

Foster Manual



mspca

Kindness and Care for Animals®



TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PROGRAM	3
COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL	13
EMERGENCY PROTOCOL	15
CHECKLIST	16
SETTING UP THE SPACE	17
TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE SHELTER	19
BODY LANGUAGE	20
SOCIALIZATION	23
CONSENT	25
TRAINING PHILOSOPHY	26
CRATE TRAINING	34
HOUSETRAINING	37
ENRICHMENT	43
INTRO TO OTHER PETS	49



Welcome to the MSPCA Foster Care Program!

As a foster parent, you are joining a special network of compassionate and dedicated foster families who are willing to open their homes and hearts to provide a safe space for animals in need.

The MSPCA will provide all necessary supplies, including dishes, crates, food, litter, leash, collar and medication. We supply the diet given in the Adoption Center, so the transition from Adoption Center to foster home and back to Adoption Center is less stressful. Before making any changes to the animal's diet, the foster parent must receive approval from the MSPCA. While in foster care, all foster cats and small animals must remain indoors, and all dogs must wear their MSPCA collar and ID tags at all times. You agree to keep the foster care animals under your supervision, and to keep foster care dogs on a leash at all times when not safely secured on your private property.

Foster Parents are responsible for providing all daily care to the foster animal, including feeding, exercise, and socialization. Animals placed in foster care may need daily medication. Foster parents are responsible for these treatments for the duration of their prescribed use. If you feel you are unable to attend to the animal's specific needs, please let us know.

All animals have the potential to carry zoonotic diseases (transferable from animal to humans or other animals). The MSPCA does its best to screen animals for health concern prior to foster care, and will make you aware of any known medical diagnoses associated with your foster animal. However, the MSPCA cannot guarantee the animal will not begin to show signs of illness while in your care.

As a foster parent, you will be responsible for notifying the MSPCA at the first sign of illness (or of sudden death) as soon as possible, so we may assist you. Foster parents are responsible for transportation to and from all appointments at the MSPCA Adoption Center. If the foster animal needs emergency medical care, foster parents are responsible for following emergency protocols outlined at your foster care orientation. The foster parent understands that if they choose to bring the foster animal to the vet without receiving approval by the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director, the MSPCA cannot reimburse medical expenses.

Foster parents must follow specified guidelines of the MSPCA veterinarian and staff. Foster animals must be kept separate from any resident pets in the home unless specifically approved by the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director. The MSPCA is not responsible for your family's or pet's health as a result of your foster animal, and cannot pay for medical expenses of resident pets.

The MSPCA may not be held liable for any damage caused by your foster animal during the foster period.

Foster parents need to understand that animals may act unpredictably in any given situation and that they must take precautions to prevent accidents and guard against unpredicted actions by a pet in their care. Bites, scratches or other injuries to humans and other animals may occur as a result of fostering an animal. Massachusetts has very strict laws relating to dog bites where strict liability is imposed on owners and "keepers" (caretakers) of dogs when it comes to personal injury. Given this, it is strongly recommended that you have a current homeowners or renter's insurance policy which offers personal liability in the event there is an incident involving the animal you are fostering.

One of the most difficult issues a foster parent may face is the possibility that the animal being fostered may need to be euthanized due to poor health prognosis or behavior problems. Foster homes must be aware of this possibility when entering a foster agreement, and respect the MSPCA's decision should that occur.

The foster animal **MUST** remain in the care of the approved foster home only and cannot be moved from your home to another, including those of family members, friends or potential adopters unless the foster parent has the pre-approval of the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director. In the event of an emergency, the MSPCA staff must be notified immediately, so other arrangements can be made for the foster animal.

We love it when our foster families find adoptive homes for their foster animals. However, the animal must not leave your care until the potential adopter has completed the MSPCA adoption process, including application approval by our staff. Foster parents must understand the MSPCA's current adoption process and fees, so that they can accurately communicate this information to potential adopters.

The MSPCA retains all legal ownership of the animal while in foster care. These statements remain in effect for all future foster care arrangements through the MSPCA Adoption Centers.



FOSTERING NEEDS

WHY DO WE PLACE DOGS IN FOSTER?

PUPPIES!

Occasionally, we have puppies who arrive in our care too young or too small to be placed up for adoption. These puppies will require fosters who are able to give them plenty of love and attention, and food, lots of food!

TEMPORARY CUSTODY

Owned dog(s) who come into our care for safe housing until their owners can take them home or dog(s) that have been seized by our law enforcement division and held as evidence while the case works through the court system. More comfortable for the dog(s) to spend this duration of time in a home setting.

LENGTH OF STAY

Most recent trends have show that dog adoptions are slowing down, which means many of our highly adoptable dogs are staying in the shelter for a very long time. Placing these dogs into foster homes helps give them a much-needed break from life in a shelter!



PREGNANT/NURSING MOMS

Pregnant or already nursing dogs with puppies that come into our care in need a comfortable place to go until the puppies are old enough for adoption. Mom does most of the work but both mom and puppies will require daily care and monitoring.

SPACE

In animal welfare, we can often find ourselves overwhelmed with the number of animals who need our help. Our shelter space can fill up fast, causing us to reduce or delay intaking more animals,.By placing an adult dog into a foster home, it helps make room for more pups who need a safe place to go!

MEDICAL

Some dogs need time away from the shelter for medical needs with extra TLC a foster home can provide!

We are here to talk with you about what options work for you and how to get started!

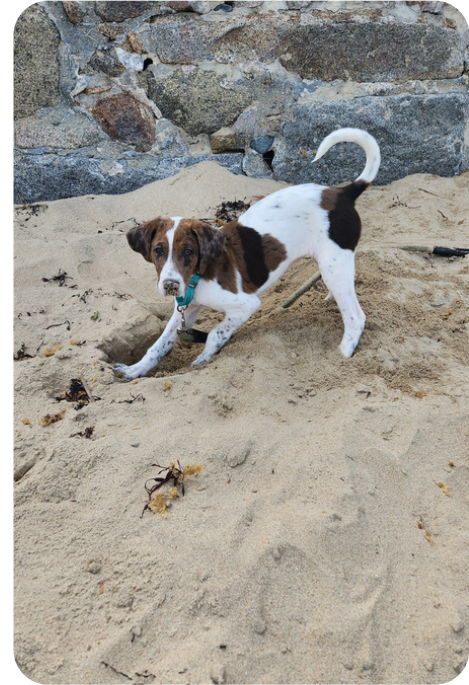
EXTRA SPECIAL FOSTERING OPPORTUNITIES

SHORT TERM

Help give a dog a break from the shelter for a bit! Many of our dogs would love to spend time with you for a little get away!

This is a great fostering opportunity for anyone who is not able to commit to a long term foster.

Our shelter management & behavior teams will identify the dogs from our populations that would benefit from this foster placement the most.



Taking on a behavior foster is a commitment but the MSPCA is here to support you and the foster dog the whole way! The staff work together to identify dogs that could benefit from this type of specialized foster and work to match the dog with the right home. It is recommended to have an open conversation among your family members at home to be sure everyone involved is prepared for the this type of commitment.

BEHAVIORAL *additional training required*

For some dogs, a shelter is a stressful place and they are looking for a chance to open up in a home. Some pets require more help with life skills or simply a place to decompress while they find their new homes!

Some Categories of animals that would benefit most from this type of foster placement are:

- A dog that needs to work on skills in a home setting while we find an adoptive home.
- A dog that is struggling or we have identified may struggle in a shelter environment due to fearful & anxious behaviors.

Our Commitment to Socially Conscious Sheltering

The MSPCA proudly supports the tenets of Socially Conscious Sheltering. We are focused on providing the best outcomes for all animals.

Our Responsibilities:

- Ensure every pet has a safe place to go for shelter and care. We are committed to supporting each animals' access to the Five Freedoms.
- Place every healthy and safe animal. The MSPCA assesses the needs of each animal on an individual basis, providing behavioral support, medical care, foster services, transfer opportunities, and more. We do not euthanize animals due to time or space.
- Assess the medical and behavioral needs of animals and ensure their needs are thoughtfully met. Our expert staff teams of medical, behavioral, and sheltering staff support the unique and individualized needs of each animal in our care, and collaborate to ensure they receive the best possible care.
- Alleviate suffering and make appropriate euthanasia decisions. The MSPCA works together to consider the best possible outcomes for each pet, including euthanasia for animals who are suffering behavioral or medical challenges that cannot be managed, treated, prevent companionship, or are irrecoverably painful. We are also committed to keeping the pets and people of our community safe.
- Align policy with the needs of our community. The MSPCA works alongside our communities, as well as neighboring animal welfare organizations to identify service gaps and support local animals, in addition to our consideration of regional and national transfer partners.
- Consider the health and wellness of each animal and each community when transferring animals. Our robust transfer program makes thoughtful choices to support our neighbors and our partners. We seek to build efficiency in transfer decisions and minimize the stress and impact of transfer on the animals.
- Enhance the connections humans and animals share through thoughtful placement and post-adoption support. MSPCA works hard to find great matches for people and pets and offers supportive care when needed for animals adopted from the MSPCA.
- Foster a culture of transparency, ethical decision making, mutual respect, continual learning, and collaboration. Our teams work across departments, organizations, and communities to ensure questions, and concerns are addressed openly and honestly, accurate information is shared, learning is encouraged, and we evolve to meet the emerging needs of the animals and our community.

We openly report all statistics and reporting, including participation in Shelter Animals Count.

Foster Care Program Policies

As a foster parent, you are joining a special network of compassionate and dedicated foster families who are willing to open their homes and hearts to provide a safe space for animals in need.

The MSPCA will provide all necessary supplies, including dishes, crates, food, litter, leash, collar and medication. We supply the diet given in the Adoption Center, so the transition from Adoption Center to foster home and back to Adoption Center is less stressful. Before making any changes to the animal's diet, the foster parent must receive approval from the MSPCA.

While in foster care, all foster cats and small animals must remain indoors, and all dogs must wear their MSPCA collar and ID tags at all times. You agree to keep the foster care animals under your supervision, and to keep foster care dogs on a leash at all times when not safely secured on your private property.

Foster Parents are responsible for providing all daily care to the foster animal, including feeding, exercise, and socialization. Animals placed in foster care may need daily medication. Foster parents are responsible for these treatments for the duration of their prescribed use. If you feel you are unable to attend to the animal's specific needs, please let us know.

