

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## Meet Cerberus: A Puppy with Big Drive!

Hi, I'm Cerberus! I'm an energetic and intelligent working dog breed looking for my forever home. Please read through this PDF guide to see if we're a good match!



### Overview

Cerberus is a 10-month-old German Shepherd–Boxer mix with strong instincts and a clear need for structure. He thrives in a calm, predictable environment and builds deep bonds with the people who guide him. If you enjoy working with intelligent, responsive, and energetic dogs, then Cerberus may be an ideal fit.

### Why He Stands Out

Cerberus combines intelligence with drive. He responds quickly to direction, enjoys a challenge, and reads his environment closely. He connects deeply with people who use consistent, respectful handling. His eagerness to learn makes him a rewarding companion for someone who values daily engagement and structure.

## His Journey So Far

Cerberus started life in a rural setting with lots of open space but little structure. His early training relied more on discipline than reward, and he was later housed in a small hotel room with minimal outlets for energy or stimulation. Despite this, he stayed eager to connect and responded quickly to kindness and routine. When his living situation changed, Cerberus was brought to North Carolina, where he adjusted well in boarding care and showed how resilient and responsive he truly is.

*To read the full backstory and better understand his current behaviors, see: [Cerberus's Rehoming History \(on page 4\)](#).*

## What He Needs

Cerberus will thrive in a home that offers:

- Daily structure and regular exercise
- Positive reinforcement and clear expectations
- Mental stimulation through play, training, or enrichment
- Adults or children over five who respect boundaries
- Limited time alone; he does best with a consistent daily care plan

He prefers stable households with minimal chaos. As a working breed, Cerberus will thrive in a space with a backyard or even on a farm!

*To evaluate whether your home is a strong match, review the [Dog Match Guide \(on page 8\)](#).*

## Who He Suits

Cerberus is a great match for people who:

- Have experience with working breeds or enjoy hands-on learning
- Value training and daily engagement
- Can provide a structured, calm, and communicative home
- Want a loyal companion who thrives on guidance



### Note:

He is not suited for homes with cats, chaotic energy, or owners seeking a low-energy pet.

*For a quick eligibility reference, see the [Housing Requirements Checklist \(on page 16\)](#).*

## Tools and Next Steps

We've created several tools to help you make a confident, informed decision. Here are some tools:

- [Dog Match Guide \(on page 8\)](#) – Compatibility, energy needs, and environment fit
- [How to Adopt \(on page 12\)](#) – Step-by-step process from inquiry to placement
- [Health and Vaccination Record \(on page 31\)](#) – Details about Cerberus's recent and upcoming vaccines and doctor appointments
- [Frozen Treat Recipe \(on page 26\)](#) - How-to-guide for making frozen treats.

## Ready to Adopt?

If Cerberus sounds like a good fit for your home or foster program, please explore the full adoption package, including the Dog Match Guide, care tools, and housing checklist, and check out the [How to Adopt Cerberus Guide \(on page 12\)](#). We'll follow up shortly to begin the conversation!



## Background and Rehoming History



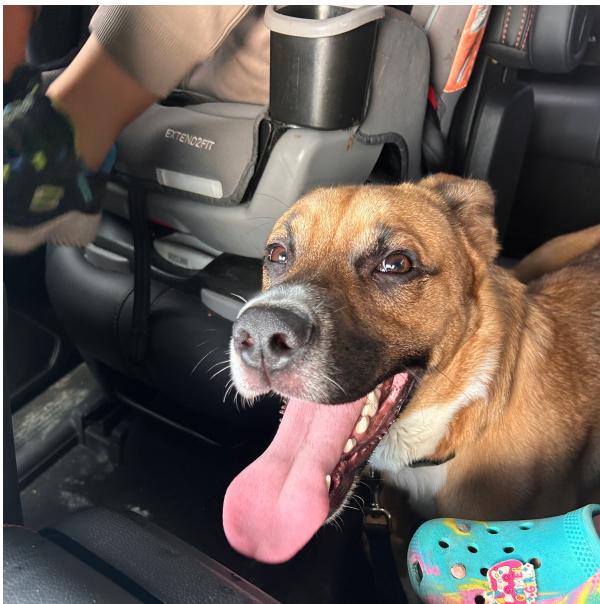
Cerberus is a high-energy and intelligent German Shepherd–Boxer mix who has experienced several living environments in his first year. He originally lived in a rural area with open fields, which allowed him space to run but offered little structure or positive reinforcement. His early training emphasized discipline over bonding, and he was primarily treated as a guard dog. Despite this, Cerberus remained eager for connection and responded quickly to kindness.

He later lived in a hotel for three to four months with his former owner and a secondary caregiver. Cerberus struggled with excess energy and the lack of consistency while confined indoors with limited stimulation. During this time, he formed a strong attachment to the caregiver who prioritized gentle handling and engagement.

Due to housing instability, Cerberus traveled to multiple states before being brought back to North Carolina. His transition was stressful, and he displayed signs of confusion and anxiety during attempts to place him in rescues or shelters. To avoid the risk of surrendering him to a shelter, a short-term boarding solution was arranged, where he received daily exercise, attention, and a chance to decompress.

As part of his ongoing adjustment, Cerberus is still learning to trust new people fully. He is being trained on leash reactivity. Adopters must be prepared to facilitate slow, structured introductions with unfamiliar people and to continue using positive reinforcement to help Cerberus build confidence and trust over time.

