
DALLAS ANIMAL SERVICES

Foster Handbook and Guidelines

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2020

DALLAS ANIMAL SERVICES

Table of Contents

About Dallas Animal Services	2	Finding a Successful Match	15
Foster Program Policies and Procedures	2	What if I feel it's Not a Good Match?	15
Understanding Your Manual	2	Meet and Greets with Potential Adopters.....	15
Anti-Harassment Policy	2	Handing the Animal to the Adopter	16
Fostering Program Description.....	3	What if I'm Uncomfortable Speaking to Potential Adopters?	16
Housing Requirements.....	3	Common Medical Terms and Conditions.....	16
Legal Guardianship of Animals	3	Heartworm Disease	16
Health and Temperament	3	Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)	16
Conflicts of Interest.....	3	Fleas and Ticks.....	16
Adoption Prices and Receiving Payment.....	4	Roundworms, Tapeworms, and Hookworms	17
Suspected Mistreatment of a Foster Pet.....	4	Canine Distemper	17
Contacting the Foster Team.....	4	FeLV and FIV.....	17
Lost Foster Pet	4	Parvovirus.....	17
Stolen Foster	5	Panleukopenia	18
Deceased Foster Animal.....	5	Demodex Mange	18
Returns to the Facility	6	Ringworm	19
Getting Started as a Foster Parent	6	Coccidia and Giardia	19
Selecting a Foster Pet.....	6	Deciphering Your Foster Pet's Fecal Matter	19
Foster Pet Isolation	7	Common Behavioral Tips for Dogs	20
Pre-Treating Your Dwellings and Yard	7	Teaching Your Foster New Tricks.....	20
Prepping for First Day: Items and Expectations.....	7	Puppies and Socialization	20
Decompression Period	8	Mouthing/Play Biting.....	22
Important Medical Information.....	8	Chewing.....	22
Scheduling an appointment with the Medical Clinic	8	Jumping Up.....	22
Medical Emergency and Contact information.....	9	House Training.....	23
Mandatory Vaccinations and Preventatives	9	How to Leave your Foster Alone	24
Scheduling Spay and Neuter Surgery	9	Crate Training	24
Surgery Complications.....	9	Resource Guarding	25
Sick or Injured Foster Pets.....	9	On-leash Reactivity.....	25
In the Home with a Foster.....	10	Separation Anxiety	25
Feeding Guidelines.....	10	Dog to Dog Introductions	26
Dog Parks, Public Outings and Leash Etiquette	10	Dog to Cat Introductions	27
Walking Equipment.....	11	Basic Dog Body Language Infographic.....	29
Marketing Your Foster	12	Kids and Pets in the Foster Home.....	30
Photographs.....	12	Common Behavioral Tips for Cats	31
Videos.....	13	Cat to Cat Introductions	31
Getting Your Foster Adopted	13	Using/Not Using the Litterbox	31
Is My Foster Pet Ready for Adoption?	13	Managing Inappropriate Scratching	32
My Pet is Available for Adoption – Now What?	14	Is Declawing an Option?	33
Open Adoptions Policy at DAS.....	14	Basic Cat Body Language Infographic	34

About Dallas Animal Services

Hello, and welcome to the Fostering program with Dallas Animal Services!

Our mission at Dallas Animal Services (DAS) is to help Dallas be a safe, compassionate, and healthy community for people and animals. Our work in the community is guided by the following:

1. Public Safety
2. Compassion
3. No Shortcuts

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Understanding Your Manual

This handbook summarizes many of Dallas Animal Services' (DAS) policies and procedures, including the ones that you, as a Foster Parent, must follow. A Foster Parent's failure to comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook may result in a termination of the relationship between a Foster Parent and DAS. All DAS staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook. We are happy to provide further information or clarification on this Handbook if needed. Please note that DAS managers and their designees may modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If any changes are made, DAS will notify Foster Parent(s) as soon as possible.

Anti-Harassment Policy

DAS's anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintain a workplace that is free of harassment, so our employees and guests can feel safe and happy. DAS strives to create and maintain a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect.

In accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, DAS expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

DAS expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments, or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. DAS will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, or coerce an employee, co-worker, client, volunteer, or any person working for or on behalf of DAS.

Anyone engaged in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from the Foster Program with DAS. If a Foster Parent or other any other individual who is associated with the Foster Parent (i.e., babysitter or other adults in household, etc.) ("Foster Parent Affiliate") believes they are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the DAS staff contact with the Foster Team. DAS will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation of any DAS employees or volunteer(s) who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation by a Foster Parent may result in termination of the Foster Parent's Relationship with DAS. Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as

is practical. Following the investigation, the Foster Parent who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, because of the investigation, DAS determines that an employee of DAS, a Foster Parent, an Affiliate, or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, DAS will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment or release from the Foster Parent's relationship with DAS, or possible legal action.

Fostering Program Description

A foster home is a temporary living arrangement for animals in our Foster Program through placement with individuals, Foster Parents, in the community of Dallas. As a Foster Parent with DAS, you are a volunteer and part of a massive life-saving mission to help prevent animal homelessness and overpopulation. The animals in our Foster Program need a temporary place to recover from medical procedures, relax away from the stress of the shelter, grow large enough to enter our adoption program, wait their turn to be transported to a shelter in another area, or mature as a pet. We see you as a part of our team and with that we have expectations that must be met to ensure a positive fostering process.

Housing Requirements

When fostering a pet for DAS, you are expected to provide a secure and caring housing environment. Cats and kittens must always be housed indoors while in the foster program, unless specific arrangements have been made with the Foster Team. Puppies under 6 months of age should not go to outside public areas until they have received at least 2 rounds of booster vaccinations.

Under Dallas City Code [Article III, Section 7-3.1](#), it is against the law for an animal to be unrestrained in the City of Dallas. All dogs should be on leash when outside or inside your secure, fenced yard. They should not be housed outside in your yard when you are not home. Adult foster dogs should not be given free access to a 'doggie door' or any other access door to the outside when you are not at home. DAS will lend you a kennel to house your foster pet indoors when you are away from the home.

Legal Guardianship of Animals

All animals in the foster program are the legal property of DAS until the adoption paperwork has been processed, foster team has sent approval of paperwork received, and the animal has been altered. If adoption paperwork has been received, but the animal has not been spayed or neutered, this animal will still be the property of DAS.

Health and Temperament

DAS does not guarantee any health or temperament of an animal entering your care. By taking an animal into your home, you are acknowledging that you will accept the risk of taking an animal home with unknown or limited history. All medical and behavioral information will be divulged at the time of pick up. It is the responsibility of the Foster Parent to ensure they are following the proper protocols for keeping their foster pet and family safe.

Conflicts of Interest

As a supporter of and volunteer for DAS, a Foster Parent should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, interfere with timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, discredit DAS, or conflict/appear to conflict with DAS' best interest. The success of DAS rests on its reputation and the goodwill of the community. Unless expressly authorized, no outside

activity should involve the use of DAS assets, funds, materials, facilities, or time or services of other DAS affiliates. Violations of this policy may result in release from the Foster Parent's relationship with DAS. If a Foster Parent is asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of DAS, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please reach out to a DAS Foster Team member.

Adoption Prices and Receiving Payment

All adoption fees are waived for foster pets unless otherwise noted. If an animal has been identified as having an adoption fee associated with them, the adoption process will need to be carried out at the main facility. Payment must be given directly to a DAS employee. A Foster Parent shall never collect money on behalf of DAS or solicit money from potential adopters for any reason.

Suspected Mistreatment of a Foster Pet

If there is suspected mistreatment of a foster pet, DAS will take appropriate measures to investigate. If you are found to have mistreated an animal, either as a Foster Parent or before joining the program, you will be immediately suspended while we investigate and possibly terminated from our Foster Program. A Foster Team member will contact you if there are any concerns.

Contacting the Foster Team

We understand that having a new foster pet can raise a lot of questions. We want to be able to assist you with anything that might occur. We ask that you follow the appropriate channels to ensure that your questions are being answered in a timely manner. The best way to contact the Foster Team is through email at DASFoster@dallascityhall.com. We ask that you use email for any non-emergency questions. This could include medical questions that are not life-threatening, questions that pertain to behavior, placement/offsite opportunities, adoption, or any other foster pet related questions that you do not see the answer to in the manual.

We will reply to non-emergency emails as quickly as possible, but we cannot guarantee that it will be immediate. Feel free to reach out again if you do not hear from us within 72 hours. Our office line is best used for time sensitive or urgent phone calls. After hours, this number can also direct you to who to contact in case of an emergency.

Foster Program Phone Line 214-671-1928

If you have a question pertaining to your foster kittens, you can reach out to our team of Foster Mentors. This is a team of Fosters and Volunteers that have firsthand experience fostering through DAS and can provide advice and counseling about how best to handle specific situations with foster kittens. They can be reached at DASKittenmentors@gmail.com.

Lost Foster Pet

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your foster pet may escape from you or your home. If this should happen, please email the DAS Foster Team immediately with the following information:

- The animal's A# (EX: A1234567) and Name (this can be found on your foster pet's paperwork or emails)
- Last known location
- Date and time of escape
- What the situation was when escape occurred (opening the front door, walking the foster pet, etc.)

In addition, we ask that the Foster Parent report the animal as lost through the www.petharbor.com.

- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for DOGS
- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for CATS
- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for other animals.

We suggest that you put up fliers around your neighborhood and place ads on local lost and found websites, Facebook pages (including your personal page and the DAS Volunteer and Foster page), NextDoor and Craigslist. [Here is more information about how to do this.](#)

Should the animal be picked up by an Animal Services Officer of DAS, the Foster Team will be notified and will contact you immediately. The Foster Team can request that an officer be sent out to survey the area if the animal was lost in the city of Dallas. Always keep the Foster Team informed with any updates by phone or email.

