

Sandy Paws Rescue, Inc.

Foster Care Guidelines

What is a Foster Home?

A foster home is a temporary living situation for animals while they are awaiting placement in a permanent home. Foster families provide shelter, food, care, love, and guidance. The number of animals we can save depends entirely on the number of people who are willing to open their homes and hearts to them. For some of these animals, this will be their first experience being treated as a family pet.

Sandy Paws Rescue is in constant need of individuals and families who are willing to open their homes and hearts to provide foster care to rescued animals. This care not only includes the general maintenance and safety of the foster dog, but we also ask that you assist us in providing basic training and socialization which is crucial for a successful adoption. We will provide you with support and guidance in every way we can, to make your fostering experience a rewarding one.

Why Foster?

Being a foster family has rewards beyond the essential value of helping a pet in need find a new home. For some, it is a chance to have an animal companion without making a lifetime commitment, or to try new companions for an existing pet. Foster care is critical to our rescue efforts, the more homes we have, the more animals we can save. Becoming a foster family is a very rewarding experience and can be a lot of fun. While it is sad when a foster finally finds a home of their own, knowing you have saved a life and opened up space to save another makes it all worth it.

As a foster parent/family, you are a representative of Sandy Paws Rescue. We hope you will read this manual with an eye toward continuing to improve our foster program or through sharing ideas and knowledge. Many of you will already know much of this material, but these guidelines are developed and reevaluated periodically to ensure that every aspect of foster program goes as smoothly as possible, both for you and your foster animal. Please feel free to make suggestions that you think may help other foster families.

Again, thank you for participating in our foster program. We hope that you will enjoy teaching your foster animal how to be a loveable, loyal and well-behaved family pet.

Ownership of Foster Animals

All foster animals are the sole property of Sandy Paws Rescue and shall be returned to Sandy Paws Rescue upon request, or if the foster parent/family is not able to adequately care for the animal. Should you want to adopt the foster animal yourself, you must submit an Adoption Application for approval. Your Application is given preference to any other applications submitted at the time BUT must be approved by our Adoption Coordinator. You will also be

required to pay the adoption fee. Until such time, the foster dog is considered available for adoption.

Foster Care Goals

A rescued animal in our Foster Care Program can may in your care for a few days, weeks, or on the rare occasion, months. As a foster parent/family, you are responsible for helping the foster animal as listed below:

- Housebreaking, if necessary.
- Walking on a leash, if necessary.
- Providing medications, if needed.
- Responding to his/her name assigned by Sandy Paws Rescue.
- Appropriate behavior indoors and outdoors.
- Proper interaction with other pets.
- Proper play techniques with adults and children.

The foster dog's personality will slowly develop and bloom. We ask that you keep us up to date on their behavior and personality.

Remember: we are only a phone call or email away if you have any questions or need advice!

Your Foster Dog and Other Animals

Getting acquainted

Take precautions while you are getting to know the dog's personality, especially when he/she is around other animals and children. Introduce them to one another slowly, always using a leash. Never leave the foster dog alone with cats, small pets, or other dogs during this time.

Introducing the foster to your dogs

- Have the pets meet on neutral territory; for example, introduce them on the sidewalk in front of your house or down the block.
- Keep the foster dog on a short leash close to your side. Bring your dogs out on leashes one at a time.
- Keep the atmosphere calm and do not let your pets rush up to the new dog.
- Observe the reaction of the new dog and of your own dogs.
- Watch for signs of aggression and/or dominance:
 1. Head and tail held high, stiff, and rigid
 2. Maintaining eye contact
 3. Hackles up - raised hairs along the spine from shoulder to tail
 4. Ears pricked
 5. Standing over - paws or head over other dog
 6. Pushing or mounting
 7. Grabbing muzzle of subordinate dog
 8. Growling or snapping teeth
 9. Any other signs you might feel are a threat to either animal

- Once they have sniffed and greeted each other, take them around your property and into the house. If all pets are behaving well with each other, you may drop the leashes but leave them on and continue to monitor and supervise. Do not leave dogs unattended together until you are 100% confident that they are getting along well.

