

# FOSTER

**WITH SWEET PAWS RESCUE**

SAVING PEOPLE.

ONE DOG AT A TIME.™



WELCOME  
TO OUR  
FOSTER FAMILY!

SWEET PAWS



RESCUE

Bringing a dog or puppy into your home can be a wonderful experience. Your foster dog will need your patience and understanding during this transition. Please remember that your new companion has been through many new experiences lately. Many of the dogs come to us from the South, riding in a USDA approved transport truck. After their long journey, MA state law requires that they get a vet visit, receive a health certificate, and stay at our quarantine facility for 48 hours where their needs are attended to by our loving staff. From there they either go to their forever homes, or to foster homes.

## **BRINGING YOUR DOG HOME**

Once your new companion is home it may take him or her a few days, to settle in and adjust, and for you to see their true personality shine through. It is possible your dog has never seen stairs before, or not had a lot of experience in a loving home. Keep this in mind as you introduce your dog or puppy to new people and new things. Sometimes new things can be scary for them. We suggest that you let your dog take the first week with you to adjust and get to know your family. Try not to overwhelm them with a lot of new people and new situations in the first few days.

## **WHERE DO I PICK UP MY FOSTER DOG?**

The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture requires that all dogs entering the state be quarantined for a period of 48 hours at an approved facility before being released to a foster or forever home. Our approved facility is at 310 Main St, Groveland, MA. Our Foster Team will be in touch regarding the day and time of pick up, after the quarantine period has been satisfied.

## **WHAT DO I BRING TO PICK UP MY FOSTER DOG?**

Your foster will come with a collar or harness. You will need to bring a leash. We strongly suggest bringing a crate (or a second pair of hands) for your foster dog to transport them in the car to your home. You'll receive the dog's paperwork

packet that should stay with the dog wherever they go. If you don't have a crate, we will supply one. DO NOT bring your resident dog(s) to pick up your foster dog as it is a very stressful and chaotic time to introduce them.

## **WHAT IS IN THE PAPERWORK PACKET?**

In the brown folder packet will be your foster's medical vetting records. When you get home, please review all the records in the packet and make note on the cover sheet when your foster is next due for vaccines, heartworm and flea/tick preventative. This paperwork packet and any tags should go with the foster dog whenever transferred to another foster or an adopter.

## **WHAT KIND OF FOOD SHOULD I FEED MY FOSTER DOG?**

While at our isolation facility your foster dog has been eating high quality food. You should have received a complimentary bag when you picked up your dog from the isolation facility today.

## **DO YOU SUPPLY FOOD?**

Yes. We will supply you with food and you can pick it up from our isolation facility.

## **SHOULD I USE A CRATE?**

SPR strongly encourages foster homes to crate puppies (this helps with house training and saves personal items from being

chewed!). For older dogs, please use your discretion based on the dog's history. We can lend you a crate if you would like.

## **CAN I CHANGE MY FOSTER DOG'S NAME?**

Please don't change your foster dog's name. For posting purposes and record-keeping we need to keep the foster's name as it is.

## **HOW DO I INTRODUCE MY FOSTER DOG TO MY RESIDENT DOGS/CATS?**

It is always best to introduce dogs on neutral territory. Try to keep leashes loose and let the dogs approach each other from the side, rather than putting them face to face. This is a more natural way for them to greet, and how they will choose to greet on their own if off leash. Watch for any stiffening of their bodies—stiff body means that the dog is uncomfortable, best to calmly walk away and give them some space. Loose, wiggly body posture is good and should be encouraged. (See section on dog body language to familiarize yourself with other signs of stress).

It is usually a good idea to feed the new dog in a crate or in a separate room to avoid any issues over food. The same goes for bones and other high value items, best to give them to the dogs in separate spaces or not to offer at all during their acclimation to your home.

To prepare your cat for your foster dog's arrival, you should designate a safe space for them. Putting up

a baby gate that the cat can get over or under but the dog can't, is a good way to make sure your cat has a safe place to retreat to. When letting them meet for the first time, it is a good idea to have the dog on leash. During this transition period, we suggest keeping a leash on the dog at all times for the safety of your cat. Don't force the cat to make contact if it doesn't want to, and make sure that it has an easy out, and doesn't end up cornered. Cats respond differently to meeting a dog, some are friendly, some run away, and some may go after the dog if they feel threatened. Because of this, and because of the sharpness of the cat's claws, it may be a good idea to trim your cat's nails prior to arrival of your foster dog.



