



Guide to Fostering

Top Tips for Foster

- Check in regularly with your Foster Coordinator.
- Ask for advice if your dog has stopped eating.
- If your dog seems sick, check immediately for hydration – she should be drinking water, urinating, have elastic skin tone and a moist mouth.
- Wash your hands and change your shirt after handling sick animals to prevent spread of illness.
- Never let your dog run loose outside; guard against escapes.
- Don't leave your foster dog unattended with any resident animals.
- Feed your foster dog separately from other pets in your home.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long are dogs kept in foster homes?
 - a. It completely depends on the dog and the situation. Keep in mind with great photos and bios, dogs tend to get adopted much more quickly! Check in with your coordinator to talk about different methods or exposure.
2. Can I adopt my foster dog?
 - a. Yes, as long as foster parents meet the BBR requirements necessary for adoption, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster dog *as long as* it has been communicated to the Rescue within a reasonable amount of time. If conversations have already been made with other potential adopters, meet and greets have been scheduled, it may be too late.
3. How are foster dogs promoted?
 - a. Photos and bios of *adoptable* dogs in foster homes are posted on adoptapet.com. Some foster dogs may not be posted until vetting or behaviors have been assessed. Foster dogs are also promoted at special events throughout the year. Foster parents may participate in various events to increase the visibility of their foster dog to potential adopters. Foster parents can also help promote their foster dog to their family, friends, colleagues and the general public through a variety of means including flyers, emails, social media, like Facebook and Instagram, and even by walking your foster dog in local neighborhoods.
4. What is the process for someone interested in adopting my foster dog?
 - a. The steps are briefly outlined below:
 - i. Potential adopters that are identified by the foster parents should be shared with BBR representatives.
 - ii. If a potential applicant is interested in setting up an official meet and greet with a foster dog, an **Adoption Application must be submitted prior to the meet and greet**. This ensures that the applicant is approved by BBR prior to meeting.



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- iii. Foster parents can confer with BBR to provide their input on the “fit” of the adoption. Adoptions are always approved or rejected by BBR.
 - iv. Once approved by BBR, and if the meet and greet went well with all family members, potential adopters can then fill out the Adoption Contract and provide the associated Adoption Fee.
5. If I have personal pets can I still foster dogs?
- a. Yes! Keep in mind that it is always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals whether its walking at parks, vet waiting rooms or other common animal areas .The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain and health diet and lifestyle and are not elderly or very young.
6. What supplies are needed to foster?
- a. Foster parents are asked to provide their foster dog with shelter, food, basic training, exercise, socialization and love. BBR will provide you with certain supplies, upon request and approval, needed throughout your foster experience. BBR will provide vaccination and veterinarian visits for the foster.
7. Do I have to crate-train my foster dog?
- a. No, but it is one of the most efficient and effective ways to house train a dog. Some dogs do not like crates, and most dogs need to be trained to use a crate, so it is up to the foster parent to decide whether to crate or not. Putting the dog in the crate while you are gone will give you peace of mind knowing that they are in a safe place, away from harm, and not doing any damage to your belongings or themselves. For many dogs, a crate can also represent a safe and comfortable place to call their own and provides them with a sense of security. Dogs actually like having a “den” to cuddle in. Crating should NEVER be used as punishment.
8. What if my foster dog becomes sick?
- a. All veterinary costs are covered by Belles Buds Rescue. If a foster dog becomes sick, foster parents must call Belles Buds Rescue immediately. Please remember, you do not have the authority to bring a foster animal to a veterinarian of your choosing. These animals belong to BBR so it is imperative that we have our vets or our vet partners care for them. You will also NOT be reimbursed for a vet visit if you choose to take an animal in without consent or authorization from a BBR staff member.
9. How much time each day is needed for my foster animal?
- a. Commitment and responsibilities depend on the individual dog and situation. It’s essential that foster parents understand that Rescue Pets may be stressed and moving the dog to a new foster home is also very stressful and emotional. Foster parents must be willing to be patient and commit to the dog because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment.
10. How can I help my dog become more adoptable?
- a. There are various ways to make a foster dog more adoptable. First and foremost is marketing. If no one knows about your foster dog, or how wonderful they are, then it will be next to impossible to find them a forever home. In addition to supplying



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great photos and a bio and updating these regularly, giving a foster dog additional exposure by telling friends and family about them will help create a “network effect” and will speed up the process of finding their forever home. Dogs benefit greatly from exercise, basic training, special love and attention you give them! While marketing provides you with applicants, it is ALWAYS the dog that “closes the deal”. Providing a foster dog with basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy dogs will benefit from your patience, routine and slowly exposing them to new people will build their confidence. Rambunctious adolescents who learn good manners will help show off their trainability and long term potential!

11. Am I responsible for finding my foster dog its forever home?
 - a. No, but we do need your help! Once a qualified applicant is identified, you will be asked to schedule a meet and greet with your foster dog and the potential adopter. Your quick response and then final input on the adoption is critical to finding a great match! Many times a foster parent will find a perfect match through their own network of friends and family. We greatly welcomes these referrals! If you think you have found a perfect forever for your foster dog, remember they still must go through the application process and be approved by BBR.

Health and Wellness

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it’s up to you to observe your dog closely each day.

