dogs, but not to people or cats. Over 50% of dogs and 80% of puppies that contract the virus die from it. It is an infection that can be transmitted through mucous, urine and feces with or without direct contact with an infected dog. Typical symptoms include squinting, congestion of the eyes, pus from the eyes, weight loss, coughing, vomiting, nasal discharge and diarrhea. This disease is another reason why foster puppies shouldn't go to parks or areas where unknown dogs may have been.

## ***Parvovirus***

Parvovirus (Parvo) is a highly contagious virus that attacks the intestinal tract, white blood cells and heart muscle. It is contagious to other dogs but not to people or cats. Signs of infection are depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, severe diarrhea, fever and sometimes kennel cough symptoms. The illness is contracted through contact with the infected feces of another dog. This is why you must NOT take your foster puppy out to public places where other dogs have been until he has completed his vaccine series against the disease. **This virus can be deadly to dogs. Contact your dog Foster Coordinator immediately if you believe your foster dog may have this illness.**

## ***Injured dogs***

Injured foster dogs will have specific needs. They'll most likely be recovering from surgery and will come with veterinary orders. They may need to be confined to a crate or a small room to limit mobility.

This type of foster situation may require you to schedule follow up appointments with the dog's veterinarian. As with all foster dogs, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited, but cuddling, petting, talking, brushing and massaging are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

## ***How to take a dog's temperature***

A normal temperature for dogs and puppies is 101 to 102.5 degrees. Any temperature below 100 degrees or above 103 can be a problem. Contact your Foster Coordinator in either situation. If a dog has a temperature below 100 degrees, place him on a heating pad turned to low and covered him with a towel immediately. If the dog's temperature is 103 degrees or higher, and the dog has been on a heating pad, remove him from the pad immediately.

To take your foster dog's temperature, you will need:

- Rectal thermometer
- Vaseline
- Disinfectant (30:1 water and bleach solution)

## **Step by step instructions:**

1. Sterilize the thermometer by dipping it into the disinfectant solution.
2. Dry with a clean paper towel.
3. Shake the thermometer down to under 80 degrees.
4. Coat the tip of the thermometer with a small amount of Vaseline.
5. Insert the tip of the thermometer ½ inch into the dog's rectum and hold there for 1-2 minutes.
6. Be gentle, as the rectal tissues are fragile, and you don't want to tear the tissue.
7. You may need a second person to help hold the dog to prevent struggling.
8. You should speak softly to the dog. Sometimes it is helpful to stroke the dog around the head to distract him from what is going on in the other direction.
9. Be sure to sterilize the thermometer again when finished.

If a dog has a temperature below 100 degrees, place him on a heating pad turned to low and covered him with a towel immediately. If the dog's temperature is 103 degrees or higher, move him to a cool area and apply cool water all over his body (not cold water, as this can send the dog into shock). Apply ice packs or cold towels

only to his head, neck and chest. Let him drink small amounts of cool water or lick ice cubes. Contact your Foster Coordinator immediately.

### ***Poisonous foods and household items***

Many household products can be toxic to dogs. Remove any rat or mouse poisonings, antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid from your home before fostering! And store cleaning products and other items listed below out of reach of pets.

### **Outside Hazards**

- Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol has a sweet taste that attracts animals but is deadly if consumed in even small quantities; one teaspoon can kill a seven pound cat. The HSUS recommends pet owners use safe antifreeze in their vehicles. Look for antifreeze that contains propylene glycol, which is safe for animals if ingested in small amounts. Ethylene glycol can also be found in common household products like snow globes, so be sure to keep these things out of reach of animals.
- Cocoa mulch contains ingredients that can be deadly to pets if ingested. The mulch, sold in garden supply stores, has a chocolate scent that is appetizing to some animals.
- Chemicals used on lawns and gardens, such as fertilizer and plant food, can be easily accessible and fatal to a pet allowed in the yard unsupervised.
- De-icing salts used to melt snow and ice are paw irritants that can be poisonous if licked off. Paws should be washed and dried as soon as the animal comes in from the snow.

### **Inside Hazards**

#### ***Food Items***

The following common food items are poisonous for dogs:

- Chocolate, Caffeine, Grapes/Raisins, Coffee Grinds, Tea
- Macadamia Nuts, Walnuts, Mushrooms, Onion and Garlic
- Alcoholic beverages
- Apple seeds, apricot & cherry pits
- Candy and gum that contains Xylitol
- Moldy foods, potato leaves and stems or potatoes that have turned green, Rhubarb leaves
- Salt, Yeast dough
- Chicken bones (cooked) can splinter and choke a dog.

