

NEW FOSTER INFORMATION

First and foremost, THANK YOU for fostering with Houston Pets Alive. This packet should answer most of the questions that you have in regards to being a foster parent. If you have additional questions or concerns, please email dogfoster@houstonpetsalive.org

When you applied to foster you agreed to several things are integral in making your fostering experience a success for you and your foster pup. Since we are you that you were as excited as we were when we first got started, you may not remember all of those things. That's ok! We have included the foster agreement below with additional information that you will need.

Foster Agreement

By applying to foster in partnership with Houston Pets Alive!, I agree to the following:

Pet's Health and Disposition

Houston Pets Alive! cannot guarantee the health or disposition of any foster animal. We do not have past records for these animals and there are some risks associated with taking in foster animals. Family pets must be current on all shots and foster pets will be kept separate from family pets, for a minimum of 7 days for the protection of all animals.

I agree to be fully responsible for the safety and well being of the foster pet. I will provide a safe, loving, humane environment with adequate food, water, and shelter at all times. I will not declaw, crop ears, or crop the tail of a fostered pet. I will adhere to all state and local animal laws and all foster animals will wear a collar with identification. I will promptly notify Houston Pets Alive! of any signs of illness, behavioral issues, or concerns, an inability to continue to foster, if the pet becomes lost, and/or if the pet bites someone. The email for all behavioral concerns is behavior@houstonpetsalive.org

Veterinary Services

HPA! covers all approved veterinary services at our facility at 2800 Antoine St. This includes vaccines, microchips, spay/neuter surgery, and treatment for heartworm disease or other illnesses. While you are welcome to use your preferred vet for treatment at your cost, we are not able to reimburse any medical expenses outside of our facility.

We do prefer that you use our medical clinic for medical needs barring an emergency situation.

We hold a routine medical clinic for vaccines and monthly preventatives on several Sundays every month. The date is updated on Wednesday of the week before the clinic. Please ensure when you sign up that you give the dog's name, A# if you have it, weight if you have it, and a simple explanation of what the animal needs. Here is the link for Foster Fest:

<https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/30e0e4ca9a92da0fe3-foster65>

If at any time you have questions about Routine Medical needs such as vaccines, preventatives, or spay/neuter surgery, please email routinemedical@houstonpetsalive.org

If you have a medical concern that is NOT an emergency, please email sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org

In case of a medical emergency with you foster, please call the emergency line: 281-215-5146

Adoption Events

Your foster dog will be eligible to attend adoption events after one week of being in their new home. Fosters are asked to attend a minimum of two (2) events per month.

Some events do require your dog to be spayed/neutered before attending events. Please check those requirements before signing up.

Puppies must have a minimum of 2 shots to be able to attend events and should still be kept off the floor of the events.

Most adoption events are held on the weekends from 12-4. You are always welcome to drop off and pick up your foster, but you will need to provide a kennel if you cannot stay. Also, most foster dogs have better luck when the foster is able to stay and talk about how wonderful their foster dog is!

You can check and sign up for upcoming foster events here:

<https://www.houstonpetsalive.org/dog-adoption-events/>

If you have questions about adoption events, you can email dogfoster@houstonpetsalive.org or shelteradoption@houstonpetsalive.org

We often get questions from fosters about adopting their foster dogs or what if a friend wants to adopt their foster. These requests can be sent to adopt@houstonpetsalive.org

Another important part of getting your foster dog adopted is having good pictures and a good online bio. You can send those things to bios@houstonpetsalive.org

Out of State Transport

We often partner up with out of state rescues to help move more dogs into their forever homes as well as help create more space to save more lives here in Houston. Shelters up north often times have more adopters than dogs and need our help to fill those adoptive homes with loving doggies. If your dog is tagged for transport, we will notify you as soon as the rescue confirms with us. Once confirmed you will be notified of a date and time for a vet check and a date and time for drop off. Dogs tagged for transport MUST go on transport, unless you reply within 48 hours of transport notification from HPA! stating you would like to adopt and have completed the online adoption application.

