

Welcome to HSWC



Foster Care Program

Guide for Dog Foster Homes

Top Tips for Foster Parents

- ♥ Check in regularly with your Foster Coordinator.
- ♥ Ask for advice if your puppy/dog has stopped eating.
- ♥ If your dog seems sick, check immediately for hydration – she should be drinking water, urinating, have elastic skin tone and a moist mouth.
- ♥ Wash your hands and change your shirt after handling sick animals to prevent spread of illness.
- ♥ Make sure to bring your Foster Adoption Checklist to all checkups and when you bring your spay/neuter, microchip, and rabies information to be entered in the computer.
- ♥ Never let your dog run loose outside; guard against escapes.
- ♥ We recommend keeping foster animals separate from other animals in the home, to prevent the spread of illness. We can provide medications for foster animals, but we cannot provide it for your own animals, so it's your responsibility to keep your animals safe.
- ♥ Don't leave your foster dog unattended with any resident animals.
- ♥ Feed your foster dog separately from other pets in your home.
- ♥ Routine care for foster animals is provided at foster clinics. Please see flyer for days & times.
- ♥ Puppies younger than 5 months should NEVER go to off-leash areas, because they are not fully vaccinated. (this also applies if you have an adult dog who isn't yet vaccinated)
- ♥ Puppies should not be exposed to other dogs or places frequented by other dogs due to the risk of diseases such as parvovirus

Thank you for participating in the Foster Care Program at the Humane Society of Washington County. Fostering is a wonderful way to contribute to the shelter and its mission by providing love and care to sick, injured or underage animals. By you temporarily caring for these animals in your own home, more kennel space is available for pets ready for adoption. The individualized attention you provide your foster animals is priceless - you are making a lasting impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing.

This manual is a guide to provide you with important information about caring for your foster animals and will clarify many questions or concerns that you might have along the way. Feel free to call or email the Foster Care office with additional questions or concerns. Our goal is to make your foster care experience enjoyable. If you have a friend or family member who is interested in becoming a Foster Care Volunteer, please direct them to the Foster Care office. Again, thank you for accepting this important responsibility. We truly appreciate your commitment. Good luck and happy fostering!!!

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HSWC Foster Care Contact Information:

Director of Animal Admissions and Foster Care

Sonia Nicholson
301-733-2060 ext. 215
snicholson@hswcmd.org

Foster Care Team

Karen Poston – Foster Care & Technology Supervisor
Monica Bulat – Foster Care Coordinator
301-733-2060 ext. 215
240-452-6907 – foster cell- for any matters during business hours, and urgent/emergency matters after hours
kposton@hswcmd.org

Medical concerns when the shelter is open:

Call the shelter at 301-733-2060.

Staff is available every day from 9am-6pm except Wednesday when we open at 1pm. If it is an emergency, tell the person who answers the phone. They will make sure you talk to somebody who can help you.

For a list of holiday closures, see our webpage, www.hswcmd.org.

Emergencies after hours:

First, try Monica on the foster cell - 240-452-6907. If you can't get through, try Sonia

For emergencies/authorization for emergency medical treatment, call/text Sonia Nicholson at 240-674-0974

if unable to reach call our emergency answering service at:
301-733-2060

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PREPARING FOR YOUR FOSTER ANIMAL(S)

Before you pick up your foster(s), you will want to prepare your home for its stay. If you have other pets in your household, you must provide a separate room for your foster animal for the safety of all animals involved. No matter how friendly your dog or cat may be, you never know how the new foster will react to your pets. Also, although our shelter animals are examined by our staff when they arrive, they may be harboring an illness that could be contagious to your own animals. We encourage you to keep your foster animals away from your pets. The room you keep your fostered animals in should be free from valuables that may become damaged.

For the safety of the animals, please take the following steps:

- Choose an area that is climate-controlled. If it's uncomfortable for you, it's uncomfortable (and possibly life-threatening) for them
- Check for exposed electrical cords
- Close toilet lids
- Remove breakable items that could be knocked off shelves
- Remove small, ingestible items such as rubber bands or pieces of string
- Remove any plants from the area that might be poisonous.

