

*Live Love*  
Animal Rescue

## Foster Training Manual

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mission &amp; Vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Board of Directors</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fostering 101</b>	<b>4</b>
Setting Up Your Space	4
Decompression	5
Crate Training	6
Establishing A Routine	7
Integration into the Resident Pack	8
General Training	12
Marketing for Adoption	17
<b>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</b>	<b>19</b>

## Contact Information

**General questions or concerns:** email [woof@liveloveanimalrescue.org](mailto:woof@liveloveanimalrescue.org) for a response within 24 hours

## Mission & Vision

Live Love Animal Rescue's mission is to save homeless animals by providing them a lifelong commitment to their well-being. We take in dogs from all situations and often find ourselves rescuing the most extreme behavior and medical cases. Live Love Animal Rescue is dedicated to ensuring these dogs are healed and brought to the greatest possible quality of life and placed in loving, responsible, committed foster, and then permanent homes. While in the care of foster homes, all dogs are healed, spayed or neutered, fully vaccinated, and receive behavioral training as needed prior to adoption. The ultimate goal is to find our rescued dogs a forever home of their own and for those that are too ill, they will remain in our rescue family as Forever Fosters and be cherished for all of their days.

We partner with local rescues, the shelter, and city government to develop a network of volunteers and supporters that can transform Long Beach into a no-kill city for all animals.

Live Love acts with fiscal responsibility to ensure that we meet our commitments to our rescue dogs. We act with gratitude and respect to our network of volunteers, fosters, and supporters that provide countless hours of work, support, and donations. Our rescue board, officers, volunteers and fosters act with courtesy, kindness, and respect as a member of the Long Beach community and greater rescue network.

## Board of Directors

[Emily Ann Peters](#), Founder & Executive Director

[Lisa Darcy](#), Vice President & Adoptions Coordinator

[Angela Robinson](#), Grants Lead

[Cecile Lindsay](#), Adoptions Event Coordinator

[Megan Sturdevant](#), Volunteer Coordinator

# Fostering 101

## Setting Up Your Space

You want to make sure you are providing your foster dog a safe, quiet space to decompress from his/her time in the shelter. You will be provided a crate, bed/blanket(s), food, leash, collar with an ID tag, and harness if needed. If you feel you need anything else, don't hesitate to ask!

- **Crate:** Set up the crate in a separate room or in a quieter area where the foster dog can be given space away from the resident dog(s) and other pets.
- **Feeding:** Plan to feed your foster dog separately from your resident dog(s). You may feed your foster dog in his/her crate or in a separate room.
- **Mindset:** Understand that fostering won't always be easy. With patience, consistency, and love, you will make great progress! We are here to support you every step of the way, so don't be afraid to ask for guidance.
- **Energy:** Be aware of the energy you are exhibiting. The dog is aware and is already responding based on your energy; either you mirror the dog's energy or s/he mirrors yours. As a leader, you need to have the dog mirroring your calm and balanced energy.
  - Try to avoid getting frustrated or angry when something doesn't go as planned with your foster dog (which it inevitably will!). Take a deep breath, and back up a step or two in the process.
  - The more you can break down a goal into incremental steps, the more success you can achieve and celebrate!

## Decompression

\*Text adapted from Gentle Jake's Coonhound Rescue\*

- **Definition:** After the stress of being in a shelter environment, dogs need a “decompression” period to help them return to a calm, relaxed, SAFE state of mind.
- **Rationale:** The shift from shelter to home may be happy and exciting for you, but it can be confusing and scary for a dog. Showering the dog with affection and “fun” new experiences may make you feel good, but this isn't about you. This is about what is best for the dog.
- **Procedure:** For at least 1-2 weeks, your foster dog's life should be incredibly simple and boring.
  - Have a daily routine planned out prior to the dog coming home. From bathroom breaks to crate time, to short walks in quiet boring places, the entire day should be on a schedule.
  - Dogs find comfort in routine more than they do belly rubs and cuddles. For that reason, keep the affection to a minimum.
  - Remember that “you get what you pet,” so whatever state of mind the dog is in, you reinforce that when giving affection. Only give affection when the dog is displaying calm behavior, and they will learn to be calm more often.