Transfer of Animals

Animals cannot be transferred to the custody of another person, shelter, humane society, SPCA, or other entity without prior consent and permission of Houston Pets Alive! I agree to not place this

pet in another home without the written or verbal authorization from HPA, whether it be temporary or permanent.

If you are going on vacation and plan to have someone else watch your foster dog, that person will need to complete a new foster application and be approved by HPA. You can email newfoster@houstonpetsalive.org if you have any questions about this procedure.

Return of Animals

All the pets in the Houston Pets Alive! foster program are the property of Houston Pets Alive! and must be returned within 24 hours of request. I agree that I am fostering this pet for Houston Pets Alive! and that I do not have any right of ownership over my foster animal. I further agree that Houston Pets Alive!'s rights in and to my foster pet are superior to mine. I agree to provide the Authorized Representative, or his/her designate access to my home and property to check on my foster pet, at any time while I am in possession of my foster pet.

Personal or Property Damage and/or Injury

I agree that accidental animal bites or other injuries to humans and other animals do occur, and agree to hold harmless and indemnify, and protect Houston Pets Alive! from any claim or suit filed by someone as a result of such incident.

In addition, Houston Pets Alive! will not be responsible if an animal should damage or destroy property belonging to the foster, foster's household, or others, or if the animal shall transfer any disease, internal or external parasites to other animals and people in the foster's household.

As mentioned before, all behavioral concerns should be directed to behavior@houstonpetsalive.org

Now that we have covered the basics, here are some tips to help you get started with your foster!

Bringing your dog home for the first time

1. When you get home, make sure your dog has a chance to relieve himself before going inside (unless your dog is a puppy, keep reading!) Neither of you want to start out with any accidents! If you are fostering a puppy, make sure that you only put them down in a protected area like your backyard. Again, it's very important that they are not exposed to the "germs" out in the world. Those with puppies who don't have a protected outdoor area should put puppy pads down immediately and place the dog on them to give him/her an opportunity to go potty.

2. Show your dog his/her sleeping area, either the crate (strongly recommended) or a place with his own bedding. If you have other animals, you will need to ensure that you can keep your new dog separate. To introduce your new dog to your resident animals after the recommended 7-10 day separation, please see the Behavior section of this packet for tips for a successful introduction.

3. Dogs should never be left unattended in a backyard. Although your yard may seem "escape proof," too often, newly adopted dogs have managed to find a way out. This is also their time to

begin bonding with people again, and being left alone outside could cause them increased anxiety. Fully vaccinated dogs should be taken on walks, but always on a leash.

4. Special precautions need to be taken with puppies. Puppies should never be placed on the ground in a common area where other dogs have roamed. If they need to be taken out in public—for example to our vet clinic—they should be transported in a crate and only placed in a pen/crate/area that has been sanitized. You should always have hand sanitizer handy and ask everyone (friends, family, neighbors, etc.) to use the sanitizer before petting or handling your puppy. If you live in an apartment you will need to use puppy pee pads for their potty training as they cannot go outside on the ground until they have had all 4 DAPP shots.

Pets in shelter environments usually suffer from kennel stress. Once removed from the shelter, it can take from several minutes to 48 hours or more for that pet's anxiety to return to near normal levels. It takes time to build trust, and trust is the basis for obedience. The more a dog trusts its owners, the more likely it will follow the rules.

In some cases, the buildup of shelter stress can make a dog difficult to tire out. This will improve with time, but there are several things you can do to help your new pet decompress from kennel stress and become comfortable in your home.