### **WHAT IF MY DOG AND THE FOSTER DOG DON'T GET ALONG?**

Although we strive to match our foster dogs with an appropriate foster home, there are occasions when dogs—just like people—don't get along. Please keep in mind that our dogs have had a long, hard trip to New England, so it may take a few days for them to get comfortable and for their true personality to shine through. If after a few days you feel the placement is not going to work, please contact the foster team and let us know that it is not working. We will work quickly to find an alternate foster home. Because foster homes are limited and are not always readily available, it may be a day or two before the dog can be moved.

### **WHAT IF MY FOSTER DOG REQUIRES MEDICAL ATTENTION?**

Sweet Paws Rescue is proud to partner with The Newburyport and Riverside Veterinary Clinics who provide quality, care to our dogs. If you believe a trip to the vet is in order, contact the foster team. Please include a brief description of the dog's condition) and we will schedule a vet visit to bring in your foster dog at your convenience. The most common medical issues our dogs encounter in foster care are kennel cough, stress colitis and intestinal worms. Many of the medicines required to treat these issues can be picked up at our vet or isolation facility after speaking with an foster team member. We cannot

cover vetting costs at any other vet, but ours.

### **DO YOU PROVIDE HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVE AND FLEA/TICK PREVENTATIVE?**

Yes. We count on you to let us know when your foster is due for their monthly preventatives. Please reach out to the foster team to let us know your foster is due and we'll arrange to meet you at our isolation facility.

### **HOW DOES THE ADOPTION PROCESS WORK?**

We have trained adoption coordinators that dedicate their time and effort to re-homing our dogs with loving forever families. We have an in-depth screening process that helps ensure our dogs are placed in the very best homes. The process includes a written application, phone screen, vet & personal references check, and a home visit.

### **WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THE ADOPTION PROCESS?**

Once an applicant "passes" the phone screen and reference check, the adoption coordinator will put the applicant in touch with you to talk about the dog. The applicant will want to know about the dog's personality, ability to get along with other dogs/cats/children, physical attributes, etc. The applicant will then let the adoption coordinator know if they want to meet the dog. If so, they will make arrangements directly with you so a convenient meeting can be arranged. Although the adoption coordinators carefully consider the written application, phone interview, reference checks, and home visit when deciding if an applicant is a good match for a dog, your feedback is welcomed and encouraged! If you think an applicant sounds perfect for

a dog, please let the adoption coordinator know. And if you're unsure about the dog's placement with a particular applicant, be sure to voice your concerns before pick up day.

### **HOW DO I KNOW WHO THE ADOPTION COORDINATOR FOR MY FOSTER DOG IS?**

Once an adoption coordinator has approved an application for your foster dog, they will reach out to you via email and give you all the information needed to move forward. If you have questions, please reach out the foster team. They are there to work with you to make sure the process goes smoothly.

### **WHEN WILL MY FOSTER DOG GO HOME?**

It's difficult to estimate how long a dog will be in foster care. It can be just a few days or a few weeks. A dog can go home with an approved applicant only. If an applicant has already been approved for adoption (e.g., written application, phone screen, references check, and home visit) prior to visiting your home, the dog may go home with the applicant if the meeting goes well. Sometimes an applicant may meet a dog before their home visit is done. In these cases, the dog may not go home with the applicant since they are not approved adopters. If you are not sure if the applicant is approved, please check with the adoption coordinator who will check in our database to make sure the adoption contract and fee have been received. If you have any questions at this point, please reach out to the foster team. When your foster is ready to go home, please be sure to give the dog's paperwork packet to the adopter.

### **CAN I PROVIDE INPUT FOR MY FOSTER DOG'S ONLINE BIO?**

Yes! As the foster family, you know more than anyone about the dog and your input for their online bio is greatly appreciated. Input (and updated photos) should be sent to the foster team either via messenger, email or through our private foster facebook page. Our adoptable dogs' online bios can be accessed via our website at [www.sweetpawsrescue.org](http://www.sweetpawsrescue.org) Please check the website periodically to make sure your foster's information is current and accurate. If you feel there are any errors, please reach out to the foster team.

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO ADOPT MY FOSTER DOG?**

Many times our foster families fall in love with their foster dog and don't want to part with them. Please let us know IMMEDIATELY if you are considering this! Once we have started working applications for your foster dog, it will be very difficult to stop the adoption. Please contact the foster team and let us know that you would like to adopt your foster dog. If your foster is available, we will ask you to submit an application and connect you to an adoption coordinator to proceed with the adoption.