If you are fostering a pregnant mom or a very young litter, you will want to create a nesting box.

Always provide your fostered animals with access to fresh water (bottle-feeding infants excepted). Use metal or glass bowls, as they are easier to clean than plastic. Thrift shops often have cheap kitchen supplies that can be used as food & water bowls

When fostered animals are not being supervised, you may crate them to prevent damage. HSWC can provide bedding, crate (if available), and any necessary medication for the animals for the duration of their stay. If needed, an initial supply of donated food is available. The shelter may be able to continue to supply food if the resources are available. Everything we have to give to fosters has to be donated to us before we can pass it on to you.

When you pick up your foster animal, an HSWC staff member will go over the specific needs of that animal, instruct you on how to administer medicine (if needed), give you feeding guidelines and answer any other questions that you may have about that animal.

Dogs should be kept on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in a private, secure, fenced area. Recommended fence height is 6 feet.

Foster dogs/puppies are not permitted to go to dog parks.

Dog parks can be dangerous environments. There are no lifeguards or professionals at a dog park when

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conflicts arise. Not every dog is safe. While dogs are social animals, they are individuals and don't like every dog they meet. Dogs have a variety of play styles, and if these play styles are conflicting, fights can break out.

Types of Fostering

RECOVERING ANIMALS

Shelter animals that are recovering from an illness or operation may be placed in a foster home until they are completely recovered and able to be adopted. These animals will be handled on a case-by case basis and HSWC staff will make sure you are aware of all of the specific needs of the animal. If medicine is to be administered, it will be provided for you and instructions given as to dosage. Please follow instructions carefully and be diligent about medicating. It is important that your foster animal receives medication on schedule. It is imperative that these animals be kept away from other animals, both to prevent the spread of illness and disease and to lessen the stress on the foster animal. If any conditions get worse, please contact the shelter. The animal may need to be brought in for a check-up.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION/SOCIALIZATION

Certain animals may need to be placed into foster care for modification of unwanted behaviors or general socialization. For example, a dog that is so nervous that he is constantly hiding in the back of his cage and refusing to eat will benefit from individualized love and attention in a foster home. Likewise, a kitten that is just a little bit "feral" will benefit from spending time around humans in a home environment. Volunteers that take in these special assignments must be prepared for a little extra work. These animals need extra time spent building their trust (sometimes through hand-feeding) and possibly some minor training. These animals will be handled on a case-by-case basis and any specific handling instructions will be relayed to you when the animal is picked up.

PREGNANT DOGS

Fostering an expecting animal is a wonderful experience. You will be able to witness the miracle of life right before your eyes. Pregnant moms need extra care and consideration while they are preparing to give birth. They should be kept in a room or enclosure where they can be quiet and comfortable. Food and water should be available at all times. Moms should be eating puppy food for the extra fat and nutrients. Please provide a nesting box space for the mom to give birth. In most cases, mom does all the work. If it seems that the mother is having trouble going into labor, please contact the shelter. **After the infants are born (within a day or two), please contact the Foster Care Coordinator to report how many babies were born and their colors, so we can get them into the system.** Sex can be very difficult to determine in newborns, but if you have a guess, we'll put it in the system. If you have names, we'll put those in, too.

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MOMS WITH LITTERS

When a mom first comes to your home with her babies, allow her to have some time and space to get used to her surroundings and reduce her stress. Do not touch the babies for the first 2-3 days until the mother is more trusting with you. Have patience. Take some time during the day to sit in the room with mom and babies and let the mother come to you. Mothers with their litters should be kept in a relatively quiet environment to reduce stress. A nesting box should be provided for moms with very young litters or a large bed should be for moms with older babies. Food and water should be available for mom at all times. The room or enclosure where the litter is kept should be baby-proofed. Even kittens with their eyes still shut are very mobile and can easily find themselves in harm's way.

Please monitor mom's nursing. If one particular baby is not eating enough, place it right up to mom's nipple. If mom is not doing a good job nursing her infants, please contact the Foster Care Manager. Infants can continue to nurse up to 6-8 weeks of age. Occasionally give mom some time away from her infants, but bring her back shortly because she helps provide the warmth they need. Always be cautious around moms with their litters as they can become protective of their babies. Watch for warning signs such as growling, swishing tail, ears back, head jerks towards you, tensing up, or moving away. **Nursing mothers must never be around unneutered males!** A nursing mother is most fertile at this time and will get pregnant.