- Prepare needed supplies for engaging your dog mentally. You may want to use food-filled frozen Kongs, puzzle toys, etc. Put them in a safe place for later use.
- Pick up all dog toys and treats from your house and yard, especially if you have other pets.
- If this is your first time outside of the shelter with your dog, take a walk around the shelter grounds for 10-15 minutes before leaving to get comfortable with the dog and vice-versa.
- Continue walking the dog on a regular basis, either at a park, or in your neighborhood. We recommend at least 1 mile for dogs who have medium to low energy levels, 2 for medium energy levels, and 3-4+ for dogs who appear to have higher energy levels.
- When you arrive home, ensure that any family members who are meeting the dog for the first time are seated. They should let the dog come to them for attention, as opposed to soliciting attention from the dog.
- We recommend keeping your new dog separated from your own dogs for 7-10 days for precautionary reasons.
- If your dog is unable to settle down (panting, whining, constantly in motion, etc.) channel their energy into a task such as fetch, puzzle toys or any game that engages their brain until they are able to relax.
- Do only essential meet-and-greets for the first 48 hours to week, depending on the dog's comfort level.

Dog Behavior and Training

It is common for a dog to experience some behavioral problems and need a period of adjustment when placed into a new environment. The following is a list of common behavioral problems as well as suggestions for behavior modification.

Lack of House-Training

Chances are your new dog may need at least a refresher course in house-training. Some rescued dogs have spent most of their lives outside and never learned the rules of living indoors. Other

dogs may have once been house-trained, but may still have an accident or two when transitioning into a new home.

The most important element of effective house-training is extensive supervision. Correcting a dog for eliminating in the house is only effective if the dog is caught in the act and corrected immediately. For this reason, it is essential that the dog be under your supervision at all times. There will, of course, be times when you are unable to watch the dog constantly. During these times, you can confine the dog to a crate. The crate should be just large enough for the dog to be able to comfortably stand up, turn around, and lie down. Because a dog will try not to soil the area where he sleeps, he will usually not urinate or defecate in a crate. When the dog is allowed out of the crate, he should be taken outside immediately. If the dog eliminates outside, give him lots of praise. If the dog does not eliminate, it is important that you supervise the dog closely once you re-enter your home. If you catch the dog having an accident in the house, make a loud noise by either clapping or saying "at" in a firm (but not angry) voice. Take the dog straight outside and give him a chance to finish eliminating outside. If the dog does eliminate, give him lots of praise. If not place him back in the crate for 10-15 minutes and take outside again.

When house-training a dog, use common sense. Give the dog a chance to eliminate outside following meals and naps. Pay attention to the dog's behavioral signals. If you observe the dog circling, sniffing the floor, or moving toward the door, take the dog outside.

House-Training Don'ts:

- Do not rub the dog's nose in it! This method of training has been proven ineffective by trainers and behaviorists. The only message a dog gets from this type of "training" is that you are angry and you are showing them where to mark next time. The dog will likely not learn to eliminate outside and may instead learn to fear you.
- Do not correct the dog after the fact! Again, this method of training has been proven ineffective. Punishing a dog for something she did much earlier will not yield the results you are looking for. Yes, the dog will behave submissively and perhaps look guilty, but this is because the dog knows you are angry by your body language, not because she knows that, earlier, she did something wrong. House-training is not a process that happens overnight. Be patient. Any progress you can make with your dog on house-training will make your life easier and help improve the dog's chances for successful placement. For more information on house training please see:

<http://goo.gl/Qv3Ve>

Chewing

Destructive chewing is a phase that all puppies go through. It usually starts around three months and can last until the dog is one year old. During this time, the dog's adult teeth are coming in and chewing helps relieve the pain.

Adult dogs may also have problems with chewing, but for different reasons. Adult dogs usually chew on inappropriate things because they are anxious or bored, or because they have never been taught what is appropriate to chew on. The best solution for destructive chewing is providing your dog with something that is acceptable to chew on. Alternate chew toys daily and do not leave all toys out all the time. Dogs generally get bored of toys and find alternative things to chew.