Stolen Foster

If you believe a foster pet is stolen while in your custody, please contact the Foster Team immediately. We also ask that you call 911 and create a police report to give any information that you might know about the situation. In addition, follow the same steps that are outlined above in the [Lost Foster](#) section.

DAS will also consider an animal stolen if we have been unable to contact you, the Foster Parent, and the animal has not yet been spayed or neutered. The Foster Team will send out communication during the fostering process periodically. If at any point during this period we believe you as the Foster Parent have become unresponsive, we will make every attempt to reach you. If at 60 days in the foster home we have been unsuccessful in making contact, DAS staff will proceed by releasing the animal as missing or stolen in the DAS Database. This could prohibit you from being able to foster or potentially adopt from DAS in the future.

Deceased Foster Animal

It is never easy to lose an animal and it affects each of us differently and personally. As a Foster Parent, it is important not to blame yourself for any loss that may occur. Please understand that sometimes we are operating against unknown illnesses or, especially in the case of neonatal animals, fragile populations. Due to this, we understand that accidents or a decline in health can occur. Remember that everything you do for these animals is in the efforts to create a positive outcome and to save a life. The Foster Team at DAS is always here to assist you in case an animal in your care passes.

If an Animal Passes in Foster:

1. Make sure the animal has passed. In some cases, especially with neonates, a very cold, hypoglycemic kitten/puppy can appear to be deceased but may not be
 - a. If the animal has not passed, please see the [fading puppy/kitten protocol](#)
2. Contact the Foster Team immediately either through phone or email. The Team will direct you as to how to return your deceased pet to us
3. Wrap the animal in a cloth and place it inside of a zip lock bag or a bag that is size appropriate
4. With a Sharpie, write the animal's name and A# on the outside of the bag. This is very important as all deceased animals must be accurately reported in DAS records
5. After you have gotten in contact with a DAS Foster Team member and you have placed the remains in

- an appropriate bag with identification, they will direct you as how to best bring the pet back to us
6. If you are not immediately able to bring the animal to DAS, or it is overnight, the animal may be stored in its appropriately sized bag in a freezer until you are able to do so

Should you wish to cremate your Foster Pet, communicate this to the DAS Team. While we cannot offer that service at our facility, we do understand if you wish to seek this option privately.

Returns to the Facility

There are multiple reasons why your Foster Pet will need to return to DAS. If you need to return your foster pet and it is not a critical emergency, we ask that you schedule an appointment at www.das.as.me/fostersurrender. If you are bringing your pet back to the shelter for adoption, you may also use this link.

If you are having an emergency and need to return your foster pet immediately, you can contact the foster office. If you reside inside of the City of Dallas, you may also contact 311.

If you are attempting to schedule your animal for a medical appointment or heartworm treatment, please see our [Medical Appointment Section](#) for more details.

EAC Drop-offs

The Everyday Adoption Center (EAC) is DAS's satellite location in the PetSmart located at the intersection of Coit and Campbell in North Dallas and it is another alternative to bringing your animal directly to the shelter. Discuss this option with the Foster Team if you are interested.

Getting Started as a Foster Parent

Commitments as a Foster Parent range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose an option that fits your lifestyle. All information for becoming a new Foster Parent is located on our website, www.dallasanimalservices.org. The first step to becoming a Foster Parent begins with creating an account with a communication platform called Better Impact. From there, you'll find valuable information that guides you as to the best ways of communicating with the Foster Team, as well as important guides to connect you to our Facebook Page, and other informational platforms.

Selecting a Foster Pet

While most pets located at DAS are eligible for fostering opportunities, we look to our Foster Parents to assist us with those who need fostering the most. The pets that we believe need you the most include:

- Nursing mom and babies
- Orphaned underage and neonatal pets who are too young to be adopted
- Pets identified as needing additional medical support
- Shy or nervous pets that need a home to decompress
- Medium to large adult dogs

DAS will post the pets most in need of foster homes on our Trello board, found here:

<https://trello.com/b/GwUQuLEL/dallas-animal-services>. This board is updated daily with pets that are in need.

If a pet catches your eye (or you're just interested in more information about one) you can schedule an appointment to talk with one of our Foster Team members at www.das.as.me/fosterapet. Our Foster Team will

be more than happy to provide you the information you require to make a final decision regarding if this is the right pet for you.

If you do not find a match right away, you can still either make an appointment at the above link, or keep an eye out on our Trello board for a pet that matches your needs!

Foster Pet Isolation

When you take a foster pet from DAS, we recommend that you keep them separated from your personal pets for at least 72 hours. This is recommended for the safety and protection of your personal pets. **We can give no guarantees about the health and behavior of a pet coming from our facility into your home.** Pets are fully vetted upon intake when arriving to DAS, but it is always a good idea to be on the safe side when it comes to your personal pets. Please note that some diseases will not always appear within the first 24-48 hours of arrival to the shelter, or your home, and can incubate in the body for longer than that time frame. An enclosed area or separate room with no carpet will often work best for your foster pet during the isolation period (such as your laundry room or an unoccupied bathroom).

Pre-Treating Your Dwellings and Yard

Texas is home to several very common viruses carried by wildlife and domestic pets that are found on most ground surfaces in our backyards. The warm climate, minimal freezes, and rainy springtime can allow highly contagious illnesses, such as [as Parvovirus and Distemper](#), to have longer gestation times outdoors than other states. Even if your backyard is fully fenced, wildlife can spread viruses through possible contaminants in your yard.

You can pre-treat hard surfaces, such as your patio or deck, with a bleach to water mixture of 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach) on any surface. With this pre-treatment, you should be able to safely let underage puppies out onto these locations. **Puppies under 6 months of age should not go out onto the grass or dirt that you cannot pre-treat until they have had 2 rounds of booster vaccinations.** Adult dogs that have been vaccinated are much less susceptible to contract these viruses and, in most cases, can go out into your fully contained yard onto the grass or dirt without the need for pre-treatment. We do always recommend pre-treating your dwellings if you are unsure of the tenant history.

Prepping for First Day: Items and Expectations

Here is a good list of items for you to have the first time you ever bring home a new foster pet:

BASICS ITEMS

- Species appropriate food (Look for brands with ingredients that you recognize)
- Pet stain and odor remover with enzyme destroyers
- Grooming brushes
- Water and food bowls
- Bedding, blankets, and towels
- Crate, carrier and/or baby gate

FUN AND GAMES

- Food dispensing toys
- Toys to relieve boredom
- Training treats to learn new things!

DOGS SPECIFIC ITEMS

- 4-6 ft leash for walking
- Poop bags
- Long-lasting durable chews

- Shampoo/conditioner
- 10-16ft leash for unsecured yards

CAT SPECIFIC ITEMS

- Litter box and scooper
- Litter (non-clumping)
- Scratching posts of different varieties

Despite your experience level, we recommend checking out our section on reading [body language](#) before taking a pet into your home.

Decompression Period

Remember that this is more than likely a confusing time for your new foster pet. They have just left the chaotic environment of the shelter and are bound to be feeling a little overwhelmed. It can be tempting to bring them with you to shop or visit friends or go out to eat, but your foster pet should go straight to your home and be allowed to settle in before taking them anywhere. It can take days to several months for an animal to become comfortable in your home and with your routine. Be patient and allow for them to have some time to decompress.

You should plan to create a quiet space for your foster pet with [a crate setup](#) that is “den like” or give them a room like an unoccupied bathroom. If the foster pet you bring home appears stressed out or shut down, allow them to have a space that is entirely their own. Allow your foster pet to relax before immediately subjecting them to social situations.

For dogs, when you first arrive home, walk them around outside on their leash to allow for a chance to go to the bathroom. Keeping them on leash at first can be helpful, especially when entering a new environment with so many smells and potentially scary new sounds. A leash will keep them from running away from you or chasing objects that could be potentially harmful. Once you’re inside the house, it might take a bit of time for your new foster pet to relax. The more you can relax into a routine, the more your foster pet will, too.

For cats, starting with a small space can make them feel much more comfortable about their new dwellings. Often, they will want a place to hide and make sure the environment is safe to move in. Allow them to have a space that belongs to them without intrusion from other pets. As they begin to get more comfortable, you can allow them to have more free roaming time.

Please also note that all animals are individuals; they all have different adjustment and decompression periods.

Important Medical Information

DAS can make no guarantees about the health of an animal entering your home. During pick up, a Foster Team member will review your foster pet’s medical notes and do a quick visual observation for any obvious signs of illness or injury. You will also be given a copy of the most current medical records of the foster pet, as well as any medication that they might be on. Please speak to a Foster Team member directly with any questions regarding your foster pet’s medical history.

Scheduling an appointment with the Medical Clinic

All Foster and Medical operations have been moved to an appointment-based system for Foster Parents and pets. All requests for a medical appointment can be made here: <https://das.as.me/medical>.

If you feel your foster pet is having an emergency, please contact the Foster Team directly at 214- 671-1762.

Medical Emergency and Contact information

Currently, our medical staff is limited to business hours. If you are able to wait until we are open, we can immediately address your concerns. If you are having an emergency and need DAS to take your foster pet back immediately, you can contact our main line at 214-671-1762. This will direct you to our dispatch line. If you live within the City of Dallas, an officer will be able to come pick up your pets. If you do not live in the City of Dallas, please discuss your options with the DAS Dispatcher.

If your Foster Pet is having an emergency and you would like to take the pet to an emergency clinic, this is also an option to do so at your own expense. An emergency can be described as:

- Trauma –sustaining a severe injury or suspected poisoning or burn
- Difficulty breathing –struggling for breath, gasping, or shallow breathing
- Seizures
- Deep cuts and gashes that will not stop bleeding with pressure
- Extreme lethargy and foster pet is unable to waken or move
- Extreme instability or falling over
- Liquid diarrhea with blood and vomiting
- Rectal temperature 104.5 or above. (If not after a period of high activity.)