#### ***Poisonous Plants***

The top ten most common poisonous plants are:

- Azalea/Rhododendron, Castor Bean, Cyclamen, Kalanchoe, Lilies, Marijuana, Oleander, Sago Palm, Tulip/Narcissus bulbs, Yew

## **NEONATAL PUPPY CARE**

Fosters who care for nursing moms and their pups will watch an amazing developmental process unfold as mom teaches her pups all about life. Having mama dog present often is much easier; she feeds and cleans her puppies, corrects them, and stimulates them to go to the bathroom. The foster then aids in cleanliness and a

supportive environment for mama dog, as well as socializing the puppies to humans and continuing to potty train them.

Oftentimes, however, neonatal puppies are brought to the shelter without their mom. Caring for orphaned bottle baby puppies is both exhausting and rewarding and is not something everyone can do! It requires constant round-the-clock care, including feeding every few hours. Bottle baby puppies without a mother are not appropriate fosters for people who work away from home.

### ***Supplies***

Supplies you will need if fostering neonatal puppies without a mother:

- Box or carrier
- Towels, blankets and washcloths
- Just Born, Esbilac or similar puppy formula
- Hills Prescription Diet A/D or baby food
- Bottles and Nipples
- Dishes with low sides, such as pie plates
- Heating pad
- Flea comb
- Puppy shampoo or Dawn dishwashing liquid

Supplies you will need if fostering neonatal puppies with a mother:

- Box or carrier
- Towels, blankets and washcloths
- Wet food, Hills Prescription Diet A/D or baby food
- Dishes with low sides, such as pie plates
- Heating pad
- Flea comb
- Puppy shampoo or Dawn dishwashing liquid

From birth on, puppies must be kept clean and flea free. Fleas can kill a puppy by causing severe anemia. Flea combing daily is usually enough, but you should be prepared to bathe puppies in warm water and appropriate shampoo when they get food on themselves, have excessive fleas, or have diarrhea. They must be thoroughly dried after bathing to avoid becoming chilled, which can lead to illness. Wrapping them in a towel and drying them vigorously and/or using a hair dryer on a low setting is recommended.

### ***Orphaned Puppy Care: Newborn to Three Weeks***

Until three-four weeks of age, puppies need a substantial amount of round-the-clock bottle feeding. Since the mother is not available, the foster parent must provide all of the mother's functions: feeding, warmth, cleaning and stimulation to urinate/defecate. There is no set rule that applies to all litters of puppies, but the following are guidelines to help you.

### **Safety and confinement for orphaned pups**

These pups should be set up in small living quarters (crate or box with bedding) easily kept consistently warm at about 80-90 degrees. They will pile on each other to keep warm, but a hot water bottle and warm bedding are

needed. Heating pads can be dangerous. If used, they should be kept on low, with several layers of bedding between the pad and pups, and they should be monitored closely.

**Under two weeks:** Chilling, diarrhea and dehydration are the biggest killers of puppies this young. If they have been orphaned, you must assume that they are chilled. The bedding arrangement must include a heating pad with plenty of padding between the puppies and the heat. A towel folded over once to make two layers of towel is ideal. You can burn the puppies if you do not monitor them carefully.

### **Feeding orphaned pups**

Puppy milk replacer, such as Esbilac, should be mixed and fed according to package directions. Generally, feeding every 3 hours is needed in the beginning. By 3 weeks of age, feeding every 4-5 hours with a night break of 8 hours should work well.

Milk replacer can be fed by dropper, syringe or bottle as pups accept it and need larger feedings. Some of the pups may be too weak to suck from the bottle and you will need to feed them with syringes. If you need to syringe-feed the puppies, drip the formula slowly into the side of their mouths, and give them time to swallow. Going too fast can cause liquid to go into their lungs and cause pneumonia.

Do not hold pups on their backs, or allow them to suck too fast, as this can lead to aspiration of formula into the lungs. The puppies should be tilted forward and slightly up, as if they were nursing on their mother. Never try to bottle feed an unconscious or semi-conscious puppy.

Feed until the puppy's tummy feels tight and full. Sick puppies will not eat eagerly, and you will have to feed them slowly and often to ensure they are getting enough food. After each feeding, you must stimulate bowel and bladder movement. Use a warm, damp cotton ball or later a cloth as volume increases. Mineral oil on a Q-tip at the anus may stimulate defecation. Gently massage their genital areas in a circular motion and do not stop until they have finished eliminating.

Note the color of the urine. If it is light yellow or straw colored, this is normal. If it is a bright canary yellow, the puppy is dehydrated and needs fluids immediately. Cottage cheesy stools or diarrhea are also an indication of illness. Call your Foster Coordinator if you see these symptoms.

### **Cleaning orphaned pups**

Initially, newborn pups should be kept in a box or crate, and bedding should be changed as needed. The process of stimulating urination/defecation and then cleaning the urine/feces should keep puppies fairly clean.