If you catch the dog chewing on something inappropriate, tell the dog "At" in a firm (but not angry) voice, and replace the item with something more appropriate. If the destructive chewing occurs

when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. A crate will help keep both the dog and your home safe. It is also important to make sure that your dog is getting plenty of exercise. A tired dog will sleep, not chew!

Separation Anxiety

It is common for dogs to experience some separation anxiety when left alone. The severity of the anxiety can range from pacing and whining to much more destructive behavior. A dog may experience separation anxiety simply because he has a very dependent personality, or because she is reacting to a history of abuse or abandonment. Whatever the reason, separation anxiety can be difficult to deal with because you are not around when it happens. The most common sign that a dog may be suffering from separation anxiety is destructive behavior when left alone. A dog may scratch frantically at the door or make other attempts to get out of the house, or the dog may chew on things or engage in other destructive behaviors. If you have reason to suspect that your dog is suffering from separation anxiety when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. If used appropriately, the crate will help the dog feel safe and secure and hopefully relieve some of the anxiety. And, until the separation anxiety itself can be examined and dealt with, a crate will help keep both your home and your dog safe.

There are several things you can try to help alleviate separation anxiety:

- Start out by leaving the dog in your home for very short intervals. Tell the dog to wait and then walk outside for a few minutes before returning. When you return to the house, praise the dog for waiting. Begin to gradually leave the dog for longer and longer periods of time.
- It is important that, when you leave, you remain calm and not make a big deal out of leaving.
- It is also important that you not be too excited when you return. You want to praise the dog, but calmly. You don't want your return to be such an exciting event that the dog anxiously anticipates the moment of your return.
- Perhaps the most effective treatment for separation anxiety is time. Be patient. As your dog spends more time with you, he will begin to feel more secure in knowing that when you leave, you always come back.

Some destructive behavior that appears to be related to separation anxiety may, in fact, be the product of boredom. Try providing chew toys or other play items that will entertain your dog while you are away. There are several products on the market that work quite well. One of the more popular toys keeps dogs engaged by making them work for food or treats. Once the toy is filled with some kind of small food item, the dog must work by rolling and tipping the toy until a treat falls out. Most of these products allow you to adjust the level of difficulty, and can keep a dog entertained for significant periods of time. Don't forget to make sure that your dog gets plenty of exercise. A tired dog is much less likely to engage in behaviors associated with anxiety or boredom.

Introducing A New Dog to Your Dog: Information pulled from:
<http://www.ourpack.org/dogdogintros.html>

****This document provides advice on how to safely introduce two dogs who generally get along well with other dogs. Do not use this procedure if either dog has had a history of dog aggression and/or displays On Leash Reactivity (OLR) or Barrier Reactivity (BR) to other dogs. Both of these behaviors are rooted in frustration. This reactivity can manifest as barking, lunging, and even fighting or biting and can be displayed while the dog is either on the end of a leash or behind a barrier (fence, gate, etc.). If you are attempting to follow this procedure and either of the dogs seems uncomfortable or begins to display OLR or BR, please cease the introduction and contact a professional immediately.****

A few things first...

How We Set Dogs Up to Fail

Many dogs have forgotten or never learned at all how to properly greet other members of their own species. Dogs are mostly on leashes, behind fences, rushed into greetings by their well-meaning people, and kept from situations that would have otherwise helped them learn canine greeting etiquette. Leash reactivity is one of the biggest dog behavioral issues caused by us humans. Tight leashes can create frustration when your dog sees other dogs on the street. This can cause body language in your dog that may look offensive to other dogs. (See Dog Aggression vs. Leash Reactivity). Other behavior often facilitated by humans – pulling, hard stares, and running up to other dogs head-on – can turn greetings sour.