Notify BBR immediately if you see:

- Unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings
- Abnormal lumps
- Limping
- Difficulty getting up or down
- Loss of appetite
- Abnormal waste elimination
- Other abnormal behavior

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 2 cups of cooked rice mixed with bland, cooked chicken for a day or two, and then reintroduce dry kibble. Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. Notify BBR immediately if you suspect your foster is dehydrated. In an emergency, take your foster directly to vet, we do have BBR Approved vets in your area.

Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating or vomiting. Parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms and mange. Tapeworms will look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster dogs’ stool. Round worms and hookworms may be vomited, and roundworms look like



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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, notify BBR immediately. Please note that it is important for your personal dogs to be on regular vaccination, worming, and preventative (most heartworm preventative also includes other worming preventative). It is important to understand the risk you are enduring to your personal dogs by agreeing to foster a dog.

Fleas Most foster dogs have been treated, but additional flea treatments are available if needed. Dawn dishsoap can be used to safely help treat fleas if a puppy is too young for flea treatment. Puppies younger than 4 months should not be treated with toxic chemicals. Puppies over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs can be treated with topical flea treatment. Flea treatments contain insecticides that can cause nerve and liver damage, impair the immune system and even cause cancer. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least every two to three days. Good food, minimal stress, proper hygiene and TLC help keep the dog from getting fleas or an illness. To check for fleas, inspect your dog daily, including rear groin, belly, tail, neck and under the chin and head. 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. If your foster dog had fleas, watch his stools for short pieces of white rice that are tapeworms, which come from ingesting fleas. Tapeworms can cause diarrhea. If you see tapeworms, notify BBR, who can provide you with medication.

Injured foster dogs will have specific needs. They'll most likely be recovering from surgery and will come with veterinary orders. Generally fracture, cast or other surgery patients (including fosters going through Heartworm treatment) may need to be confined to a crate or a small room to limit mobility. This type of foster situation may require 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.

Kennel Cough Just like people who have colds, kennel cough develops when the dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised. Kennel cough usually goes away as soon as the dog has a warm, quiet and soothing place to sleep, 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. Because kennel cough is contagious, infected dogs should not be around other dogs until they're over their cough. If you have a dog at home and plan to foster a dog with kennel cough, we



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have found that if your own dog is healthy and has been vaccinated annually, then he will most likely not get sick. Talk to your vet about giving your own dog the Bordetella nasal vaccination. Make sure your foster dog has 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. Take short, leashed walks. If your dog's energy is good and the cough seems mild. If you don't see improvement of the cough or cold, notify BBR. 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. However bringing your foster dog into the bathroom while you're taking a shower can be beneficial as the steam can help loosen mucus. 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.

Parvo attacks the intestinal tract, white blood cells and heart muscle. 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. Notify BBR immediately if you believe your foster dog may have this illness. Please note, that if you have personal dogs that are older and have been vaccinated, your personal dog is not at risk.

Distemper is an extremely contagious and often fatal viral disease. It is an airborne infection that can be transmitted with or without direct contact with an infected dog through mucus, urine and feces. Symptoms include squinting, congestion of the eyes, pus from the eyes, weight loss, coughing, vomiting, nasal discharge and diarrhea. Contact BBR immediately if you suspect Distemper.

Behavioral/Training

Housetraining: Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they have recently encountered a lot of new changes. If there are smells in your house from another pet, some foster dogs may "mark" their territory. This action should be redirected immediately with a calm "Oops" – then escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer on the areas where the dog "marked" to insure he will not smell and mark that area again. 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 – it could be the backyard, side yard or an indoor spot such as a pee pad, litter system or one you have designed. Then take him there every time with a spoken command (such as "do your business"). Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. 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 "Oops," scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes. If he eliminates 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 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 fear.



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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 pup 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; they're 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 playrooms with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure.

Attention & Playtime: Gentle and calming human contact is important for dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of playtime periodically through the day. 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. Do not play tug of war or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw a 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 so that 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 it a reward.

Behavior Issues: 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 being dogs.” The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate outlets for these behaviors. 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 verbally scolding a dog when he is seeking attention or engaging the dog when he uses bad manners to get you to play.
- 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 his natural instincts and drives? We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, notify BBR– another foster home might be best for both you and the dog. Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, which will not address the cause of the behavior and in fact it may worsen behavior that's motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. People often believe their dog makes the connection to discipline because he runs



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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. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

Showcasing Your Foster

Write a Bio: A good bio makes a big difference in the number of calls the dog gets, so be descriptive! Try to include things like:

- What does the dog like to do? (play fetch, go for walks, etc.)
- Is he a cuddler?
- Does he have experience with other animals and children?

Of course, any cute things that he does or anything you want to point out about his fur or appearance is good as well. It can be as long as you want, but the typical description is a paragraph or two. If the dog has some bad habits, this can be discussed with BBR. The bio should generate interest, not turn people away. We don't want to mislead people; however we really try to focus on the positive. Please send the bio to BBR. We do have a private group on Facebook called Belles Buds Angels that is used for Fosters or other Volunteers. There are bio forms, event updates, etc you can utilize for your foster. Additionally, you can share information there about your foster dog.

Photos: Please take lots of pictures, the more pictures the better. A good picture is everything! Avoid taking pictures from bad angles, zoomed in, or blurry. It may take several attempts (use treats or toys as motivation).

Have fun and enjoy your foster dog! Treat him like family! Fosters are key to Belle's Buds success and we appreciate you for fostering our dog!