### Trigger Stacking

Dogs get stressed with changes - some cause more stress than others. In a normal situation, dogs may experience one “trigger” or stressor at a time, and be able to react appropriately to it.

- Part of the reason decompression is so important is that it helps avoid “trigger stacking” for the foster dog.
- A dog coming out of the shelter is experiencing A LOT of changes all at once, which can lead to them becoming overwhelmed with stress.
- Dogs will choose fight or flight - either of these responses can lead to a dangerous situation for both dog(s) and humans.
- Introduce changes slowly to set your foster dog up for success.
- Watch [this video](#) to learn about trigger stacking and stress hormones.
- For more in-depth information on trigger stacking, read [this article](#).

## Crate Training

Crate training is an essential component of decompression, training, and helping a dog become more adoptable.

- Using a crate begins with your mindset - if you view the crate as a negative tool, so will your foster dog. So make it a positive, happy place! Think of it as the dog's safe space, like a den.
- A crate should be large enough to stand up and turn around in, but not so large that the dog will be tempted to potty in it.
  - It should have a soft bed to lay on and can even be covered by a blanket or towel (to create a den-like feeling).
  - Allow the dog to associate good things with the crate by providing meals, delicious treats, and toys in the crate.
- Not all dogs will take to the crate immediately. Start with short time periods and work your way up to longer ones.
- Stay consistent! Don't give in to whining.
- Going into and coming out of the crate should be a calm transition. Provide incentives for the dog to enter, and wait until they are calm to allow exit.
- Crate training is also our main tool to aid in potty training.





## Establishing A Routine

Dogs thrive on routine! The more they can predict what will be happening around them, the more comfortable they will feel.

- Any unsupervised time should consist of the dog being in the crate.
- Make sure to go straight from the crate to a potty break each time the dog comes out, to avoid any accidents in the house.
  - If you have a foster who tends to “mark” in inappropriate places, we can provide belly bands while crate and potty training is in progress.
- Provide crate rest time after each meal. At least one hour is recommended, especially for large breed dogs, to aid in digestion and avoid bloat.

Example Daily Routine:

- Morning walk with leash training
- Morning feeding
- Crate rest for several hours with Kong or safe chew toy
- Basic training exercises (look, sit, down, come, place, threshold work)
- Unstructured playtime with dog’s toy of choice
- Crate rest for several hours with Kong or safe chew toy
- Afternoon walk with leash training
- Evening feeding
- Crate rest for one hour with Kong or safe chew toy
- Evening potty break walk, unstructured
- Basic training exercises (look, sit, down, come, place, threshold work)
- Bedtime in the crate

## Integration into the Resident Pack

### Slow Integration is Key:

- Note that you don't need to integrate the foster and resident dogs at all. You may keep them completely separate if that's what's best for the foster dog. However, if you choose to integrate, it's best to start the process outside of the home environment, and after AT LEAST 1-2 weeks of decompression time.
- It is helpful to have another person help you during the integration process - one person handling one dog is ideal.
- If you have more than one resident dog, integrate them one at a time with the foster dog, starting with the most "balanced" of your resident pack.
- If you're ever feeling uncomfortable with moving to the next step, slow down or go back to the previous step until you do feel comfortable. Your dog(s) will sense your unease which will make them uncomfortable as well.
- Anytime you are working on integration, make sure both dogs have been exercised beforehand. This will help with the calm state of mind.
- Watch [this short video](#) outlining the process.  
\*Note, we do not encourage the use of tie-downs as suggested in this video. We prefer leashes instead!