Introducing the foster dog to your cats

- Introduce the foster animal to your cat indoors with the animal leashed.
 1. Hold the leash tightly in your hand
 2. Leave the cat on the floor
 3. Walk toward the cat slowly
- If the dog pulls or lunges, give a sharp pull on the leash and firmly say, "NO!" Correct the dog every time it shows interest in the cat. If you observe any of the following signs, please inform the foster coordinator:
 1. Teeth snapping
 2. Ears pricked
 3. Fixed gaze that cannot be broken
 4. Trembling or lurching
 5. Any other signs you may feel are a threat to either animal
 6. Caring for the Foster Animal

Caring for your Foster Animal

Foster parent/family must provide the following for foster animal:

- Good quality food
- Fresh water
- Love and affection
- Soft comfy dog beds
- Lots of guidance, supervision and training

The foster dog **MUST** be kept indoors as a house pet. These animals have generally been kept indoors in temperature-controlled kennels and are unaccustomed to being around people. Being left outdoors may cause behavior problems, or worse, it could be fatal to the foster dog.

Training

Foster animals are very responsive to no force, positive reinforcement methods of training. You should never hit a foster animal. They are very sensitive to voice commands. Foster animals respond better and learn more quickly, through the use of positive reinforcement when they have done something right. They will repeat the action that worked for them. It may be frustrating at times and hard not to punish the dog for his/her wrong actions, but this will simply teach the dog not to trust you. Please don't hesitate to call for help in this regard! It is important for the dogs to learn appropriate manners while still being outgoing and happy dogs.

Medications

Unless prescribed by a Sandy Paws Rescue approved veterinarian, DO NOT administer any over the counter or otherwise obtained medications to your foster animal. If you know of a natural remedy that you would like to use to help the foster dog in a situation, please contact the foster coordinator before administering the medication. Also know that certain pesticides are lethal to animals. In the case that you need to use one for ticks or other outdoor pests, please contact a representative of Sandy Paws Rescue. Most of these animals have already been treated for fleas and ticks and any additional treatments could prove harmful to the animal.

Traveling

In order for Sandy Paws Rescue to place the foster animal in their forever home, the adoption counselor and foster coordinator need to have access to the dog at all times. In the event that you are leaving town for any period of time, please contact the foster coordinator at least two weeks before (or sooner) to work out a plan that will best suit you and the dog while you are away.

Swimming Pools

You must take extra precautions in introducing the foster dog to your swimming pool. Do it gently and slowly. You just need to give them the understanding that it is not a solid walking surface. Once they realize that, they will more than likely stay away. However, that is not a reason to leave the dog unattended near the pool. The foster dog can easily walk too close to the pool and be bumped or just slip near the edge and fall in. If the dog is interested in getting in the water, please spend some time making sure that you teach them where the stairs are so they can get out.

Help with Placement Process

The most rewarding part of fostering a dog is seeing the end result. When you have nurtured the dog into becoming a very good house pet and see that it is ready for its forever home, you play a very important role in the placement and adoption process. In order to do this in an efficient manner, you may be asked to do "Meet-n-Greets", talk to prospective families, and drop off or pick up dogs.

A Few Reminders Now That You Have a Foster Animal in your Home

Check to be sure living area is secured and reinforce any loose fence material. Contact any company or services that has free access to an area the foster dog may frequent in order to make arrangements and prevent the animal from escaping the secure area. (i.e., pool caretaker, landscapers, meter readers, etc.). Please keep the foster dog separated from other pets when unsupervised.

Thank you again for fostering with Sandy Paws Rescue.

Sandy Paws Rescue, Inc.
www.sandypawsmv.com
(860) 920-7921
adopt@sandypawsrescue.com