Cerberus is now in stable foster care. He's thriving with routine, affection, and space to move. His story reflects his resilience and readiness to bond with those who provide a calm, structured environment. This background informs his current behaviors and helps shape the kind of home where he'll continue to succeed.



## External Breed Reference: Boxer–German Shepherd

Learn more about the Boxer and German Shepherd breeds. These external links provide detailed information about the breeds' temperament, energy levels, and care needs.

### **Boxer Breed Information**

For an overview of the Boxer breed, including health, exercise, and personality traits, visit the American Kennel Club (AKC) Boxer breed page:

[Boxer Breed Info \(AKC\)](#)

### **German Shepherd Breed Information**

For an overview of the German Shepherd breed, including care, socialization, and training needs, visit the American Kennel Club (AKC) German Shepherd breed page:

[German Shepherd Breed Info \(AKC\)](#)

### **Why This Matters for Cerberus**

Cerberus is a Boxer–German Shepherd mix. Understanding these breeds' general characteristics can help adopters prepare for his high energy, intelligence, and need for structured activity. Individual personality and history will vary, so use this as general context only.

## Adoption Tools Overview

This toolkit supports both foster teams and potential adopters by providing clear, modular resources that make it easier to understand and care for Cerberus. Each tool is designed to be practical, shareable, and focused on setting him up for long-term success.

Some Key Tools Include:

- [Cerberus Match Guide \(on page 8\)](#): Screen for fit
- [Volunteer and Foster Contact Sheet \(on page 37\)](#): Centralized information for coordinating with support network
- [Cerberus Health and Vaccination Record \(on page 31\)](#): Snapshot of Cerberus's medical history
- [Daily Routine: Feeding, Exercise, and Potty \(on page 23\)](#): A.M.-to-P.M. structure to reduce guesswork and support transition
- [Behaviour Log \(on page 33\)](#): Track behavioural progress over time
- [Photo Repository \(on page 38\)](#): High-resolution images ready for listings and social media
- [External Breed Reference: Boxer–German Shepherd \(on page 6\)](#): Context for breed mix (Boxer–German Shepherd)
- [How to Prepare Your House for a Dog \(on page 17\)](#): Preparing your living space for Cerberus
- [How to Make Frozen Treats for Cerberus \(on page 26\)](#): Treat recipe for mental stimulation

## Cerberus Match Guide

This guide outlines Cerberus's care needs, temperament, and compatibility to help determine if you and Cerberus are a good match. A strong match ensures long-term success for both dog and caregiver.

### Ideal Home Environment

Cerberus thrives in calm, structured environments. He benefits from consistent routines and companionship throughout the day. A house with a secure yard works best. Cerberus is not suited to apartment living.

#### Best fit:

- Access to outdoor space
- Quiet, predictable routines
- Human presence during most of the day

### Energy Compatibility

Cerberus brings enthusiasm and a strong working drive. He needs regular movement, stimulation, and shared purpose. Daily walks, play, and short training sessions help him feel settled and engaged.

#### Care includes:

- 60+ minutes of activity each day
- Toys and games that challenge his mind
- Consistent feedback and clear direction

### Experience Level

Cerberus responds to steady, confident leadership. With guidance, he adapts well and enjoys learning. Experienced handlers and new adopters who commit to structure and support can succeed with him.

#### Caregiver strengths:

- Clear boundaries and consistency
- Commitment to ongoing training
- Calm and attentive presence

## Household Compatibility

Cerberus does best in adult-only homes or with children over 5 years old. He prefers environments free from overstimulation. His high prey drive makes cat-free homes ideal. He may live well with a calm, balanced dog after a careful introduction.

### Additional needs:

- Time and space to decompress
- Consistent structure to build trust

## Medical and Health Overview

Cerberus maintains overall good health. Gentle care helps him continue to build confidence and strength.

- Treated for fleas on intake
- Not neutered yet; recommended at 12–18 months
- Healing paw scrapes (as of July 6, 2025)
- Sensitive to hot pavement
- Recovering from kennel cough
- Healed bite on ear

For Cerberus's full medical and health overview, see the [Cerberus Health and Vaccination Record \(on page 31\)](#)

## Feeding and Food Habits

Cerberus eats well and responds to food as a training tool. He enjoys a steady routine and a balanced diet.

- Two meals daily of dry kibble
- Likes yogurt, peanut butter, broths, and watermelon
- Fast eater and drinker (slow feeder recommended)
- Begs at the table but is not fed from it

## Temperament and Activity

Cerberus is alert, affectionate, and playful. He builds bonds quickly and shows joy when given shared tasks.

- Active and eager to engage
- Protective instincts; good alertness
- Needs structured walks and mental games
- Enjoys treat balls, squeaky toys, beach balls
- Not responsive to frisbees
- Supervision recommended during soft toy play

## Socialization and Daily Life

Cerberus connects deeply and thrives in homes with structure. He values routine, activity, and companionship.

- Wakes up at 6 a.m., potty break, fetch, breakfast at 7 a.m., then bowel movement
- Loves children (above 5-8 years old)
- Trained to give hugs, doesn't jump up
- Learning personal boundaries
- Pack-oriented; enjoys daycare and dog companions
- Dislikes crates and long periods alone
- Not compatible with cats

## Training Needs

Cerberus shows strong potential and benefits from structured, positive reinforcement.