### Step 1: Walks

- Take the foster dog and resident dog(s) on a walk together.
- At first, do not allow any interaction between the dogs. Maintain enough distance between them that neither dog becomes overly excited.
- Once you get a calm state of mind from both dogs, you may begin to allow sniffing or minimal interactions. No nose-to-nose interactions.
- Practice these walks as many times as you need before moving on to the next step. Make sure both dogs exhibit calm behavior around one another.

### Step 2: Yard

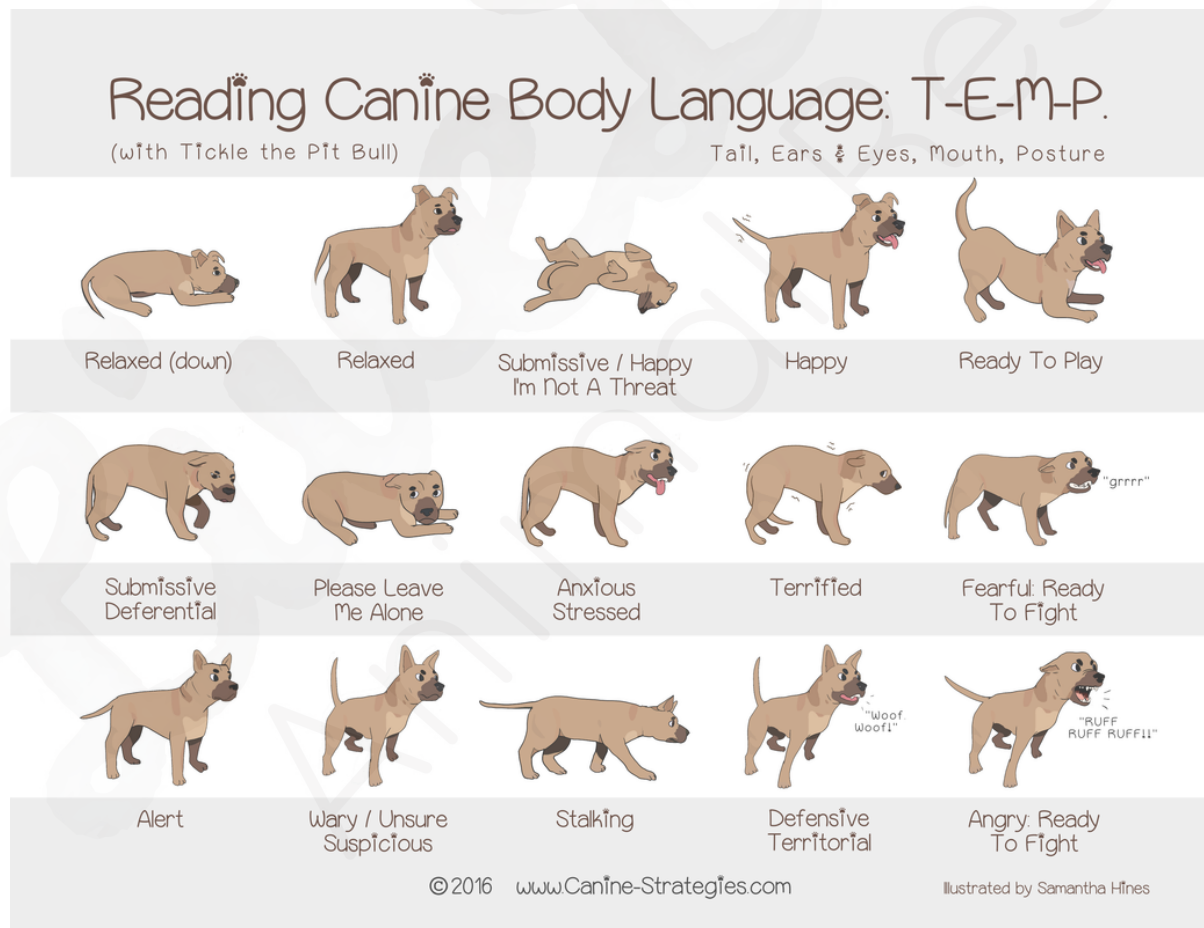
- Allow the dogs to interact in the yard, each dragging a leash.
- If the energy begins to ramp up, you may pick up the leashes and redirect the dogs.
- Again, make sure both dogs are able to exhibit calm behavior around one another before moving onto the next step.