As pups become more mobile and learn to urinate/defecate on their own, a larger box or small, papered, gated area like a kitchen or bathroom may be used to confine them. Keep the area free of feces/urine. The weaning process (low dish of mushy food) can make for messy feet and faces - wash with a warm wet cloth as needed. (Distributing food along the outer edges of the dish can help to prevent the pups from walking in it.) If you must bathe the puppies, make sure they are thoroughly dried after bathing to avoid chilling, which can lead to illness. Towel-dry them and use a hair dryer (on a low setting and held ~6" away) to finish drying.

### **Weaning orphaned pups**

As your pups grow and become more mobile, weaning time approaches.

- **3 weeks:** Weaning can be started at 3 weeks by offering formula in a low dish or pie plate with or without canned food mixed in. Be sure to offer food when the puppies are hungry so they will make their best effort to lap/lick/eat. Supplement with bottle feedings as needed until pups are lapping consistently from a dish.
- **4-5 weeks:** At this stage, no more bottle feedings should be needed. At 4 weeks, offer water soaked kibble with or without canned food mixed in or formula added. Water penetrates kibble better; soaking in formula does not work as well.
- **5 weeks:** At this stage, begin offering dry food when the puppies are hungry near meal time so they will start to try the dry food.
- Continue feeding soaked kibble until **7 weeks** or so.
- **8 weeks:** By 8 weeks, the puppies should readily eat dry food only.

### **Medical care for orphaned pups**

If signs of illness develop in the pups, notify your Foster Coordinator. Lack of appetite and diarrhea are of special concern. Check umbilical cords daily until the cord dries out and falls off. Eyes open at 7-10 days - watch for infections/crusting at the lids. Newborns without a mom may also try to nurse on each other causing injury (genitalia are the common site for this false “nipple”). Pups may need to be separated if this occurs.

De-worming should occur at 2-3 weeks of age. A second dose should be administered 10 days later. From birth on, puppies must be kept clean and flea free. Fleas can kill a puppy or cause anemia. Daily flea combing is usually enough, but you should be prepared to bathe them as necessary. If fleas are found, call CCHS for advice in treating newborns. At 6 weeks of age, the pups should get their first set of vaccinations.

### ***Nursing mothers with puppies 0-4 weeks old***

#### **Safety and confinement for puppies with mothers**

A small, quiet, warm, easily cleaned room (laundry room, bathroom, family room, kitchen, or mudroom) is best for a mother and her pups. Clean bedding should be provided with food and water nearby. A child’s plastic baby pool or the base of a large plastic dog crate lined with a blanket makes a wonderful, safe den for mom and pups.

The mother dog should be allowed outside on leash (or supervised in a fenced yard) regularly to eliminate. The puppies should not go out at all. If the mom’s history is unknown, she will not be vaccinated at the shelter because she is nursing puppies. Be aware of other dogs and other dogs’ feces when taking the mom out for a walk, since she may not be properly vaccinated.

The mother will spend most of her time nursing, cleaning up and caring for her pups. Later, as the pups become more mobile and less demanding on her, she may enjoy more time away from them and play actively with people and chew toys. As the pups become more mobile, check their living area for hazards.

#### **Feeding nursing mothers and her puppies**

The mother dog requires extra nutrition for adequate milk production. Feed a premium diet three times each day. (Oftentimes, a puppy kibble is given to nursing moms to provide them extra nutrients. Nursing moms will typically be thin and will sometimes have an unkempt coat while nursing.) Be sure all the puppies are nursing and steadily gaining weight. Newborns depend entirely on mom’s first milk, receiving valuable antibodies (colostrum).

- **3-4 weeks:** When the puppies are 3-4 weeks old, begin offering a low bowl (a pie plate) of water-soaked puppy kibble mixed with wet puppy food. Be sure to offer this at a time when the puppies are hungry, and, if necessary, separate the mom so she won't eat it.
- **4 weeks:** By 4 weeks of age they should be eating some mushy meals. (See the next section on Weaning Orphaned Puppies.)
- **6 weeks:** By 6 weeks of age puppies should no longer need mother's milk and should be eating soaked kibble and starting on dry kibble.

### **Medical care for puppies and mothers**

Call your Foster Coordinator if you see any signs of illness in mother or pups. If the mother dog goes off food or is stressed, milk production may drop sharply, and puppies may have to be raised as orphans. Check mother's mammary glands daily for redness, harness, discharge or streaking color. A hard, red, hot or painful mammary gland may mean mastitis (an infection of the milk duct) which should be checked by a veterinarian. Call if you believe your nursing mother has this condition.

As long as pups all nurse and gain weight, milk production is probably adequate. If milk production or mother's calcium reserves are inadequate, the mother may develop eclampsia, an emergency situation of low blood calcium levels requiring immediate attention. Symptoms include muscle twitching, tremors, anxiousness, progressive or stiffening, seizure-like tremors.