Maternal neglect – In some cases, about 8% of the time, kittens die from poor maternal care. There are a few causes of this. Some dogs lack maternal instincts and, in other cases, it is nature's way of handling sick or weak puppies. Environmental stress is an important factor, which is why it is important to create a calm environment for mom and the litter. As the foster parent, watch for signs of maternal neglect. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice the mom avoids feeding and grooming her puppies and ignores their cries.

Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her puppies, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your household pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. If aggression becomes severe, call the Foster Coordinator.

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Health & Wellness

Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including stress, change of diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites and viruses. If your foster dog has diarrhea and has no other symptoms, rule out change of diet by feeding your dog 2 cups of cooked rice mixed with one cup of cottage cheese for a day or two, and then reintroduce dry kibble.

Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it snaps back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, then the dog is dehydrated and needs fluids. Call your Coordinator if you suspect your foster is dehydrated.

Distemper

Distemper is an extremely contagious and often fatal viral disease. It is an airborne infection that can be transmitted with or without direct contact with an infected dog through mucus, urine and feces. Some of the symptoms include squinting, congestion of the eyes, pus from the eyes, weight loss, coughing, vomiting, nasal discharge and diarrhea.

Contact your Coordinator immediately if you suspect Distemper.

Fleas

Most foster dogs have been treated when arriving at the shelter, but additional flea treatments are available if needed. Puppies younger than 4 months should not be treated with toxic chemicals. Puppies over 8 weeks of age and adult dogs can be treated with topical flea treatment.

To check for fleas, inspect your dog daily, including rear groin, belly, tail, neck and under the chin and head. Look also for black specks of flea dirt, which is actually digested blood. Before you begin combing, get a bowl of tap water and put a few drops of dish soap in it. You can put any fleas you find in the water and they will drown. (If you don't use soap, the fleas may swim to a fluff of fur and jump out of the water.) If fleas are present, treat as soon as possible. Change bedding and vacuum the floors daily. The washing machine will remove fleas, eggs and dirt.

If your foster dog had fleas, watch his stools for short pieces of white rice that are tapeworms, which come from ingesting fleas. Tapeworms can cause diarrhea. If you see tapeworms, call your Coordinator, who can provide you with medication.

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Kennel Cough

The shelter is much like a child day care – as soon as one dog has a cold, most all the dogs in the shelter get a cold. Kennel cough is typically a dry, hacking cough. There may be some discharge from the nose and a clear liquid that is coughed up. It's generally a mild, self-limiting illness of the trachea and bronchi encountered in all age groups of dogs, but especially in those under unusual stress.

Because kennel cough is contagious, infected dogs should not be around other dogs until they're over their cough. If you have a dog at home and plan to foster a dog with kennel cough, we have found that if your own dog is healthy and has been vaccinated annually, then he will most likely not get sick.

Talk to your vet about giving your own dog the Bordetella nasal vaccination. Immunity to kennel cough is usually established 3-4 days after vaccination.

Make sure your foster dog has plenty of fresh water and healthy food. If your dog is not eating, try cooking up something special and smelly such as eggs, chicken or steak. Take short, leashed walks.

Strenuous activity can bring on coughing episodes, so limit activity and encourage rest. Even baths can be stressful to the system and should be avoided. However bringing your foster dog into the bathroom while you're taking a shower can be beneficial as the steam can help loosen mucus. Incubation of kennel cough is 5-10 days; its course is 10-20 days with symptoms generally more marked the first week. Fever, lack of appetite and a yellow-green-brown nasal discharge can indicate secondary infections. Call your Foster Coordinator if any of these symptoms occur.

Parasites

Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating or vomiting. Parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms and mange. Tapeworms will look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster dog's anus or in his stool. Round worms and hookworms may be vomited, and roundworms look like spaghetti (hookworms are smaller and rarely distinguishable without the aid of a microscope).