- Currently in formal training with Lydia Register (AAS, CPDT-KA)
- High prey drive (squirrels, rabbits, small dogs)
- Can jump up on cue



### Note:

Lydia Register will offer discounted training sessions to Cerberus's future adopter. For more information, see

Training success depends on:

- Positive reinforcement
- Daily, clear communication
- Avoidance of punishment-based methods

## Lifestyle Fit Scenarios

- Remote or hybrid worker: Excellent match for consistent engagement
- Active adult or couple: Good fit for shared activity and bonding
- Retiree with routine: Works well if structured and attentive
- High-traffic or chaotic home: Not a good match
- Confined living space (i.e., apartment): Not a good match

## Summary

Cerberus is energetic, trainable, and full of heart. He builds trust with presence, structure, and mutual respect. Cerberus is a great companion who will grow alongside a dedicated owner.

## Chapter 2. Adoption Process

### How to Adopt Cerberus

This guide shows you the full adoption process for Cerberus, from first application to final adoption, so you know exactly what to expect.

1. Step 1: Explore and Self-Screen
  - Read Cerberus's [Dog Match Guide \(on page 8\)](#) to understand his energy, social preferences, and structure needs.
  - Assess your lifestyle: schedule, living space, pets, family dynamics.
  - Cerberus is not a good match for first-time dog owners or homes with cats and children under five years old. Ideally, adopters should already have experience with a high-energy dog.
2. Step 2: Submit an Adoption Inquiry at Adopt-a-Pet
  - Complete the form at [Adopt-a-Pet: Cerberus's Adoption Application](#), sharing honest details about your home, experience with dogs, other pets, routines, and why Cerberus appeals to you.
  - For a step-by-step guide on how to submit an adoption inquiry form, see [the Adoption Inquiry Form Guide \(on page 14\)](#).
3. Step 3: Initial Screening
  - A volunteer or foster coordinator will follow up within 2-3 business days to clarify your responses, discuss Cerberus's care needs (energy, training, supervision), and answer your questions.
4. Step 4: Meet and Greet
  - Meet Cerberus in person or virtually, ideally with all household members present.
  - Household introductions should be done on-leash, starting outside with playtime and rewards, then moving inside once he is calm.
5. Step 5: Home Safety Check
  - Foster agents will check for secure fencing, safe indoor zones, and no cat/small-pet conflicts.
  - Cerberus likes to chew on stuffed animals and items made of rubber, silicone, wood, and plastic, so be sure to remove or secure these items.
6. Step 6: Trial or Foster-to-Adopt Period
  - When possible, begin with a 7–14 day trial to gauge how Cerberus adapts to your home and routine.
  - For the first 24 hours, keep Cerberus in a small room for decompression.

- Introduce Cerberus to family routines on the second day, then slowly introduce family members, and, finally, other pets.
- During the trial period, expect some behavioral issues that are currently being addressed in training.
- Support and check-ins are included.

#### 7. Step 7: Final Adoption

- If the trial is successful, you will finalize the adoption by signing the adoption agreement and submitting the adoption fee through Adopt-a-Pet, which helps cover Cerberus's care and veterinary costs.
- You'll receive Cerberus's full medical and behavioral records, daily routine guide, training logs, and key contact information for ongoing support.
- Recommended post-adoption follow-ups ideally occur at 1 week, 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, and 6 months.

## How to Submit an Adoption Inquiry

Start Cerberus's adoption process by applying through Adopt-a-Pet using the official application link. If you cannot access the platform, you may email the foster team with the same information.

### 1. Read Cerberus's Profile Thoroughly

Review Cerberus's full biography, behavior notes, and care needs to ensure compatibility before applying.

### 2. Submit Your Application on Adopt-a-Pet

Complete the application at [Adopt-a-Pet: Cerberus's Adoption Application](#). This is the fastest and preferred way to start the process.



#### Note:

The current adoption fee is \$100.

### 3. If You Cannot Apply Online, Send an Email Instead

If you are unable to access Adopt-a-Pet, email the foster team at [christinaemayr@gmail.com](mailto:christinaemayr@gmail.com) with the following information:

- Your full name and location (city, state)
- A brief introduction about yourself and household members (including other pets)
- Why you feel Cerberus would be a good fit for your home
- Housing situation
- Any relevant experience with dogs or high-energy breeds



#### Note:

Include photos of your home or yard if possible. This helps the team assess suitability.

### 4. Wait for a Response

A foster coordinator or volunteer will follow up within 2–3 business days. They may ask clarifying questions or suggest next steps (screening call, home check, or meet-and-greet).

## Tips for Success

- Be honest and specific. The goal isn't to "pass," but to find the right match.
- Don't worry if your setup isn't perfect. Many issues can be supported with guidance.
- If you're unsure about adopting but want to learn more, say so in your message.

## For Foster Organizations

You can reuse or adapt this text for adoption listings or email templates. It helps standardize applications, reduce back-and-forth, and makes it easier to assess fit before proceeding.

# Chapter 3. Preparing for Adoption

## Checklist: Housing Requirements

This checklist helps adopters quickly review if their home is ready for a new dog. Use it before submitting an adoption inquiry.

### Quick Checklist

- Is your home secure (doors, gates, and fences checked for gaps)?
- Do you have a quiet space or room where the dog can rest and feel safe?
- Are harmful items (cleaning products, small objects, wires) stored out of reach?
- Do you have enough indoor space for the dog to move around comfortably?
- Do you have a yard, patio, or access to nearby walking areas?
- Can you block off unsafe areas (stairs, pools, balconies) if needed?
- Do you have a plan for exercise and potty breaks (especially if you work long hours)?
- Do you have a designated feeding area (water and food bowls set up)?