Mandatory Vaccinations and Preventatives

(Please see the Neonatal Guide for information about your Foster Pet under 8 weeks of age.)

All animals are given the following when they enter the facility:

- Microchip – Given at Intake and registered to DAS until adoption has been processed
- Rabies Vaccine – will receive if the animal is over three months
- Dewormer
- Species appropriate flea/tick prevention

All dogs will receive:

Heartworm Test – if over six months

Heartworm Prevention

DA2PP Vaccine – given every three weeks until the pet is over four months OR two vaccinations have occurred

All cats will receive:

FeLV Test - if over six months

FVRCP Vaccine – given every three weeks until the pet is over four months old OR two vaccines have occurred

Scheduling Spay and Neuter Surgery

If you have a foster pet that is over 8 weeks of age and 2 lbs., a surgery will be scheduled before the pet is picked up.

If you are fostering a neonatal pet, an appointment must be made before the pet is able to be adopted. All spay and neuter surgeries must occur at DAS. You can schedule a surgery at www.das.as.me/spayneuter.

Surgery Complications

Complications can sometimes arise with your foster spay/neuter surgery. If you notice an issue with your foster pet after surgery, email pictures to the Foster Team at DASFoster@dallascityhall.com and make a medical appointment at <https://das.as.me/medcal>.

Sick or Injured Foster Pets

The symptoms listed below are not always indicative of an issue, but you should schedule a medical appointment if you notice any of the following:

Ears

- Dark, flaky debris, especially in cats
- Dark, waxy discharge accompanied by yeasty smell
- Painful when rubbed or cleaned
- Consistent scratching at ear

Nose

- Yellow, green or heavy oozing discharge
- Excessive sneezing with discharge

Eyes

- Yellow or green discharge
- Uneven pupils
- Swollen or bloodshot eyes, including 3rd eyelid

Stomach (Internal)

- Loss of appetite past two meals

- Multiple Vomiting episodes – either heavy gagging with bile or phlegm

Mouth

- Trouble eating or chewing
- Pale gums
- Ulcers or lacerations on gums or lips

Fecal/Urination Issues

- No bowel movement for more than 48 hours
- No urination for more than 24 hours, especially in male cats

Gait

- Sudden lameness that does not improve with rest within a day
- Animal exhibits pain or stiffness upon walking or handling

In the Home with a Foster

Feeding Guidelines

Be sure to have the appropriate food for the arrival of your foster pet. The best types of food and treats are **not** the most expensive but have ingredients that you recognize and are free of dyes, parabens, and fillers (ex. Corn). You should never give your foster pet food intended for people, nor should you feed them scraps off your plate. Certain types of human food can be toxic to animals and cause symptoms from allergic reactions, lethargy, organ failure, and even death.



Dog Parks, Public Outings and Leash Etiquette

There is a saying that “a tired dog is a good dog” and that is actually very true! Dogs are like humans in that they’re happy when their physical and mental state is healthy. Giving a dog mental and physical exercise sets them up for success and understanding a dog’s age, temperament, energy level and overall health will help you in creating a satisfied pooch. When you bring home an animal that has an immeasurable amount of energy, take advantage of it! Taking a dog for a walk (or a run) not only exercises and tires them out, it creates a bonding experience for you and the animal.

Knowing the how to act in the public setting will set you and your foster pet up for success. We encourage you to exercise your foster pet, but we want you to be smart and considerate of others while you do. As the Foster Parent,

you are always required to keep your foster dog on a leash in any public area. Foster dogs are not allowed to go to off-leash dog parks. As fun as dog parks may seem, they can be a very high stress environment for any animal. When you are in public with your foster dog, understand the pet's limitations and be able to recognize the signs of what makes the animal uncomfortable. See this [infographic](#) for more information on reading body language. **Along those lines, it is incredibly inappropriate to allow a foster dog to run up on other animals, even while on the leash.** Not only does this set up a meeting for failure, as outlined in the dog to dog meet and greet sections, but it might not be a welcome greeting by the other animal. Retractable leashes should not be used as they do not hold enough control if your animal becomes frightened or over-aroused.

Remember that you are your foster pet's ambassador and showcasing your foster pet is very important in finding their new home! Allowing your foster pet to be a rude and intrusive dog does not show off their best qualities, nor does it help them find a home. If you are struggling to have a nice outing with your foster, we recommend checking out the walking equipment and [Common Behavioral Tips](#) section to see if this alleviates behavioral concerns.

Walking Equipment

Whether you are struggling with a dog who pulls, barks, or tries to flee, having the appropriate walking equipment can make your outings go from annoying to enjoyable.

Front Clip Harness

Front-clip harnesses have the leash attachment in the center of the dog's chest. Trainers often choose front-clip harnesses to lessen the dog's pulling on the leash. The chest clip gives the owner control over the direction the dog is moving and allows for the dog to be redirected to face the owner if needed. Common types of front-clip harness include the Freedom Harness, the Sensation Harness, or the Positively Harness. When being used, **always clip the harness to the collar**, as shown in this photo. This eliminates any possibility of your dog slipping out of the front of the harness.



Gentle Leader/Head Harness

The Gentle Leader harness sits high on dog's neck without putting pressure on the throat. The Gentle Leader headcollar fits securely over your dog's nose. The nose loop redirects their head towards you when the dog pulls forward, preventing pulling and giving you full attention. If your dog is barking or lunging at objects on leash, this is typically the best tool to use to prevent continued bad behavior. See this section on [On-Leash Reactivity](#). Most commonly, people look at this equipment and think the animal is wearing a muzzle, but this is not the case at all! The dog still had full control of their mouth to pant, drink water, and play with toys. Common types of Gentle Leader are the Halti and Pet Safe Gentle Leader harnesses.

Martingale Collar



Martingale collars, also called no-slip or limited-slip collars, are a type of dog collar that provides more control than a typical flat collar and prevent dogs from backing or slipping out. These collars were originally designed for dogs with thick necks and narrow heads, such as a Greyhound or Whippet. However, martingale collars are getting more popular due to the extra amount of control they provide for all types of animals. Fearful or extra rambunctious

dogs benefit from the design of a martingale collar, due to the inability (when properly fitted) to slip out of the typical buckle style collar.

The collar works by constricting when the dog pulls on the leash. Tension on the leash causes the smaller loop to tighten, which in turn pulls the larger loop tighter—but not too tight. Martingale collars are adjustable and should not



tighten past the width of the dog's neck. They offer comfortable security without harming your dog.

Marketing Your Foster

When your Foster Pet is 8 weeks old, pending any medical or behavioral concerns, they will begin to show as available for adoption on our DAS website. Even though they are visible, Foster Parents are strongly encouraged to let others know that their foster pet is available for adoption using resources such as friends, family, work colleagues and social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, and NextDoor. We also recommend posting on other platforms, such as Craigslist. Have fun and be creative!

If you're struggling with receiving interest about your foster pet, double check that they have an update photo that shows off their personality, and a biography that tells a bit more about them. DAS can also assist you market your foster pet! All updated photos and videos of your foster pet should be sent to DASpio@dallascityhall.com. Here are some additional tips for marketing your foster pet:

Photographs

A good photo is Bright. Clear. Happy.

Photographs can be the key to your foster pet's adoption. Getting photos that are well-lit, in focus and that give the viewer a window into a pet's personality can be tricky, but we have some ideas that can make this much easier for you.

Always Have Your Camera Handy

Without a camera handy, you may not be able to capture those intimate moments that will help your pet make an emotional connection, like when your foster cat is finally comfortable enough to rest their head in your lap, or when your own dog and your foster dog curl up together on the couch. Here are some examples:



Take Photos with People and/or Other Animals

Photographs taken with people and/or other animals are great because they not only feature the pet, they give information as well. A photo of two dogs together looking happy tells potential adopters, "This dog is good with (at least some) other dogs." A photo of a cat and a small child implies that the cat is safe with children. Keep this in mind when creating marketing material for your foster pet.

Take Photos of Dogs Outdoors

Studies have shown that photographs of dogs taken outside can help dogs get adopted more quickly. Outside, the options for nice-looking backgrounds are unlimited, and dogs' stress levels may be lower, enabling you to get better photos.

Take Multiple Photos

One foster explains, "I am an awful photographer. This is easily combated by taking one million rapid fire photos at once. Odds are you'll snap something to work with." Whether you're an ace photographer or not, taking multiple photos increases the chances of coming up with something good!





Make Sure the Pet Is Looking into the Camera

The eyes are the window to the soul, so it follows that eye contact is helpful in establishing an emotional connection, even if it's just from a photograph.

Use Photos to Showcase Personality

We want potential adopters to get a feel for our foster pets' personalities, so use photos in a way that does just that. Take photos that capture an aspect of a pet's personality. When viewed together, one gets a more accurate picture of who they are.

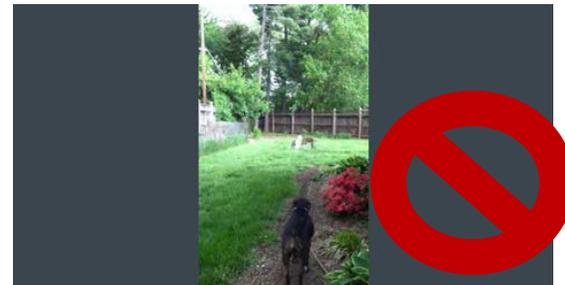


Videos

Great videos can give the best idea of who your foster is. Videos have the power to make a connection before an official meet-and-greet happens. The following are a few tips for making great videos.

Hold the Camera Horizontally (unless you're doing Facebook live)

Holding the camera vertically creates wide black lines on either side of the video.



Make Your Video 30 Seconds or Less

Attention spans are short, so make sure your video is fast-paced and succinct.