Mange is an infestation of tiny mites that bite and cause intense scratching, reddened skin and loss of fur. Only rare cases of mange (sarcoptic) are contagious to humans. If you suspect your foster dog has parasites, call your Coordinator immediately.

Parvo

Parvo attacks the intestinal tract, white blood cells and heart muscle. Signs of infection are depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, severe diarrhea, fever and sometimes kennel cough symptoms. The illness is contracted through contact with the infected feces of another dog.

Call your Coordinator immediately if you believe your foster dog may have this illness.

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Vaccination & Worming

Your foster dog's vaccination and worming history will be given to you. If they are old enough, your dog has most likely been vaccinated for Distemper, Canine Hepatitis, Parainfluenza, Parvo and Bordetella.

Rabies vaccinations are given in limited circumstances. Contact your Coordinator for more information.

If you're fostering a puppy, they will need to start dewormer at 2 weeks (this can be given at foster clinic, or you can give it at home, if you're able to weigh them), and they will need to come in to foster clinic every 2-3 weeks for shots until they are 16 weeks old or adopted, whichever comes first.

Most likely, your foster dog had one dose of wormer upon arrival to the shelter. If you see worms in the dog's stool, let the Foster Coordinator know what they look like, so you can be given the correct dewormer. Different medications take care of different kinds of worms.

♥ These tips can help keep your home free of infection:

www.aspcapro.org/infection-control-foster-homes

♥ Learn about household toxins that cause seizures:

www.aspcapro.org/resource/shelter-health-poison-control/most-common-causes-seizures-dogs

Spay/Neuter

When a sick/injured dog is well enough, and when a puppy is 8 weeks old, they can be fixed. Please let the Foster Coordinator know when it's time for your foster to be fixed, and she will look to see if there is space for them on the schedule with the shelter vet team. If not, she will give you a voucher to take the dog/puppy to one of the participating area veterinarians for surgery. You will then choose one of the vets on the voucher and make an appointment at your convenience. **You MUST take the voucher with you to the appointment!** If the dog is at least 3 months old, they will get the rabies shot at the same time. If the surgery is done through the HSWC, a microchip will be given. If the surgery is done with a voucher, you can either pick up a microchip to take to the surgery appointment, or you can bring the dog back to a foster clinic to receive the microchip.

****You need to bring in any paperwork given to you by the vet, including rabies certificates and discharge papers** This must be done BEFORE the dog will be considered adoption-ready**

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Veterinary Visits

All vet visits must be pre-authorized unless you are willing to pay for the visit yourself. Check with the Foster Care Coordinator first.

All authorized vet visits are paid by the HSWC. We work with a number of vets in and around the Washington County area. They bill the shelter directly so there are no out-of-pocket vet costs to a foster parent.

We must be very cautious when deciding whether or not a foster animal needs to go to the vet as office visits add up very quickly. Each case will be evaluated individually by what is best for the animal as well as economically feasible for the shelter.

Any time you take an animal to an outside vet, you must give the shelter any paperwork you get from them. If you don't get any, you must contact the foster office and tell them what the vet said & any medications they recommend, so we can get it in the animal's medical history.

Please notify us if any of the following occur -

Puppies under 12 weeks of age:

Diarrhea that lasts for more than a day
Vomiting and diarrhea for more than 6 hours
Vomiting more than once in an hour
Not eating for more than 12-24 hours
Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours
Lethargy with fever

Dogs older than 12 weeks of age:

Diarrhea that lasts for more than 1-2 days
Diarrhea and occasional vomiting for more than a day
Vomiting more than 2-3 times in an hour
Not eating for more than 24 hours
Lethargy without fever for more than a day
Lethargy with fever

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your dog closely each day. Call your Foster Coordinator if you see:

- Unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings
- Abnormal lumps
- Limping
- Difficulty getting up or down
- Loss of appetite
- Abnormal waste elimination
- Other abnormal behavior

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Medical Supplies

To help save money, please do not accept these items from veterinary clinics as they can be obtained at the shelter, and always call the shelter to see if we have additional medications:

- Advantage/Revolution (for fleas)
- Droncit (for tapeworms)
- FVRCP vaccination or boosters
- Nutrical
- Tresaderm (for ear mites)
- Panacur (routine wormer, mainly for roundworms)
- Pyrantel Pamoate (routine wormer)
- Albon (coccidia)
- Ofloxacin (eye drops)
- Metronidazole (giardia)
- Clavamox (antibiotic)
- Triple antibiotic eye ointment ("BNP")²

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Behavior

Housetraining

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they've been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may "mark" their territory. This action should be redirected immediately with a calm "Oops" – then escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer (like Nature's Miracle) on the areas where the dog "marked" to insure he will not smell and mark that area again.

