

THE
RESCUED
PACK

FOSTER MANUAL



Welcome to our foster program

Thank you for opening your home and heart to a foster dog! Fostering is one of the most rewarding ways to make a difference in the life of a rescue dog.

We're here to support you every step of the way. You'll receive guidance, supplies, and a team that's always available to answer questions.



Why fostering matters

Your role as a foster gives these dogs the space and care they need to decompress, adjust, and thrive. You'll be part of their journey from uncertainty to security, and while letting them go is never easy, knowing you played a vital role in their story makes it all worthwhile.

What you can expect

Fostering isn't just about giving a dog a place to stay—it's about setting them up for success. Your foster dog may need:

- Time to decompress – New environments can be overwhelming, and patience is key.
- Basic training and structure – Many of our dogs need help with leash manners, house training, and confidence-building.
- Socialization and love– Exposing your foster to new experiences helps prepare them for adoption.

Supplies and requests

We provide essential supplies such as food, crates, Leashes and medical. If you need anything, please email FosterSupport@therescuedpack.org

What we provide:

- ✓ Food & treats
- ✓ Crates
- ✓ Leashes, collars, harnesses
- ✓ Puppy pads (if needed)
- ✓ Heartworm, fea and Tick Prevention

Medical

All vet care is covered by the rescue. If your foster needs an appointment, please email FosterSupport@therescuedpack.org

Routine vet care includes:

- ✓ Vaccinations
- ✓ Spay/neuter surgery (if not already done)
- ✓ Preventatives (flea/tick/heartworm)

For urgent concerns or emergencies:

Contact Beth or Malissa-

901-628-9356

901-303-5313

Preventatives

All preventatives will be made available on the same day every month. We will send out an email to remind you, and you will be able to pickup at a select location. This allows us to easily track when they've had it and make sure everyone gets Preventatives on time.

If you need them mailed to you, please let us know

Introducing your foster dog to your home and decompression time

Bringing a new foster dog into your home is exciting, but it's important to give them time and space to adjust. Many dogs come from stressful situations and need a decompression period to feel safe before learning routines and meeting new people or pets.

What is Decompression?

Decompression is the adjustment period after a dog enters a new environment. It allows them to relax, build trust, and process their surroundings without pressure.

How to Help Your Foster Dog Settle In:

1. Give Them a Safe Space

- Set up a quiet area with a crate or cozy spot where they can rest.
- Avoid overwhelming them with too much freedom too soon.

2. Keep It Calm & Low-Key

- Let them come to you—avoid too much petting or handling right away.
- Use a calm, reassuring voice and avoid loud noises.

3. Limit New Experiences

- No dog parks, busy areas, or introductions to too many people right away.
- Keep meetings with resident pets slow and supervised.

4. Stick to a Routine

- Feed them at the same times daily.
- Take them on structured potty breaks and walks.

5. Watch for Stress Signals

Signs of stress include pacing, hiding, excessive panting, and avoiding eye contact.

If they seem overwhelmed, give them more space and time.

How Long Does Decompression Take?

Every dog is different, but most need at least 3-7 days to settle in, and some may need weeks. Be patient, move at their pace, and celebrate small progress!

By allowing your foster dog to decompress, you're helping them feel safe and setting them up for success in their forever home.

Dog Body Language Chart

This Body Language Chart can Help You to Understand How They are Feeling

<p>Relaxed</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head raised up with straight posture• Tongue out and moved to one side of the mouth.• Ears up and straight• Eyes open and bright	<p>Curious</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eyes wide open• Mouth closed• Ears forward• Smooth nose & forehead	<p>Happy</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tail wagging• Smooth hair• Eyes in normal shape• Dog is inviting to play
<p>Pleased</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soft eyes• Floppy ears• Smiling & Up for play• Dog will look soft	<p>Stressed</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yawning & indirect eye contact• Dry panting & body freezing• Low tail carriage• Sweaty paws – dogs sweat through their foot pads	<p>Aggressive</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body posture upright but slightly leaning forward• Dog growls & cold staring eyes• Dog snaps• Wagging Tail
<p>Disrespected</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gives you their back• I will be no threat• Look back slowly• Ears sharp	<p>Playful</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tail up and waved & pupil dilates• Ear up and straight• Mouth open and tongue wagging• Forepaw bent	<p>Fearful</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yawning & indirect eye contact• Dry panting & body freezing• Low tail carriage• Sweaty paws – dogs sweat by their foot pads
 <p>Made By PawMaw.Com</p>	<p>Unperturbed</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head down• Eyes in normal shape• Tail May move slightly• Smooth nose & forehead	<p>Suspicious</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspicious eyes & sharp ears• Stiff posture• Flattened ears against the head• Tail raised

Basic training and socialization



Helping your foster with basic training and socialization increases their chances of finding a forever home.

1. Establish a Routine

- Set consistent feeding, potty, and exercise schedules.
- Use the same words for commands to reinforce learning.

2. House Training

- Take the dog outside frequently, especially after meals and naps.
- Reward successes with praise and treats.

3. Crate Training

- Make the crate a comfortable, safe space (never a punishment).
- Start with short periods and gradually increase time.

1. Basic Commands

- Teach “sit,” “stay,” “come,” and “leave it” using positive reinforcement.
- Keep training sessions short (5-10 minutes) and fun.

2. Leash Training

- Use a well-fitted collar or harness.
- Reward calm walking and redirect pulling with treats or changes in direction.

Socialization

1. Exposure to New People & Places

- Introduce new experiences gradually, ensuring positive interactions.
- Reward calm behavior around new people, dogs, and environments.

2. Handling & Grooming

- Touch their paws, ears, and mouth gently to prepare for vet visits and grooming.
- Pair handling with treats to build trust.