### Next Steps

If you can check off most or all items, your home is likely ready for a new dog. If you are missing some items, take time to address them before bringing a dog home.

For additional preparation tips, see the [How to Prepare Your House for a Dog \(on page 17\)](#) guide.

Once ready, check out the [How to Adopt Cerberus Guide \(on page 12\)](#) to start the adoption process.

# How to Prepare Your House for a Dog

This guide explains how to create a safe, low-stress environment for a new dog. Whether you're adopting or fostering, preparing your home beforehand helps reduce anxiety, prevent accidents, and support a smoother transition.

## 1. Step 1: Choose a Setup Area

- Designate a quiet, calm zone (e.g., a kitchen corner or utility room) where your dog can eat, rest, and retreat.
- Keep it free of loud noise or foot traffic.
- Provide a comfortable bed or crate and soft toys.

## 2. Step 2: Dog-Proof Your Home

- Remove small objects (rubber bands, cords) that could be chewed or swallowed.
- Secure trash, cleaning supplies, and medications out of reach.
- Tape down loose cables and ensure balcony doors and stairs are safe.

## 3. Step 3: Set Up Feeding and Water Stations

- Use durable bowls on a non-slip mat.
- Use slow-feeder bowls to reduce gulping for fast eaters.
- Maintain a consistent feeding schedule.
- Transition food plans gradually.

## 4. Step 4: Establish a Potty Plan

- Learn the "3-3-3 rule": let the dog settle in 3 days, bond over 3 weeks, and build confidence over 3 months.
- Take the dog out first thing in the morning and at regular intervals; every 2 hours if possible.
- Praise immediately after they potty outside.

## 5. Step 5: Prep the Outdoor Space

- Check fencing for gaps or weak spots.
- Remove toxic plants and garden chemicals.
- Pick a potty spot and clear a path to it.

## 6. Step 6: Organize Enrichment and Daily Routine

- Provide chew-safe toys, puzzle feeders, and mental stimulation.
- Prepare a daily schedule (morning to evening) to establish a routine, especially in the first 3 weeks.

## 7. Step 7: Prep Household Members

- Explain house rules: no hugging immediately, no feeding from the table, calm greetings only.
- Agree on a consistent training vocabulary for commands. He is currently used to "good boy", "Cerb"

## 8. Step 8: Gather Essentials

- Get soft-sided crate/bed, bowls, leash, treats, poop bags, grooming tools, safe toys, cleaning supplies.
- Have these ready before the dog arrives to reduce stress.
- For a full supply list, check out the [Supply List \(on page 19\)](#).

A secure, well-prepared home creates a sense of stability and safety for your pet from day one. It builds trust and sets a positive foundation for bonding, training, and long-term success.

## Cerberus Supply List

This list shows the crate, food, and chew toys Cerberus currently uses. Each item includes a brand name and an Amazon link for convenience.

### Crate

- Suggested: Dog Crate, Travel Dog Kennel Double Door Collapsible, XL 42" x 31" x 31" - **Amazon Basics Store** [View on Amazon](#)

### Food

- Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula With Probiotics, Lamb & Oat Dry Dog Food, 24 lbs. - **Petco** [View on Petco](#)
- Blue Buffalo Health Bars Oven-Baked with Natural Ingredients Bacon, Egg & Cheese Crunchy Dog Biscuits, 16 oz - **Petco** [View on Petco](#)
- Pet Botanics Training Rewards Peanut Butter Soft & Chewy Mini Puppy Treats, 4 oz. - **Petco** [View on Petco](#)
- Pupford Freeze Dried Training Treats for Dogs & Puppies, 475+ Three Ingredient Bites (Beef Liver, 4 oz) [View on Amazon](#)

### Health Maintenance Food

- Allergy Immune Chews - **Strella Lab** [View on Amazon](#)
- Dentalife Daily Oral Care Chicken Flavor Large Breed Dog Dental Chews, 20.7 oz., Count of 18 - **Petco** [View on Petco](#)

### Enrichment Tools

- Dog Brick Treat Puzzle Enrichment Toy Level 2 Intermediate Game, Blue - **Outward Hound Store** [View on Amazon](#)
- LickMixes, Calming - **WOOF Store** [View on Amazon](#)

### Leash and Safety Tools

- Dog Tie Out Cable 25 Feet - **BV Store** [View on Amazon](#)
- Dog Seat Belt for Car, Adjustable Dog Seatbelt Harness for Small, Medium and Large Pets - **Mighty Paw Store** [View on Amazon](#)
- Dog Tie Out Cable and Stake for Camping, 360° Swivel Dog Run - **TOPKNOT** [View on Amazon](#)

## Note



### Note:

Amazon links may change or go out of stock. If a link no longer works, search for the brand name and product description on Amazon or a trusted pet retailer.

## Common Housing Questions

This reference answers the most common questions about preparing your home for Cerberus.

### **Q: Do I need a house with a yard to adopt Cerberus?**

A: Yes, Cerberus is best suited to houses with backyards to allow him to meet his daily activity needs. He needs at least 60 minutes of combined walking and play every day, i.e., two 30-minute walks a day. If you have a yard, ensure it is fully fenced with no gaps or weak spots.

### **Q: How long can Cerberus be left alone?**

A: Cerberus does best when someone is home for part of the day. If you work full-time, arrange a midday potty break with a dog walker, neighbor, or doggy daycare. He should not be left alone for more than 4–5 hours without a break.