You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 8 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog who is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate – it could be the backyard, side yard or an indoor spot such as a Pup Head, litter system or one you have designed. Then take him there every time with a spoken command (such as "do your business"). Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern. A puppy can hold their bladder for about an hour for each month of age. If you would like to use pee pads for training your puppy, ask the Foster Coordinator if they have any. They are one of the things we ask to have donate, but we don't always have any.

Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!

Supervise the puppy closely while you're inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm "Oops," scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes. If he eliminates in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him – it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer to get rid of the smell. Never put the dog's face in his mess or yell at him; he won't understand you, and you will only be teaching him fear.

Crate Training

If you would like to crate train your foster, let us know. If we have an appropriate crate, we are happy to lend it to you. Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and housetraining mistakes. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old, plus one. For example, a 4-month-old pup should not be crated longer than 5 hours.

How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, he has never been required to hold it for any period of time. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it, and you will need to start slowly. Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time. Rigorous exercise should be given before and after any long periods in the crate, and good chew toys should be in the crate at all times. You may want to crate your new foster dog for the first few nights in your bedroom – most of them feel more secure in their crate and it protects your house from accidents.

Crates should never be used as a means of punishment; they're not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms, just like child playrooms with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure.

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Attention & Playtime

Gentle and calming human contact is important for dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of playtime periodically through the day.

Do not allow children to behave with the foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a dog alone when he is eating, chewing and sleeping. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other prized possession from a dog.

Do not play tug of war or wrestle with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw a toy toward the dog, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away so that you are controlling the toy and the playtime. When giving the dog a toy or treat, have him sit before giving it to him. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat – making it a reward.

Behavior Issues

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic – such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals – are really just normal dog behaviors and can be explained as “dogs being dogs.” The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate outlets for these behaviors.

If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioral issues, ask yourself the questions below:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples include verbally scolding a dog when he is seeking attention or engaging the dog when he uses bad manners to get you to play.
- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on his natural instincts and drives?

We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, talk to your Coordinator – another foster home might be best for both you and the dog. Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, which will not address the cause of the behavior and in fact it may worsen behavior that's motivated by fear or anxiety.

Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. People often believe their dog makes the connection to discipline because he runs and hides or “looks guilty.” But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

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Puppy Development

In the first 2 weeks of life, puppies are helpless & vulnerable. They are still developing basic reflexes, their hearing and vision aren't properly developed, and they are unable to properly control their body temperatures. They should therefore be confined to a nursery area. Puppies should not be allowed to mingle with your own pets.

During the first 1-3 weeks of life, puppies do not urinate or defecate on their own, and require stimulation for elimination. Gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the puppy's genital area & anus. This should be done before or after feeding.

Keeping the puppies clean is vital for their health. If you notice your puppy has food, urine, or feces on them, gently wipe the puppy down with a warm, damp cloth or baby wipe. If that's not enough, you can bathe them with Dawn dish soap. Be sure to dry the puppy well with a towel or blow dryer. Remember, small puppies can't regulate their own temperatures!

Puppies are born with the instincts to bite. One of the most important things puppies can learn is how to control the strength of their bite. Puppies naturally train each other. If one puppy bites too hard, the other puppy yelps loudly and stops playing. You can play the role of the other puppy, too. If a puppy mouths you with too much force, yelp loudly. If the puppy stops biting, praise them. If they continue to bite, turn your back on the puppy and stop playing. Resume play happily after 10 seconds or so. Mouthing is important, though. A puppy who isn't allowed to mouth will grow up with a hard bite. Never scold, tap on the nose, or yell at a puppy who is biting. Bite inhibition is a crucial development for puppies. A puppy who is punished for biting can turn into an unsafe adult, because they do not know the strength of their own jaws. Simply yell "ouch" when a puppy bites too hard.

