



## Tiny Miracles Rescue Foster Guidelines

### Overview

At Tiny Miracles Rescue, our foster program is designed to place dogs in foster care during the “quarantine” period, which is the first 10-14 days after they arrive from the shelters that we pull from. Due to the fact that the rescue location is also a boarding kennel, it is important that the rescue animals are not exposed to the boarding animals until we are certain that they will not spread any infectious illnesses.

After the quarantine period, and if the dog has not yet been placed in a permanent home, the dog will be moved to the rescue facility at the farm, and the foster home can prepare for the next foster.

### General Guidelines

Please read & review the following important guidelines:

1. All foster homes must complete a foster home application, a foster home agreement, and home inspection.
2. All foster homes agree to accept primary responsibility for providing housing and care of their foster for a minimum of ten days. If the foster dog is showing symptoms of kennel cough, it may be longer. If the dog is healthy, it could be as short as a week. Once the dog is deemed healthy, it can be brought to Tiny Miracles Farm, and we will arrange for you to receive another foster.
3. Food donated to Tiny Miracles Rescue will be made available to all foster homes. *If the dog seems stressed, we recommend that you start your foster dog off on a bland diet of boiled chicken and rice for the first few days and gradually incorporate dry dog food once the dog begins to settle in.*
4. Medical care will be provided only via a Tiny Miracles Rescue’s veterinarian. If you feel that your foster dog needs any medical care, including vet visits or over-the-counter medications, please contact Tiny Miracles Rescue before acting.
5. Your foster dog might arrive with medications that will need to be administered daily per their instructions. Please give these exactly as indicated. Please contact Tiny Miracles Rescue if there are any questions regarding the medications given.
6. Foster homes are asked to provide a progress report (via email) every 3 days. Please include remarks on the dog’s level of training, sociability, house breaking, leash walking, general health, and tolerance of children, cats, and other dogs. Please email updates to [tiny\\_miracles@msn.com](mailto:tiny_miracles@msn.com).



7. Foster homes are asked to provide 3 good quality photos of the foster dog within 5 days of receiving the dog. A great photo makes all the difference in how the dog is seen by potential adopters. Please email them to [tiny\\_miracles@msn.com](mailto:tiny_miracles@msn.com). If you do not have the ability to take the photos, please let us know, and we will make arrangements to get them.
8. From time to time, we may ask you to facilitate meetings with your foster dog and a potential family. This will happen if the dog received applications prior to the end of the quarantine period.
9. Only a director of TMR will find foster dogs. Volunteers and/or Foster Homes are not authorized to pull dogs directly from a shelter.
10. All applicants for a particular foster dog must go through the Tiny Miracles Rescue application process (online application, interview by TMR Director, home visit). If a friend or family member of the foster home wishes to adopt your foster dog, that's great! But, the adopter must go through the same process as other applicants.
11. Your own dogs should be spayed or neutered and have current vaccines. We also recommend that you vaccinate your dogs with the Bordetella vaccine to prevent kennel cough, a common illness, with shelter dogs. Tiny Miracles Rescue is not responsible for any veterinary bills for resident dogs. The foster home assumes responsibility for any veterinary bills that result from resident dogs becoming ill due to exposure with a foster dog.
12. Do not leave your dog with anyone else without prior approval from TMR. Anytime a foster dog is left we MUST have a signed release of liability.
13. If your foster dog becomes lost or escapes, you must notify Tiny Miracles Rescue IMMEDIATELY.

### **Getting your home & family ready for fostering**

Fostering is a commitment that will affect your entire household: your family, permanent-resident pets, home, and yard! Here are some tips to ensure that fostering will be a positive experience for you and your family.

Discuss your plans with other family members and get their input on how to make it work out best for everyone. Include in the discussion what kind(s) of dogs are appropriate for your household: small/large, young/old, active/not active, playmate for your active dog? Do you have an older dog that would not appreciate pestered? How long are you gone during the day? We'll need to match you with a dog that works with your schedule. You'll need a dog that fits your lifestyle, even if he/she is only a temporary resident.



## Supplies

You should have the following on hand before your foster dog arrives:

- **Food & Water Bowls:** it is best to have separate bowls for your foster dog and, to feed your resident dogs & foster dog separately. They should be able to eat in a stress-free environment as they are getting to know each other.
- **Food & Treats:** Tiny Miracles Farm can supply food. If you want to provide your own, we will advise you as to what kind of food or treat is best for your foster. ***Again, if the foster dog seems stressed, we recommend that you start your foster dog off on a bland diet of boiled chicken and rice for the first few days and gradually incorporate dry dog food, once the dog begins to settle in.***
- **Dog Crate:** We strongly recommend you have a crate for your foster dog. Crate training is a very helpful way to introduce a dog into a new home. We can supply you with a crate if you do not have one, and give you some excellent articles on crate training if you are unfamiliar with it.
- **Bed:** Cotton blankets or large beach towels are best as they are washable and less likely to be chewed up by your foster dog.
- **Toys:** Kongs are excellent for stuffing—they will keep your foster dog occupied. Stuffed toys and balls are also great depending on your dog's temperament.
- **Collar & Leash:** We will provide a collar and leash for your dog. A Tiny Miracles Rescue ID tag will be on your dog's collar as well. The collar and tag should stay on at all times, as it will help ensure the dog is returned to Tiny Miracles Rescue if it becomes lost. In most cases, your foster dog will already be micro chipped, so the microchip ID tag should be placed on dogs collar as well.

## Introducing Your Foster Dog to Your Home

Here are some tips for a smooth transition.

### Everyone Needs Space

If possible, it is best to keep foster dogs & resident dogs separated for the first 2 days. This is a stressful time for both the foster dog and your own animals. In addition, there are some illnesses common to dogs coming from a shelter environment that sometimes don't show up for 1-2 weeks, so separation can ensure that your dogs don't get sick. If it is not possible to keep them separate, be aware that your dogs may be exposed to illness. However, also be aware that many of the diseases that shelter dogs get (Kennel Cough, Diarrhea, etc) are stress related. Many have had poor nutrition and a hard life before coming to your home. Tiny Miracles Rescue cannot be responsible for resident dog vet



bills. We do not have the financial resources to make that commitment. If it is not possible to physically separate the dogs, try to ensure that everyone has their own “personal space” such as a bed, a crate, or a special area. This will keep the stress levels lower for your own dogs and the foster dog.

The backyard is not an acceptable place to leave the foster dog unsupervised. They may be destructive (digging, trampling plants), they may be escape artists, they may bark incessantly, or they could be taken. A crate or an enclosed room, are the best choices when you are not available to keep an eye on your foster.

## **Dog Introductions**

Introduce your resident dogs to the foster dog on neutral territory, at a park or down the street from your house, for example. Introduce them on leash, with an adult holding each leash. Allow a quick “hello” sniff or walk-by, and then separate them, even if things seem fine. This gives them a chance to think about things, and often, they will then seek each other out to get a lengthier greeting. Give lots of positive reinforcement so that both dogs feel safe and that the other dog is a friend, not a foe. If one dog gets aggressive, separate them quickly, increase the distance between them, and slow down the pace of the introductions. Don’t force things if they are not immediate best friends, sometimes it takes a few days for dogs to accept each other. Sometimes, dogs just don’t like each other. By giving them each attention separately, and making them feel safe about their bed, toys, and food, you can minimize any tension.

## **Getting Along**

Dogs are pack animals. There is usually one who dominates. Correction of one dog by another (whether it is your resident dog or the foster) is normal. As long as the dogs are responding positively to each other and seem to recognize the “pecking order”, this is fine. So, one dog may growl at another. If the dog reacts by moving away or showing passivity, then usually, the dogs will get along fine. If they are constantly battling for the “alpha” position, then they will have to be separated, and may not be a good fit for each other.

Never leave the dogs unsupervised together. They are still getting to know one another, and will need correction on appropriate behavior toward each other, which means supervision. If you are leaving the house, then crate the dogs or otherwise physically separate them. Again, feed the dogs separately. This reduces stress for everyone. Food aggression between dogs is common and is not a cause for concern, but should be noted.

## **Working With Your Foster Dog**

While your foster dog is living with you, you can provide some basic training along with lots of tender loving care. No formal training regime is needed for most foster dogs, but if you can work on the following, it will make your foster dog much more “adoptable.”



- **Socializing** is definitely the first priority. This means ensuring that your foster dog is acclimated to meeting new people, dogs, cats, children - as wide a group as possible. If you have a shy dog, this is a big task, and should be approached slowly (but all the more important to address it so that your dog overcomes his/her shyness). With a more outgoing dog, it's more about curbing enthusiasm so that people aren't overwhelmed upon meeting the dog (or knocked over with love).

- **Food aggression** with other dogs is a fairly common trait, however food aggression towards people is not acceptable. If your foster dog is growling when you are near his food, you need to work on correcting this behavior. Hand-feed the dog, so that it's clear the food is yours, and you are the giver of food. Then, when feeding with a bowl, take it away several times during the meal, giving it back after the dog sits & waits politely. With a dog that is not food aggressive, these are still good tips, along with taking toys away and then giving them back. If the dog growls, tell them "no" and continue to practice taking it away until they get the idea. If your foster dog is showing food aggression with your dog over food or toys, always feed them separately. Another good reason to crate your foster is that you can use that place as a safe place to give treats, chews, and toys.