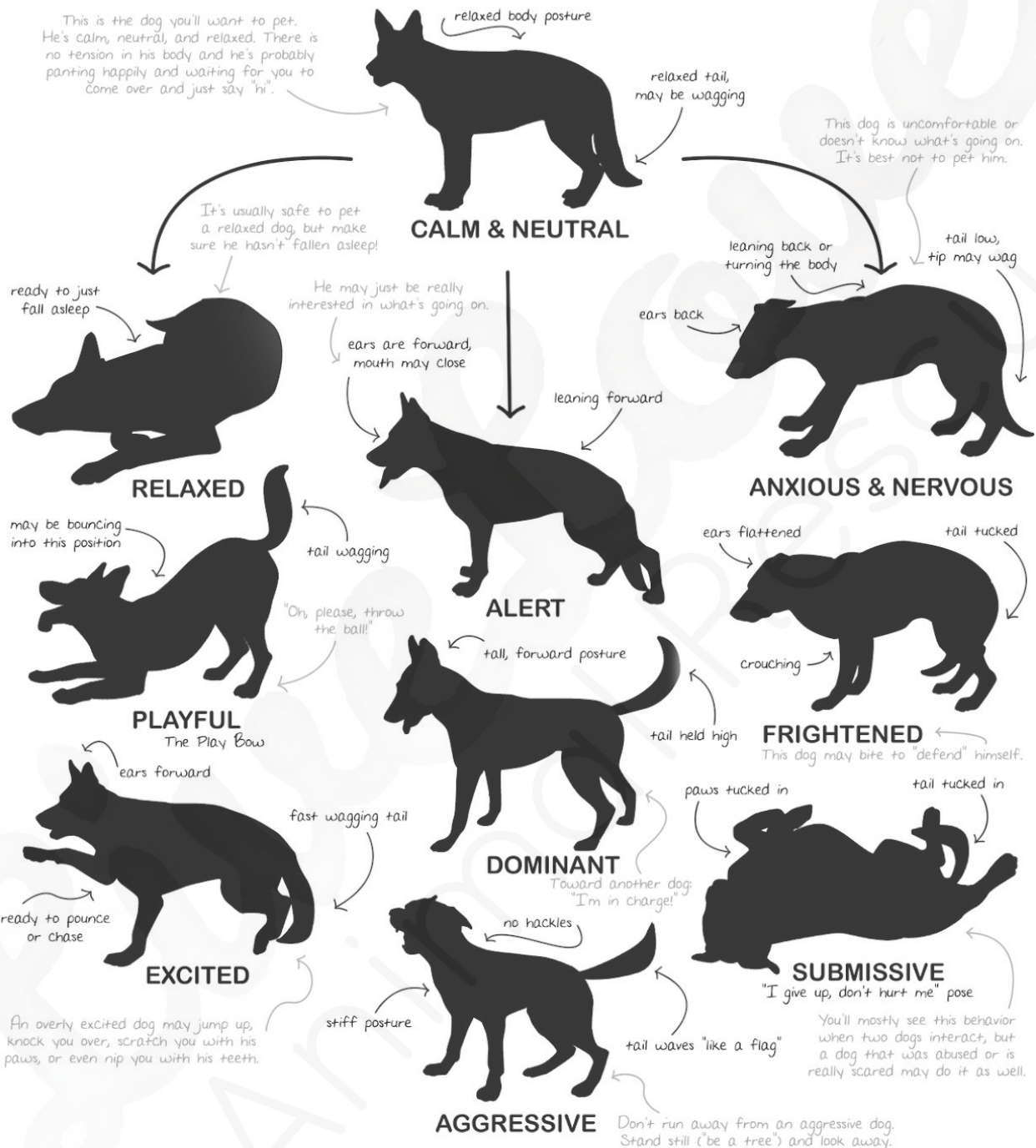
### Step 3: House

- Allow the dogs to interact inside the house, each dragging a leash. Once both dogs are behaving calmly, you may allow interactions without leash-dragging.
- Start with small increments of time together and allow longer periods of time together if they are staying calm.
- Make sure to keep food, toys, and other high-value objects out of reach of the dogs when they are together in order to avoid resource guarding.
- Make sure to supervise dog-to-dog interactions AT ALL TIMES. Never leave your foster and resident dog(s) alone together, unless one or both are crated.