Feeding

Never give a neonate puppy anything other than their specified formula (No cow's milk!). Puppies who are less than 3-4 weeks old are fed puppy formula. This can be powdered or pre-mixed. If using powdered formula (most common), make sure to follow the package directions carefully. Mixing the formula improperly can result in diarrhea or constipation.

Use only clean nipples and bottles! You can clean nursing supplies with hot, soapy water or in a basket in the dishwasher. Feed puppies one at a time. Place them on a countertop and allow them to feed with four paws on the counter and a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom. Never feed a puppy on its back! This can cause formula to go the wrong way and end up in the lungs. If the puppy doesn't take the nipple, gently open its mouth with your finger and place the nipple on the tongue. Stroking the puppy can help them to eat. Pull lightly on the bottle, this promotes strong suckling. Tilt the bottle up slightly to prevent the puppy from inhaling too much air. Make sure you don't squeeze the bottle, because that can cause the formula to move into the lungs. After feeding, burp the puppy by gently massaging their back. Make sure you stimulate the puppy to go to the bathroom either before or after feeding.

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Weaning

Weaning can occur at 4-5 weeks and should be conducted gradually. Create a slurry by mixing wet food with water or formula. You can also add dry food (just allow the dry food to soften before you give it to the puppy). Warm it up and put it in a shallow dish. They may not take to it right away, but they'll eventually get it. Sometimes, putting a bit on a baby spoon is easier for them for them to lick. You can also put a little on their lips, so they get the flavor when they lick it off. After they accept the slurry, gradually thicken it by adding less liquid. Start offering dry food and water on a free-feeding basis. Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding. Feed puppies until they are full, but not bloated.

If the mother is present, she will usually begin weaning the puppies by discouraging them from nursing; however, some dogs will allow the nursing until the puppies are old enough for spay/neuter surgery. Some nursing is the canine equivalent of thumb-sucking – that is, for comfort only. Even if the puppies appear to be nursing, they may not be getting all of the nutrition that they need from mom. Make sure they are eating food & gaining weight.

The digestive systems of puppies are fragile. Don't offer them treats, as treats could cause upset stomachs. If they are fighting over food, feed them separately. Never take food from a puppy that's growling. Simply remove the other puppies and wait for the growly puppy to leave.

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Showcasing Your Foster

Our foster program has a public Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/hswcmdfostercare/>. We also have an Instagram account at [hswcmd_fostercare](#) and a Twitter account at [@hswcmdfoster](#).

You are welcome to post pictures and stories of your fosters on our Facebook page. When your animals are ready for adoption you should write a story about the dog's personality, and send pictures to kposton@hswcmd.org. We will then make sure they end up on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Try to include things like:

- Whether the dog likes to be petted or held
- Is a lap dog
- Is vocal or quiet
- Is active and playful or calm
- Has good leash manners
- Has experience with other animals and children, etc.

Of course, any cute things that she does or anything you want to point out about her fur or appearance is good as well. It can be as long as you want, but the typical description is a paragraph or two.

If the dog has some bad habits, this can be discussed during the first phone conversation. The web story should generate interest, not turn people away. We don't want to mislead people; however we really try to focus on the positive.

Check the site a day or two after you have sent your info. You know the dog best and will catch any errors on the site. If you don't see the dog listed, or if there are mistakes, just send an e-mail with any corrections. If you will be taking the dog to an Adoption Ambassador event (discussed below), or if you'll be returning the dog to the shelter for adoption on a specific day, we can put that information in the story.

In order for us to share adoptable fosters without a day where yo'll be in a specific place, you must be willing to contact potential adopters once we alert you to their presence. Trying to negotiate meeting times and places is much easier when there's no middleman.