Getting Your Foster Adopted

Is My Foster Pet Ready for Adoption?

Our Foster Program is instrumental in providing lifesaving opportunities for pets that may be at risk of euthanasia. Did you know the DAS main facility can receive up to a hundred pets in a *single day*? Like all our programs, our Foster Program is geared towards saving as many lives as possible – while also focusing on transparency and building trust in the community. Due to this, DAS does not place a waiting period on pets eligible for adoption outside of the local ordinances for a pet undergoing stray hold. When pets are determined to be adoptable, they can be adopted by members of the public. In addition, DAS does not automatically withhold a pet's visibility when first transitioning into a foster's home.

Foster pets will begin to show on the DAS website when they are

- Determined to be medically and/or behaviorally sound
- At least 8 weeks of age

My Pet is Available for Adoption – Now What?

When a Foster Pet is on the DAS Website you will begin to receive inquiries through your email address, so it is important to ensure that your contact information is up to date. Your information is not provided at the time of an inquiry but is privately connected (Bcc'd) on an email that goes directly to the potential adopter.

After you have received an inquiry, we set expectations that you should respond to potential adopters within 72 hours. On our end, we may be privately reaching out to you after those 72 hours have passed to ensure that you received the inquiry and are comfortable reaching out if questions come up.

We have a wonderful video that can help guide you through this process! Please view here:

<https://youtu.be/iXmR0ms1bFQ>

Until the Foster Team has received the name of the foster pet's potential adopter and the spay/neuter appointment is scheduled, your foster pet will remain active on the website. You will continue to receive inquiries that will need to be responded to within 24- 72 hours until we receive an adopter for approval. Failure to respond to inquiries could affect your ability to foster with DAS.

Open Adoptions Policy at DAS

As you have inquiries that come in about your Foster Pet, it is important to remember that DAS, and our Foster Parent(s) by extension, follow a model based on "Open Adoptions." For DAS, this means removing barriers to adoption and creating a welcoming and non-judgmental experience for the members of our community looking to adopt. It starts by celebrating people's willingness to adopt and meeting them where they are in terms of their attitudes and understanding of pet care and investing in their success. In short, this adoption model is based on the knowledge that most pet relationships can be successful, and our goal is to provide counseling and support to make it so.

The "Open Adoption" style was created after national research showed that individuals who were denied adoptions at their local shelter got pets from breeders, pet stores, and free listings; in doing so, they received no information on responsible pet ownership and the pets were typically not spayed/neutered or vaccinated.

In short, by rejecting these adopters, shelters were feeding the cycle of homelessness. Open adoption policies recognize that in order to solve the pet overpopulation crisis, we must create a culture of responsible pet ownership and that is only achieved through providing the information needed for an adopter to be successful. Instead of placing hurdles to adoption, we focus on matching adopters with a pet that is a good fit and providing each adopter with the specific information and resources they need to be the best pet owner they can be. Every adopter must present a valid ID, speak to an adoption counselor, and fill out an adoption questionnaire, but our counseling process is conversation-based and is customized to the needs of each individual or family; we look for ways to say yes and build connections rather than to put up barriers.

Open adoption policies are supported by national organizations, including the Humane Society of the United States, ASPCA, and Maddie's Fund. Here are some links for more information on Open Adoptions:

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/animalia/wp/2018/02/02/millions-of-dogs-need-homes-why-is-it-sometimes-hard-to-adopt-one/>

- <https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/resources/support-for-open-adoptions>
- <https://bestfriends.org/blogs/2017/07/05/to-adopt-or-not-a-new-best-friends-survey-sheds-light-on-pet-adoptions>
- <https://www.today.com/pets/aspca-adoption-euthanasia-s-down-animal-shelters-t109029>

Finding a Successful Match

You could receive multiple inquiries a day about your Foster Pet. We find that having a template that you can copy and paste might be the easiest way to communicate when your inquiries seem endless. Here is an example of a template that we've seen used. You can edit, add, or remove as needed:

“Hi there! Thank you so much for your interest in adopting this pet. I've had them in my home for about 2 weeks and have gotten to know them pretty well!

In my home, they started off shy, but they are warming up. I have two other dogs and one cat. It took some slow introductions to get them to be okay with the cat, but they are able to co-exist well. Do you have any pets in your house? I'd be happy to walk you through how we did introductions if you're interested.

With us, this foster is a fun dog! He loves to show off his toys, and even seeks us out for petting now. Even though he can still be a bit frightened by loud noises, we're working on scary things = treats. He's come a long way.

Can you tell me a bit about the type of pet you're looking for, or what drew you to this pet? I'd be more than happy to give you tips on how we integrated this pup into the home, and some of the work we're doing to make sure he doesn't get too overwhelmed. Let me know if you have any questions, and I'd be happy to help answer them as best as I can!”

What if I feel it's Not a Good Match?

First, it's important to stop and take a look at why we might be feeling that this match isn't a good fit. Often, we hear the term, “gut feeling” regarding why an individual isn't the person that you believe should adopt a particular pet. While this isn't to say completely disregard any concerns, the reality is that our “gut instinct” can be a funny thing. That little ball of doubt clenched right below your bellybutton might not necessarily be telling you something rational, but more something that is unchecked or even an *unintentionally biased*. Here are some things to ask yourself if you find you're uncomfortable over a decision:

- Did this person already return a pet, and you believe they are being irresponsible?
- Does the worry you have about this adopter stem from their home location or description?
- Are you worried that this person is too young or too elderly to be able to properly care for this pet?
- Do you feel like this person is unable to afford the care or supplies needed for a pet?

We encourage you to bring your concerns to the Foster Team. However, we do require all, from staff to volunteers, to practice objectivity and refrain from negative assumptions based on internal bias for what the “ideal home” may look like. We know this is a tough road to navigate, so by speaking to the Foster Team, we can assist you in the communication to a potential adopter or on how best to approach a situation.

Meet and Greets with Potential Adopters

If you decide to move forward with a meet and greet, it's best to do this where the pet is most comfortable. With concerns regarding COVID-19, we encourage utilizing social distancing while introducing your foster pet. Here are some suggestions that you could utilize to help introduce your pet to potential adopters:

- Phone calls and emails with stories or photos about the pet
- Video conferencing using free platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams

- Extra-long or multiple leashes that can allow your foster pet to greet a potential adopter while remaining six feet apart
- Using a fenced yard or enclosed area without other pets present

If there are children involved, we recommend doing **slow, controlled introductions** for children that join meet and greets, even if your foster pet has been around children before. Please also see the infographic on [how children should meet animals](#). This will help gauge how the foster pet will react to children and children to your foster pet. If the potential adopter has another dog and would like to introduce them together, please ensure that you are following appropriate guidelines set by the [dog to dog introduction](#) section. We never recommend a cat meeting but encourage the adopter to follow the [cat to dog guidelines for meeting each other](#) should they decide to adopt.

Handing the Animal to the Adopter

Until the animal has been fully processed in the DAS system, meaning the adopter has signed all paperwork and the animal has been spayed or neutered, the animal is still the property of DAS. This means that the animal cannot go to the adopter's household. Once paperwork has been processed, a Foster Parent can either bring the animal to DAS or meet the adopter at another location to transfer ownership. Remember, if you do not get the approval from the DAS Foster Team or DAS Adoption Team, the animal is not eligible to leave the foster home. Once your paperwork has been processed, we will send you an email to confirm that you are able to proceed with a hand off of your foster pet to their new adopter.

What if I'm Uncomfortable Speaking to Potential Adopters?

If you would rather not speak to potential adopters, we still have fostering opportunities for you! Discuss your options with the Foster Team.

Common Medical Terms and Conditions

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets transmitted from a single mosquito. It can easily be prevented by providing a monthly preventative, which all heartworm negative animals are given at the time of intake. If you are fostering an animal with heartworms, DAS may be able to treat the animal in a foster home. [Contact the Foster Team](#) for more information.

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

The term "upper respiratory infection" is used to refer to any illness that affects an animal's upper respiratory system; it is basically a cold. URI's are common in shelter animals that can cause symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes, fever and loss of appetite. The symptoms of this virus are typically treated with antibiotics. Be certain to keep animals warm until they have recovered from a URI.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are bloodsucking parasites that are easily treated with a monthly preventative. On a mature animal, fleas are not particularly serious, but young animals do not have that much blood and they are virtually defenseless if they get fleas. Flea treatments that are meant for older cats or dogs can kill a kitten/puppy, so if you find fleas or flea dirt on kittens or puppies of any age, we'll need to get them off! Since most flea treatments are too strong, we give warm dawn baths: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcDqHFAf0aU>.

Ticks are also bloodsucking parasites that can cause Lyme disease, anemia, and death in severe cases. DAS will give all animals, age permitting, in our care ongoing prevention starting at intake for ticks. As long as you continue to keep your foster pet on schedule for their prevention, any tick that latches on to your foster pet should die quickly.

However, should you need to remove a tick, please see the following video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZ6_zWmzeMg.

Roundworms, Tapeworms, and Hookworms

Intestinal parasites affect a digestive system and are very common. You can sometimes see these “worms” in or around an animal’s rectum; you may see a long worm or what looks like rice protruding from its anus. Indications of worms are a large belly, diarrhea, and an inability to gain weight even when eating well. If you see signs of worms, please schedule an appointment here: <https://das.as.me/medical>. There are various medications given to the animal, depending on the type of worm, that easily take care of the problem. Worms can sometimes be passed through the feces to other animals.

Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is a virus that primarily affects dogs; however, it can also affect ferrets and some species of wild animals (racoons, wolves, foxes, and skunks). It is NOT contagious to humans, nor to domestic cats. Distemper can be spread by humans via secondary surfaces like shoes or clothes. Removing feces from the yard and not leaving water bowls out at night will help eliminate accidental spread from wildlife.