All animals have the potential to carry zoonotic diseases (transferable from animal to humans or other animals). The MSPCA does its best to screen animals for health concerns prior to foster care, and will make you aware of any known medical diagnoses associated with your foster animal. However, the MSPCA cannot guarantee the animal will not begin to show signs of illness while in your care.

As a foster parent, you will be responsible for notifying the MSPCA at the first sign of illness (or of sudden death) as soon as possible, so we may assist you. Foster parents are responsible for transportation to and from all appointments at the MSPCA Adoption Centers. If the foster animal needs emergency medical care, foster parents are responsible for following emergency protocols outlined at your foster care orientation. The foster parent understands that if they choose to bring the foster animal to the vet without receiving approval by the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director, the MSPCA cannot reimburse medical expenses.

Foster parents must follow specified guidelines of the MSPCA veterinarian and staff. Foster animals must be kept separate from any resident pets in the home unless specifically approved by the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director. The MSPCA is not responsible for your family's or pet's health as a result of your foster animal, and cannot pay for medical expenses of resident pets.

The MSPCA may not be held liable for any damage caused by your foster animal during the foster period.

Foster parents need to understand that animals may act unpredictably in any given situation and that they must take precautions to prevent accidents and guard against unpredicted actions by a pet in their care. Bites, scratches or other injuries to humans and other animals may occur as a result of fostering an animal. Massachusetts has very strict laws relating to dog bites where strict liability is imposed on owners and “keepers” (caretakers) of dogs when it comes to personal injury. Given this, it is strongly recommended that you have a current homeowner's or renter's insurance policy which offers personal liability in the event there is an incident involving the animal you are fostering.

One of the most difficult issues a foster parent may face is the possibility that the animal being fostered may need to be euthanized due to poor health prognosis or behavior problems. Foster homes must be aware of this possibility when entering a foster agreement, and respect the MSPCA's decision should that occur.

The foster animal MUST remain in the care of the approved foster home only and cannot be moved from your home to another, including those of family members, friends or potential adopters unless the foster parent has the pre-approval of the MSPCA Foster Care Coordinator, Manager, Supervisor or Director. In the event of an emergency, the MSPCA staff must be notified immediately, so other arrangements can be made for the foster animal.

We love it when our foster families find adoptive homes for their foster animals. However, the animal must not leave your care until the potential adopter has completed the MSPCA adoption process, including application approval by our staff. Foster parents must understand the MSPCA's current adoption process and fees, so that they can accurately communicate this information to potential adopters.

The MSPCA retains all legal ownership of the animal while in foster care. These statements remain in effect for all future foster care arrangements through the MSPCA Adoption Centers.

All foster caregivers are required to be 18 years or older. Children under the age of 18 are allowed to participate in the care of foster animals at the discretion of the MSPCA Foster Coordinator, Supervisor, Manager or Director and must be directly supervised by a trained foster caregiver.

Leaving the Foster Care Program

All foster care providers entering the program are volunteers at will and have the right to leave the foster care program at any time, for any reason. If you wish to be removed from the foster care program, please contact your Foster Care Coordinator and/or the Foster Care Program Manager. We ask that any request to be removed from the Foster Care Program be given in writing and sent to your Foster Care Coordinator as well as the Foster Care Manager. We request that all fosters, prior to removing themselves from the program, return all supplies and borrowed equipment that is considered property of the MSPCA. Any Foster Care attire (ie T-shirts, sweatshirts, etc) or items given as recognition gifts for your service may be kept by the foster care provider, even if you no longer wish to be a part of the program.

Violation of Policies and Procedures

All foster care providers are expected to hold themselves to our organization's standards and follow all policies and procedure pertaining to the foster care program. MSPCA-Angell reserves the right to terminate a foster care provider's service at any time for violation of any of our policies or procedures. For minor offences, a three warnings system is followed in according to the outline below. While this outline is provided for general information, MSPCA-Angell is not bound to follow this outline and may deviate from it depending upon the circumstances of the particular incident. There is, however, misconduct that is of sufficient gravity as to warrant dismissal for the first offense. If a foster is believed to have committed such an offence, their service will be suspended pending an investigation. If management determines that the allegations are substantiated, the foster will be subject to removal from the foster care program.

First Minor Offence

For a first offence, fosters will be given a verbal warning by their Foster Care Coordinator, the Foster Care Program Manager, or Director of Operations. A written description of the verbal warning will be documented and placed into the foster care providers file within our data system and a hard copy will be kept in the Foster Care Manager's Office.

Second Minor Offence

For a second offence of violation of policy or procedures, regardless of if it is of the same nature of the first offence or not, the foster care provider will be given a written warning from the Foster Care Manager. The foster care provider will be emailed a description of the violation, follow up notes and an action plan to prevent the violation from occurring again. The foster care provider will be asked to acknowledge this violation by agreeing to and signing the document. This documentation will be placed into the foster care provider's file within our data system and a hard copy will be kept in the Foster Care Manager's office.

Final Warning or Major Offence

A final warning or major offense of a policy or procedure will come in the form of a meeting with the Foster Care Manager, Foster coordinator and Director of Operations. At this time, a written warning will be issued. The foster care provider will be emailed a description of the violation, follow up notes, and action plan to prevent the violation from occurring again. The foster care provider will be asked to acknowledge this violation by agreeing to and signing the document. This document will be shared with the foster care provider via email. A copy will be placed in our data system and a hard copy will be kept in the Foster Care Manager's Office.

EUTHANASIA



Our primary goal is to place each animal into a loving home. Unfortunately, that isn't always possible and the decision is made to euthanize animals in our care.

It is important to recognize that these decisions are not made lightly. Many factors such as health, age, and behavior are considered when making these tough choices. We are committed to keeping the pets and people in our community safe.

Euthanasia due to behavior is a complex decision making process that involves collecting all the information we can gather about the animal and having an open conversation as staff to determine the best outcome for that animal. We take into consideration the animal's history prior to coming to the MSPCA, a behavior evaluation while at the shelter, and their behavior throughout their time in shelter or in foster care.

We always want you to feel informed and supported. You will be given the opportunity to opt-into information regarding euthanasia decisions for your foster animal. We encourage you to discuss any concerns or decisions with the staff. Please remember, these decisions are complicated and difficult. This is the most heart-breaking aspect of our work. We will always be open and honest with you why a particular decision was made.

We will be looking to you for honest feedback on the behavior and health of your fostered animal(s). It is crucial to have accurate information in order for us to place the animal in the right situation for him/her.

Before taking in a foster animal to your home, you should discuss death and euthanasia with your family. It is hard to prepare for this, however an open discussion prior to bringing home an animal is a good idea. We will do our best to support foster families through the loss of a foster pet.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

MSPCA BOSTON

350 S. Huntington Ave
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
617-522-5055

Katie Armour

Foster Care Coordinator
karmour@mspca.org
617-524-5708



MSPCA CAPE COD

1577 Falmouth Rd
Centerville, MA 02632
508-775-0940

Sarah Messeck

Program Coordinator
smesseck@mspca.org
508-775-4112

MSPCA NEVINS FARM

400 Broadway
Methuen, MA 01844
978-687-7453

Naomi Bourque

Foster Care Coordinator
nbourque@mspca.org
978-379-6611



MSPCA NORTHEAST ANIMAL SHELTER

347 Highland Ave
Salem, MA 01970
(978) 745-9888

Jacquie McKay

Foster Care Program Manager
jmckay@mspca.org
978-224-7238

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

MSPCA FOSTER MEDICAL & PERSONAL EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

WHAT IS CONSIDERED AN EMERGENCY?

- Temperature over 103F or less than 98F
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Severe lethargy
- Severe pain (restlessness, crying, panting)
- Major wounds
- Complication with labor/delivery/newborn foster pet
- Excessive vomiting (4 or more times)
- Not urinating for longer than 24 hours

DURING BUSINESS HOURS: MON-FRI 8AM TO 4PM

Contact your Home Base Foster Coordinator

BEHAVIORAL EMERGENCIES:

DURING BUSINESS HOURS: MON-FRI 8AM TO 4PM

Contact your Home Base Foster Coordinator.

AFTER BUSINESS HOURS & WEEKENDS

Contact the Foster Care Program Manager at 978-224-7238.

AFTER BUSINESS HOURS & WEEKENDS

In the event of a Medical or Personal emergency, head directly to MSPCA-Angell Boston's ER.

If possible, please call the ER in advance to make them aware you will be coming in with a MSPCA Foster Animal.

(617) 522-7282, 350 S Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02130

Having a non-emergency concern?

Go to our Foster Resource Library to fill out our Foster Concerns Form.

ACCIDENT REPORTING:

Practice safe animal handling. If you are not comfortable then don't do it, ask us for help. Your Foster Care Coordinator will advise you on the best ways to groom, handle, and/or medicate your foster to minimize the chances of being scratched or bitten.

In the event a bite does occur:

1. Clean and flush the wound immediately.
2. See your doctor for appropriate treatment, if necessary
3. Report the incident to your Foster Care Coordinator or Foster Care Program Manager ASAP