When deciding how quickly to move through the steps of integration, keep in mind the body language the dogs are exhibiting. You want **relaxed, calm, or neutral** body language from all dogs involved in the integration!



# DOG TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION CHART



COPYRIGHT 2010, DOGS FOR DEFENSE K-9 - ONLINE AT [WWW.DFDK9.COM](http://WWW.DFDK9.COM)

For more information on integrating a new foster dog into the home, check out [Bad Rap's guide](#).

You can also read through a real-life example of integrating a new dog on [Bad Rap's blog](#).

The concept "Crate, Gate, and Wait" is an easy way to remember how to integrate a new dog! Pitty Pawfessors (formerly known as Lucky Dog Human Education) and iPittytheBull collaborated on [this amazing presentation](#).

## General Training

For all training that occurs, short sessions are key. You will make more progress with 3 sessions of 5 minutes spaced throughout the day than you will with 1 session of 15 minutes.

This holds true for walks as well - the goal does not always need to be to make it around the block, but rather to strengthen the leader/ follower relationship between you and your foster dog. Always try to end all training sessions and walks on a positive note!

Keep in mind that training will take time. Take as long as it takes, stay calm, and work in small, incremental steps. You can do this!

### Rules, Boundaries, and Limitations

- Your foster dog is coming into your home, so it is up to you to create and enforce rules, boundaries, and limitations for your foster dog.
- It is completely acceptable to give your foster dog different rules than your resident dog(s). Both dogs are at different places in their unique journeys and may require different rules.
- The more structure we give the foster dog, the quicker their rehabilitation, training, and adoption can happen.
- One of the most important boundaries to set up is **not to allow the foster dog onto the couch or into your bed**. While this often seems like the nice thing to do, it can lead to behavior concerns down the road.
- Bad Rap suggests that you wear your “Boss Hat” and has some simple solutions to common problems in a multi-dog household in [this video](#).
- An important skill in creating rules, boundaries, and limitations is using your body language to direct a foster dog, as seen [here](#).

### Exercise, Discipline, and Affection

- Exercise is the first step in creating the calm mindset that you want in your foster dog.
- “Discipline” is simply training and mental stimulation - this is not to be viewed as a negative but as a fulfillment of the dog’s needs!
- Affection is a reward once exercise and discipline have been fulfilled, and you have your foster dog in a calm and relaxed state.

## Threshold Training

Threshold training helps the foster dog remain calm during transitions. Threshold training can be frustrating for fosters, but remember to take it very slowly and in incremental steps.

- **Doorways** - do not allow your foster dog to rush out the door. Whether they sit or stand calmly at the doorway, the goal is that you do not open the door or walk out until the dog is calm.
- **Crate** - do not allow your foster dog to rush out the door. Only allow exit when the dog is calm. You can use the crate door to block the foster dog if they try to rush out.
- **Feeding** - Put your foster dog into a sit and gain eye contact before placing the bowl down. Eventually, add in a “stay” or “wait” so you can place the bowl down before the dog jumps into eating. You can use “okay” or a similar release command.
- See an example of crate threshold training and doorway threshold training [here](#).

## Leash Training

Just like threshold training, leash training should be broken down into small, incremental steps. It’s important to teach the foster dog to follow you, their leader, rather than allow them to run the show. Some walks should be structured and some should be unstructured - see below for the difference.