**House training** (potty training) is definitely desirable for both you and the future adopter. The best way to house train is to use a crate, and to be vigilant about taking the dog outside regularly, including after naps and meals. If a dog is particularly stubborn about house training, keep them on a leash in the house; this will prevent them from wandering off to hide to go potty.

**Crate training** is a great way not only to potty train, but also to establish general house manners since the dog will not be roaming free in the house unless he/she is being supervised. So, no chewing on couch cushions, counter-surfing, or garbage can diving if the dog is not left alone.

**Sitting** is relatively easy to teach and pays big dividends. A dog that sits for his/her leash and food knows they are subservient to the person commanding them to sit. It also helps to get an overly excited dog under control.

**Jumping up** is a common problem with our foster dogs—they are so happy to have someone to love! But, it's best if they are taught not to do this, since it can knock people over and it is just rude. The best prevention is to see it coming and tell them to stop and sit.

**Leash walking** is challenging to teach. Many of our dogs have never been on a leash and have no idea how to behave. The ultimate goal will be to have a relaxed dog walking in close proximity to the handler. This can be achieved by stopping when the dog pulls and waiting for a release in attention or direction from the dog. If necessary, a movement in the opposite direction be the handler if only stopping does not alter the dog's intent,



should yield the desired response. This will be a continued process. Please feel free to ask us for a demonstration or clarification for any training points for your foster dog. We would be glad to help!

## **Dogs & Children**

Dogs and kids just go together! They are great playmates, guardians, and confidants. But, children must learn proper handling and discipline, and dogs must learn self-control so that they do not play too rough.

We recommend always supervising child and dog interactions. Children should be taught that dogs are beings, not toys to be handled or constantly. Make sure that a dog does not feel threatened by a child's behavior. Teach children not to tease or rile up the dog unnecessarily. Sometimes even just running and chasing the dog around the house, could frighten the dog, especially in the beginning.

Children should not play unsupervised with foster dogs. For puppies, be sure to teach proper handling (pick up by the body, not the limbs), and limit interaction. Children need to be taught that a puppy's mouthing is not biting, and that the puppy is not trying to hurt them. If a dog is small, we want to make sure a child isn't going to squish him/her. A big dog or even a small one could play too roughly with a child. By supervising a child and dog's interactions you will be able to correct the behavior.

We discourage young children from walking a foster dog, even a well behaved dog. On a walk unexpected situations could occur that might cause a dog to run, jump, and pull the child.

## **Adoption Procedure**

The Tiny Miracles Rescue directors work hard to find the proper match for each of our dogs. All applicants must go through the Tiny Miracles Rescue adoption process. Dogs cannot be adopted to friends or family of the foster home directly and all applicants must be properly screened. Potential adopters may be directed to our website [www.tinymiraclespetcare.com](http://www.tinymiraclespetcare.com) to fill out an adoption application, or they may contact us via email [tiny\\_miracles@msn.com](mailto:tiny_miracles@msn.com) or phone 215-997-2844.

Once foster dogs are healthy and have had all their vet checks, and we know their behavior, a foster dog will be put up on adoption sites. If the dog is healthy and receives interest from a pre-approved adopter (meaning, they have already met all adoption requirements), it is possible for that dog to be in a permanent home within a week of arriving from the shelter. However, our trend is for most dogs to be in our care for an average of 3 weeks from arrival to adoption.

Since all adoptions must be handled directly by a Tiny Miracles Farm Rescue director, it is important that you let us know any concerns you have about the requirements for your



foster dog's adoptive home. This includes how long the dog can be left alone, how the dog is with cats/children/other dogs, and any other pertinent information.

Please keep in mind that you should not make any promises or statements about a potential adopters "chances" of getting the dog. This is a topic that can get very emotional. We try to minimize hard feelings and keep emotions from running too high by having the Tiny Miracles Farm Rescue directors be the only people to let potential adopters know where they are in the adoption process. This also minimizes miscommunication.

### **Medical Treatment**

Prior to any medical procedure being done, you must contact a Tiny Miracles to get approval. Failure to get prior approval will mean that you are foregoing reimbursement for treatment. In addition, even if you are willing to cover vet expenses, we prefer to have the dogs seen by our vets so that the dogs get consistent care and have their records centralized. If the dog is sick, injured, needs to be spayed/neutered, or needs a doctor's visit for immunizations, a Tiny Miracles Farm Rescue director can make the vet appointment and, in most cases, will take the dog.

For medical emergencies, please call immediately:  
Kim Rutherford - 215-272-2926

Make sure that your own pets are protected. We expect that your own pets are altered and are current on all vaccinations. We recommend your pets be immunized for kennel cough and are on flea/tick preventative.

If there are any questions about training, medications, or anything about the dog, please feel free to give Tiny Miracles a call at 215-272-2926.