Nursing mothers often "blow their coat" when nursing due to nutrition demands on their body; feeding premium diet in adequate amounts helps avoid this situation. Vitamin supplements can also help. The mother's vaginal discharge (lochia) should taper from dark mucoid green to reddish brown in smaller amounts by 3 weeks postpartum. Routine medical treatments for the mother include de-worming and she should be vaccinated as soon as she is finished nursing.

Check the pups' umbilical cords daily until they dry and fall off. Eyes open at 7-10 days — watch for infections/crusting at the lids. If you see fleas, ask CCHS for advice on treating the newborns. Fleas can be especially dangerous to newborn pups, causing flea anemia when infested.

Puppies should receive their first dose of de-worming medicine at 2-3 weeks of age, followed by a second dose in 10 days. At 6-9 weeks of age the pups should receive their first set of vaccines.

### ***Puppy development and socialization***

If your foster puppies have a mother present, be aware that mama dog may be protective of her pups, but most mother dogs will allow a calm, gentle approach by adults picking up and handling pups. Puppies need a lot of human contact. Handle them as much as you can.

It's important to start handling and manipulating puppies right from birth to get them comfortable with humans. Although their ears and eyes are still sealed, their sense of smell is already relatively well developed.

The growing puppies should be handled every day, and gentle grooming should be started at 4-5 weeks. As they become more aware of their environment, they should be exposed to as many stimuli as possible, including the vacuum cleaner, calm, young children, men, women, other friendly animals, loud noises, etc. However, you must pay attention they do not become too stressed, over-stimulated or tired.

## **Important puppy experiences**

- Short car trips will get puppies used to traveling.
- When the mother is not available it's important that puppies come in contact with an older, friendly dog from about 5 weeks of age on.
- Puppies have to learn how to communicate like a dog and most importantly, how to submit. A puppy that has not learned submission from its mother or another adult dog will be more difficult to train later on.
- It's also very important that puppies learn bite inhibition - best from littermates or an adult dog.
- Starting at 8 weeks, the puppy is ready to learn "human" language and the rules of human society. Socialization with other dogs and humans has to be continued. With any introduction, be aware of the possibility of transmission of infectious disease - use good judgment.

## **GETTING YOUR FOSTER DOG ADOPTED: THE ADOPTION PROCESS**

### ***Determining if your foster dog is ready***

As previously mentioned, it can take a dog about 10-14 days to settle in to a foster home enough to give us the best picture of its disposition and personality. Some dogs that go into foster are already ready for adoption. If not, and you are unsure if your foster dog is ready to be adopted, ask yourself the questions below:

- Did your foster dog or puppy gain or lose enough weight?
- Is your foster dog healthy?
- Has the dog recovered fully from an illness?
- Is your foster dog successfully socialized with no major behavioral issues?
- Does your foster dog or puppy have good basic manners?

If your foster dog is ready for adoption, please continue on to the next section.

### ***I can't part with my foster dog and want to adopt!***

So you've fallen in love! This happens sometimes when fostering animals, and as always, if it's a good match all around, fosters are given the first opportunity to adopt. We do require, however, that this decision be made *before* we advertise the animal as available for adoption. Once he is up for adoption, if there is an interested adoptive party, we can no longer guarantee adoption to the foster.

To officially adopt your foster dog, you will be asked to complete the appropriate adoption paperwork and pay the applicable adoption fee. Upon adoption, all items loaned to you by CCHS for foster purposes should be cleaned and returned promptly.

If adopting your foster dog, you may still be able to continue fostering depending upon the particular situation (i.e. time, dog-dog specific dynamics, etc.). Should you decide however that you are not interested in adopting your foster dog and would like to continue fostering, please continue reading to find out how to best help your foster dog find its forever home.

### ***Promotion of your foster dog***

#### **How CCHS promotes**

Available dogs are advertised in the following manners by CCHS, including but not limited to:

- CCHS website

- Adoptapet.com
- Petfinder.com
- Nearly 100 other websites that range in viewer traffic
- Facebook
- Craigslist
- Dog adoption events
- Flyers, as applicable
- Advertisement with veterinary hospitals, CCHS newsletters, and other publications, as applicable

### **How fosters can help promote**

We always appreciate help from the foster as well. Here are some simple ways that you can help to promote your dog:

- Send an email to your family, friends, neighbors and colleagues. Let them know about your foster dog and ask them to help you spread the word and to tell their friends and colleagues
- Spread the word at your child's school, your place of worship, or other organization to which you belong
- Record a video of your foster dog or create a slideshow with more photos and give them to us so that we can have them posted with your foster dog's bio
- Make sure you always walk your foster dog with an adoption vest (available thru CCHS)
- Many companies have newsletters, email lists, blogs or intranets where you might be able to post information about your foster dog. See if you can bring your foster dog to work!
- Blog about your foster dog, or find a local community blog and blog about your foster dog there!
- Participate in any shelter events that will help you promote your foster dog
- Post flyers at local pet friendly venues