- **Leashing up** - ask for a “sit” or calm behavior before attaching the leash. If the dog gets excited, either remove the leash and start over, or wait until the dog calms down before moving on.
- **Exiting the house** - use the doorway procedure from threshold training. Make sure that you walk out the door before the dog, or side by side with the dog.
- **Structured walking** - the focus is to create a follower mentality in the foster dog. You set the pace and direction, and don’t allow the foster dog to sniff or eliminate anywhere (you choose location). In this case, allow elimination before the walk begins so the dog is not uncomfortable. Focus on having the foster dog walk next to or behind you.
  - The “here” or “heel” command can be a good tool in building the follower mentality in the dog, as seen in [this video](#).
  - While you begin to teach this skill, you will be changing directions a LOT so the foster dog begins to learn that they need to follow you.



- **Unstructured walking** - this is your typical walk. The dog can sniff and eliminate as needed. You still want to focus on having the foster dog walking next to or behind you.
- **Entering the house** - again, use the doorway procedure from threshold training. Entering and exiting the house should be the same in terms of calm behavior.

### **Obedience Training**

Try not to “talk” too much or repeat commands. Hand signals are helpful when teaching dogs commands, as they are more visual than auditory learners. Some possible hand signal cues are provided.

- Look (point to eyes) - this is the best command to help your foster dog stay focused on you.
- Come (sweep arm inward) - recall is extremely important in emergency situations.
- Sit (sweep arm upward) - use treats to lure the dog into a sit, then reward. Build up the duration.
- Down (sweep arm downward) - use treats to lure the dog into a down, then reward. Build up the duration.
  - Some small dogs have trouble with the down command. If you have difficulty teaching “down” to a small dog, [try this](#).
- Stay (flat hand outward) - can be practiced in conjunction with sit or down. Reward very small increments of time when first teaching stay, and build up. You can also play around with slowly increasing your distance from the foster dog.

### **Place Training**

The place command is used to instruct the dog to settle calmly in a specified spot. It helps dogs practice a calm state of mind, respect boundaries, and ignore distractions, among other things. Many trainers use a place board (Kuranda bed) to teach this command, but you can really use anything.

- To start, lead the foster dog to the “place” and use the verbal command as their paws are about to touch the place.
- All 4 paws should be on place. Having the dog sit or lay down on place is also helpful.
- Always invite the dog off place or release place when you are done.
- Build up duration and distance as the foster dog gets better.



- *Never correct or punish the dog for breaking place.* We want “place” to be purely positive. Instead, use your body to provide spatial pressure, or use the leash to lead the dog back to place. Release when you are finished.
- A more in-depth look at place training can be seen [here](#).

## Corrections

We aim to keep all training experiences as positive as possible - reward calm, appropriate behavior with affection and/or treats, and ignore/ redirect undesirable behavior whenever possible. But what do you do if you just can't get your foster dog to “snap out of it?”

- Proximity is an important factor if a dog is reacting negatively - try to create distance from the trigger until the dog is able to listen and respond to you.
- Using a leash can help you direct the dog away from a trigger.
- Redirection vs. Blocking
  - Redirection involves moving the dog's attention away from a lower-level trigger. Treats can be helpful in this situation.
  - Blocking involves using your body and spatial pressure to help move the dog away from a higher-level trigger. Get between the dog and the trigger, and then guide the dog away.
  - If redirection doesn't work in a given situation, you may need to move to blocking. A leash is also helpful here!
- Correction vs. Punishment
  - Punishment is punitive and involves acting on a negative emotion.
  - Correction is teaching and focused on the dog's needs, not yours.
  - We want to correct the foster dog, not punish!
  - Every dog will respond differently to corrections based on the trigger, the dog's personality, and the correction itself. Some possible corrective methods to try (only if needed!) are:
    - i. canned air (such as Pet Corrector)
    - ii. soda can with pennies
    - iii. spray bottle with water
  - If you have success with one of these corrective methods to help a dog “snap out of” a negative reaction, then move to redirecting them to a more desirable behavior that you can reward!