### **Q: Does Cerberus need a crate?**

A: Cerberus does not enjoy being in a crate for long periods and may feel stressed if confined. A soft-sided crate or a quiet “safe area” can be used for short rest periods, but a gated room or playpen is often a better option.

For tips and alternatives, see the [Crate Training Guide \(on page 24\)](#).

### **Q: How should I set up my home before Cerberus arrives?**

A: Prepare a calm space with his bed, bowls, and toys ready. Remove anything he might chew (cords, shoes, small objects). Secure trash, cleaning supplies, and medications so they are out of reach.

For a full checklist, see the [House Preparation Guide \(on page 17\)](#).

### **Q: Can Cerberus live with cats or other small pets?**

A: Cerberus is not compatible with cats and has a strong prey drive. Small pets must have fully secure enclosures and be closely supervised if they are in the same home.

For more details, see the [Cat and Cerberus Introduction Guide \(on page 28\)](#).

### **Q: Can Cerberus live with another dog?**

A: Possibly. Cerberus may do well with a calm, balanced dog after slow, careful introductions. Success depends on the other dog’s temperament and the adopter’s ability to manage the process.

**Q: What if my home situation is different from these examples?**

A: Every home is unique. If you have questions about your specific setup, please reach out to the foster team at [christinaemay@gmail.com](mailto:christinaemay@gmail.com) for guidance.

**Q: What are Cerberus's exercise needs if I work long hours?**

A: Cerberus needs at least 60 minutes of combined daily exercise. If you work long hours, consider arranging a midday dog walker or daycare. A longer walk or play session before and after work will also help him feel balanced.

**Q: How do I introduce Cerberus to children?**

A: Cerberus does best in adult-only homes or with children over five years old. Always supervise interactions, teach children to respect Cerberus's space, and avoid hugging or rough play. For more information on how to introduce Cerberus to children, contact [Lydia Register](#), Cerberus's trainer, to set up a training session.

**Q: How should I handle visitors coming to my home?**

A: Cerberus can be protective of his space. Keep him leashed or behind a gate during arrivals and reward calm behavior as guests enter. Give him time to adjust at his own pace. For more information on how to introduce Cerberus to visitors, contact [Lydia Register](#), Cerberus's trainer, to set up a training session.

**Q: Can Cerberus handle stairs or open spaces?**

A: Yes, but supervise him around open staircases or elevated spaces. Block access with baby gates if you're not confident about safety.

**Q: How much time should I plan to spend at home during the first weeks?**

A: Plan to be home as much as possible in the first 1–2 weeks to help Cerberus decompress and learn his routine. Gradually increase time away once he's more settled.

# Chapter 4. Welcoming Cerberus Home

## Daily Routine: Feeding, Exercise, and Potty

Cerberus thrives with a consistent daily schedule to balance his energy, meet his core needs, and build trust.

### **Morning Routine**

- Potty break immediately upon waking.
- 20–30 min active walk or play.
- Breakfast meal with potty break afterward.

### **Midday Routine**

- Potty break, short walk or play session (10–15 min).
- Provide mental enrichment (puzzle toys, frozen treats).

### **Afternoon and Evening Routine**

- 45–60 min structured exercise.
- Dinner meal followed by potty break.
- Quiet activities: training, grooming, cuddles.

### **Bedtime Routine**

- Final potty break before bed.
- Settle in a designated sleeping area.

### **Weekly Grooming**

- Coat brushing.
- Teeth brushing with dog-safe toothpaste.

### **Importance of Routine**

A consistent routine reduces stress, supports training, and promotes calm, confident behavior.

## How to Crate Train Cerberus

Help Cerberus build a positive, voluntary relationship with the crate without using force or confinement. This is especially important because he has a history of anxiety around crates.

### 1. Understand the Crate as a "Safe Zone," Not a Containment Tool

- Never use the crate for punishment.
- The crate should feel like a choice, not a trap. Treat it as a den or nap pod.
- Place it in a low-traffic area where the family spends time. The current bathroom location may feel too isolated.
- Keep the door open at all times during initial exposure.

**Note:** Cerberus gets upset if he is told "go to crate," and he will avoid it. Avoid verbal commands at this stage.

### 2. Choose the Right Crate Setup

- Use a soft-sided crate, as Cerberus scratches and chews on metal crates.
- Use a flat blanket or bed.
- Do not use fluffy bedding, as he may chew if anxious.
- Do not cover the crate unless he is already used to low light or being enclosed.
- Keep the crate accessible all day, especially after walks or meals when he is calmer.

**Note:** Cerberus will only stay in the crate for up to 30 minutes. Expect very short initial sessions.

### 3. Stage 1: Neutral Presence

- Toss treats near the crate entrance without cues or pressure.
- Allow Cerberus to sniff, pass by, or ignore it. Do not shut the door.

**Note:** Watch for signs of stress like panting or whining and pause if these appear.

### 4. Stage 2: Voluntary Entry and Reward

- Toss treats further into the crate gradually.
- Feed meals at the entrance, then inside as comfort builds.
- Pair entry with a calm word once he starts going in comfortably.

### 5. Stage 3: Calm Duration (Door Open)

- Give Cerberus a stuffed Kong or chew to encourage settling inside.
- Walk away for a few seconds, then return calmly. Do not hover.

**Note:** Even with calming tools like music or a Thundershirt, Cerberus may only settle for 5–10 minutes before his anxiety increases.

