



Bringing A Foster Dog Into Your Home

Bringing a new dog into your home can sometimes have different results than you expect. You may have only had dogs that could be thrown into any new situation or meet a variety of new people or pets happily and confidently. That's why it is important to keep in mind that some rescued dogs have been through a lot in a short period of time. They may have lost their family, spent time in a frightening shelter, and then have been to the vet for the first time ever. They may be under-socialized or afraid. They may have never worn a leash, ridden in a car, or even lived indoors. In order to set you and your new foster up for success, please read through the following tips for adding a foster to your home.

Before Pickup

1. **Choose your quarantine space** - This may be a separate room, a crate, a securely blocked off area, or a combination of the above. In addition to keeping your pets safe from any medical issue that hasn't shown symptoms yet, it should also be a quiet place for the dog to decompress and feel safe and secure. Even after quarantine, when you are away & pets are left alone, we recommend separating any newcomers for a few weeks and if you have a higher population home, you may want to do it indefinitely. Crates can be borrowed through the Supplies Team (supplies@angelsrescue.org).
2. **Determine where the foster dog will use the bathroom** - For new intakes, leash walking and scooping poop immediately is ideal, even if you have a fenced in yard. Some dogs may be able to jump fences or dig under. Fosters should never be left in the yard, unsupervised. Also, consider whether the dog can get outdoors without interacting with your personal pets and if not, how you will manage that. You may want to temporarily close off your pets from the path you will take or have another family member keep pets leashed or held during the first few days, at minimum.
3. **Dog Proof** - If you have shoes or other treasured belongings on the floor, you should move them out of reach. This may also include breakable objects on low shelves or tables and food on countertops. And if you have other pets, it's important to pick up all toys and chews prior to a new dog coming in the house. These should be saved for crate or other alone time. You should also feed dogs separately, as well, at least until you know the dog better. Some dogs have never had things of their own and may resource guard so you should watch for this in the early days.
4. **Secure Collar/Harness & Leash** - Make sure you know your foster's size prior to pick-up so you can be ready with the right size collar or harness and be sure to fit it properly before leaving the vet office. Dogs often slip collars and are harder to recover when they don't know the area. For dogs who are known to be scared or a flight risk, transporting in a crate is safest. Otherwise, we

recommend martingale collars or a harness that does not allow the dog to back out (or both). You can also double leash for added security.

At Pick-up

1. **Angels Tags** - Ask the intake vet for a tag and attach it to the collar before leaving the vet. Double check that dog is secure.
2. **Medication & Discharge Instructions** - If you were told of any medical conditions, make sure you get any prescribed medication and if there is anything you don't understand, ask the tech. They will be happy to go over it with you.
3. **Your Personal Pets** – Do not bring your personal pet to pick-up your foster dog. The car is not a great place to introduce two unfamiliar dogs, one of which is likely stressed by all the unfamiliar people and places.

The First 72 Hours

1. **Decompression** - Keep your foster primarily in a calm, quiet area where they can decompress. Get to know him or her during this time but limit their introductions to other people, especially children, and pets. While a dog is still adjusting to a new place, you are much more likely to have issues if there is a lot of activity and introductions right away. An adult should handle the basics: food, water, and walking during this time. An incident is not only difficult for you, your family, and/or your pets, it can also result in the foster dog getting a label that will be difficult to overcome. So please, go slowly.
2. **Let the dog set the pace** - Some dogs may be immediately ready for lots of love and kisses. If so, that's great. But if the dog seems hesitant or afraid, don't push. Allow the dog to come to you. Offer treats, talk softly, and on the floor, a little bit away from the dog, as this is less threatening than standing. If you need to move the dog from one place to another, use a treat to lure instead of physically moving the dog until you know they are OK with that.

Post-Quarantine

1. **Introductions** - When the dog has settled in and you are past any needed medical quarantine, it's best to introduce the foster dog to your children and pets one at a time. Don't rush the introductions. Give the dog time to get to know each one individually before allowing group play. We have handouts on how to introduce dogs to your pets and will be happy to assist you with this if needed. Reach out to your mentor, the Foster Team (foster@angelsrescue.org) or the Training Team (training@angelsrescue.org) for assistance with this or any other aspect of fostering.
2. **Monitoring** - Over the next couple of weeks, new dogs should be monitored closely, especially around children or other pets. Children should always be supervised and discouraged from hugging dogs, feeding, or giving treats until you are certain the dog will behave nicely. While the dog can begin playing with your personal pets, you should interrupt rough or intense play until you know all dogs can handle it appropriately.

3. **Give Breaks** - We know that sometimes we need a break from activity - a little quiet time or alone time each day. Interacting with other people 24/7 can be exhausting and everyone needs some down time. So do dogs. Break up the day with individual walks or a yummy peanut butter filled Kong in a crate. By giving one on one attention and time to rest, dogs may interact better the rest of the time.
4. **Begin Training** - Some dogs may need to be house trained (or have a refresher). Some may need to be discouraged from jumping or mouthing or practice leash walking. And all can benefit from learning a few basic commands. We have handouts on all of the above and more. We also work with professional trainers for more serious issues. Contact the Training Team if you need handouts or training help. This will help the dog not only be more successful in your home but in the adoptive one, as well.
5. **Marketing & Adoption** - Don't forget to send a bio, 3 great pictures and even a short video to petfinder@angelsrescue.org to update your foster's profile so that the right people apply and not those just seeing the intake photo. And when you receive an approved application, communicate as quickly as you can, even if they aren't a fit for your foster. We want ALL applicants to have a good experience, so they not only adopt one of our dogs, but they also tell their friends. We also have handouts on all aspects of fostering and adoption so please ask if you have questions!
6. **Foster Failing** – This is an expression we use that means a foster is adopting their own foster dog. While we love foster fails, we ask that you make that decision quickly, before other applicants are involved. When someone is led to believe that they will be adopting a dog and the foster changes their mind at the last minute, it causes hurt feelings and makes the organization look bad. So please be respectful of others and if you do want to adopt the dog, do it right away.

Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to dogs and cats in need. The first 24 hours can be the hardest and I know that all of us have wanted to give up and run away. But if you can stick it out and get over the hump, you will be rewarded 1000 times over in the love and gratitude you see in your foster's eyes and the satisfaction you will feel when they find the forever home they deserve. And there is a whole community of Angels willing to help you every step of the way.