Dogs aren't all that different from people – they have personal space just like we do – and may become offended when a stranger invades that space. Think of it this way: if I were to wave to you from a distance, that would be a nice gesture. If I were to rush up to you and wave my hand right in your face, that would be rude, intrusive, and somewhat threatening. Dogs are constantly placed into situations in which they are forced to endure invasion of their space and are set up to fail at greetings. The sad thing is that the dogs get blamed for snappy behavior or are said to be “aggressive” in these situations. But it's a normal reaction for a dog to get cranky about another dog running up, acting rude, and rushing a greeting (especially so when the dog is on its own territory).

Before you set up a new-dog introduction, take into account your own dog's general attitude towards other dogs. If your dog has a solid history of playing well with properly matched playmates, then you have a better chance at success. Pairings of the opposite sex tend to be most successful. Some dogs are uncomfortable with or reactive to new dogs and need very slow introductions. Realize that, like humans, dogs don't necessarily like every single dog they meet, and some do best as an only dog. If your dog has a history of reacting negatively to the company of other dogs, then it is probably best to just have him as an only dog.

Successful Introductions Lead to Successful Integration!

It is very important to properly introduce your current dog to a new dog, especially if the new dog is meant to become part of your family. Do not just walk a new dog into your home with your current dog waiting inside. Your dog will naturally feel that the newcomer is an intruder, not a new friend. First impressions matter! Properly introduced dogs are more likely to become buddies. The goal is to emulate the natural greetings talked about above.

How to Properly Introduce a New Dog to Your Dog

To properly introduce your dog to a new dog, you'll need:

- Two people, (or) one person per dog.
- Some high-value treats. These can be pieces of chicken, hot dog or cheese, anything that will get the dog's attention and that it doesn't get normally.

Start by walking the two dogs on leash in the same direction in neutral territory. If you find that they pull toward each other, stare at each other or are overly excited, then you're too close too soon. Put some distance between the dogs, and have them just hang out for a bit at that distance before continuing to walk.

Use your treats to reward your dog for remaining calm and focusing on you. This gives them something to do while they get used to each other's presence. Be patient and relax so the dogs can relax too. As the dogs begin to calm down in each others' presence, begin to move them closer to each other. At some point they should become more relaxed, and you can proceed with your walk. You are emulating the natural greeting: they are not face to face. Instead, they are showing the sides of their bodies to each other while walking.

What you're looking for is calm, relaxed and confident behavior. Neither dog should be overly aroused, nervous, stiff, or fearful.

If they are relaxed and nicely interested in each other, then go ahead and let them get close enough to sniff. As they sniff, watch carefully. Warning signs include stiffening, low growling, avoidance, or hard stares. If you see these behaviors, calmly move the dogs away from each other. Remember, some dogs don't like the company of other dogs and they should never be forced into a greeting. Some dogs may need more time or a few more intros to get used to another dog. If the dogs remain relaxed and pleasantly interested in each other, one or both of them may gesture to play. Keep the leashes loose and let them interact on leash for a bit to make sure all goes well. As long as both dogs are still relaxed and showing loose, happy body language, you can drop the leashes and let them play while dragging their leashes in an enclosed area. Take away all food from this point forward. Watch the play for a while to be sure everyone is minding their manners: no rude behavior or pushy type of mounting behavior allowed initially. Every few minutes, before the dogs reach a state of high arousal or over-excitement, stop the play and get the dogs calm again or walk them. Then let the play resume. End the play on a good note; don't let them play into crankiness. With you as their leader to give them guidance and direction, the dogs will get to know each other and build a trusting bond.

The Next Step

After they have successfully played for some time, you can bring both dogs into your house or yard with their leashes dragging behind them. If the new dog is going to be a member of your family, it's best to crate the new dog often and not let it just roam around. Make sure that both dogs are fed in separate rooms or areas, and to not introduce high value objects like chewies or bones too quickly.

If you have any further questions about your new foster, please don't hesitate to reach out to dogfoster@houstonpetsalive.org

Thank you,

Foster Team

Houston Pets Alive!