### 6. Stage 4: Close the Door Briefly

- Once Cerberus chooses to enter on his own, close the door for a few seconds, then open it.
- Gradually extend the time (10 seconds, 30 seconds, 2 minutes).
- Do not open the door in response to whining. Wait for quiet before releasing.

#### 7. When to Use the Crate

- Use it only if Cerberus voluntarily chooses the crate.
- Start with calm times of day, such as mornings after a walk.
- Delay using the crate for overnights or absences until positive association is strong.

#### 8. Tips and Alternatives

- Track his comfort levels in a [behaviour log](#). ([on page 33](#)).
- If he avoids the crate for a full day, go back a step in training.
- Try music, worn t-shirts with foster scent, or dog-calming playlists.
- If crate anxiety persists, consider a gated safe zone, though Cerberus may jump over barriers.

## How to Make Frozen Treats for Cerberus

Offer Cerberus a calming, mentally stimulating activity that also supports digestion and routine. These frozen treats are helpful during crate time, transitions, or when he's extra energetic and needs a healthy outlet.

### Ingredients

- Plain Greek yogurt (unsweetened)
- Natural peanut butter (xylitol-free)
- Plain pumpkin purée
- Dry kibble (same food as his regular meals)



#### Note:

Peanut butter is Cerberus's favourite ingredient and helps him stay calm.

### Tools You'll Need

- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Ice cube tray, silicone mold, or Kong
- Freezer-safe container

#### 1. Mix the Base.

- Combine yogurt, peanut butter, and pumpkin in a bowl.
- Stir in Cerberus's kibble or treats.



#### Note:

Aim for a thick but spoonable texture for the base. The kibble or treats give a satisfying crunch.

#### 2. Fill Molds or Kong.

- Scoop the mix into your container of choice.



#### Note:

For a Kong, layer mix–kibble–mix so he stays engaged longer.

#### 3. Place in the freezer for at least 3 hours or overnight.

## Serve Thoughtfully

Give him a frozen treat during crate time, when guests arrive, or after a long walk.



### Note:

Cerberus enjoys the treats most after his afternoon walk (around 3 p.m.). Cerberus can get overexcited and gulp the treats, so a little supervision is needed.

## Optional swaps

- A bit of low-sodium broth (if picky)
- Mashed banana (for sweetness)
- Small pieces of frozen watermelon

## Why Treats Help Cerberus

- Keeps him mentally engaged when bored.
- Encourages calm chewing (which soothes anxiety)
- Slows down eating if he's overexcited
- Adds hydration and digestive support from the pumpkin

## Storage

- Freeze batches ahead and store in a sealed bag or container.
- Use within 2 weeks.

## Tips

- If he loses interest, soften the mix with broth or let it thaw for a few minutes.
- Always count frozen treats toward his daily food intake.
- For crate training, prep one in advance and hand it over as soon as he enters calmly.



### Note:

Cerberus has tried stuffed bones and lick mats, but he tends to tear apart the rubber lick mats.

## How to Introduce Cerberus to a Cat

Cerberus is best suited in a cat-free home. However, Cerberus may be able to coexist with a cat through proper training and gradual and monitored introductions. This guide does not guarantee that Cerberus will be able to coexist with a resident cat.

### 1. Begin with Separation and Scent Sharing (Days 1–4)

- Keep Cerberus and the cat in separate rooms with closed doors.
- Swap bedding or use scented towels to exchange smells daily.
- Place each animal's food bowl near opposite sides of a closed door to create positive scent associations.



#### Note:

Be patient with this stage. Cats often hide or avoid contact when they smell a new dog, and it may take time before they feel comfortable leaving their safe space.

### 2. Facilitate Visual Introduction Through a Barrier

- After several days, allow visual but not physical access by using a baby or pet gate.
- Keep Cerberus on a leash and at a distance; let the cat roam freely on the other side of the barrier.



#### Note:

Reward calm behavior in both animals. Strong barriers are essential, as gates or crates may not be enough to contain Cerberus if he becomes reactive.

### 3. Hold Leashed, Supervised Meetings

- When both pets remain calm, bring them into the same space under controlled conditions.
- Keep Cerberus leashed and the cat free to exit at any time; reward calm behavior with treats and praise.



#### Note:

Keep sessions short (just a few minutes) and gradually increase the duration as comfort grows. Controlled conditions include low noise, low traffic, and a predictable space.

**Note:**

Cerberus may display strong reactions, such as intense staring, stiff posture, barking, and lunging. He does not currently respond well to treat-based redirection during these episodes, so handlers must be ready to remove him calmly if he escalates.

#### 4. Allow Curiosity from a Distance

If Cerberus fixates on the cat, mark and reward any moment he shifts his focus away. This helps teach him that calm disengagement is rewarded.

**Note:**

Dogs can detect cats by scent before they see them. Watch closely for early signs of tension (stiffness, deep sniffing, fixated posture) and redirect before it escalates.

#### 5. Allow Unsupervised Access Only When Truly Ready

- Unsupervised time should only begin when both the cat and Cerberus can eat, rest, and move calmly around each other without tension.
- Continue to provide escape routes and high resting areas for the cat.

**Note:**

Expect this to take weeks or months. Moving too quickly increases the risk of conflict and can set back progress.