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

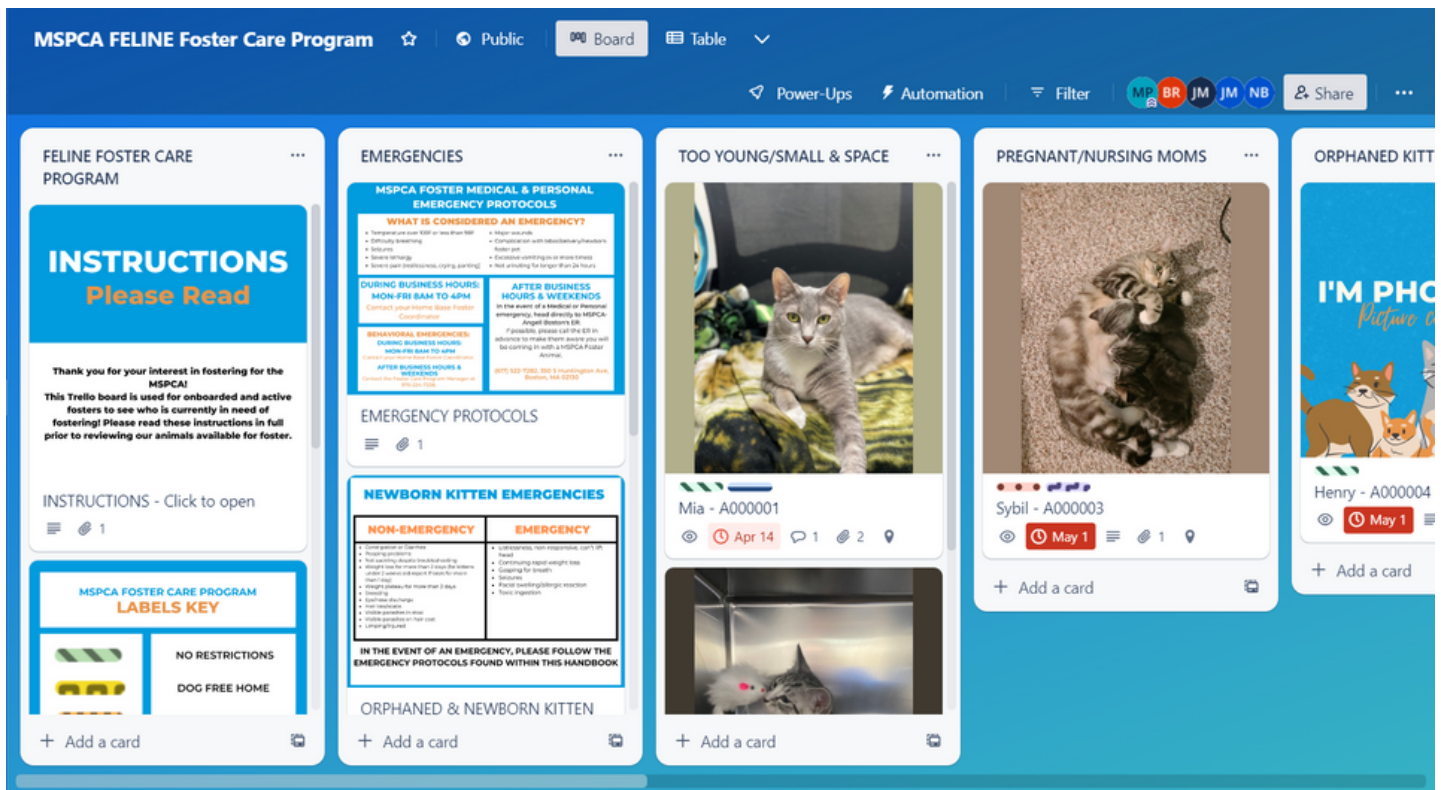
How Does The Fostering Process Work?

Each MSPCA foster caregiver is designated a "home base" shelter once onboarded, which is determined by your home address. However, The Foster Care Program is fully integrated and we share our foster families among our four shelter locations. All of our animals in need of fostering are posted on our Trello board - This allows our foster caregivers the opportunity to review all of the information and requirements for the animal in detail prior to indicating they are interested in fostering. It is important for foster caregivers to keep in mind that for some of these animals, you may be asked to travel to a shelter location outside of your homebase for pick up, but in most cases, you are able to return the animal to your homebase location for medical/behavioral care and adoption.

TRELLO BOARD

TRAINING VIDEO AVAILABLE!

A full training video on our Trello Board & its usage is available on our Foster Resources page of our Website.



SEE AN ANIMAL YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOSTER?

Make a comment on the animal's card and the foster coordinator assigned will contact you to discuss more details about the animal and schedule a pick up appointment!



ARE YOU PREPARED?

GETTING READY

Fostering a pet is a commitment that will affect your entire household. Discuss your plans for fostering with all individuals that will be interacting with the pet and make sure that everyone is on the same page for this endeavor. Planning things like where a crate will be, who will be doing the primary care-taking and preparing the home before hand will make the entire process easier!

CHECK LIST

The MSPCA will supply all supplies needed to care for our fosters. If you already have some things at home, be sure to let your Foster Coordinator know exactly what you need! Here are some things you should take stock of before bringing home a foster dog:

Martingale collar with MSPCA tag: All adult dogs will leave the building with a martingale collar with an MSPCA tag. They should wear this collar and tag for the duration of their time in your care.

Flat collar with MSPCA tag: Depending on their age, puppies may leave the shelter wearing a flat collar with an MSPCA tag. Your foster coordinator will advise whether or not your foster puppy will need to wear a collar with tags while in your care.

Harness: Most adult dogs will be wearing a front-attaching harness as a part of their behavior plan. In those cases, we'll share most specifics about other pieces of walking equipment for your foster dog.

Crate: Will will provide a crate, see crate training section of this handbook for more information about how to use it!

Bedding: We have plenty of bedding options available and recommend using bedding or blankets that you won't be sad about if they are ruined

Food: The MSPCA will provide food for the foster dog.

Toys: In addition to normal toys we are able to provide mentally stimulating puzzle toys, as well as longer lasting food toys for enrichment purposes.



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media is a great way to share with friends and family that you are fostering - It promotes both the animals in your care and our program!

However, we ask that the animals below are not shared on social media:

Any animal under the age of 6 weeks
Animals with a significant health concern
Temporary Custody

If you are unsure – just ask!

SETTING UP YOUR FOSTER SPACE

An important part of setting your foster dog up for success includes having their space set up before bringing the dog home. The goal is to limit the number of wrong choices your foster dog has access to so that they are more likely to make the "right" choice.

Look around your home through the lens of puppy proofing, as we can't expect that any dog coming into our home knows yet what we expect of them. We have to teach them, and the most effective way to do that while also facilitating a strong, lasting relationship is to find as many ways to say "yes" as possible. If we're constantly saying "no", we're not helping them understand what we do want them to do, and are creating a lot of frustration and confusion for both us and our dog. Instead, take away as many choices that might prompt you to say "no", so they aren't even an option to start with.

- Limit access to a small part of the house to start. Use baby gates and closed doors to keep them in a smaller, more easily puppy-proofed space as they are settling in.
- Puppy-proof! Remove anything that you'd be upset if your dog chews up or pees on. Blankets and pillows should be stored in a closet, shoes and socks should not be left by the door, remote controls should be in the drawer, etc. Anything that doesn't need to be out should be put away.

SETTING UP YOUR FOSTER SPACE

CONFINEMENT

Create a quiet space as your dog's "home base." Don't rely on physical confinement alone, pair it with the necessary behavioral management as well. They should only spend time in the confinement space after having some time to get used to the space with you, and following plenty of physical and mental stimulation, with an empty bladder, and with plenty of appropriate activities to keep them busy as they wind down for a nap. The space should be:

PRIVATE

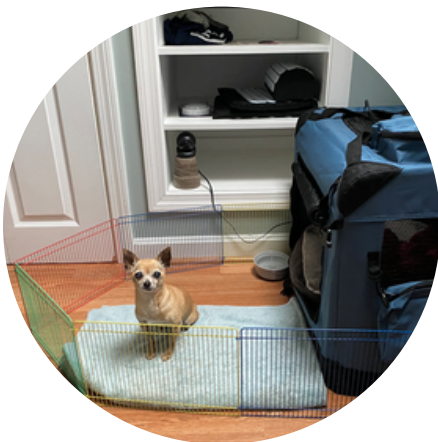
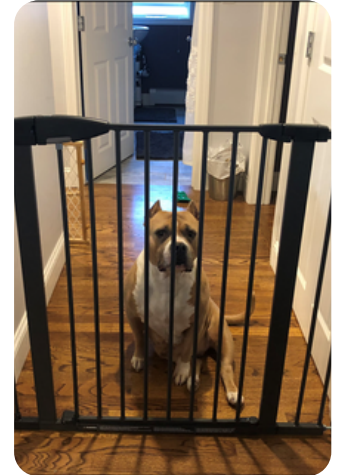
The space should be in a low-traffic area so your dog can easily to relax without seeing or hearing things going on in the home.

PUPPY-PROOFED

your dog is still learning the rules. Remove anything you'd prefer they don't put in their mouth, then gradually allow more access to items as they are successful.

SECURE

start with a gate, exercise pen, or closed door.



TO CRATE OR NOT TO CRATE?

Teaching your dog to love their appropriately-sized crate using positive reinforcement has many benefits, including providing a safe, secure place for them to settle, preventing destructive behavior or accidents when unsupervised, and providing a management tool for times when they need a break or when you need them out of the way

Do not close your dog in a crate before teaching them to settle inside comfortably. Closing a dog in a crate before they are ready can cause your dog to bark, pace, go to the bathroom, or try to escape, which can cause injury to your dog and make crate training much more difficult going forward. See our crate training handout for more information.

PLAY WHITE NOISE

Play some white noise (search white noise on youtube, classical music, sound machine, fan) to block out noises as your dog is getting used to the new space.

TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE SHELTER

DECOMPRESSION

Living at the shelter is an inherently stressful experience, and your new foster pet has been through several other stressful transitions before arriving at your home. To support them through this next transition, they will need some time to decompress, meaning:

- Keep their world small and predictable.
- Use gates, closed doors, and ex-pens to limit their access to a small part of house to start – see confinement space for more information.
- Avoid asking them to meet new people or dogs outside of your household for the first two weeks (at least).
- Avoid going out on the town or to any new environments. Ideally, you will have a firm foundation for communicating with each other before you begin to introduce new people, dogs, or places to the equation.
- Focus on observing their behavior and body language to better get to know your new dog - identify likes and dislikes, and make adjustments to their space and your interactions with them accordingly.
- Let them sniff! Walk a shorter in distance and focus on letting your dog explore their new environment. Sniffing is proven to be a calming activity, so encouraging it will help with the decompression process.

LEAVE THE LEASH DRAGGING

Have a leash dragging on your foster dog's collar at all times during his transition – at least 1-2 weeks. This will eliminate the need for close handling of his collar for putting on/taking off the leash. An additional benefit is that you can easily and gently guide him away from something you don't want him doing, like barking out the window or looking for a place to pee, for example.



MINIMIZE HANDLING

Minimize handling and petting. You will probably be tempted to scoop him up and squeeze him as I'm sure you will be excited to finally have him in your home. Please resist that urge and remember that he has gone through many stressful and confusing transitions in the past several weeks, including the transition into your home. Give him the time and space he needs to adjust at his own pace. Pay very close attention to his body language – he will tell you when he is comfortable and for how long. Allow him to spend time with you without putting your hands on him.



GUIDE TO DOG BODY LANGUAGE

We should always be paying attention to a dog's body language – it is constantly changing! Interpreting it is half the battle – using sound and quick judgement to respond accordingly is equally as important and is our responsibility as caregivers.