Distemper is spread to unvaccinated dogs just like the common cold, through contact with secretions. **Unvaccinated** dogs can also get Distemper through sharing water bowls, touching noses, or being in the same place at the same time as dogs with Distemper.

Fortunately, Distemper does not live very long in the environment. The virus dies very quickly - within minutes - as soon as it dries. It lives longer if it has a host or is in water or on wet surfaces, such as in food bowls or on water-soaked toys. However, the incubation period for Distemper can last anywhere from two weeks to several months. The Distemper vaccine (DAPP/DHLPP) is VERY effective! DAS does vaccinate animals at intake, but it is necessary for the animal to have received two vaccines before contraction to be considered a fully successful vaccine.

If your resident dog(s) are healthy and current on their vaccinations, they should not contract Distemper. If you take home a dog who is Distemper exposed, on Distemper watch, or has Distemper, your personal dog(s) and any dog(s) that may come in contact (even through a fence) with your foster dog *must* be fully vaccinated.

FeLV and FIV

FeLV is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, as well as through urine, feces, and milk from infected cats. The virus can also be transferred through a bite wound, mutual grooming, shared use of litter boxes and feeding dishes, sexual contact, and from a mother cat to her kittens while in utero or during birth. FeLV does not survive long outside of the cat’s body, less than a few hours, so carefully adhering to established protocols limits the possibility of transmission.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that can cause a multitude of health problems in cats due to reduced immune system function; it is also known as feline AIDS. Most cats with FIV live a normal life despite the virus and can live well with other cats as long as there is no aggressive fighting. Transmission occurs most commonly through deep bite wounds; less commonly, it is transmitted by an infected mother cat during birth or through sexual contact. FeLV+ and FIV+ kittens and cats are adoptable.

Parvovirus

Parvo is a highly contagious and life-threatening virus that infects the cells in the dog’s body, most severely in the intestinal tract. The virus is highly resistant and can survive in the ground for up to **nine months** in the right conditions.

The most at risk of contracting parvo are any unvaccinated dog, and/or young puppies under four months old who have not had their full round of booster vaccines.

Parvovirus will present with the following symptoms:

- Lethargy (low or lessening energy, listless)
- Inappetence (diminished or nonexistent interest in food/eating)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (usually bloody)
- Fever (normal rectal temperature for a dog is 99-102 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Severe, bloody diarrhea

Parvo is typically spread directly from dog to dog, but contact with contaminated stool, environments, or people can also spread the disease. Once infected, a dog with parvo may contaminate food, water bowls, collars, and leashes – as well as a dog's bedding or crate. Once a dog or puppy is infected, there is an incubation period of three to seven days before the onset of first symptoms. Pet owners can transmit parvo infections through their hands, clothing and shoes if they touch infected dogs and their stools.

If you have ever had a dog in your house that has contracted parvo, you will be unable to take young or immunocompromised animals through DAS. It is highly recommended that you only bring home fully vaccinated adult dogs or puppies that are already recovering from Parvovirus moving forward. By continuing to bring unvaccinated dogs or young puppies into the home, you might continue to infect new dogs to the Parvovirus.

Panleukopenia

Panleukopenia, also known as “Panleuk,” is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted through direct contact with saliva, vomit and feces. An infected mother cat can also transmit Panleuk to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating and difficult to deal with because the virus is very durable, can survive in the environment for up to a year, and is highly transmissible. This means that other unvaccinated cats can become infected with Panleukopenia simply by coming into contact with places where an infected cat has been. Testing for Panleukopenia is not routinely done during intake since the test will not show positive until the virus is shedding. The test also does not have a high accuracy rate, and if the mother cat has been vaccinated, then the kittens will test positive. Symptoms of Panleuk include vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and lethargy. Symptoms can take 3–10 days to present once a kitten has been infected. Once kittens are suspected or confirmed of having Panleuk, they are put into quarantine or placed with a specialized foster home for treatment. Due to the ease of transmission and the high number of potential fatalities from this disease, kittens with this disease must be isolated and brought to the Foster Team immediately.

Demodex Mange

Demodectic mange is a skin infection that is caused by mites that naturally live on hosts, such as dogs, cats, and humans. Yep, humans have their own form of demodex mite. The mites are not rare, most healthy pets have demodex mites. The problem occurs if your pet has an immune system that does not work normally and cannot keep the mite population controlled. The mites multiply and cause intense itching. Your pet scratches and develops secondary bacterial infections. Your pet's hair falls out and leaves bald, red, weepy, infected areas. The skin may become leathery. A skin scrape is used to diagnose this type of mange. This type of mange is NOT contagious and resolves typically after a change in diet, parasite prevention/medication or improved living situations. Speak to your [Foster Team](#) to find out more about treatment.

Ringworm

Contrary to its name, ringworm is not a worm at all but a fungus – a lot like “Athlete’s Foot.” In fact, most ringworm is the exact same fungus as “Athlete’s Foot.” When this fungus grows anywhere other than the bottom of the foot, it is called ringworm. The fungi live on the surface of the skin and in the hair follicles.

Appearance

The usual symptom is a round hairless lesion. However, the characteristic "ring" that on humans doesn't always appear as a ring on animals. This lesion will grow in size and often become irregular in shape. Ringworm is commonly found on the face, ears, tail paws. The lesions are scaly, and the skin may be reddened. The spots may or may not be itchy.



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Transmission

Transmission can happen by direct contact with another infected animal or person. It can be passed from cats to dogs and vice versa and from pets to humans and from humans to pets. A ringworm infection in a person typically occurs after a person has handled an infected cat, but it can also occur after simply handling items that were used by an infected cat.

Can Humans catch Ringworm from Animals?

Yes, humans can contract ringworm by handling an animal with the condition or sharing a living area with them. Immune compromised individuals, such as the elderly and very young, are more prone to contracting ringworm.

Ringworm Diagnosis and Treatment

If you see ANY hair loss on your foster animal, please immediately inform members of the Foster Team by emailing DASFoster@dallascityhall.com. Include photos of the hair loss in your email. Depending on the photos, they might instruct you to bring your foster pet in for a vet examination. If your pet is found to have ringworm, you will have the option to continue treatment in your home or return the foster pets to DAS to explore other placement options. The Foster Team member will give you more information on treatment options for your foster should you decide to continue.

Coccidia and Giardia

Coccidia and Giardia are very common. They are protozoa that invade the digestive system and cause diarrhea. These are highly transmissible and can be spread through feces to humans and other animals. These parasites are easily treated with oral medications. Parasites can cause digestive problems as well as diarrhea. Diarrhea can be dangerous for a young animal and should be treated as soon as it shows up.

Deciphering Your Foster Pet’s Fecal Matter

It might not be the most pleasant, but we can often find out an ailment from the consistency of your foster’s bowel movements. There are several typical causes of diarrhea in our shelter animals. The most common reason why an animal might have diarrhea is due to a change in diet, such as changing brands or adding an extra stinky treat. Changes in diet are sometimes necessary to ensure a consistency to an appropriate food. If you find your foster has a sensitive tummy, or is prone to gas/diarrhea, you can always add a small amount of pumpkin or yogurt to their food. The best way to alleviate diarrhea is

to keep your foster on a consistent diet. Some mild diarrhea will usually clear up on its own. However, if you find that your fosters are consistently having diarrhea a few days past a food change, there could be another issue going on. Below is a diarrhea chart that will help guide you in what you can do to help your foster pet and when it is time to bring them in for a medical appointment. Please contact your Foster Team member if the diarrhea remains after a few days.

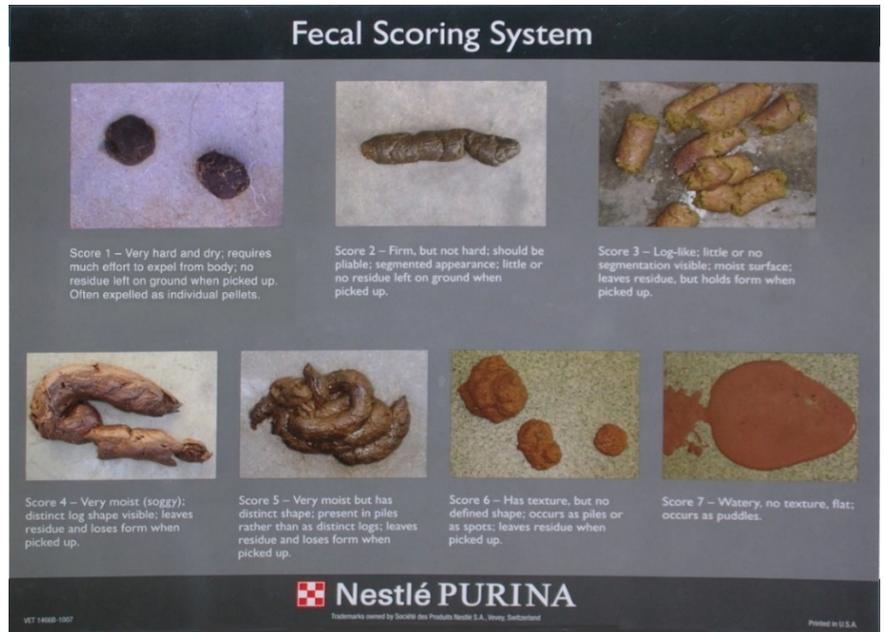
Additional reasons we see diarrhea might be:

- Stress/excitement
- Coccidia or other parasites
- Viral (corona, panleukopenia, etc.)
- Failure to properly keep animal and/or living space free from filth

The Importance of Cleanliness:

Keeping the animal's body and living space clean is crucial to having a healthy and successful experience.