#### 6. Maintain Ongoing Support and Environment Management

- Always separate Cerberus and the cat when no one is home.
- Provide multiple litter boxes and water stations so the cat can avoid Cerberus when needed.
- Continue reinforcing calm commands like “leave it” and seek professional support if progress stalls or aggression escalates.

#### **Redirecting Fixation**

If Cerberus locks eyes, tenses, or freezes at the cat, do not scold or yank him away. Instead:

- Watch for small signs of relaxation or disengagement: blinking, sniffing, head turns, or looking at you.
- Mark and reward any moment of calm focus or self-regulation with treats, calm praise, or gentle play.
- Keep sessions short and neutral, and end them on a positive note.



**Note:**

If fixation escalates (barking, lunging, growling), pause the session and increase physical distance. A decompression walk before the next introduction can also help.

The goal is to build tolerance, not force obedience. Teach Cerberus that looking calmly at the cat and then disengaging leads to a reward. This builds focus without increasing stress.

**Outcome**

This process is likely to be slow and challenging, but with consistency and safety measures, Cerberus may gradually learn to coexist with a cat. Professional trainer support is highly recommended for homes with resident cats.

## Cerberus Health and Vaccination Record

This record shows Cerberus's medical history, vaccination dates, and treatments for easy sharing with fosters, adopters, and vets.

### Dog Details

- **Name:** Cerberus
- **Breed:** Boxer / German Shepherd (Mix)
- **Colour:** Tan/Yellow/Fawn with White
- **Sex:** Male
- **Age:** 10 months old
- **Weight:** 52 lbs (current)
- **Neutered:** No
- **Microchipped:** No
- **Pet ID:** 7264971
- **Allergies:** None officially, but sneezes and itches frequently (testing allergy chews)

### Vaccination Summary

Based on Grace Animal Hospital and Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services records:

Vaccine	Date Given	Next Due	Clinic
Rabies	2025-01-07	2026-01-07	Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services
DHPP (Core)	2025-01-07	2026-01-07	Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services
Leptospirosis	2025-01-07	2026-01-07	Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services
Bordetella	2025-06-30	2026-06-30	Grace Animal Hospital
Bordetella (Oral)	2024-12-11	2025-12-11	Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services

### Medications and Treatments

- Doxycycline: 2025-07-07 to 2025-07-14 (kennel cough)
- Meloxicam: 2025-07-07 to 2025-07-14 (anti-inflammatory)

- NexGard (flea/tick prevention): Started 2025-07-21 (given every 30 days)
- Heartworm prevention: Monthly (start date pending)

## Vet Visit Log

- 2025-06-30: Grace Animal Hospital - Bordetella vaccine
- 2025-01-07: Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services - Rabies, DHPP, Lepto boosters
- 2024-12-11: Tender Heart Mobile Veterinary Services - Bordetella (oral)
- 2025-07-17: Grace Animal Hospital - fecal test

## Upcoming Medical Needs

- Heartworm test due: Not yet tested
- Next flea/tick dose: 2025-08-21
- Annual physical: 2026-01-07
- Rabies booster: 2026-01-07

## Record Tips

- Keep a copy (digital and printed) for handoffs.
- Update after every vet visit or treatment.
- Bring this record to boarding, adoption events, and vet visits.

## Vaccination Summary

You can also view the full official vaccination record here:

[Vaccination Record \(PDF\)](#)

# Chapter 5. Post-Adoption Support

## Behaviour Log

This log helps you track Cerberus's behavior each day. Use it to write down what happened, what you did, and what worked. Share the log with the foster team or trainer if needed.

### How to Use This Log

- Write in the log once or twice a day.
- Be clear about what happened and what you did to help.
- Track things like eating, sleeping, bathroom habits, and reactions to people or pets.
- Write down small wins or improvements you notice.

### Behaviour Log Table

Date	Trigger (What Happened?)	Behavior (What Cerberus Did)	What You Did	Outcome (How He Calmed)	Notes / Wins
2025-07-26	E.g., Visitor at the door	E.g., Barked and paced	E.g., Guided to crate with treat	E.g., Calmed in 5 minutes	E.g., Barked less than last time

## How to Troubleshoot Post-Adoption Issues

This guide helps adopters and foster caregivers respond calmly and effectively to common challenges in Cerberus's first days or weeks, including aggression, anxiety, food refusal, and more. It provides step-by-step guidance to de-escalate behavior and stabilize trust without punishment or surrender.

### 1. Normalize the "Decompression Phase" (First 3–14 Days)

- Expect Cerberus to be more withdrawn, overstimulated, or reactive, even if he seemed calm before.
- Avoid overwhelming him with new people, parks, or pets. Keep the routine quiet and consistent.
- If his behavior seems “off,” slow things down and avoid adding new stressors.

### 2. If Aggression Occurs (Growling, Lunging, Snapping)

- Stay still and quiet. Do not reach toward him.
- Remember: aggression is often fear-based or a form of boundary-setting, not a sign he is “bad”.
- Note what triggered it: sudden touch? A loud noise? Resource guarding? Proximity to another pet?
- Do not punish or yell. Give him space. Remove the trigger if it is safe to do so.
- Use a calm, low voice and redirect him to a safe zone or crate (if conditioned).
- Document the incident: date, trigger, duration, and recovery time.
- If it happens repeatedly, contact the foster organization for support.



#### Note:

Track Cerberus's behaviour in the [Behaviour Log \(on page 33\)](#).