### **WHAT DO I DO WITH MY FOSTER DOG IF I AM GOING ON VACATION?**

Please notify the foster team as soon as possible if you have a vacation planned and let us know ahead of time before you commit to fostering a dog and we can set a plan in place if needed.

### **WHAT IS A MEET & GREET AND AM I REQUIRED TO BRING MY FOSTER?**

Meet and Greets are events held at different public locations to give people a chance to come and meet the dogs currently in foster. It is encouraged that you bring your foster to as many Meet and Greets

as possible. In the event that you cannot bring your foster dog, we can often arrange a ride for the dog so that it doesn't miss out on a chance to meet their forever family.

### **WHAT IF SOMEONE I KNOW WANTS TO ADOPT MY FOSTER?**

All potential adopters must fill out an application and go through the adoption process. Please have the interested party fill out an Adoption Application on our website: [www.sweetpawsrescue.org](http://www.sweetpawsrescue.org). You can also inquire as to whether or not your foster has a previous application pending. To be fair to all applicants, applications are reviewed in a first come first serve manner.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES FOR BASIC TRAINING ISSUES**

#### **HOUSE TRAINING:**

Today's preferred method of house training is crate training. A crate used for house training should be just large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down in. Dogs typically won't soil in the same area that they sleep.

Training pads and papers are not recommended as this sends a mixed signal—it's okay to go to the bathroom in the house "sometimes". It is best to send a clear message.

Getting your dog on a schedule can be very helpful in house training as well. Bring them outside first thing in the morning, after each meal and before bedtime to relieve themselves (this should not be in place of their regular walks and outside exercise).

Keep a close eye on your dog/puppy in the house, if they start sniffing around looking for a place to void, take them outside. When they do go to the bathroom outside praise them excitedly and feed them a treat.

If they have an accident in the house, whoops! there is not much you can do about it after the fact. But, if you catch them in the act, you can make a loud noise to disrupt them and promptly bring him/her outside. Praise them as described above if they finish what they started inside, outside.

The umbilical method- this is a handy way to make sure your dog doesn't go out of sight to go the bathroom when you are not paying attention. Use their leash to attach them to your belt loop or keep them attached to your chair.

### **PUPPY BITING AND CHEWING:**

Teething puppies will be nippy, and

they will chew on various objects. Puppies play and wrestle with their mouths. While this is normal behavior, those sharp puppy teeth can be painful!

Some ways to deal with puppy biting—make a yelping noise if they nibble too hard. This is how puppies signal to each other that a bite is too rough; most puppies respond quite well and will remove their mouths when they hear it. Holding still—a moving target is more fun than one that doesn't respond. While this can be difficult to do, it is effective. If standing still is not an option, remove yourself from the room the puppy is in. They will learn that rough play makes their person

disappear. This is a way of using negative reinforcement to change the behavior.

An alternative is to remove the puppy. Just as young children sometimes get over tired and act up, puppies do as well, and sometimes guiding them quietly to their crates for a time out and a nap is the best course of action. Other options are redirecting the play, instead of wrestling, get a ball and play fetch, or give the dog an appropriate chew toy such as a frozen Kong or bully stick.

### **ADDITIONAL INFO FOR FOSTERS:**

It may be that you end up with a foster puppy who is in their crucial socialization window, or, you may be fostering an older dog who may not have had the best socialization when younger. Please let us know if you experience any behavioral issues with your foster. Here is some basic information you may find helpful.

### **SIGNS OF STRESS**

Many people are aware of some of the signs of stress in a dog, but there are many other more subtle signs that will help you communicate and train your new dog.

### **COMMONLY KNOWN SIGNS OF STRESS AND APPEASEMENT:**

- Tucked tail
- Cowering
- Shaking
- Growling

### **LESS COMMONLY KNOWN SIGNS OF STRESS AND APPEASEMENT:**

- Urine Marking
- Shedding
- Licking lips and/or nose
- Yawning when not tired
- Panting
- Pinned ears
- Refusal of food

### **AVOIDANCE BEHAVIORS:**

- Turning head away
- Looking away
- Excessive sniffing
- Inattention
- Licking genitals

### **WATCH OUT, YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR (OR ARE ABOUT TO)!:**

- Freezing
- Freezing in combination with "whale eye" when the dog looks at you out of the corner of its eye and you can see the whites of the eye.
- Growling in combination with freezing and/or whale eye.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

#### **TRAINING TIPS:**

[The Other End of the Leash](#)  
by Patricia McConnell

[Decoding Your Dog](#)  
by American College of Veterinary Behaviorists

Questions? E-mail [info@sweetpawsrescue.org](mailto:info@sweetpawsrescue.org)