**Please review any of these activities with your Foster Coordinator to ensure that you are consistent with CCHS policy.**

### **Tips for taking great photos**

We can't stress this enough...a picture is worth a thousand words. The picture is the first thing people see when they visit the CCHS website or other avenues of adoption. If the dog has a poor picture, visitors may move on to another dog without clicking or reading your dog's bio. If you want to give your dog the best chance possible, take large, clear, good quality (high resolution) pictures of the dog alone. A good picture is often the difference between a dog who generates inquiries and one who doesn't.

- Take a lot of digital pictures. You may have to take 50 pictures to get 1 or 2 really great shots. If you don't have a digital camera, borrow one from a friend or contact your Foster Coordinator and we can arrange for a special photo session.
- Pictures taken outside in natural light are usually much better than those taken inside or with a flash. Lighting is very important for accurately capturing a dog's coloring and detail. Have the sun or light source behind you and check to make sure you're not casting a shadow on your subject. Try to avoid red "laser" eye.
- Use treats and/or a squeaky toy to capture the dog's best expression. Sometimes having two people makes this process easier.
- Try taking pictures using a neutral backdrop. Select a background that contrasts with the dog's coloring. Darker-colored dogs will show up better against a lighter backdrop. Most dogs look great against a lush green lawn.

- Try different props. If the dog likes to fetch, you might get a picture of the dog with his favorite ball. Wrap a bandana around the dog's neck to add a streak of color (especially good for solid and darker-colored dogs). A bright, cheerful collar is a nice touch. Avoid having chain and prong collars in your pictures.
- The dog is the subject of your picture so the dog should take up the majority of space in your picture. Avoid excessive amounts of background. The dog's eyes should be focused on you. Try to capture at least one "hero" shot, where the focus is on the dog's face. A full body picture is also a great way to show size and scale.
- Exercise the dog before your photo shoot. A calmer dog is easier to photograph, and a panting dog looks like he's smiling! Before snapping the photos, take the time to get the pet as calm and relaxed as possible, so the photos don't show an animal that looks anxious or scared.
- Take pictures with different scenarios – napping, cuddling, playing, with kids or other pets, etc.
- Check out the competition. Visit [Petfinder.com](http://Petfinder.com) and look at the photos of similar dogs and see which ones pop out to you. Then try to mimic these shots with your own foster dog.
- Videos also work wonders! If you're able to take a video of your foster dog playing, interacting, doing something cute, etc., please send it to us!
- If your first attempts fail, don't be discouraged. Just keep trying and have fun.

When you are having fun, your foster dog will probably be having fun too and it will show!

### ***The Adoption Process: From Applications to a New Home***

The process for adopting a foster dog is identical in concept to adopting a dog from the shelter, but is slightly more in depth because of screening and scheduling. As a foster parent, your involvement in the adoption process is both extremely important and essential. CCHS requires that all dogs be spayed/neutered, microchipped and vaccinated at the point of adoption, or released with a Sterilization Agreement.

### **Inquiries by phone or online**

If a potential adopter inquires about your foster dog, we ask the interested party to read the dog's bio on the CCHS website and submit a completed dog adoption application, found online. The application can be completed online and submitted by email, or is available for download as well. Downloaded copies can be faxed to the CCHS office or dropped-off.

The Adoption Program Director monitors incoming applications daily. Once an application is reviewed and approved, the Adoption Program Director will contact the potential adopter and discuss the dog further. If it seems like a good match, the Adoption Program Director will contact both the foster and the Foster Coordinator to set up a meeting with the foster and foster dog. If at the meeting all parties feel comfortable with the potential adoption, the dog is allowed to be adopted that day or when schedules permit. Appropriate paperwork is completed that day. The adoption paperwork includes a one-week built-in trial to see if the dog is a good fit within the home. If the dog is returned within that first week, the adopter receives 50% of their adoption fee back (the balance is kept for administrative purposes and holding the dog).

Sometimes a potential adopter seems like a good match on paper and by phone, but in person, it becomes clear that the match is not well suited. This is why it is important to ask plenty of questions and watch the interactions, particularly those of the dog (does he seem abnormally shy, reserved or uncomfortable around the potential adopter? Does he cower? Does the potential adopter seem understanding of this or is he/she forcing interaction? Are the kids acting kindly towards the dog?) If there are any hesitations or reservations at the adoption meeting, the Foster Coordinator will let the potential adopters know that they will be in touch the following day, after

everyone's had a chance to process the meeting and interactions. The foster dog will not be allowed to be adopted if there are any reservations whatsoever on the part of the Foster Coordinator, foster family, or potential adopter. The Adoption Manager will take all feedback from the Foster Coordinator, foster parent and/or potential adopter and determine how best to proceed. The foster will never be responsible for verbally having to deny an adoption.