- Make sure the animal's face, mouth and genital areas are always clean from food and/or organic matter
- If you are fostering an animal that uses a litter box, the litter must be scooped daily and replaced with fresh non-clumping litter. The litter pan must be cleaned as well
- Remove ALL organic matter before cleaning/bleaching any area
- Consider yourself 100% contaminated if you came in contact with a contagious disease
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated animals should not be allowed to interact unless discussed with the Foster Team



The faster we can identify the causes and type of poop in an animal, the quicker we can get a treatment plan in action. Just when we think an animal might have a parasite infestation, we could be looking in the wrong direction! It is crucial to keep in mind that there are various reasons for diarrhea, and it is important to be able to understand the root cause.

Common Behavioral Tips for Dogs

Teaching Your Foster New Tricks

Positive reinforcement training is a wonderful and positive way to not only teach your foster pet basic helpful home-living behaviors (such as sit, down, and off) but also a way for you to bond with your foster pet!

The basics of positive reinforcement training involve using reinforcements, or things a pet wants, to encourage the behavior we're asking for. Reinforcements can include treats (in moderation) and human interactions such as petting and praising to encourage good behavior. Praise and reinforce the behaviors you DO want - ignore the behaviors you don't. You do not punish by hitting, pushing, or striking your pet. These types of corrections have been scientifically proven to not only not work long term in building good behavior in pets and can also cause unwanted aggressive behaviors to appear or increase.

Puppies and Socialization

When we hear the word "socialization" we tend to recognize the need for introducing a pup to other dogs and people. However, it's important we choose appropriately. Puppies, especially the very young, would do best to interact with other young puppies and well-socialized adult dogs. Dog parks are NOT an appropriate setting for puppy socialization as there are unknown factors and far too much unpredictability. We also want to be careful about the people we introduce to our young puppy (or those who introduce themselves without asking). Make sure you pay

attention to how the person is interacting with your dog AND the signals your dog is giving. It is okay to remove your pup from a situation when they seem uncomfortable.

LOCATION

For puppies UNDER 4 months, even if pup is up to date on all their vaccinations, their immune systems are still developing and so they are still at risk for contracting potentially life-threatening diseases like Parvovirus and Distemper Virus. You want to avoid high traffic areas like parks and pet stores, but neighbors' and friends' homes and yards are perfectly safe if all resident dogs are up to date on their vaccinations.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Never force a pup to approach anyone or anything, let them explore on their own terms! If a pup encounters a novelty and their initial response is wariness, praise them when they overcome it. Not only will they realize there's nothing so scary about it after all, but mom/dad LOVES it when they walk on this stuff! Toss treats around the scarier objects and let your puppy go at their own pace. We recommend following the Rule of 12 for any dog entering the home.

Rule of 12 Positive Paws Dog Training ©2002 - Margaret Hughes

By the time a puppy is 12 weeks old, it should have:

Experienced 12 different surfaces: wood, wood chips,

carpet tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, grates, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc.

Played with 12 different objects: fuzzy toys, big & small balls, hard toys, funny sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, (all under supervision) etc.

Experienced 12 different locations: front yard, other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, hardware store, pet store, stairs, etc.

Met and played with 12 new people: (outside of family) include children, adults (male and female) elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes and umbrellas, crutches, hats, sunglasses, men with deep voices, people of different ethnicities, etc.

Exposed to 12 different noises: (always keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level-we don't want the puppy scared) garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, Harley motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts, clapping, pan dropping, vacuums, lawnmowers, etc.

Exposed to 12 fast moving objects: (do not allow to chase) skateboards, roller-blades, bikes, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, children running, squirrels, etc.

And, if your puppy is over 12 weeks old, continue with the above until you have given him experience with all the above.

Keep in mind that you are not trying to overwhelm your puppy with new experiences - quantity is not better than quality. Make sure your puppy is confident, well rested, and having a good time whenever you introduce them to something new. Do not overdo it either. Puppies get tired very quickly, and most importantly give your dog lots of downtime after a new experience to recuperate and rest in a safe, quiet place.

The Do's and Don't's of Dog Training

EAST BAY DOG TRAINERS
www.eastbaydogtrainers.org

Mouthing/Play Biting

Aside from chewing, a common way in which dogs utilize their mouths is in play. It's very natural and (to a certain extent) acceptable for dogs to use their mouths when playing with one another. It's up to us humans to teach them that doing so is not acceptable when engaging with people. Here's how:

1. **Redirect:** As with chewing, you want to teach your dog what IS allowed. So always have toys nearby. When it comes to mild mouthing, simply engage them with a toy and continue playtime. You will probably have to repeat this several times even within the same stretch of playtime to help your dog understand.
2. **Remove all attention:** If your pup isn't responding after several attempts to redirect, and/or the mouthing/play bites become more intense, say "no" or "eh eh" and then immediately walk away. Don't talk to them further, don't interact with them in any way. Simply remove yourself from them. To your pup, suddenly the game has stopped. With enough repetitions, they'll come to understand that being mouthy is what causes the fun to go away. Following this, if you catch your pup go to a toy or politely (not jumping or mouthing) approach you, you can give them lots of praise and re-engage them in playtime. (Note: Ignoring is also a great tactic for attention-seeking barking).
3. **Teach a calming cue:** You can teach your dog a cue called "touch" or "target" to redirect and calm them. [Click here for a video on teaching touch/target.](#)

Chewing

Dogs interact with the world with their mouths. They don't have hands and opposable thumbs. Using their mouths is how they eat, play, explore, pick things up, etc. Not only is chewing natural for dogs, but it has health benefits as well (so long as they're chewing the right things). Then how do we make sure they don't chew what they shouldn't?

Management: Your dog can't chew on what it can't reach. Keep shoes, kids' toys, remotes and other curious and chewable items out of your dog's reach. If you need to cook dinner, make a phone call, or get involved in some other task that takes your attention away from your dog, have a dog-proof area. This can be a penned-off area or even the dog's crate. It's not a punishment, so make sure your dog has plenty of positive things to keep them occupied. (One of the many benefits of [crate training](#) is to prevent destructive behaviors like chewing.)

Redirect: If all we did was prevent and correct, we wouldn't give our dogs a clear message. We want to teach them what they ARE allowed to chew on. If you catch your dog chewing on something they shouldn't, interrupt them with a neutral (non-praise, but also non-punishment) noise that gets their attention. A mild "eh eh" or "no" or a light clap of your hands are a couple ideas. Offer them an appropriate toy or chew instead as a means of redirecting the chewing behavior. While your dog is in the process of learning, offer lots of praise any time your dog picks up something they can chew.

Exercise: There is an adage that "a tired dog is a good dog". Sometimes a dog chews for no other reason than they are bored (as one might chew on the cap of a pen in a dull meeting). It's important to make sure your dog has not only plenty of physical stimulation, but mental stimulation as well. Mental stimulation can include training games, puzzle toys, even a Kong stuffed with tasty treats. A dog can run around the yard for an hour and still have stores of energy (or at least enough for chewing!), but put that same dog in front of a puzzle toy that takes them fifteen minutes and suddenly you have one pooped pup!

Jumping Up

Puppy jumping is usually greeted with enthusiasm and affection. Then one day that same behavior is greeted with irritation or worse—all because the puppy grew up.

Never reward any dog for jumping. In fact, we want to engage them as little as possible. They jump for attention, and even a stern “no” or “eh eh” is attention. And many dogs consider pushing them away to be play. Here are a few ways to effectively deter jumping behavior:

- Teach an incompatible behavior: A dog can’t jump if they’re expected to do something that requires all four paws on the ground (what we call having four on the floor). Give your dog a solid foundation of sit. If your dog wants your attention, they must sit for it. They only get attention as long as they have all four on the floor.
- The moment they jump up...
 - Remove all attention: Again, this means not even scolding them. Stand up and either a.) turn around and walk away, or b.) walk “through” (or past) them and keep walking.
 - Make a game of it: If turning away from and walking “through” the jumping aren’t enough to get the message across, try this game. Tether your dog to a piece of heavy furniture or another stable object/fixture. Have one individual, either a family member or a guest, approach at a time. If the dog keeps all four on the floor, they get attention and affection. The moment they jump up, the person walks away out of the reach of the tether. This way the dog can’t pursue attention. This is especially useful when managing an excitable, jumpy pup when guests are over. Just make sure your guests know the rules of the game! (Note: This technique is also useful for dogs who get mouthy out of excitement).
 - Use a leash: If your pup is prone to jumping, have always them wear a lightweight leash. We call this a “dragging leash” or “drag line.” When your pup starts to jump, tack the leash to the floor with your foot. The length between your foot and their collar should be enough that, if they have four on the floor, there is no tension; but as soon as they jump up, there is automatic and immediate pressure. This gives the dog instant feedback that jumping up is a.) unsuccessful and b.) uncomfortable.

With enough repetition of both these steps, your pup will pick up on the pattern: four on the floor = attention; jumping = no attention. To dogs, it’s really that simple. As your dog begins to show an understanding and offers a sit in a situation where they would usually jump, lavish them with praise and other rewards.

House Training

Whether you’re bringing home a brand-new puppy or an adult dog who’s lived in a home before, **expect messes**. Even a full-grown dog who is fully house trained will need to adjust to their new home and new routine, and sometimes there might be an accident or two. The basics for potty training puppies and adults, whether previously house trained or not, are generally the same. There are some key points to keep in mind during this process that are almost universally applicable:

Holding it period

Every dog has their time limit. Puppies under six months are typically unable to hold it in for more than a few hours. Prepare for this! Hire a dog sitter or walker to come once or twice a day while you’re at work. A healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for 8-10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions.

Frequent Outings are Necessary

To avoid accidents, you will want to make sure your pup has plenty of opportunities to go outside. You also want to give them ample time. Walk them for at least 15 minutes to encourage them and give them plenty of time to go. When they do go outside, you want to reward and praise this wanted behavior.

Reward the Wins!