It is important to consider the whole picture – everything the dog is saying, and the context in which he's saying it. Attempting to create distance is often overlooked. Let them know you "heard" them by giving more space or relieving some pressure (and not just for fearful dogs!) It is your responsibility to use appropriate body language during each interaction. A few things to be aware of: 1) The direction of your shoulders, 2) Bending at the waist vs. at the knees, and 3) Reaching vs. letting the dog approach you.

HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick your hand in his face



DON'T
Lean over the dog & stick your hand on top of his head



DON'T
Grab or Hug him



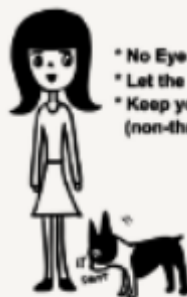
DON'T
Stare him in the eye
(This is an adversarial gesture)



DON'T
Squeal or shout in his face



DON'T
Grab his head and kiss it
(This is an invasion of space)



The correct way:

- * No Eye contact
- * Let the dog approach you in his own time
- * Keep your SIDE towards the dog (non-threatening posture)



Body Language of Fear in Dogs

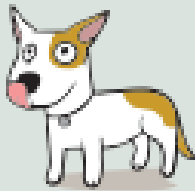


Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

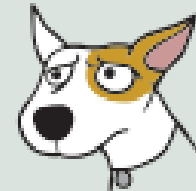
More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



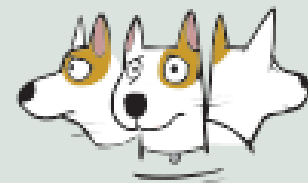
Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



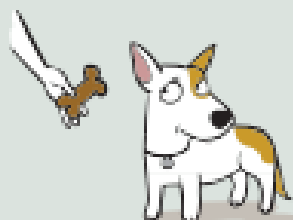
Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



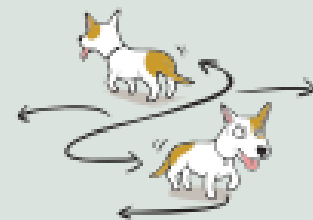
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and offer signs of appeasement and peace: See the Doggy Dos and Don'ts poster



If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clearer that they are uncomfortable: raised hackles are a sign of fear:



TAIL POSITIONS

tucked



in line with spine



high and rigid



low and wagging slowly



CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.



TAIL POSITIONS

relaxed



high and wagging quickly



casually at 45 degrees



Brought to you by **JezRose**
canine behaviour specialists

For further resources and information on dog training and behaviour, see www.JezRose.co.uk

Copyright 2011 Jez Rose. All rights reserved.

SOCIALIZATION:

WHAT IT IS VS WHAT IS ISN'T

An important part of helping your new puppy grow into a well-adjusted, emotionally resilient animal.

WHAT IT IS

- Careful, intentional intros to people, places, and things
- At a low level so your dog has a neutral or positive experience
- Paired with something good like a cookie
- Aborted if your dog exhibits fearful or overly excited behavior.



WHAT IT ISN'T

- Exposure to something new at close proximity or for a long time, regardless of the dog's response
- Passive or unstructured exposure without an option to abort if things aren't going well
- An assumption that with enough exposure your dog will figure it out on their own, outgrow, or eventually get used to something they are afraid of.



SOCIALIZATION:

new people

Let your dog approach **at his own pace**, if and when he wants to.



Associate new people with **wonderful things**.



Make sure puppies are **gently & positively exposed** to different people.



Visit parking lots and other busy places just to watch the people, animals, vehicles, etc. and feed your dog treats.



other animals

Always check that the other animal is friendly & tolerant of dogs before you let your dog approach.



Teach your dog how to act **politely around other animals** by rewarding him for good behavior. Redirect him if he's pushy or overly excited.



If your adult dog doesn't want to play with unfamiliar dogs, that's okay. Adult people don't want to play with every other person we meet either!



new things & environments

To prevent **noise phobia** (eg, fear of thunder), feed your dog a tiny treat every time the noise happens.



Take rides in a boat, train car, or elevator.



Teach your dog to **enjoy wearing a muzzle** by making it into a "treat basket" (YUM!).



Remember: **EXPOSURE** alone isn't socialization!

If your dog isn't having a great time, you could do more harm than good. Dogs don't just "get over" issues by themselves, so if your dog is shy, worried, or overly excited, leave the situation and work with a professional who can help both of you. If your dog is having a blast and is happy and comfortable, you're doing a great job of socializing him!

Pat, Pet, Pause

a dog consent test

STEP 1: PAT

Pat your leg to invite the pup over for pets!



NO THANKS

If the dog doesn't come over, he's not interested. Leave him be!

STEP 2: PET



Let the petting commence! Pet the dog gently on a safe, non-threatening area, like the chest region.

STEP 3: PAUSE

Pause your petting, pull your hand away, and wait to see how the dog responds.



MORE PLEASE!

If the dog turns away, looks away, or makes no movement, it's time to stop the petting.

If the dog looks at you, leans in, or paws at you, keep the pets coming!

ask for your dog's consent - it's the **kind** and **safe** way to treat our pets!

CONSENT

Each dog is an individual with likes and dislikes, deserving agency, or choice, over who they interact with and when. Even the happiest or most friendly dog might not want to say hello or get a pat from every new person they meet, electing instead to say “no thanks” to a snuggle, or to rest on their own for a bit. We can add to our dogs’ quality of life by giving them choice. To do that, start by becoming an expert in reading your dog’s body language, become a diligent practitioner of a “petting consent test”, and encourage people who interact with your dog (and others!) to do the same. Aim to allow your dog to initiate every interaction by waiting for them to approach you. Once they’ve approached, check for consent both before beginning to pet, and throughout your interaction to ensure they have the option to continue opting in or to let you know when they are done.

[Watch this short “petting consent test” video example presented by DogKind.](#)

credit:

infographic made by:

Pet, Pat Pause concept developed by Justine Schuurmans of The Family Dog



K9 OF MINE

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY



The philosophy that we use in our adoption centers and hope all of our clients will adopt is one based on a strong bond and clear communication between human and dog. It's not just an approach to training your dog, it's an approach to living with, supporting, and bonding with your dog.

We recommend arranging your dog's environment in a way that will make them most likely to succeed, using a rewards based methodology to teach the behaviors you want, and avoid using aversive stimuli to stop a behavior you don't want. We do not recommend the use of force as it can cause pain, injury, and/or mental suffering. To do that:



- 1. Manage the environment to prevent access to "wrong" choices, making them more likely to make the right choice.**
- 2. Good, desirable behavior should always be reinforced, even if the behavior is as simple as standing quietly and looking up at you and the reinforcement is as simple as making eye contact with a smile and telling your dog they're good. You should never assume that they know they've done the right thing, make sure you tell them every time. Likewise, you should never assume they know what the right thing to do is – they won't know unless you teach them.**



TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

3. Undesirable behavior should be minimal (because you'll do such a good job of preventing it from happening!), but when it does happen your response should be to ignore, or to neutrally end the interaction. Even if you're really frustrated, avoid yelling at or physically manipulating your dog. The last thing you want to do is anything that will make your dog afraid of you – that will make training really difficult moving forward.

Punishing a behavior does nothing to teach the dog what you'd like them to do instead. A better approach is to wait until you have both calmed down and try again to teach the right behavior. Any time the behavior you're trying to change does happen (your dog jumps up and grabs you or gets too excited), end the interaction quickly but neutrally, give your dog something to work on while they settle down, and make a mental note of what happened just before you saw those behaviors. That way you can start to predict what often leads to those undesirable behaviors so that you can better avoid them, and eventually use those as training moments to teach a more appropriate behavior instead.



TRAINING PHILOSOPHY



The goal is to always be one step ahead of your dog, to anticipate when your dog might do something you don't like so that you can redirect them to something

more appropriate before the unwanted behavior happens. Once the unwanted behavior happens, you've missed that opportunity to teach what you like instead. The more a behavior is practiced, the harder it can be to change.



A common mistake is to wait until you need your dog to perform a certain behavior to begin working on training it. For example, a family gathering with 15 people coming over is not the time to start practicing polite greetings or settling by the door. Those are skills that you should start working on ahead of time, in a distraction-free environment, so that your dog is most likely to be successful.

As they learn, you can gradually begin to introduce distractions one at a time until you reach your end goal.

Aim to say “yes” to your dog as much as possible – to do that, ensure your dog has access to the right choice! Hearing “no” all the time can be frustrating, and doesn't give any information about what you actually want from them. By focusing on arranging the environment and saying “yes” often, your dog will have more information about your expectations.

Remember that you're on the same team – you succeed when they succeed!



What is Positive Reinforcement Dog Training?

- Teaching dogs desirable behaviors using SCIENCE-based & REWARD-based methods.
- Helping dogs learn and succeed step by step.
- Motivating dogs with fun exercises and games. No force! No pain!
- Encouraging dogs to think more for themselves.
- Valuing dogs' voluntary behaviors.
- Understanding dogs' feelings from their body language.
- Understanding how dogs learn, their needs and wants.
- Using methods that work humanely with ANY dog. Big dogs, small dogs, puppies, senior dogs, disabled dogs, fearful dogs, reactive dogs... can all learn and have fun!



- ↓
- 1. develop dog's self-control**
 - 2. develop a trust relationship**
 - 3. develop dog's self-confidence**



Positive Reinforcement Training = HAPPY RELATIONSHIP



WHEN TO MANAGE, WHEN TO TRAIN

3 Steps to Modifying a Dog's Behavior

STEP #1

Rephrase the issue: Identify what you want the dog to do instead of what you want him not to do.



STEP #2

Manage: Figure out how to prevent the dog from being rewarded for the unwanted behavior, because behaviors that are rewarded are reinforced; in other words, the dog is more likely to do them again. If you can prevent the dog from being rewarded, he will be less likely to do them again. Believe it or not, this step, the management part, is often the easiest step.

STEP #3

Train: Figure out how to consistently reward your dog for the desired behavior identified in the first step. This may be the hardest part, but it will be easier to accomplish because of your Step #2 efforts.



WHEN TO MANAGE, WHEN TO TRAIN

Here are some examples of how you might use the three-step process for dealing with several behaviors commonly cited by owners as annoying and undesirable.

Example: “How do I stop my dog from jumping up?”