### **Other Mental Stimulation Ideas**

Mental stimulation can often be more energetically draining to a dog than physical exercise. If you are fostering a high-energy dog, you may need more than just exercise and training to keep their minds active. If so, try some of these ideas:

- Kong toys - put some peanut butter (that contains NO xylitol) or wet dog food and a few pieces of kibble inside a Kong toy. Freeze it for a longer-lasting experience!
- Kong Wobblers - have your foster dog eat their normal kibble out of this - they have to bop it around to get the kibble out!
- Hide and seek - hide treats around the house or yard for your foster dog to sniff out. You can also do this with a toy if your foster dog enjoys fetch.
- Puzzle toys - let your foster dog use their brain to figure out how to get the treats! There are many types of puzzle toys in varying degrees of difficulty.
- Snuffle mat - similar to hide and seek, hide treats inside the snuffle mat and let your foster dog use his/her nose to find them all.

## Marketing for Adoption

Our ultimate goal is to find each and every dog a loving forever home. You can help us make that happen by helping us market them for adoption.

- Social media is a wonderful tool - Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor, and other networking sites are great places to share photos, videos, and stories about your foster dog.
  - 70% of our dogs find their forever family via social media. The next most common route is meeting the foster dog out in public or knowing the foster family. Set your pup for success by making him or her a social media star!
  - When sharing photos, tag [Live Love Animal Rescue](#) on Facebook or [@liveloveanimalrescue](#) on Instagram, and you may see us reshare your posts if the post settings are “public.”
  - On all social media platforms, please use the hashtag **#LiveLoveAnimalRescue** and **#LiveLoveDOGNAME** (insert your foster dog’s name into the hashtag, ex. #livelovefido).
  - If you have Facebook, please request to join our closed foster/volunteer group [Fabulous Live Love Friends](#). This is a great place to ask questions, get support, and socialize with other foster parents!
- You will come to know your foster dog better than us, so after a couple of days you can fill out a [Foster Dog Profile](#).
  - We will use this to create your foster dog’s online profile. We will probably change the wording you include in your “bio,” but don’t get offended! Just like dogs live in the moment, we don’t focus on the dog’s past but rather all the wonderful things we know about them now, so please share the cute, quirky traits that adopters love to hear about. The more information you can include in the description section, the better!
- You will get an email to sign up for Maddie’s Pet Assistant and complete periodic surveys on your foster dog. Please do this - it helps us keep track of how they are doing!
- Plan to attend at least 1 adoption event per month. These events will be posted on our Facebook page as well as our website, [liveloveanimalrescue.org](#).
  - You will see the event call to action posted on the closed Group [Fabulous Live Love Friends](#) including target dogs that we would like to attend the event.

- If you are interested in bringing your pup, contact Cecile and she will let you know if the event is appropriate for your pup. Many event spaces have limits on how many dogs we can bring and how many of each sized dog we can bring.
  - When attending adoption events, please plan to stay with your foster dog.
  - Please bring his or her crate in case they need some “quiet time.”
- When adoption events are not an option, please be prepared to hold individual meetings for your foster dog and interested adopters.
  - We will send you the contact information for the interested adopter and ask you to reach out to set up a meeting.
  - We suggest meeting at a local park, pet supply store, or other “neutral territory” that will help your foster dog show themselves in their best light.
- Transportation Safety - when transporting a dog in the car, make sure to use a crate (smaller dogs) or a seatbelt (larger dogs). If you need a seatbelt, please let us know.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## **Will you provide food and supplies?**

Yes! All food and supplies will be provided by Live Love Animal Rescue. Just let us know when you are running low (ideally about a week in advance) and we can arrange for pick up or delivery. Feel free to provide treats and if there are any questions, just reach out to our foster team.

## **How long will I be expected to foster my dog?**

We ask that you be prepared to foster your dog until a suitable “forever” home is found. It’s impossible to predict how long this will take. Some dogs are adopted right away and others take weeks or even months. Don’t worry! The time flies by!