It’s vital to successful housetraining that we NEVER scold a dog for going potty inside, even—especially—when we catch them in the act. Often, the dog won’t understand that you are scolding them for going inside. They are more

likely to think you are scolding them for going at all, and as a result they will want to hide from you to do their business. This means sneaking off to quiet, isolated corners of the home or behind furniture, and no one wants to play “Find the Smell!” Instead, our focus should be on praising and treating every time the pup goes outside.

Prevention & redirection

If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you always have eyes on your pup . The second they start to go, quickly walk them outside. Remain neutral until they’re outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there you can reward! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please.

If you’re having difficulty with frequent inappropriate urination or bowel movements, please make an appointment at www.das.as.me/medical to rule out possible medical causes.

How to Leave your Foster Alone

While DAS does their best to give you as much information as we have on each pet we send home, for many pets at the shelter we simply do not have extensive background information. Because of this, we recommend housing your pet in a secure manner whenever you need to leave home. **DAS cannot guarantee that a foster pet is house trained or will not chew on furniture and belongings when you are not home supervising.** If needed, we can provide a crate for your foster pet. See the below section on crate training for more information.

Crate Training

Dogs are, by nature, denning animals. This doesn’t mean every dog will take to the crate with ease, but it does mean you shouldn’t feel guilty about crating your pup. For a puppy, a warm crate can work as an aid to house-training and a temporary play-pen when they can’t be directly supervised. Crates can offer a safe space all to their own for recuperation, whether it’s from an injury or simply just to get away from the kids. ***As long as we aren’t using crating for punishment,*** it can also help correct some undesirable behaviors, such as destructive chewing. More importantly, crates can help prevent problem behaviors before they even start by helping establish a routine for your dog. It’s completely reasonable to crate our pups for up to 8-9 hours each day, so long as we set them up for success with the crate. The most fundamental and vital thing to remember about crate training is the crate is never a punishment.

What type of Crate Should I use?

Plastic and metal wire crates each have their pros and cons, but the choice largely comes down to preference of either the dog or the human. Go with what works best for you and your pup! As for size, the crate should be big enough for your pup to stand up and easily turn around.

How to Acclimate to a Crate:

Encourage your dog to investigate the crate. Toss some treats or a favorite toy in to begin the positive association. Work on this until your dog goes in and out of the crate without displaying any nervous body language. This could take a few minutes or several days

Food is an excellent training aid. Even if your dog isn’t highly food motivated, we can still use this basic necessity to our advantage.

1. Start feeding your pup around the crate. Begin by setting the bowl in front of the crate and over the next several days (or longer, depending on the dog’s comfort level) gradually move the bowl further into the crate. Do NOT work on closing the gate until your dog has eaten a few meals, while relaxed, when completely inside the crate.
2. Once they’ve reached this point, you can begin closing the door while they’re eating. At first, open the door once they’ve finished. Lengthen this over several mealtimes until they can stay in the crate calmly for up to ten minutes after eating.
3. If at any point they begin to bark or cry or paw at the gate, DO NOT open the gate until they have stopped. Otherwise they will think complaining will make the gate open.

After you get to this point, you can start crating your pup outside of mealtimes. In the beginning, they should be able to see you while in the crate. Wait a minute or two (this doesn't have to be while you are standing right in front of the crate, so long as your pup can see you) and then let them out. Once you've worked up to at least thirty minutes of calm, you can start leaving the home for short periods of time with your pup crated.

Departures and Arrivals

Even if your pet loves their crate, they might whine a little when you first leave. Avoid an emotional departure, as it can increase the nervousness of your dog. By being a source of excitement, we reinforce that our being away was something to be upset about in the first place. As much as we want to see how excited our dog is when we come home, we can intensify their stress when we leave by making a big to-do of our comings and goings.

Exercise to Crate More Successfully

If your pet is tired, they'll be faster to lay down and go to sleep when you leave, versus anxiously waiting for you to return home. Giving them plenty of exercise before they are crated will help them relax.

Other Alternatives

Ideally, we don't want to crate a dog for longer than they're used to. Realistically, many of us have full time jobs away from home and still want to prevent destructive behaviors and messes. There are ways to work around this reality without ruining progress with the crate. You can keep your pup in a bathroom or laundry room where they can't get into anything that might hurt them. Tiled and linoleum floors are also much easier to clean up than carpet. Another option is to buy a plastic playpen or metal x pen to keep them contained in a specific area of the house.

Resource Guarding

This is a broad-spectrum term that means showing possessive, or "guarding," behavior over any object. Guarding food and/or edible objects can be defined as "food guarding." When guarding behavior occurs towards a variety of objects, not specifically only food or toys, it may be referred to as "Generalized Guarding." An easy way to describe Resource Guarding with the public is that "the dog doesn't like to share." This behavior may present itself towards other animals, people or both. However, showing resource guarding towards one is not indicative of the other. EXAMPLE: A dog showing food guarding towards another animal in the household is not guaranteed to show guarding towards a human in the house. [Contact the Foster Team](#) if you see Resource Guarding in your foster pet.

On-leash Reactivity

This is a behavior that occurs usually in the form of barking towards something while the dog is on leash. This is **not necessarily an indicator of aggression**, but more indicative of the dog feeling excitement, fear, arousal, and/or frustration towards said object or individual. When a dog is displaying on leash reactivity towards an individual, it is advised to not allow a dog to engage with them until they have shown more relaxed behavior.

Environment can play a big factor in a dog's behavior on leash. If a dog displays this behavior in shelter environment, it does not necessarily mean they will display it while in a home. Some dogs display this behavior only when in close proximity to an individual or object, others at a greater distance. Providing the [appropriate walking and handling equipment](#) for your foster can provide greater control of a foster pet who is showing this behavior.

Separation Anxiety

Separation Anxiety is a complex issue that can have many levels and variables that compound it. Typically, a dog with Separation Anxiety will display a dramatic response within a short time of their person leaving. This can range in intensity, depending on the dog or the length of time that the dog is left alone. **It is important to note that most symptoms of boredom share characteristics with minor separation anxiety**, but dogs who are bored might display these behaviors less consistently. Addressing boredom first could eliminate the unwanted behavior. The most common of these behaviors are chewing or knocking down easily accessible items, and howling, barking and/or crying.

Depending on the severity, we are looking for an adopter and/or Foster Parent who either has a flexible schedule or is home most of the time/works from home. They should be willing and able to devote time to crate-training and working on the separation anxiety. We may need to counsel the adopter if they live in an apartment or are renting (due to possible noise complaints or destruction to rental property). Depending on severity, anti-anxiety medication and/or an indestructible crate may be recommended.

Dog to Dog Introductions

With all animals, we highly recommending following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

This is meant to be a guide for introducing two social dogs to each other. 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. 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.). While OLR and BR are not indicators of canine aggression, it can cause on leash introductions to go poorly. 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 the Foster Team](#). Information pulled from <http://www.ourpack.org/dogdogintros.html>

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. 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).

Some considerations first, please!

Before you set up a new-dog introduction, consider 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 them as an only dog.

Successful Introductions Lead to Successful Integration!

It is a must 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.

To properly introduce your dog to a new dog, you'll need two people, one person per dog, and 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 calming down in each other's presence, begin to move them closer to each other. At some point they should become more relaxed, and you can proceed with your walk. What you're looking for is calm, relaxed and confident behavior. Neither dog should be overly aroused, nervous, stiff, or fearful. (If the dogs don't seem to be able to relax and be friendly, it might be best to separate until you can speak to the Foster Team.)

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. If 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 – as it can be a trigger for an argument.**

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, bones or toys too quickly.**

What if it doesn't work out?

We understand that sometimes it's just not a good fit. Please see the section in your foster manual about [Returns to the Shelter](#). We encourage following the steps outlined in this document or contacting the Foster Team for more tips to ensure the greatest success.

Dog to Cat Introductions

The best long-term results for a dog and cat introduction are to **take your time** and go through a step by step process of slowly acclimating the animals. With all animals, we highly recommend following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

Necessary separation

The dog and cat/s should not meet or see each other for at least a day so that the dog has time to get used to the new

house and the scent of the cat. To give your cats a break and for them to also acclimate to the smell of the new dog, you can rotate “free” time in the house by kenneling or putting your dog in a secured closed off room and then allowing the cats loose in the house. If you have multiple dogs, you should do this with them individually. Multiple dogs can overwhelm a cat and create a “pack mentality” in the dogs that could make introductions extremely difficult.

The Introduction

It is best for both animals to do several short 15-30 minute “introduction sessions” a day.

1. Grab some stinky treats, put your dog on leash and bring the cat into the same room using crate or baby gate to separate
2. Reward your dog with food for staying calm while the cat is visible across the room. Do not move the dog any closer until you’re able to get your dog’s attention in the presence of the cat
3. Reward the dog any time they look away from the cat and especially if the dog looks at you
4. If the dog lunges or gets over excited, say “no” or “uh-uh” and back away or put them up. Be sure to reward your dog if they choose a calmer behavior afterwards. Your dog can look at the cat but should be heavily rewarded for choosing to look away from the cat
5. If your dog is showing appropriate/ calm behaviors from across the room, begin to move closer and repeat the process. Only choose to move closer after your dog has successfully shown only positive behaviors at the previous distance 3 sessions in a row

If your dog is still showing too much interest or aggressive type behavior around the cat, keep separated and [alert the DAS Foster Team](#).

Next steps:

Assuming your new dog is remaining calm around the cat and you have moved closer in proximity to the cat in the crate or on the other side of a baby gate, you will start these exercises over again with the cat out of the crate or baby gate.