STEP 1 - REPHRASE:

“How do I teach my dog to greet people politely, by sitting, or at least by keeping all four feet on the floor?”

STEP 2 - MANAGE:

Control your dog’s environment to prevent her from being rewarded for jumping up on people.

You can use the following tools:

A leash or tether to restrain her as people approach; allow them to feed her a treat and/or pet her only after she sits. Crate, pen, closed doors, so when you can’t closely supervise her interactions with visitors, you can confine her to a safe area so she can’t practice her jumping-up behavior.

Education. Arm your visitors with information in advance of their first meeting with the dog so they know how to behave appropriately in response to her jumping up.

Exercise, because tired dogs tend to be better-behaved dogs.

STEP 3 - TRAIN:

Consistently reward her for sitting when she greets people. Use “negative punishment” (dog’s behavior makes a good thing go away) by turning away or stepping away when she tries to jump up.



Dr. Yin's Top 10 Dog Training Tips

DR. SOPHIA YIN, DVM, MS | © 2011

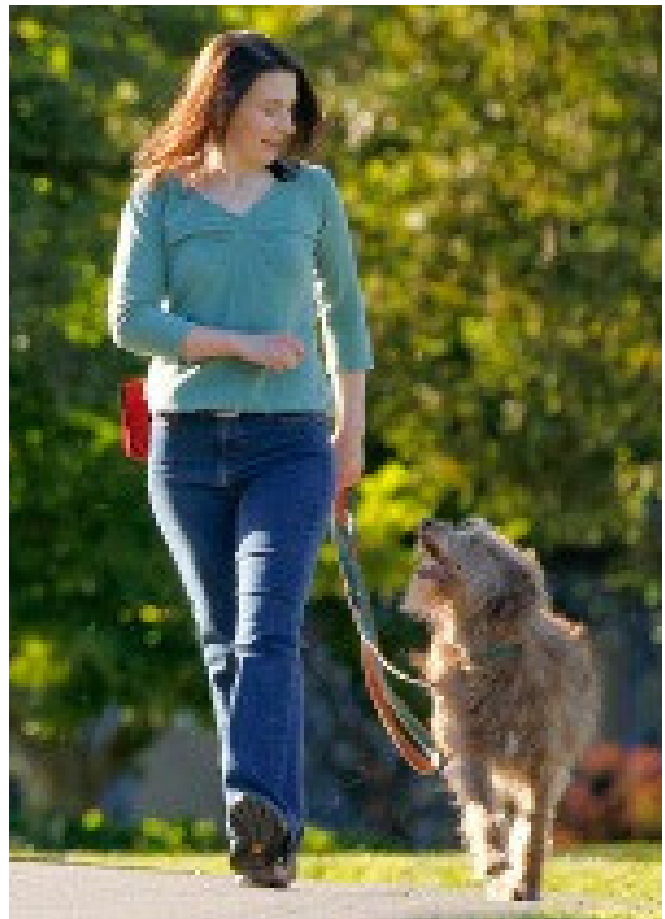
1. Every interaction you have with the animal is a training session. So it's important to be aware of what you may be doing to reward inappropriate behaviors throughout the day especially when you are not having planned training sessions.

2. Animals care about your body language and actions more than your words. Consequently, you should focus on the messages your body is giving, pay attention to your pet's response, and cut down on the words you use.

3. Animals perform behaviors that have been reinforced. In order to change behavior it's important to reinforce desired behaviors, but we also have to remove reinforcers or motivators for unwanted behaviors.

4. Training is a skill like playing tennis, dancing or playing the piano. Little variations in how you move and on the timing of the movements and rewards make a big difference in whether you can communicate your intentions to your pet. If you're not getting good results, find someone who can better instruct you on the intricacies of making the change.

5. Positive reinforcement is not just about giving treats for good behavior, it's about moving and performing the exercises in a manner and speed that make it fun. It's also about using everything your pet likes or wants, to your advantage—toys, petting, attention, access to go outside or come in, fetch..... and more.



Dr. Yin's Top 10 Dog Training Tips

DR. SOPHIA YIN, DVM, MS | © 2011

6. The goal of training is to make behaving well fun for the pet. Dogs are more likely to behave well when good behavior is fun.

7. The walk is not a time for your dog to blow you off and do his own thing, rather it's a time for you to bond with your dog and have fun. Practice exercises during your walk where your dog focuses on you as if you're playing games. The goal is that the walk becomes like an enjoyable conversation.

8. Dogs, cats, horses and other pets need exercise every day. For dogs, walks provide not only exercise but they are crucial for continued socialization to people, new environments, and other pets.

9. Throw your dog's food bowl away. Animals in the wild spend hours searching for food. They are hardwired to enjoy this behavior and studies show that given a choice, all species studied prefer to work for their food once they know how to rather than getting it for free. The best way to use food as entertainment and enrichment for the pet is to use it in training and games when you're home as this provides both food and structured interactions with you. You can also place food in toys and puzzles made specifically for such purposes of entertaining your pet.

10. I recommend you choose a food in which the label states that the animal feeding tests using AAFCO procedures substantiate that it provides complete and balanced nutrition for your pet's life stage.



CRATE TRAINING

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CRATE

To serve as a safe and comfortable place for your dog to rest, a crate should be big enough so that your dog can stand up without hitting their head on the top, turn completely around, and stretch out on their side. If possible, you should provide your dog with a soft blanket or dog bed to make their crate as comfortable as you can.

INTRODUCING THE CRATE

- Set up the crate in an area of the house that is quiet and comfortable for your dog, but that also allows visual access for both you and the dog.
- Leave the crate door open at all times.
- Periodically leave treats in the crate when the dog is not paying attention so that they find them later when they wander near or into the crate.
- Do not guide your dog toward or encourage them into the crate. Do keep a close eye on them and give lots of (calm) praise when they go in on their own.
- Anytime you see them in their crate, take a few minutes to calmly pet them from outside of the crate. If you see them lying down in the crate, pet them for even longer.
- Feed your dog meals in the crate (with the door open).
- Increasing duration of your dog staying in his crate:
- Once your dog is comfortable lying in his crate, begin to reinforce laying in that space. Do this by calmly and quietly petting for about 1 minute intervals or delivering a food reward or long lasting chew.
- Gradually increase the amount of time that your dog comfortably settles in the crate by inserting short breaks between reinforcement. If petting, remove your hands for 1 second, and then 2, then 3, etc.

CRATE TRAINING



CLOSING THE CRATE DOOR

- Once your dog can remain in the crate for about 30 minutes while you are sitting nearby, begin closing the crate door.
- Close the door for just 1 second, then open again, then pet. If they remain calm while you close the door, continue onto the next step. If at any point they try to get up, allow them to leave and re-assess the situation, you likely moved too fast. Try again next time you see them lying in their crate. Do not force them to stay in the crate or to return to the crate.
- Increase the amount of time that your dog remains comfortably settled in the crate with the door closed by providing long-lasting chews or food enrichment items while the door is closed, only when the dog was already settled. Open the door before they finish their snack, or before they begin to become restless/try to get out of the crate on their own.
- Things to keep in mind:
 - Your dog should never be closed in their crate before they are able to comfortably settle or sleep in their crate for at least one hour at a time.
 - Your dog should be relaxed throughout the training process. If at any point they try to get up, allow them to leave and re-assess the situation, you likely moved too fast. Try again next time you see them lying in his crate. Do not force them to stay in the crate or to return to the crate.
- Keep sessions short – 10-20 minutes max. (unless you are to the point where you are increasing the duration past 20 minutes).



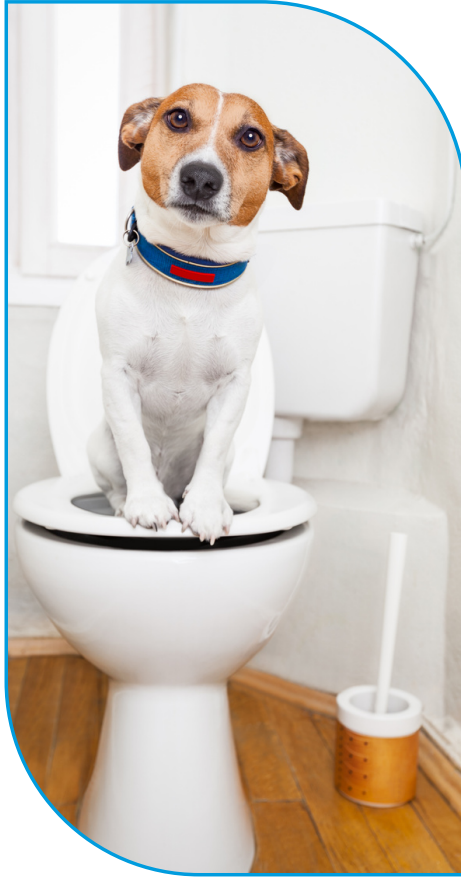
CRATE TRAINING

CLOSING THE CRATE DOOR CONTINUED

- End the session if the dog becomes anxious or restless. Ignore him for a while and do not allow access to other reinforcers immediately after the session.
- Increasing duration of your dog staying in the crate with the door closed:
- Increase the amount of time your dog can stay in their crate with the door closed in increments of 15 minutes. Vary whether they will be in his crate for long or short amounts of time (ex: they stay in the crate for 30 minutes, then 45, then 20, then 45, then 30, then 60, etc.).
- Give long breaks between each session (go for a walk, spend time together around the house, etc.)
- Continue increasing the amount of time they can stay in the crate until they can rest for 4 hours.
- When to reach out for additional support: Some dogs become stressed when confined, or struggle with behaviors related to separation distress or anxiety. If your dog struggles with the above steps, or if you observe your dog becoming restless, excessively drooling, vocalizing, attempting to escape, or other behavior that might indicate extreme stress or discomfort, contact the MSPCA for additional behavior support.

HOUSETRAINING:

CONFINEMENT, ROUTINE, ATTENTION, PLATINUM REWARDS.



Potty training dogs is not very easy, but everyone who shares their lives with dogs must do it. How to house train a puppy is slightly different than how to house train a dog, but the tools, routines and human commitment levels required to do it well are the same.

Potty-training situations are of three types: (1) dogs who have never learned the appropriate place “to go,” (2) dogs who were once housetrained but are having a training regression, and (3) dogs who are pottying involuntarily – that is, they have no control over their urination or defecation. It just happens without any intent and often without the dog even realizing it is happening at all. Let’s look at these in order.