### **Inquiries at a Dog Adoption Event**

If your dog meets a potential adoptive family at an adoption event, the potential adopters are asked to complete an adoption application on site and CCHS conducts an on-site adoption meeting. Should all parties feel it is a good match, the dog is allowed to be adopted that day. All standard procedures and protocols are followed.

### **Meeting children & resident animals**

CCHS does not generally require that all adoptive family members be present for the meet and greet, or final adoption, although it is helpful if we can see the interaction amongst all family members. If the adoptive family has children, we do always ask that they be present at the adoption meeting so that we can carefully watch the interaction and determine if it is a good match. Similarly, if the adoptive family has a resident dog, we prefer to have both dogs meet as well before the adoptive family is allowed to adopt the foster dog. Resident cats are not able to be met until the foster dog is in the potential adopter's home so we make no guarantees about that interaction. Foster dogs are typically not allowed to be adopted until CCHS has met the children and other dogs.

### **Screening potential adopters at the adoption meeting**

Foster parents often say their goal is to find a home even better than their own! CCHS will screen for qualified applicants, but your input is critical to finding an appropriate forever home for your foster dog. Remember, this can be a very emotional experience, but it's important to stay neutral. A Dog Foster Team member should always be present at the adoption meeting. This way you have the opportunity to observe the potential adopter with the foster dog, rather than just answer or ask questions. Some things that the CCHS representative and foster will be asking or observing at the adoption meeting include:

- This should be a two-way dialog, rather than just a one-sided Q&A session. Instead of just answering a question, use this as an opportunity to learn more about the potential adopter and find out if they are a good match. Feel free to probe for specifics, as you know your foster dog best.
- Don't over-sell or under-sell your foster dog. This should be an open and honest discussion about what the potential adopter is looking for and how this matches the needs of your foster dog.
- Be objective about personality traits. The best way to approach this is to ask about what they are looking for in personality **before** you talk about what type of personality your foster dog has (beyond what is already mentioned in the bio). This way you can find out if they really are a good match, or if they are going on appearances alone or telling you what you want to hear.
- Ask a lot about their past experiences with dogs. Even if this is their first dog, how do their friends or family approach dog ownership? Most people are greatly influenced by those around them.
- Find out how they would approach training and/or behavior problems. Again, don't tell them what you are doing, but find out how they would handle this. Better yet, find out how they handled this with previous dogs! This is where the hypothetical questioning can come in handy. "What would you do if you came home to find out she just chewed your brand new Jimmy Choo sandals?"
- What are the family's expectations of a "rescue" dog? How are they going about finding a dog? Is this a thoughtful process?
- On a final note: Just because the potential adopter might approach something differently than you, this doesn't mean that they won't be a great home for your foster dog. Even if you hate/love clicker training,

doesn't mean that everyone must hate/love clicker training. That said, trust your instincts. If you don't feel good about the potential adopters, then let CCHS know your concerns.

### **Finalizing an adoption**

Should everything be going well during the meet n' greet, and should the potential adopter pass the home safety inspection if applied, the potential adopter is allowed to officially adopt and appropriate paperwork is completed. Final approval of all adoptions is at the sole discretion of CCHS. Please do not make any promises during a meeting. Once the adoption is approved by a CCHS representative, the adopter signs the necessary paperwork and pays the adoption fee. **An animal is never allowed to go home with an adopter until adoption paperwork has been completed.**

### ***What does the adopter take home and what is returned to CCHS?***

The foster should provide the adopter with any medication that your foster dog is taking, along with instructions and a few days worth of food. You can give the adopter your foster dog's favorite toy, or anything else that will help with the transition, provided it either does not belong to CCHS or has been approved by CCHS. If you feel comfortable, you can pass along your contact information to the adopter should they have any immediate questions after taking the dog home. This is not required, however.

CCHS provides the adopter with an adoption packet, which is inclusive of:

- The foster dog's shelter and medical records
- A guide to bringing a new adoptive dog home
- Coupons, a training DVD and other informational material

The foster should retain all of the supplies provided to you by CCHS and return them to CCHS in a cleaned, sanitized condition within two weeks of the adoption. This includes collars, leashes, blankets, beds, crates, bowls, toys, chews, etc.