3. Dog Interactions

- Observe body language and allow supervised, controlled introductions.
- Avoid overwhelming or forcing interactions.

4. Desensitization

- Expose the dog to common household sounds (vacuum, doorbell) in a calm setting.
- Reward relaxed behavior to reduce fear and anxiety.

Final Tips

- Be patient and celebrate small progress.
- Every dog learns at their own pace—consistency is key.
- If issues arise, let us know so we can help

By implementing these basic training and socialization techniques, foster dogs will become more confident, adaptable, and ready for their forever homes.

Marketing your foster

Finding the perfect home for your foster dog is a team effort! The more we promote them, the better chance they have of finding a loving family. Your role in sharing updates, photos, and personality insights is crucial in making them stand out to adopters.

1. Take Great Photos & Videos

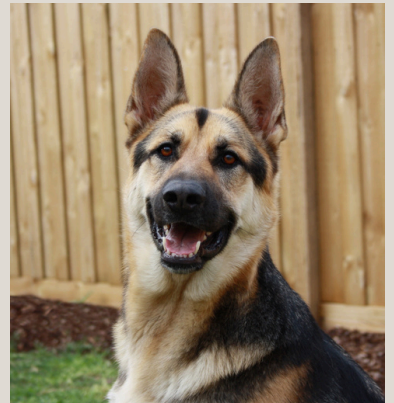
First impressions matter! A clear, well-lit photo can make all the difference.

- Use natural light and avoid cluttered backgrounds.
- Capture different sides of their personality —playful, cuddly, or relaxed.
- Videos are even better! Show off their training, zoomies, or sweet snuggles.

2. Write an Engaging Bio

Help potential adopters imagine life with your foster dog by highlighting:

- Their personality (Are they goofy, mellow, energetic, or a cuddle bug?)
- Training progress (house-trained, crate-trained, learning commands, etc.)
- Ideal home (active family, fenced yard, other dogs, kids, etc.)
- Cute quirks (loves belly rubs, carries toys around, does happy hops at mealtime)



Example Bio:

“Meet Luna, the 2-year-old Shepherd mix with the fluffiest ears and the sweetest heart! Luna is playful, smart, and loves a good game of fetch. She’s house-trained, great on a leash, and adores belly rubs. Luna would thrive in an active home with lots of adventures, and she’s eager to learn! Could you be her perfect match?”

3. Share Updates Regularly

Post pictures and updates in our Facebook chat so we can promote your foster dog across our rescue’s social media. More exposure = more chances for adoption!

4. Encourage Meet & Greet

If an approved adopter is interested, we’ll help set up a meet & greet. Share your insights about your foster’s behavior to help them find the best match.

5. Be Their Biggest Advocate!

Your foster dog’s future family is out there—you’re just helping them find each other. The more we share their story, the sooner they’ll find their perfect home!

Have questions or need help with marketing? Reach out in our chat—we’re here to support you!

Foster questionnaire

. After a week or two of having your foster, please fill out the foster questionnaire on our website, under foster. This allows us to market your foster, as well as pair them with the right family

Common medical issues

Parasites

- Worms or coccidia

symptoms

- Diarrhea, bloating, weight loss or vomiting

what do do:

- let the team know so we can schedule a vet appointment

Upper respiratory infection

symptoms

- coughing, nasal/eye discharge, lethargy

what do do:

- isolate from ther pets
- encourage hydration
- let the team know so we can schedule a vet visit for meds

Diarrhea

Causes- stress, dietary changes, parasites

what to do:

- Feed bland diet for 24-48 hrs
- provide plenty of water or electrolytes such as unflavored pedialyte
- monitor for dehydration or worsening symptopms. If symptoms last longer than 48hrs reach out to us for a vet appointment

Malnutrition

If you are fostering a malnurished dog it is important to feed small, frequent, high quality meals, as well as supplements the vet may provide. Monitor weight gain and keep us informed

When to contact us immediately

- difficulty breathing
- bloated stomach
- uncontrolled vomiting
- sudden collapse or extreme lethargy
- severe wounds or bleeding

Heartworm Treatment

Heartworm disease is a serious, potentially fatal condition caused by parasitic worms that live in a dog's heart and lungs. Treatment is intensive, but with proper care, dogs can recover. Here's what you need to know:

Heartworm treatment involves confirming infection and administering melarsomine injections to kill adult worms. A heartworm preventive eliminates larvae, and strict rest is required to prevent complications. Follow-up testing ensures success, and lifelong prevention is essential to avoid reinfection.

Keeping your foster safe during:

- **Crate Rest or Leash Walks Only** – Even excited zoomies can be dangerous.
- **Calming Activities** – Provide puzzle toys, snuffle mats, or gentle chew toys to keep them entertained.
- **Watch for Symptoms** – Coughing, lethargy, or difficulty breathing can indicate complications— if you notice any of these signs, contact us
- **Strictly Follow Vet Instructions** – Never skip medications or modify treatment without veterinary guidance.

*Refer to our heartworm treatment guides for more information and guidance

Adoption process

Your foster will be listed on petfinders, as well as other sites. When we get an application on your foster, a team member will review it, do a vet reference check, as well as a home visit with the potential adopter. Once approved, we will connect you with them so you can share more info about the dog, and setup a meet and greet if they are local. Once that is complete and they sign the contract they get to take their new best friend home. If they are not local, your foster will go on transport to their home.

Saying goodbye and moving forward

Letting go is the hardest part, but it's also the most rewarding. Watching your foster dog thrive in their forever home makes it all worthwhile.

Feel free to stay in touch with adopters (if they're open to it). Take time to process—foster fails (adopting your foster) happen, and that's okay too!

When you're ready, we'd love to place another dog with you. Every dog you foster saves a life. Thank you for being part of this mission!