HOUSE TRAINING FOR THE NEVER-HOUSETRAINED DOG:

Perhaps you have a brand new pup or a teen or older dog. One thing that is vitally important to building a happy interspecies household is that your new dog becomes housetrained as quickly and reliably as possible. You should be equipped and ready to start housetraining your new dog from the moment that you bring him home.

Housetraining involves more than just learning where to potty; dogs and puppies must also learn to “hold it” until they get to an appropriate potty location and how to notify you to get them there. To help dogs build these skills and to help keep us on track with our housetraining responsibilities,

I encourage people to think of housetraining in terms of **C.R.A.P.** Each letter of the acronym stands for an important part of the housetraining program: **Confinement, Routine, Attention, Platinum rewards.**

HOUSETRAINING:

CONFINEMENT

Preventing your dog from pottying in the wrong place is the first and most important housetraining task. Since most of us cannot keep our eyes on our dogs every minute, having a safe, comfortable confinement area is key to housetraining success. Most dogs naturally avoid going potty in their sleeping areas, so confining your dog in a small enough area that is more bed-like than room-like not only prevents unwanted accidents but also will help him develop bowel and bladder control.

What are appropriate confinement areas? I am a huge fan of crates, used appropriately, once dogs are comfortable with them. An area that is fenced off with a portable exercise pen or a smaller room (such as a bathroom or laundry room with a baby gate across the door) can also serve as a confinement area.

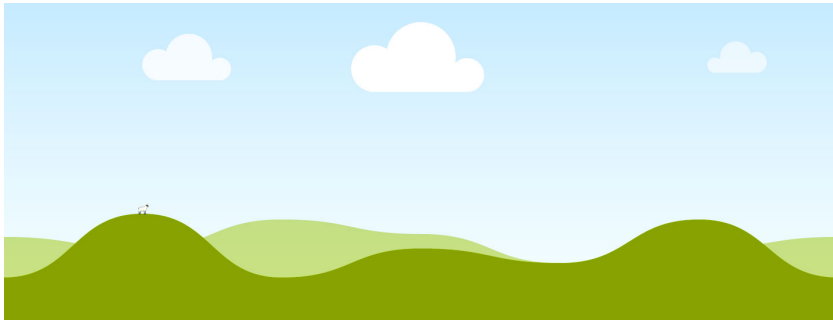
The key is that any confinement area should be small and cozy enough for your dog that he will choose “holding it” over pottying in it. When confinement is in place and used appropriately, there will be a decrease in potty accidents and an increase in bowel and bladder control.



HOUSETRAINING:

ROUTINE

Both dogs and humans benefit from a predictable, consistent housetraining routine. This routine should account for confinement time, potty breaks, meal times, play time, training time, walks, and all the other enriching activities that are part of your dog's daily life.



I recommend my clients create a written routine that includes potty breaks a minimum of every hour or two, depending on the age and situation of the dog. The general rule for “holding it” in a crate or pen is that dogs should have the ability to hold their bowels and bladder, in hours, the number of months they are plus one. So, a three-month-old pup ought to be able to hold his urine and poop for four hours. However, there are so many exceptions to this rule; most notably, that activity often makes a pup have to “go.” The best routines, then, are based on a solid understanding of your dog.

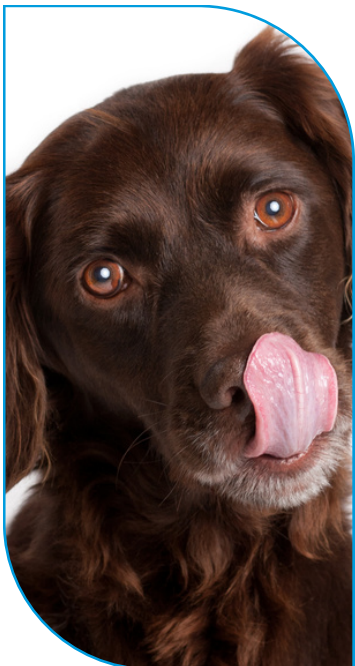
HOUSETRAINING: ATTENTION & PLATINUM REWARDS

ATTENTION

The first question I ask when a client asks me a question about a difficulty with their dog's housetraining is: "Are you catching your dog in the act of pottying inappropriately or just finding the evidence after the fact?" More often than not, people sheepishly confess that they usually find the mess after the fact – and this always means their attention needs to be improved.

There are two huge benefits to maintaining a laser focus on your dog when he is not confined. First, you can start to recognize and reward your dog's "gotta go" signals. When your dog begins to pace, circle, and sniff, you can applaud his signaling ("Awesome doggie! Let's go, go, GO!") and rush him to his potty place. Rewarding "gotta go" signals will encourage your dog to become more demonstrative when he feels the urge – communication that is as helpful to us as it is to our dogs.

Second, when we catch him in the act we can provide immediate feedback. A simple "Hey, hey!" while hustling him to his potty spot will make the point that there's a difference between the spot where he started and that special place you want him to go.



PLATINUM REWARDS

When housetraining a new dog (puppy or adult) I make sure I know what my dog considers "platinum level rewards." Housetraining is a big deal, and it requires that we acknowledge our dog's success with a fitting outcome for his or her achievement. High-value food rewards should be stored on a shelf or table by the door so you can grab them on the way out with your dog. And the rewards of praise and play should be abundantly part of the potty party that celebrates your dog's success at pottying in the proper place.

POTTY BREAK TIPS

1. You must go with your dog to the potty area so you can reward the deed when it occurs. By delivering an immediate reward, your dog quickly comes to understand that “Oh my gosh, going pee or poop in this location is nothing short of brilliant!”

2. It can be very useful to teach your dog a cue for pottying behavior. Some people use the simple phrase, “Go potty!” Others use a euphemism such as “Get busy!” Whatever phrase you use, say it once just before he starts to potty (don’t say it over and over again), and then reward and praise him mightily when he’s done. Soon, he will understand that the phrase is a cue – an opportunity to earn rewards for doing what he now knows it means: going potty. This will help him understand what you want when you take him to go potty in a new environment, or under distracting conditions he has not yet experienced.



3. If you expect your dog to potty on- and off-leash, your potty outings with your dog should sometimes be on-leash and sometimes off-leash. Why? From a dog’s point of view, pottying while on- versus off-leash can be a very different experience. Familiarizing him with both will pay off in the future.

4. While it might seem convenient to have a dog who will potty only in your yard (I call these private pottiers), it’s important that your dog learns to potty in other outdoor places, too. Indeed, I want dogs to be public pottiers (with responsible guardians who will clean up after them) so that day and even overnight outings are comfortable for all. I pity the poor dog who has learned to potty only in the privacy of his home when his family decides to bring him on a long vacation!

POTTY BREAK TIPS

5. Also in the interest of adaptability to new environments, dogs should be exposed to different surfaces as part of housetraining. Dogs can develop “substrate preference,” the willingness to potty only on specific surfaces, such as grass or concrete.

While your dog’s inclination to develop a preference for pottying on certain substrates can be helpful in creating a defined toilet space in your yard, it can also limit your dog’s adaptability to new environments if he is not allowed the option to potty on different substrates.



6. Potty outings should be mission-driven. If your dog tends to fiddle and frolic prior to pottying, restrict your dog’s access to play until the deed is done. Fiddling and frolicking can then become part of the reward.

7. If you are away from your home for extended periods of time during the day, you must have a plan for getting your dog to his potty spot in your absence. Sometimes it takes a village to housetrain a dog, with friends, family, and neighbors, perhaps assisted by professional pet sitters, dog walkers, or trainers helping with the potty outing shifts.

ENRICHMENT:

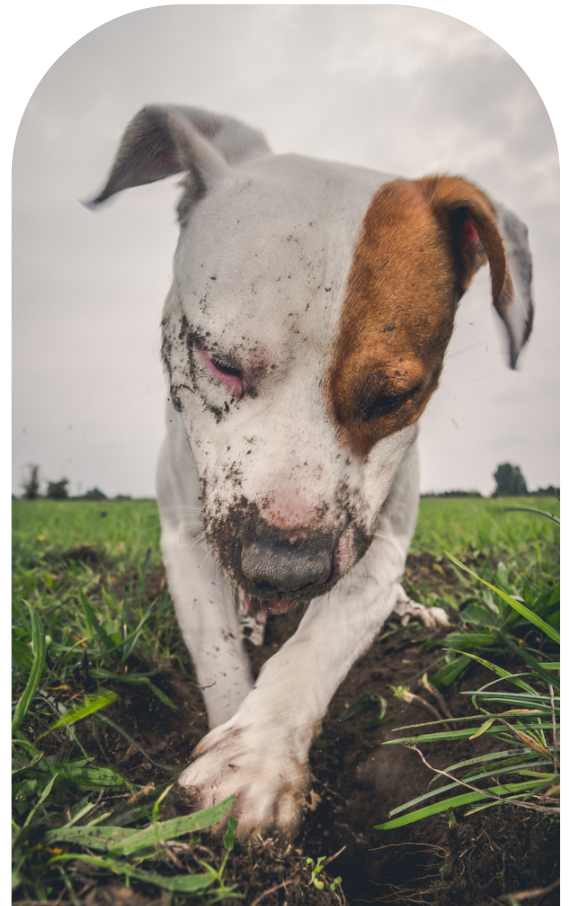
WHAT IS IT?

The term enrichment broadly refers to all of the ways that we can meet a dog's needs each day – it includes so much more than a food puzzle or a new toy! Meeting your foster dog's needs should include plenty of outlets for them to practice species-typical behaviors. Using both a dog's sensory experience and their natural tendencies, we can help them get the most out of an enrichment opportunity. For an object, activity, or interaction to be enriching, it must be something that your foster dog enjoys.

WHY IS ENRICHMENT IMPORTANT?