## **What happens if I can no longer care for my foster dog?**

We understand that sometimes life throws us curveballs. We will do our best to find another foster home, but that may take some time so we appreciate your patience. Please let us know as soon as possible if a situation may be coming up that requires re-homing. The more notice that we have, the easier it is for us to arrange a new place for the pup to land.

## **What if I go on vacation?**

Let us know as soon as possible if you need help while you are out of town. We will arrange for your foster pup to stay with another foster family or stay in a commercial kennel that is pre-approved with Live Love Animal Rescue at the rescue’s expense.

## **Who pays for my foster dog’s medical bills?**

Live Love Animal Rescue will pay for all your foster dog’s vetting. Live Love Animal Rescue will arrange all standard vetting (exams, spay/neuter, vaccinations, etc). If you notice something, reach out to the foster team for advice and they will schedule a visit with our partner vet.

## **Can I take my foster dog to my own vet?**

Live Love Animal Rescue has long-term relationships with our partner vets. However, we are willing to work with other vets if they provide special services that our current partner vets cannot provide. Please send their information to the foster team and they will start the partnership process.

**Does Live Love Animal Rescue pay for treatment of my pets?**

We do not pay for personal pet vet bills. We require that your personal pets are fully vaccinated and that you are prepared to quarantine your foster dog if necessary. Most foster dogs benefit from a decompression period from a few days to a few weeks.

**What should I do if there is a medical emergency?**

If there is an emergency, you should take the foster pup to a vet right away, and if possible, to our local partner vet Primary Care Animal Hospital. Please call and text our foster team right away, en route to the vet or at the vet. You will need the rescue's approval for any medical procedures.

**Who is responsible for communicating with potential adopters?**

Live Love Animal Rescue takes all responsibility for marketing and advertising your wonderful foster pup. We do need your help since no one will know your pup better than you! Share your updates, emails, and videos with our rescue team. You can help write a stellar bio for your pup. Once we get applications for adoption, our adoption team will screen through them and consult with you as to which potential adopters might be a good fit. Our adoption team will work with you to set up meet and greets, and your feedback on these interactions will be a very important part of deciding on the right home for the foster pup.

**Will I be required to bring my dog to adoption events?**

You are requested to come to adoption events as often as you can – it's a great way to get your dog adopted. We would ask if possible that you stay with your dog. If this is not possible, please let us know and we will arrange for a volunteer to transport and handle your pet at the adoption event.

**Can I adopt my foster dog?**

Of course! Many of us have adopted our foster dogs! Foster parents have the first right to adopt until the foster dog is listed on Petfinder, Adopt-A-Pet and our website. Once that happens, the foster family is very welcome to submit an application and it will be evaluated along with the pool of potential applicants.

**Can I pick my own foster dogs?**

When you submit an application, you will tell us about your dog experience and your home environment. Our foster team will evaluate the dogs that need



fostering with your lifestyle and situation. We recognize that often, fosters will see a picture or video of an adorable dog and want to foster that dog. Our foster team will advise you if experience tells us that it would be a problematic match (e.g., an active puppy is a bad match for a busy family, and a family with lots of stairs might not work for a dog with mobility problems). We do our best to match a dog that will fit well into your life and will be a good fit for your family. Final placements will be based on mutual agreement between the foster family and the rescue team.

### **Are purchases made for foster care tax-deductible?**

Purchases made for foster care may be considered donations to the rescue and would be tax-deductible. Please keep all receipts and reach out to the rescue for any donation forms.

### **Can I name my foster pet?**

Most foster pets already have names and we would ask you to keep this name. The rescue has sole discretion on the foster dog's name, since changing it requires updating records through our partner vets, kennels, groomers, online profiles, and other service providers. It may seem a simple thing but there is a ton of work in the background for your foster pet and can create a ton of confusion for our volunteers and partners. If you choose to adopt your foster pet, you are free to change the name at that point in time.