



4525 W. Wendover Ave.
Greensboro NC, 27409
336-641-3400
FAX: 336-641-3416

FOSTERING PUPPIES/ADULT DOGS

Welcome to the Guilford County Animal Shelter foster program! Here is some information you will need to get started!

Supplies needed (some are optional)

- Small carrier for transport
- Heating pads that do not automatically shut off, Snuggle Safe discs recommended (for very young puppies without mom or singles)
- Food/water bowls that can easily be sanitized (no plastic bowls)
- Puppy food (both canned and dry, depending on age)
- Puppy formula/milk replacer (Esbilac)
- Bottles for young bottle-feeding puppies (can be provided by GCAS if necessary)
- Adult dog food if fostering adult dogs
- Medication if needed (will be provided by GCAS)
- Bedding, such as dog beds, towels, or blankets
- Newspapers
- An area to keep foster puppies separate from other pets
- puppy training pads and a baby gate for older puppies or adults
- Toys!

Three basic needs: feeding, stimulating, and keeping warm.

Feeding

***bottle-feeders**

Always wash your hands before and after handling the puppies. Clean the bottles by washing in warm soapy water and rinsing in hot water. Make sure the puppy is lying stomach down when feeding. You may have to give the puppy a couple of minutes to get used to the nipple by gently squeezing a drop or two of formula in its mouth. Formula should be body-temperature warm; test the temperature before giving it. Feed every 2-3 hours during the day, but do not wake them if they are sleeping for feeding time. Hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle to prevent air from entering the puppy's stomach. Do not feed milk not specified for puppies nor overfeed. This will cause medical issues.

***Puppies eating on their own**

Puppies that have just been weaned (or about 4-5 weeks old) will need to be offered fresh canned puppy food 2-3 times a day. You can encourage this by making a gruel using warm water, formula, and canned puppy

food. Over several days decrease the amount of water and formula until they are eating just the canned food. They will be messy eaters so please keep them clean by wiping them with a warm wet cloth.

At 6 weeks old they should be offered dry puppy food with the canned food. You can help their interest in this by mixing some canned with dry, then slowly decrease the amount of canned food you add.

Fresh water should be available at all times.

Stimulation

A newborn puppy cannot evacuate its bowel or bladder on its own. After feeding, gently massage and stimulate the genitals and anal region with a sterile cotton ball or clean cloth dipped in warm water. You will need to do this until the puppy begins to use the bathroom on its own. They may not have a bowel movement EVERY feeding, and may even skip a day, so don't worry unless there are other signs of concern. (Refer to General Health page)

By 4 weeks of age you can make a bathroom area for the puppies by placing newspaper or puppy pads in a corner of the room. Always praise the puppy when they use the paper. Be prepared to clean up after your foster puppies frequently. It is best not to take the foster puppies outside to use the bathroom at this age due to the risk of acquiring or spreading disease such as parvo. Most puppies will not begin to potty train until about the age of 12 weeks; it may be best to leave that up to their future family.

Keeping them warm and safe

The area where you keep the puppies should be warm, dry, and clean. A small crate with a small dog bed and heating pad will work. Put the heating pad on the lowest setting and put it under the crate. Make sure they cannot access the cord, and that they have room to move off the pad if they become too hot. The first 2 weeks is critical to keep the babies warm. Use a heating pad that does not automatically shut off.

For older puppies that no longer need the heating pad and are moving around well, keep them in a small bathroom or laundry room in the home away from other pets. The puppies have not been fully vaccinated, and since we do not know the history of these animals we want to make sure your pets and the puppy are safe from any contagious illnesses.

Fostering mom and puppies

Fostering moms with puppies can be very different from fostering just a litter or a single puppy. The mom will do most of the work for you! Your job as a foster is to provide a calm environment where mom and puppies feel safe and secure. It is VERY important that these families are kept in a room of their own without interference from family pets – even another animal just sniffing through the door can be terrorizing for a mom dog who is trying to protect her babies.

The environment – set up is similar to that of the litter, but with a bigger safe place. A large carrier or small room can provide the perfect place for a mom to keep her babies. Food (wet and dry) should be available at all times. The bottom of a crate with plenty of bedding makes a great nesting box.

Introduction – Once a mom is in the foster home, she should be left alone in the room with her babies. Once she is settled you can spend increasing amounts of time in the room but let her come to you – do not approach a mom as she may become protective of her puppies.

Playtime – as mom becomes more comfortable and as the puppies get older, make sure to spend time with mom separately from the babies – even mom doggies like to play! Have a place where mom can get away from her babies if she needs a break.