### 3. If Anxiety Arises (Panting, Whining, Destructive Behavior)

- Confirm his physical needs are met (exercise, potty, food, sleep).
- Use a calming environment: soft lighting, low noise, avoid eye contact or fast movements.
- Play calming music or dog-calming YouTube tracks.
- Offer a treat-stuffed toy, frozen lick mat, or safe chew to redirect.
- Avoid leaving him alone for long periods early on.
- Use a consistent phrase like “All done” when leaving to create predictability.

### 4. If Food Refusal Occurs

- Do not panic. Many dogs refuse food for 24–72 hours in a new home.
- Offer meals in a quiet, low-distraction area and avoid hovering over him.
- Try hand-feeding a few bites, then set the bowl down.
- If dry food is ignored, mix in a small amount of warm water, canned food, or broth.

- Remove uneaten food after 20 minutes and try again later.
- Track water intake. Hydration is more important than food early on.
- If he does not eat for 48+ hours and shows low energy or vomiting, contact a vet.

## 5. Track Behavior Patterns Over Time

Use a [Behaviour Log](#) (*on page 33*) to record:

- Triggers and what calmed him
- Eating, sleeping, and bathroom habits
- Reactions to new people or pets
- Daily wins, even small ones

Share updates with the foster team. Consistent patterns matter more than one-off moments.

### When to Escalate or Ask for Support

If any of the following persist beyond 7–10 days:

- Unprovoked biting or escalating aggression
- Extreme withdrawal or cowering
- No eating for 2+ days
- Inability to sleep or settle for hours at a time
- Harmful self-soothing (chewing paws, spinning)

Cerberus is in his toddler phase (cute and a bit anxious!), so he is still settling in and learning the basics. He knows the commands "down" and "watch". He is working on the command 'sit' after a successful leash evaluation. Like many young dogs, Cerberus can get excited during play and may jump up or nip, but with positive reinforcement and consistent training, he will continue making progress. He is currently in training with a professional dog trainer - Lydia Register.

# Chapter 6. Fact Sheets for Adopters and Foster Agents

## Fact Sheet: How This Project Supports Foster Agencies

This fact sheet explains how the Cerberus Adoption Project makes it easier for foster agencies to manage dogs like Cerberus, streamline adoptions, and reduce administrative work.

### Purpose

This project centralizes all of Cerberus's adoption and care information in one place. Foster agencies can use it as a template to save time, improve communication, and ensure adopters are fully prepared.

### What's Included

- **Adoption Inquiry Form:** Standardized intake form to collect complete adopter info upfront.
- **Behavior Logs and Medical Records:** Editable templates that keep all history organized.
- **Step-by-Step Guides:** Tasks on house prep, decompression, introductions, and troubleshooting.
- **Foster and Volunteer Contact Sheet:** Quick-access directory for internal use.
- **Enrichment and Training Resources:** Frozen treat recipes, crate training guides, and more.
- **PDF and Web Versions:** Materials can be shared digitally or printed.

### How It Makes Your Job Easier

- **Reduces back-and-forth:** Adopters get all the info they need upfront.
- **Saves time:** Ready-made templates prevent rewriting instructions for every dog.
- **Improves consistency:** Every foster and adopter receives the same high-quality guidance.
- **Builds trust:** Clear, professional materials make adopters feel supported and prepared.

### How to Use This Resource

Agencies can adopt the project as is or adapt it for specific dogs. All topics are structured in modular sections (health, training, adoption forms), so you can use what you need and skip what you don't.

If needed, send the web version to adopters or print the PDF version for in-person adoptions.

### Contact for Questions or Updates

For questions about using or adapting this project, contact the project lead: [Maria Haque - [mariahaque35@gmail.com](mailto:mariahaque35@gmail.com)]

## Volunteer and Foster Contact Sheet

Internal reference for foster team and volunteers. Lists key contacts, their roles, and the best way to reach them for Cerberus's care and adoption needs.

### Contact Directory

Name	Role / Re-sponsibility	Email	Phone	When to Contact
Christina Mayr	Foster Coordinator	<a href="mailto:christinaemayr@gmail.com">christinaemayr@gmail.com</a>	+1 919-622-7508	All adoption inquiries, foster support, behavioral questions
Ruby Leonaraine	Foster Coordinator	<a href="mailto:rubyleonaraine@protonmail.com">rubyleonaraine@protonmail.com</a>	860-209-3127	All adoption inquiries, foster support, behavioral questions
Lydia Register - Puptential Training	Training and Behaviour	<a href="mailto:puptentialtraining@gmail.com">puptentialtraining@gmail.com</a>	+1 919-896-2985	Behavior support, training resources, training follow-up after adoption
Maria Haque	Adoption Project Lead	<a href="mailto:mariahaque35@gmail.com">mariahaque35@gmail.com</a>	+1 647-907-5562	PDF/content reuse, documentation questions

### Emergency Contact

For urgent issues (injuries, severe illness, or unsafe situations), call the designated 24/7 emergency line:

**911**

## Chapter 7. Media

### Photo Repository

This photo repository contains pictures of Cerberus with his foster family and friends. Photos are accompanied with a short description.



Cerberus smiling at the camera.



Cerberus in the driveway.



Cerberus on the field.



Cerberus laying down.



Cerberus getting a treat.



Cerberus at the dog park with his foster family.



Cerberus in a crate.



Cerberus sunbathing.



Cerberus sleeping on his mini foster human.



Cerberus sitting outside.



Cerberus playing catch at the dog park.



Cerberus in a car ride with his foster family.



Cerberus playing with a toy.



Cerberus being goofy!