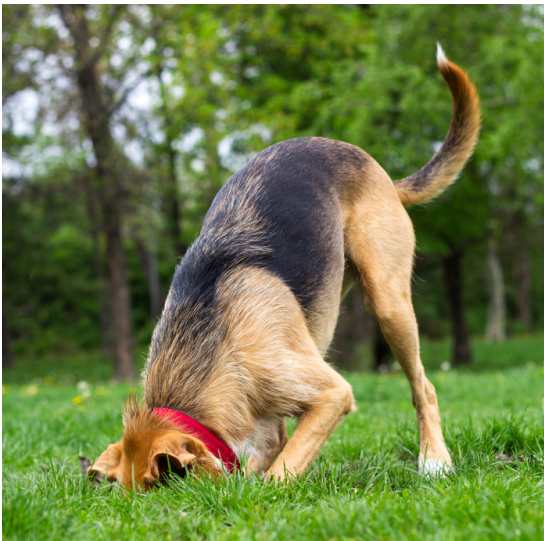
Help a dog practice desirable behaviors through structure. Using enrichment to structure your foster dog's day can address many behavior challenges resulting from boredom or stress. Chewing/destruction, picking up/seeking out household items, mouthing, barking, or jumping (to name a few) are normal, species-typical behaviors – but that doesn't make them desirable! If this were a dog's world, chewing on the coffee table, eating the trash, or barking at strangers would be no big deal: those would simply be ways that a dog meets their needs the best ways they know how.

Because we expect dogs not to destroy furniture or dig in the trash, it's our job to provide them more appropriate ways to meet their needs. By structuring their environment, schedule, and activities so that they have intentional, appropriate outlets for these behaviors, they will be more likely to behave in ways that we find desirable. Exercise and providing a stuffed Kong prior to sitting down to a long work call can help keep them out of mischief, for example. Strategically providing enrichment opportunities can also address other behavior challenges – like behaviors associated with fear, reactivity, or frustration. If your dog barks at strangers, for example, putting them in another room, playing classical music, and providing something to chew on when having family over may alleviate their stress.



ENRICHMENT:

WHAT IS IT?



Provide agency of choice to a dog's day. Dogs have preferences just like people do. Observing their behavior and body language can help us understand their preferences, allowing us to better manage their day. A dog's body language is a window into how they feel about what is happening to or around them. For example, a dog who is avoiding other dogs at the dog park, or one who is growling at someone new approaching or reaching to pet, is communicating discomfort. In both cases, we are not meeting their needs by continuing those interactions. A playdate with a familiar dog instead of a large group of dogs, or providing a hiding spot to avoid interactions with strangers in their home, might better meet their needs by providing them with greater agency.

Providing choice should include variety. Even if a person has a favorite activity or meal, they can become bored with it if it's the only choice they have every day - the same is true for dogs! Rotate through a couple of their favorites to keep things new and exciting, and be prepared to think outside of the box based on the observations you've made.

ENRICHMENT

HOW CAN YOU USE IT?

To make the most of your foster dog's enrichment, consider how they experience the world through their five senses. By incorporating their senses and incorporating activities that engage their natural tendencies, you can better design an enrichment program to meet their needs. Some activities that take these considerations into account include:

LET THEM SNIFF!

Engage their super-hero sense of smell by letting them sniff! Try a decompression walk in a quiet, novel area, or take some extra time along your normal route to let them stop and smell the roses. Consider taking a shorter, slower walk that allows for more stopping and sniffing - you'll find that your foster dog is just as tired at the end of it.



LET THERE BE HOLES!

We recognize that digging a hole in the middle of the yard might not be ideal – consider a special garden bed or kiddie pool filled with sand or dirt dedicated just to your foster dog's enjoyment. Gentle petting and brushing are other great opportunities to engage your foster dog's sense of touch, just remember to always let them opt into and out of those interactions.

NATURAL FOODIES

Most dogs love to eat – by learning what food they enjoy most, you can maximize their enrichment experience. Consider dog-safe human foods to add new flavor and texture to their meals. Try freezing their food, or using a food puzzle toy to make them their meal a bit more stimulating than just a normal food bowl. Some great brands to check out include Kong, West Paw, PetSafe, and Outward Hound.



PRO TIP: Many enjoyable enrichment activities can be frozen! Prepare your dog's meals in advance and pop them in the freezer overnight so they take even longer to consume.

ENRICHMENT

HOW CAN YOU USE IT?



SOOTHING SOUNDSCAPES

Soothing soundscapes: Research shows that certain types of music can reduce stress and help dogs relax. Give your foster dog a puzzle toy and play some classical or reggae music, white noise, an audio book or talk radio, or the clinically tested “Through a Dog’s Ear” playlist.

SCAVAGING & FORAGING

Many dogs prefer to engage with their meal in a way that is fun rather than eating it out of a bowl. Provide options for licking, chewing, and dissecting (cardboard boxes, paper towel or toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, etc.) as a part of each meal for a more relaxed and mentally exercised dog.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Taking their physical and behavioral needs into consideration, tailor an activity schedule to your specific dog. Shorter walks might meet the needs of an older or overweight dog, while few, short, leashed walks won’t cut it for a young, high-energy dog. Dogs who exhibit behaviors associated with fear or reactivity may be overwhelmed by long walks or hikes, and an active or easily aroused dog might need help learning how to “do nothing”, separately from just being tired after a good romp.



ENRICHMENT

HOW CAN YOU USE IT?

SOCIAL ENRICHMENT

Play with other animals and humans can be a great way to engage with your dog, taking their individual preferences into account. Most dogs don't love meeting every new dog in every situation – some are more selective about their friends, preferring one or two to a large group of dogs, while others prefer not to socialize with dogs at all. Similarly, some dogs love meeting new people, while others prefer to keep a smaller circle of friends. Think about how to incorporate their favorite things into their enrichment regimen.



Enrichment doesn't have to be a ton of work! Ideally, opportunities are simply structured into a dog's daily schedule. Pick options that are realistic for you, your dog, and your schedule.

Work smarter, not harder – incorporating enrichment activities to feed your dog their daily meals, taking a slow, “sniffy stroll” rather than a brisk walk in the neighborhood, or turning commercial breaks into short training sessions, can make a world of difference for your foster dog.

As a foster caregiver, MSPCA-Angell will supply you with everything you need to provide your foster dog enrichment. Check out some DIY ideas and commercially available enrichment products below!

DIY CANINE ENRICHMENT

FOR THE DISSECTOR:

Hide smelly snacks inside, layer inside of each other!

- Paper Towel Tube/toilet
- Paper Bag
- Busy Box
- Egg Carton

FOR THE SETTLER

- Pupsicles
- Frozen bowls

FOR THE FORAGER

- Food Scatter:
 - Beginner: On a smooth surface like hardwood or a carpet/rug
 - Intermediate: In the grass
 - Expert: In the snow
- Pipe Feeder (PVC with holes drilled)
- Towel Maze "bowl"
- Stacked Tupperware, cups or boxes with treats inside.

PURCHASABLE CANINE ENRICHMENT

KIBBLE DISPENSER

- Kong Wobbler
- magic mushroom
- starmark Bob-a-lot
- Kibble Nibble

LICKY MATS

PUZZLE TOYS

SNUFFLE MATS

PUZZLE BOWLS

HOLLOW FOOD DISPENSERS

For canned food, meat, squeeze cheese, etc.

- Kong
- West Paw Toppl
- Orbee
- Twist'n Treat

CHEWIES

- Bully Stick
- Himalayan/Yak Chew

ENRICHMENT

A DOG'S EMOTIONAL CUP

A Dog's Emotional Cup

Every dog has a cup that needs to be filled—with social connection, security, access to reinforcers, and enrichment.

Some dogs seem to have a full cup most of the time, either because of a genetic pre-disposition, or because they have learned good ways to get a refill.

Most things that dogs do are completely normal—including the annoying stuff, like DIGGING up the garden, CHASING cats, or BARKING at the mailman. But all dogs show signs of stress when their cups get near empty.



Signs your dog may be coping with an empty cup

- * hoarding resources, over-protective
- * over-reacting, or shutting down when exposed to new things
- * restlessness
- * slow to recover from exciting events
- * changes in appetite
- * escalating behaviors to get something or to get away from something
- * increased grumpiness, or flare-ups
- * intense social appeasement

what refills a dog's cup:

- ♥ Doing Dog Things: SNIFFING, CHEWING, FORAGING, BARKING, DIGGING, PLAYING
- ♥ Being included in the family (dogs/humans)
- ♥ Freedom to move
- ♥ Freedom to make choices
- ♥ Ability to control outcomes and get reinforcers
- ♥ Unconditional love and attention
- ♥ Good health: nourishing food, no parasites, etc.
- ♥ Having a safe, quiet place to rest
- ♥ Predictable routines and interactions
- ♥ Getting to do things a dog loves to do

what empties a dog's cup:

- ♣ Social isolation
- ♣ Long periods of confinement with no enrichment
- ♣ Poor nutrition, untreated illness, or pain
- ♣ Denied access to reinforcers
- ♣ Scary or unpredictable reactions from important humans
- ♣ Over-stimulation (over-exercised) or not enough
- ♣ Set up to fail, and then punished for it
- ♣ No preparation for challenging situations
- ♣ Unclear training: not knowing how to get reinforcement
- ♣ No one responding when expressing a need
- ♣ Too much "impulse control" (i.e. no sniffing, no eating, no exploring, no barking, no doing Dog Things) for too much of the day



DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

The MSPCA does not guarantee the disposition of any pet. For this reason, if there are resident dogs in the home, we always encourage you to bring your pet in to meet any foster dog. We may require it depending on the dog. Introductions provide information about how dogs may do living together, but cannot alone guarantee success. Plan to start with complete separation in the home, and contact the Foster Care Coordinator with any issues.



DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

MANAGEMENT FIRST

It is a good idea to have a thoughtful plan prior to bringing a foster dog home. Avoid putting your foster dog and resident dog together in the first week with the hopes that they will “work things out”. When you cannot supervise the dogs together, use confinement of one of the pets in a room or crate. This may be something you have to do for the duration of your fostering experience. Even the best dog friends can get into scuffles, so it is better to avoid this by confining one animal so they remain safe in your absence.

REWARD CALM BEHAVIOR

Try to have each introduction be a positive one. Use treats and/or petting for both pets. Carry treats with you or stash treats in small containers around in the different parts of your home where the animals cannot get to them. Ask relatives or friends to assist you as you may need two people to reward good behavior for both dogs.

SAFTY ZONES

Ensure there are safe, comfortable places for both dogs to rest away from each other, separated by a physical barrier. Both should also have a “safety zone” where they have access to their own bed, water bowl, toys, etc. that the other dog doesn’t have access to throughout their transition.

PATIENCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Animals who have just moved into a new home require a period of time to decompress as they transition into their new environment with their new foster family, regardless of whether or not their foster family includes another animal. Likewise, having a new dog in your home can be quite the adjustment for a resident dog, even for animals who have successfully lived with another animal before. Being patient and progressing through your plan slowly is your best chance at creating lasting, positive relationships between your established dog and your new dog.

DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS



OUTDOORS VS. INDOORS

For some dogs, meeting outside on a walk is a good first step. If both dogs are comfortable being outdoors and exploring their environment, and you have two handlers to safely execute an introduction on a walk or in the backyard, that could be a good place to start. Other dogs are more fearful about their environment, or there may only be one handler available, in which case the introduction should start inside. If you begin your introduction outside, you will still want to follow the indoor recommendations for introducing the dogs, and their behavior is often quite different depending on where they are. Remember to take things slow, with the goal of creating a long-lasting, stable relationship between your established dog and your new family member.





DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

STEPS TO INTRODUCE

OUTDOORS - STEP 1

If possible, start by going for a walk together. Give the dogs plenty of space and give them ample opportunity to explore the environment. Select for grassy, smelly areas that are more conducive to sniffing. Walk closely enough that the dogs can see and smell each other but far enough away that they each have their own space. Try your best to keep each dog's leash as loose as possible. If they are showing interest in meeting each other, allow them to walk alongside each other, but try to keep the momentum moving forward. If both dogs appear loose and comfortable, proceed to Step 2.

OUTDOORS - STEP 2

Begin walking alongside each other. Once both dogs appear loose and comfortable, allow them to interact with each other while standing in place, if they want. Calmer dogs may sniff each other's faces, or circle around each other and sniff each other's hind end. More energetic dogs may become playful, play-bowing and jumping up toward or on each other. Remember to keep the leashes loose as much as possible. As the dogs move around each other, it is possible that the two leashes will become entangled. Move with your dog so that you are always behind him, and try your best to keep both leashes free from each other so that the dogs can be separated if necessary. Do not allow one dog to stand with his front feet placed on the other dog. Pay close attention to each dog's body language. If either dog becomes tense, stiff or still, if the hair above the base of the tail or over the shoulders is raised, or if either dog growls or barks, call and guide both dogs in opposite directions away from each other. Keep this initial interaction short (between 5-10 seconds), even if they seem to be getting along. This will help both dogs from becoming over-aroused and will give them both a break.



DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

STEPS TO INTRODUCE

INDOORS

note that these are recommended timelines. You'll make decisions to move more quickly or more slowly based on the behavior of all dogs involved. Don't rush! Go as slowly as necessary for each dog to be comfortable before moving to the next step.

INDOORS - STEP 1

Start with the dogs physically separated by a closed door, baby gate, or other secure object. If either dog is particularly excited or worried, try covering the gate with a blanket to limit visual access. Engage each dog in a calm activity like chewing on a bone or playing with a foot toy. Always supervise both dogs when they are interacting with each other through the baby gate. Keep interactions short (no longer than 30 seconds), and reinforce (pet, praise, feed) calm behavior and loose body language in both dogs. Keep a leash clipped to both dogs' collars. If either dog appears stiff, still, if the hair above the base of the tail or over the shoulders is raised, or if either dog barks or growls, calmly lead both dogs away from the barrier. Once the dogs are able to appropriately remain calm in the presence of the other dogs consistently for several days, move to Step 2.

INDOORS - STEP 2

Allow both dogs to be in the same room of the house. Both dogs should be supervised at all times if they are not separated by a physical barrier. Leave leashes clipped to both dogs' collars so that you can easily guide them away from each other when necessary.

INDOORS - STEP 3

Continue to closely supervise both dogs whenever they are free together for the next several weeks. They should not be left together without supervision during this time.

Most dogs who enjoy the social companionship of other dogs will adjust to each other over the course of several weeks together. By maintaining a slow and deliberate introduction plan, you are giving both dogs the best chance to have positive experiences with each other.

DOG TO DOG INTRODUCTIONS

BODY LANGUAGE & TIPS



PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO BODY LANGUAGE



CALM DOGS:

Low/neutral tail position with gentle, sweeping wag, relaxed muscles along the dog's body and around his ears, eyes and mouth. Dogs exhibiting calm body language can continue with supervised interaction.



ACTIVE OR PLAYFUL DOGS:

Play-bows with fast, loose tail wag, bodies wagging from side to side, jumping around or on each other, nipping at each other's feet or neck. These dogs should be allowed to play for a while but should be taking regular breaks to keep from becoming over-aroused.



NERVOUS OR FEARFUL DOGS:

Body and head low to the ground, tail low or tucked between the legs, ears back, lip licking. Dogs exhibiting nervous or fearful body language can continue with supervised interaction, but should be provided regular breaks.

OTHER TIPS

If one dog is more nervous or fearful than the other dog, the interaction should proceed at a pace that the nervous or fearful dog is comfortable with.

If either dog is uncomfortable at any point in the introduction, separate the dogs immediately.

If one or both dogs consistently has the hair above his tail or over his shoulder raised, is stiff or still, or is growling, barking or lunging toward the other dog, separate the dogs and contact the Foster Coordinator.

Dog to Cat Introductions

MANAGEMENT FIRST

It is always a good idea to have a well thought out plan prior to bringing a new pet home. Always avoid putting dogs and cats together in the first week with the hopes that they will “work things out”. When you cannot supervise your cat and dog together, use confinement of one of the pets in a room or crate. This may be something you do for the life of your cat and dog. Even the best dog and cat friends can get into scuffles. It is better to avoid this by confining one animal so they remain safe in your absence.

REWARD CALM BEHAVIOR

Try to have each introduction be a positive one. Use treats and/or petting for both pets. Carry treats with you or stash treats in small containers around in the different parts of your home where the dog cannot get to them. Ask relatives or friends to assist you as you may need two people to reward the good behavior of both the cat and dog.

- Calm behavior in a dog includes a loosely moving body; gently, wagging tail and soft eye contact.
- Calm behavior in a cat includes their tail may be moving steadily, not in a fast or mechanical way; ears up in a normal position.
- In both species, you would see no hair standing up on their back and no puffed tail.
- If either animal fixes their gaze on the other and will not break focus, barks, growls, hisses, becomes stiff or lunges, please call for assistance from the foster coordinator.



Dog to Cat Introductions

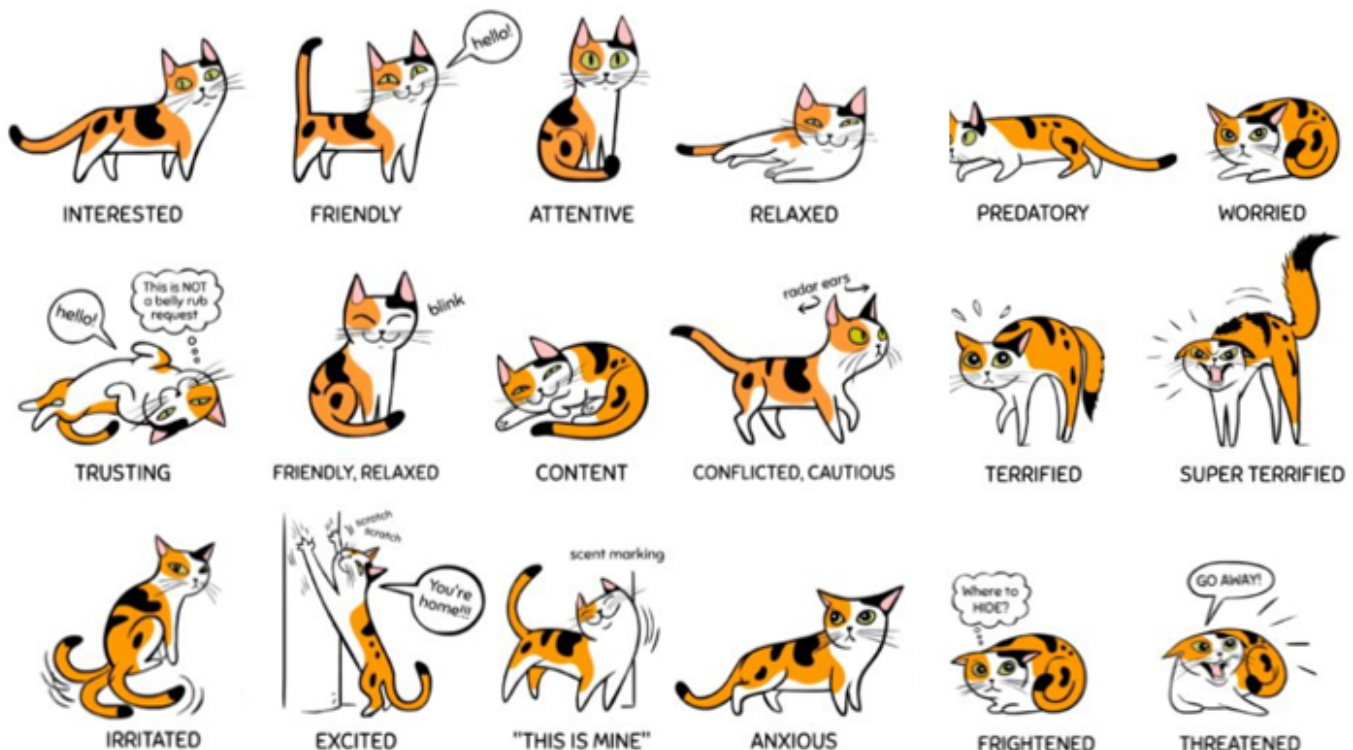
SAFETY ZONES

Ensure there are high places for the cat to escape out of the way of dog. The cat should also have a “safety zone” where litter boxes, food and water are kept, but the dog cannot gain access to them. Using a cat door installed in an interior door, a baby gate with a small hole cut into it or raised off the ground are great ways to allow cats to move away from dogs in a home when they want to do so. Use crates for dogs so they can eat or have a nap without pressure from an inquiring cat. **ALWAYS CONFINE THE FOSTER DOG WHEN YOU CANNOT BE DIRECTLY SUPERVISING HIM.**

PATIENCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

Even dogs and cats that have lived with the other species can take weeks or months to adjust to a new family member. Being patient and doing things slowly is your best chance at creating lasting, positive relationships between your dog and cat.

CAT LANGUAGE





CONGRATULATIONS

YOU DID IT!



Your foster dog has been adopted! You've found them a wonderful new home! The staff at the MSPCA greatly appreciate your time, energy and dedication. You are making such an impact in a dog's life.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to make fostering easier and more rewarding. On behalf of all the pets and staff, we thank you!