General Health Care

You will receive scheduled dates for them to come back to us for things like booster vaccines and dewormers. Some puppies will be too young for preventatives, so the medical record will just include a physical exam. Please call ahead and make an appointment with the foster coordinator or a veterinary health care technician for regular check-ups and preventative care. If a problem arises that needs to be seen right away during our regular business hours, please give us a call to schedule an emergency visit. **If it is an after-hours emergency please take them to Happy Tails Emergency Clinic, 2936 Battleground Ave. Greensboro NC (phone # 336-288-2688). Call them first to determine if it is truly an emergency.** If you take them anywhere else for veterinary care you will be responsible for payment of services. **Always have paperwork with the fosters.**

After- hours emergency care symptoms would include:

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

Things to look out for....

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. Flea treatments contain insecticides

that can cause nerve and liver damage, impair the immune system and even cause cancer. Regular flea combing is the best way to control and monitor the fleas. Vacuum all areas of your house that your foster uses at least very two to three days. Good food, minimal stress, proper hygiene and TLC keep the dog from getting fleas or an illness. 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.

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. Just like people who have colds, kennel cough develops when the dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised. Kennel cough usually goes away as soon as the dog has a warm, quiet and soothing place to sleep, where they can drink lots of water, eat healthy food and receive lots of TLC! 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.

Worms:

At 2 weeks old puppies need to be given a dewormer. This will be scheduled through us. After worming it is normal to see worms pass in the stool.

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 immediately if you suspect your foster is dehydrated. In an emergency, take your foster directly to your vet.

Parvo:

Call us immediately if you see bloody diarrhea, vomiting or lethargy. Parvovirus is contagious and potentially fatal if not treated. This is why puppies need to be kept in a room that can be cleaned easily with bleach. (If you do not, and puppies test positive, then you will not be able to safely bring another animal into your home for several months.)

***Make sure that food/water bowls are cleaned daily. Clean the room/area daily. Change puppy pads, clean walls and floors near the pads, and wash all bedding and toys with bleach. This is especially important before bringing home a new foster!

Behavior

Crate Training

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking and houstraining 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.

Houstraining

Be patient with your foster dog. Even houstrained 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 houstrain 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.

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.

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.

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.

Showcasing your foster

Web Presence

If your dog's picture is already on the shelter's website, you should write a biography about his personality. A good bio makes a big difference in the number of calls the dog gets, so be descriptive! Try to include things like:

- What does the dog like to do? (play fetch, go for walks, etc.)
- Is he a cuddler?
- Does he have experience with other animals and children?

Of course, any cute things that he does or anything you want to point out about his 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 bio should generate interest, not turn people away. We don't want to mislead people; however, we really try to focus on the positive. Please email the bio to the Coordinator.

Photos

If your dog's picture is not yet on the Web site, please feel free to take pictures and send to the foster coordinator. They can be e-mailed in .jpg format with your story.

Adoptions

When your foster is ready for adoption, friends, co-workers and relatives may want to adopt. If they are qualified adopters, we are more than happy for that to happen. Shelter staff always do a final screening and have the final authority to approve all adoptions. You are also welcome to adopt your foster dog, following the same procedures as everyone else. We may also have you contact and set up meet and greets with potential adopters that contact us directly about your foster. If they decide to adopt, you can schedule a time to meet here, where they can fill out the paperwork, pay the fees, and take the animal. They must have the animal ID number in order to complete the adoption. If you are unsure of the correct numbers for them, contact the foster coordinator.

Adopters should arrive at least one hour before closing time to allow enough time for the process and not keep staff after closing time. Please ask adopters to avoid starting the adoption right at opening time as well since it's a very busy time for staff.

Even if there are no potential adopters, fosters need to come back to the shelter for our adoption floor when they are 8 weeks old. Contact the foster coordinator to set up an appointment. PLEASE CONTACT THE FOSTER COORDINATOR ABOUT ANY ISSUES YOU ARE HAVING, ESPECIALLY IF YOU NEED TO BRING YOUR FOSTER/S BACK UNEXPECTEDLY! ALSO, BRING ALL PAPERWORK THAT YOU RECEIVED WITH THE ANIMAL.

When you are ready to foster again, give us a call!! We always need your help!



Important phone numbers

Happy Tails Emergency Clinic 336-288-2688

GCAS main line 336-641-3401 or 3402

Foster coordinator 336-641-3407 email abolton@myguilford.com

This packet is based on material generously shared by Seattle Animal Shelter on ASPCApro.org website.

Please sign and date below acknowledging that you have received the appropriate foster information and have read and understand them.

Signature of foster parent

Date

Staff Witness

Date