You may also share your dog on your own social media sites, as long as the dog isn't part of a case. We just ask that you keep it positive and don't tag individual HSWC staff or volunteers. You are welcome to tag HSWC Foster Care on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

♥ **For photos and descriptions that entice adopters, check out these techniques from ASPCApro: [resource/saving-lives-adoption-marketing-foster-care/tips-presenting-your-adoptable-animals-well](https://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/12/tip-week-all-your-selfie) [aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/12/tip-week-all-your-selfie](https://www.aspcapro.org/blog/2014/06/12/tip-week-all-your-selfie)**

Guide for Dog Foster Homes

Adoption

Your foster dog must be up to date on shots, be fixed, and have a microchip (and the information must all be entered in the computer at the shelter) before it can be adopted. This must be done PRIOR to taking your dog to get adopted, as adoption counselors are not trained to enter paperwork. Each dog needs to have a Foster Adoption Checklist completed by the foster office. This checklist should accompany them to all foster clinics, and MUST be brought to be filled out when you bring spay/neuter, rabies, and microchip information to be entered into the computer. Rabies vaccines can be given at 3 months, and are legally required by 4 months. If a puppy is too young for rabies when it gets fixed, and you still have it when it is big enough, you need to contact us about getting it a rabies shot.

Any inquiries about dogs posted on our FB page will go to the foster care office. We will either tell the adopter that you'll be at an event, or we will provide you with their contact information so you can contact them. Call and discuss the dog and screen them as you like. If they sound like suitable adopters, you will arrange a meeting with them, either at your home or at the shelter. The process for adoption should then be followed if things work out.

Showing in the Shelter

The most common way for dogs to be adopted is for them to simply be returned to the shelter to be put on the adoption floor when they are ready for adoption. For adult dogs, it's usually when they are well enough physically or behaviorally (whatever reason they were in foster in the first place) For puppies, it's usually when they are fixed. When your foster dog is ready to come back to be adopted; contact the Foster Coordinator. She will make sure there is space for them to come back, and will let you know when to come in. You MUST bring any outside vet records, spay/neuter paperwork, microchip & rabies information, and the Foster Adoption Checklist with you at that time, if you haven't done so already.

Adoption Events

Another way to find homes for your foster dogs is through adoption events on the weekends. Check our Foster Care Facebook page for a schedule. Traveling Fosters are the foster parents who bring their animals to events. Events are mostly cats, but dogs are welcome, too! Just make sure the Foster Coordinator knows you're planning to attend, so the volunteers running the events don't bring any other dogs.

Adoption Ambassadors are fosters who are trained to do adoptions, and are provided with the materials necessary to perform them. Adoption Ambassadors are allowed to adopt out their own fosters from their homes or take them elsewhere to be adopted. If you would like to be trained as an Adoption Ambassador, let the foster department know.

Guide for Dog Foster Homes

Sitting with your foster dog at a Traveling Foster/ Adoption Ambassador event is a great way to meet potential adopters and exchange information so you can remain in contact (if you want to). If somebody wants to adopt one of your dogs at an event, it will be done right there, and they will take the dog home when the adoption is complete.

Unless you have been trained to do adoptions, you are only there to promote your own fosters.

All dogs that go to events MUST have their paperwork with them, including the completed Foster Adoption Checklist. This is the folder we keep at the shelter on each animal. You can ask at the Adoptions desk, and they'll find it for you. Please make sure that it has, at the minimum, the original and copy of each of the following: surgery paperwork, microchip, and rabies certificate (if the animal is old enough to have it). Note – if you are fostering an animal that already had these things, but was surrendered without paperwork, you may not have originals. They do, however, need some sort of documentation. Being spayed or neutered can be listed in the medical history, and you can request that Customer Service print the tag screen for rabies and microchip.

Screening Potential Adopters

Friends, co-workers and relatives may want to adopt your foster dog. If they are qualified adopters, we are more than happy for that to happen. If you are a trained Adoption Ambassador, you can do the adoption yourself. If not, you can have them meet you at an event or back at the shelter, where somebody else will do the adoption for you. Either way, they must still fill out the application and pass an animal cruelty check. If you want to adopt one of your fosters yourself, you are welcome to do so! Just follow the same steps.

As foster volunteers, you have given the animals you cared for and loved a very special gift-a second chance at a full and wonderful life.

THANK YOU FOSTER VOLUNTEERS!!

Trusted Resources

You can use them for webinars or general information

ASPCA Pro