1. Start with your dog on leash across the room with the cat loose on the other side. This will look different to your dog since the cat can move more freely and normally
2. A common trigger for dogs is when the cat runs across the room so be sure to heavily reward your dog if the cat does move quickly or jumps up on something and your dog remains calm
3. Work up to a closer proximity to the cat but not allowing the cat to approach the dog or for the dog to have access to the cat

Step four:

If the dog is doing well on leash and is responsive to you around the cat, you can try them loose. **Keep a leash on your dog** but allow it to drag on the ground beside them like an extended handle that you can step on or quickly pick up if you need to interrupt your dog. Allow your cat to give appropriate warnings like hissing or swatting to indicate that he needs space. Your dog should respond to this by moving away, reward him when he does this. If your dog does not understand the cat’s warning or thinks that it is play, help your dog by calling or guiding him away by the dragging leash. Continue to reward your dog for relaxed behavior and for any time that your dog looks at the cat but chooses to look/move away.

Reminders:

*Even dogs that respect cats indoors may chase or lunge toward cats outdoors so be very careful having your dog and cats in the backyard together.

*New dogs and cats should not be left alone together for at least the first 6 months you have the dog. You are still getting to know your new dog and what he/she will do in every circumstance.

*Every animal might have a different reaction to the other, so please be mindful and aware of your animal’s comfort level.

Basic Dog Body Language Infographic

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier

By Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"

How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

<p>Avoid taking people's food</p> 	<p>Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating</p> 
<p>Avoid stealing other people's toys</p> 	<p>Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys</p> 
<p>Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face</p> 	<p>Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face</p> 
<p>Avoid bothering when asleep</p> 	<p>Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.</p> 
<p>Avoid pestering</p> 	<p>Avoid grabbing tail/ears</p> 
<p>Avoid climbing on or trampling</p> 	<p>Avoid climbing on or trampling</p> 
<p>Avoid pinching</p> 	<p>Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.</p> 
<p>Avoid screaming around</p> 	<p>Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.</p> 

Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit www.drsophiayin.com.



Common Behavioral Tips for Cats

Cat to Cat Introductions

As a species, cats tend to need more time to adjust to changes in their environment, and, like us, they can vary in their social personalities. When introducing one cat to another, consider things such as energy level, history with other cats, and/or behavior when viewing another cat. None of this can ever predict 100% your cat's reaction when you bring home another pet, but it could give insight into how they might react when they smell or see another animal in your home. With all animals, we highly recommend following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

Step One: Separate at first for long term success

The first impression between two cats matter because it can set the mood for the entire relationship. We are not entirely different from cats in this regard. If the first time you meet someone they say something unpleasant to you, it can take some time to shake off the first interaction. To aid in a successful first meeting, it is best to **separate** your resident cat from the new can when first brought home to control the initial introduction.

While separated, the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other, but not see or touch to prevent any negative interactions. This can be done either by placing your new cat in a spare bedroom, laundry room, a walk-in closet, or even a bathroom. To prevent negative touch, a baby gate is highly recommended to place in front of any door, but also a towel underneath can substitute for this. During separation, each cat should be provided with their own necessary items (food and water, litter box, scratching post, bed and toys) to alleviate any stress.

After a few days, we recommend allowing the cats to rotate between the two rooms. This allows your new cat to be able to explore, but also lets your two cats separately investigate the other's smell. Play around with removing the barrier that has been preventing touch at this point and notice if either cat's reactions to each other under the door is positive.

Step Two: The View

Once you begin to see no aggression (swatting, growling, etc.) between the two cats under the door, you can begin to introduce the cats to the sight of each other. A tall baby gate can be extremely helpful here, or even to rotate time in an extra-large wire crate if you have an agile cat.

Step Three: Meeting and Friendship

After viewing each other without any direct swatting, you can open the door to allow for the cats to interact with each other. Do not force the cats to interact, allow them to approach each other on their own terms. It is normal during this time for cats to hiss at or low growl at each other. However, they should not charge at or bite each other. If this happens and the cats begin to fight, do not attempt to pick them up or grab them. Try to separate them by using your voice or something that you can put in between them. You can also prepare yourself with a spray bottle filled with water. Once separated in their own rooms, go back to Step Two or even Step One to work on a slower integration process.

Using/Not Using the Litterbox

Most cats will instinctively gravitate towards using a litter box from an early age. However, inappropriate elimination outside of the litter box can occur for many reasons, creating stress between you and your new cat. Here are some important basics to know about the litter box, and tips for addressing inappropriate elimination.

1. **Placement makes perfect!** When you are placing the litter box, it should be in a location that can give your cat a bit of privacy. Avoid placing it next to your cat's food or water dish, and/or loud or suddenly startling noises (such as the washing machine or dishwasher). If you have adopted a young kitten, we recommend starting them off in a small room with their box until you see them consistently using it.
2. **One box per cat, plus one.** Have you ever had to share your bathroom with a less than ideal roommate? Your cat may enjoy the company of their fellow friends, but sharing their box is a different matter. To keep the peace, we recommend having one litter box per cat, plus one more. This means that in a house with two cats, we recommend at least 3 litter boxes in various locations of the house.
3. **Keep the box clean.** No one likes a filthy toilet, and your cat will agree. Solid waste and clump should be scooped daily, and a complete wash of the box should happen at least once a month.
4. **The cat chooses the litter.** We suggest using a litter that is plain and unscented, but the choice is ultimately up to your cat. If you have a cat that is used to a certain type of litter, we recommend sticking with it. Cats prefer a routine and stability and changing the type of litter can cause stress and inappropriate elimination.

If you are struggling with litter box issues, there could be several factors at play. We recommend doing the following:

1. **Rule out illness.** The first step to take if you notice your cat is not using their litter box is to discuss this with a veterinarian to rule out medical issues as the underlying cause. If observed, please schedule a medical appointment at <https://das.as.me/medical>.
2. **Clean up all messes.** Any area that has been soiled should be cleaned properly with an enzyme-based cleaner. Cleaners that have this will break down the urine/stool traces in areas that you might not be able to see, but the cats can smell.
3. **Prevention & redirection:** If you are still in the process of houstraining, or if you have already followed the above steps, make sure you limit the access of the house. This could mean a large crate or a small easily cleanable room (such as a bathroom or laundry room) to help re-train the cat to use the crate.

Managing Inappropriate Scratching

We like this edited handout from the ASPCA about inappropriate scratching:

Cats like to scratch. They scratch during play. They scratch while stretching. They scratch to mark territory or as a threatening signal to other cats. And because cats' claws need regular sharpening, cats scratch on things to remove frayed, worn outer claws and expose new, sharper claws. All this scratching can cause a lot of damage to furniture, drapes and carpeting!

What to Do About Your Cat's Scratching Habits

The best tactic when dealing with scratching is not to try to stop your cat from scratching, but instead to teach where and what to scratch. An excellent approach is to provide appropriate, cat-attractive surfaces and objects to scratch, such as scratching posts. The following steps will help you encourage your cat to scratch where you want them to:

- Provide a variety of scratching posts with different qualities and surfaces. Try giving your cat posts made of cardboard, carpeting, wood, sisal and upholstery. Once you figure out your cat's preference for scratching, provide additional posts of that kind in various locations. Keep in mind that all cats want a sturdy post that won't shift or collapse when used.
- Encourage your cat to investigate posts by scenting them with catnip, hanging toys on them and placing them in areas where they'll be inclined to climb on them.
- Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering other desirable objects.
- Put plastic, double-sided sticky tape, sandpaper or upside-down vinyl carpet runner (knobby parts up) on furniture or on the floor where your cat would stand to scratch your furniture. Place scratching posts next to these objects, as "legal" alternatives.
- Clip your cat's nails regularly. See this section on how to trim

- Consider putting plastic caps on your cat's claws so that they'll do no damage if they scratch on something in your home. These special caps attach to claws with an adhesive. They're temporary, lasting four to six weeks.
- If you catch your cat in the act of scratching an inappropriate object, you can try startling by clapping your hands or squirting with water. Use this procedure only as a last resort, because your cat may associate you with the startling event (clapping or squirting) and learn to fear you.

What NOT to Do

- Do not hold your cat by the scratching post and force them to drag claws on it. This practice could seriously frighten your cat and teach them to avoid the scratching post completely.
- Do not throw away a favorite scratching post when it becomes unsightly. Cats prefer shredded and torn objects because they can really get their claws into the material. Used posts will also appeal to your cat because they smell and look familiar.

Is Declawing an Option?

Cats have a normal and instinctive need to scratch, stretch, and climb on surfaces. These behaviors are instrumental in helping remove excess claw material and keeping a cat's nails clean and in good shape. While these behaviors may become destructive to furniture or household items, cats are unaware that this instinctive behavior may not coexist well with their owner's belongings. While the behavior might be normal to cats, the damage caused could be resulting in increased stress on the people in the home. To reduce this, you might consider the option of "declawing" to still allow your cat to perform this behavior while keeping your household items safe. Before you make this decision, we'd like to offer you some information about this procedure, while also providing you different options for your feline companion.

When we hear the term "declaw," it's not uncommon to imagine a more advanced type of manicure - an easy way to keep a cat's nails permanently trimmed at a more desirable length. However, the procedure to declaw a cat is far more severe and can cause negative long-lasting effects, both behaviorally and physically, that may result in diminishing the pet's quality of life.

Cats' nails are part of the last bone in their toes, and so the declawing procedure must involve an amputation (using scalpel blade or laser) to fully remove the claw and ligatures. Since a cat has nails on all ten of its toes, this also means that the cat will undergo ten amputations to ensure the nails are fully removed. For comparison to a human, it is comparable to cutting off fingers and toes at their last knuckle. The recovery from the procedure can also be extremely painful, as it requires cats to walk on the newly amputated digits. The associations of pain during this period can cause cats to avoid other "normal" activities more long term – such as using the litterbox.

In general, declawing a cat to protect furniture or address playful scratching is discouraged. As an elective procedure, there is no benefit to the pet. Instead, we suggest addressing the concerns that are guiding the interest in "declawing" by providing alternative options areas for cats to use their claws, while deterring popular areas that they are drawn to scratching.

Basic Cat Body Language Infographic

CAT LANGUAGE