### ***Saying goodbye***

Fostering a needy pet is one of the most important things an animal lover can do. It's also an emotional, often life-changing experience that isn't for everyone—even for those who can do it, saying goodbye is never easy. But, it also signifies one of the happiest events in the pet foster care system—a new family being created. Here are a few tips to help you with the transition of letting go:

**It gets easier with time.** For many people, the first time you say goodbye to a foster pet is the hardest—the second time is easier, the third, even more so. While you never stop caring for the foster animals that come into your home, you will soon realize that the sadness is often replaced with the satisfaction of knowing you were instrumental in saving a life.

**Become active in the adoption process.** Many foster parents enjoy taking an active role in the adoption process and find that it helps with the transition of saying goodbye. While every rescue has a different policy on how involved a dog foster parent can be, CCHS is delighted to have your input. The information you provide may be invaluable to ensuring that your foster dog is matched with the right family.

**Focus on the ultimate goal.** It's only natural to find you have a stronger bond with certain animals and may even question whether or not to adopt your foster pet. At these times it's important to remember why you became a foster parent—it's about helping to save a life. Shelters across the country are overflowing with adoptable animals,

but in the absence of available foster homes, many have no choice but to turn to euthanasia. As a foster parent, it's vital to keep your original goals in mind and remain committed to helping foster pets find loving, forever homes.

**Learn to celebrate.** One simple action you can take to help alleviate the "letting go blues" is to celebrate the occasion. From throwing a little goodbye party to treating yourself to a special dinner, it's good to commemorate the fact that your foster pet has found a new forever home and is alive because of you. It's also important to acknowledge your hard work. So go ahead, pat yourself on the back for a job well done and celebrate!

**Don't feel guilty.** After days, weeks or even months of bonding, it can be painful to say goodbye to a foster pet. You may even experience strong feelings of guilt for not adopting the animal yourself—this is to be expected. However, it's important to understand that while these feelings are natural for you, animals are incredibly resilient and adaptable—your foster pet will become part of his new family and be living happily ever after in no time!

**Start or join a foster support network.** It's very important for pet foster parents to communicate with like-minded folk. By joining a foster support network you'll be able to share advice and experiences, give support and even provide a shoulder to cry on.

**Take a break.** With the constant demands of foster work, you may begin to feel a bit burned out—and that's completely understandable. You may also simply need time to process your feelings in between fosters. It is important to recognize these feelings and follow through with the break. While you may feel guilty or pressured to immediately open your home to another foster pet, if you burn out completely, there will be one less foster home available—so take time!

**Cherish the memories.** Consider saving memories of your furry foster friends in a scrapbook. From photos, to reminiscent stories and other memorabilia—a foster scrapbook is a great way to capture the memories of your foster pets, while honoring the many animals whose lives you have directly helped.

## **YOUR DOG IS ADOPTED: CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!**

Your foster dog has been adopted! You've helped find him a permanent home that will cherish and love him. You gave him the gift of not only life, but a good life.

The staff and volunteers at Contra Costa Humane Society appreciate your time, energy and dedication. Without you, we could not continue to do our part in giving these amazing dogs a second chance. Please let us know if there's anything we can do to make fostering easier and even more rewarding. On behalf of all the graduating dogs of CCHS, we thank you!

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### ***Dog Foster Team***

- Adoption Program Director: Chrissy Wilberg
  - Office: (925) 279-2247, ext. 303
  - Email: [adoptions@cchumane.org](mailto:adoptions@cchumane.org)

### ***Current veterinary hospitals that CCHS has partnerships with:***

- Valley Veterinary Hospital  
1780 Ygnacio Valley Road  
Walnut Creek, CA 94598  
(925) 932-2420
- Alpine Veterinary Hospital  
5201 Clayton Road  
Concord, CA 94521  
(925) 285-8464
- Animal Care Clinic  
3340-K Princeton Plaza  
El Sobrante, CA 94803  
(510) 222-9966
- Brentwood Veterinary Hospital (speak with Hollie)  
4519 O'Hara Avenue  
Brentwood, CA 94513  
(925) 634-1177
- Wellpet Veterinary Clinic  
4040 Railroad Avenue  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
(925) 427-4300
- SAGE Emergency Center (after-hours only)  
1410 Monument Blvd.  
Concord, CA 94520  
(925) 627-7243

This Dog and Puppy Foster Care Agreement is entered into between Contra Costa Humane Society (the “Charity/We/Us/CCHS”), a California non-profit corporation, and the undersigned (the “Caretaker” or “You”). In consideration of the mutual promises in this Agreement, and other good and valuable consideration, the Charity and Caretaker agree to the following terms and conditions, intending to be legally bound:

1. **The Dogs.** You agree to provide temporary boarding and foster care (together, the “Foster Care”) for dogs/puppies (together, the “Dogs”) until the Dogs are adopted into permanent homes, whenever that may be. You understand that CCHS does not operate a shelter facility and that foster care can often last up to a year. You will be a continual Foster Care provider for different Dogs until such point as You or We choose to end your Foster Care with the Charity.
2. **The Foster Care.** You will provide the Foster Care in your home at the address at the end of this Agreement, in an area decided upon by the Charity, subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement. Your Foster Care for the Dogs will be comprised of the following:
  - Providing daily wholesome dog food and water;
  - Providing a clean area for elimination;
  - Providing exercise of not less than one hour total per day;
  - Provide basic training and manners, as well as training your dog to walk on leash;
  - Bottle feeding for puppies, if necessary;
  - Providing a warm, safe place inside your home;
  - Administering medicines, if any;
  - Transporting the Dogs to the veterinarian, as necessary;
  - Transporting the dogs to adoption events, as necessary;
  - Socializing and playing;
  - Keeping the Dogs on leash when out of the house

The Dogs may not be crated for more than eight hours per twenty-four hour period.

3. **Veterinary Care.** Whenever possible, You will use a veterinarian recommended by us. You will telephone Chrissy at (925) 279-2247, extension 303, of this Charity to advise her of any emergencies involving the Dogs and for pre-approval of non-emergency veterinary care.
4. **Costs and Expenses.** The Charity will pay all veterinary treatment costs that may be incurred for the Dogs during the Foster Care; provided, that We have given You prior approval by telephone for such treatments, except in the event of a medical emergency, in which case You will use your best judgment in the matter. You will give Us the receipts from the veterinarian for the veterinary care and medicines. The Charity will pay all pre-authorized food and supply expenses necessary for the Dogs during the Foster Care. Any voluntary purchases made by You that have not been pre-authorized by the Charity are not subject to reimbursement by the Charity. You are providing the Foster Care out of your love for dogs, and as a volunteer, at no charge to the Charity.
5. **No Liability.** You are not liable to Us for any injuries to, illness or disappearance of the Dogs arising out of the Foster Care, except if such injuries, illness or disappearance are caused by or arise out of your gross negligence or intentional misconduct. We are not liable for any bodily injury or property damage, losses or injuries whatsoever to You or other persons, or to your or another persons’ animals and pets, caused by the actions, behavior or health of the Dogs, or arising out of the Foster Care, except if such damage, losses or injuries are caused by our gross negligence or intentional misconduct.
6. **Vaccinations.** We represent that if the Dogs are not current on their necessary vaccines (DHLPP, Rabies), de-wormed (puppies), spayed/neutered or microchipped, CCHS will provide that necessary medical care during their foster period. You agree to take the Dogs to the appointed veterinarian for any necessary treatment, vaccines, or spay/neuter surgery as instructed by CCHS.
7. **Returning Dogs.** You agree to contact Us immediately by telephone in the event that You are no longer able or willing to provide Foster Care to any or all of the Dogs. You will continue to care for the Dogs for a reasonable period until We are able to come to your home to retrieve any Dogs being returned, or until We can accept the return of the Dogs from You at our facilities. We will notify You by telephone whenever We wish to retrieve any or all of the Dogs, whether for adoption into a permanent home or any other reason. You will cooperate with Us by promptly arranging a mutually satisfactory time for Us to pick up any Dogs being returned. You may not entrust the care of the Dogs to any other person or relocate the Dogs. You further agree to take the Dogs back into your home for foster care should they be returned within a two-week period after adoption.
8. **Adoption.** In the event that you wish to adopt any or all of the Dogs as a household pet(s) for yourself, You must first enter into our Adoption Agreement, and if the Dog is not yet sterilized, also enter into our Sterilization Agreement. If the Dog is being

transferred to You from another foster home, the previous foster has no more than 3 days, following the date of transfer, to decide to adopt the Dog.

9. **Loaned Equipment and Supplies.** We will temporarily provide You with the necessary equipment and supplies for use in providing the Foster Care. You will return these items to us in good, clean condition (subject to normal wear and tear) at the end of the Foster Care period, or whenever we request them. If the foregoing items are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond normal wear and tear as a result of your negligence or misconduct, You will promptly pay Us the replacement price to purchase new items.
10. **Foster Guide Receipt.** I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Contra Costa Humane Society Dog Foster Guide. I agree to abide by the rules and guidelines included in the Dog Foster Guide. I further agree to comply with the policies, procedures and Code of Conduct outlined in the Volunteer Manual.
11. **Entire Agreement; Modifications; Binding Effect.** This Agreement is the entire Agreement between You and Us. Any modification to the Agreement must be in writing, signed by both You and Us. This Agreement binds your and our respective heirs, executors, representatives, successors and assigns.

FOSTER CARETAKER	
_____	
Date	
_____	
Signature	
_____	
Print Name	
_____	
Street Address	
_____	
City, State	Zip
_____	
Email address	
_____	
Phone number	

CHARITY
<b>Contra Costa Humane Society</b>
_____
Signature
_____
Print Name