

# Foster Handbook and Guidelines for Dogs



**Animal Services**  
DEPARTMENT of GUILFORD COUNTY

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## About Guilford County Animal Services

Welcome to the Guilford County Animal Services Foster Program! Our mission at Guilford County Animal Services (GCAS) is to help our county be a safe, compassionate, and healthy place for people and animals. We work to control the loose animal population, as well as increase the positive outcomes for homeless animals in the county. GCAS is the only open admission shelter in Guilford County. As we expand our life-saving programs, working collaboratively is more crucial than ever, both in the shelter and outside of our front doors.

### *Guiding Principles*

The staff members at GCAS deeply appreciate a Foster Family’s service and dedication to help save the lives of animals in Guilford County. Together, our work is guided by the following values and principles:

**Lead with Innovation:** Develop, promote, and collaborate to create new ideas geared towards better life saving techniques and increasing the quality of life for all animals.

**Demonstrate Empathy, Compassion, and Kindness:** By understanding and respecting each other, we can collectively identify how we can become a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

**Provide Success through Support:** Ensure that every animal and person is set up for success by providing information, training, and assistance with appropriate dialogue.

**Safety through Transparency:** Provide open and honest communication to ensure all humans and animals thrive within a safe environment.

**Positive and Forward-Thinking:** Look towards challenges with an open and positive mind-set, as well as creative solutions.

By working together within these principles, we can impact everything from the animals in the GCAS’s facility, to the individuals who take them home.

### *Foster Program Description*

A Foster Home is a temporary living arrangement for animals in our Foster Program through placement with individuals, Foster Parents, in the community of Guilford County. As a Foster Parent with GCAS, you are a volunteer and part of a massive life-saving mission to help prevent animal homelessness and overpopulation. The animals in our Foster Program need a temporary place to recover from medical procedures, relax away from the stress of the shelter, grow large enough to enter our adoption program, wait their turn to be transported to a shelter in another area, or mature as a pet. We see you as a part of our team and with that we have expectations that must be met to ensure a positive fostering process.

### *Anti-Harassment Policy*

GCAS’s anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintain a workplace that is free of harassment, so our employees and guests can feel safe and happy. GCAS strives to create and maintain a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect.

In accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, GCAS expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran’s status, or any other protected classification. GCAS expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments, or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. GCAS will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, or coerce an employee, co-worker, client, volunteer, or any person working for or on behalf of GCAS.

Anyone engaged in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from the Foster Program with GCAS. If a Foster Parent or any other individual who is associated with the foster parent ("Foster Parent Affiliate") believes they are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the GCAS staff contact with the Foster Team.

GCAS will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation of any GCAS employees or volunteer(s) who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation by a Foster Parent may result in termination of the Foster Parent's Relationship with GCAS.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the Foster Parent who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, because of the investigation, GCAS determines that an employee of GCAS, a Foster Parent, an Affiliate, or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, GCAS will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment or release from the Foster Parent's relationship with GCAS, or possible legal action.

## ***Working with Guilford County Animal Services***

As a Foster Parent of GCAS, we expect that you understand and agree to the following:

- You have not been convicted of Animal Cruelty, Neglect, or abandonment, and will notify GCAS should you be convicted at a later date.
- If you take an animal that is the property of GCAS into your care, GCAS reserves the right to check on the welfare of said animal. This may include a home visit or welfare check of your property. GCAS may also request the animal leave the dwelling at any time and for any reason be returned to the facility.

## **Procedures**

### ***Contacting the Foster Coordinator***

<b>Foster Coordinator</b>	<b>Foster/Rescue Admin</b>	<b>Vet Tech</b>	<b>Vet Tech Supervisor</b>
Stephani Crandall 336-937-1867 <a href="mailto:scrandall@guilfordcountync.gov">scrandall@guilfordcountync.gov</a>	Erica Marion 336-471-2054 <a href="mailto:emarion@guilfordcountync.gov">emarion@guilfordcountync.gov</a>	336-279-4944	Katie Bivona 336-803-2710

### ***Understanding Your Manual***

This handbook summarizes many of Guilford County Animal Services' policies and procedures, including the ones that you, as a Foster Parent, must follow. A Foster Parent's failure to comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook may result in a termination of the relationship between a Foster Parent and GCAS. All GCAS staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook. We are happy to provide further information or clarification on this Handbook if needed. Please note that GCAS managers and their designees may modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If any changes are made, GCAS will notify Foster Parent(s) as soon as possible.

### ***Legal Guardianship of Animals***

All animals in the foster program are the legal property of GCAS until the adoption paperwork has been processed.

## ***Confidentiality Policy***

Working with GCAS, all Foster Parents are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information, including but not limited to history or prior owner information of an animal. Failure on a Foster Parent's part to comply with GCAS Confidentiality Policy, may result in termination of the Foster Parent's Relationship with GCAS.

## ***Conflicts of Interest***

As a supporter of and volunteer for GCAS, a Foster Parent should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, interfere with timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, discredit GCAS, or conflict/appear to conflict with GCAS' best interest. The success of GCAS rests on its reputation and the goodwill of the community. Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of GCAS assets, funds, materials, facilities, etc. Violations of this policy may result in release from the Foster Parent's relationship with GCAS. If a Foster Parent is asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of GCAS, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please reach out to the Foster Coordinator.

## ***Foster Parent Expectations***

- Abide by policies and procedures that are outlined in the GCAS Foster Manual.
- Maintain regular access to email and/or your phone and provide updates to contact information when necessary.
- Ability to provide transport to and from GCAS when necessary for an animal in your foster care.
- Provide a clean, safe and caring environment with food, water, enrichment and proper shelter.
- Appropriately socialize with foster pets and treat them like a household pet while they are in your care.
- Monitor and communicate any medical and/or behavioral concerns.
- Follow guidelines and policies for adoption outlined in our "Getting your Foster Adopted Section".
- Have up-to-date rabies and age-appropriate vaccinations and have for all animals in your home.
- If your resident animals are not currently spayed/neutered (unaltered), you will only be able to foster animals who have been spayed/neutered (altered). If your animals alteration status changes in course of fostering, please provide the Foster Coordinator with spay/neuter records from your vet so that we can update your foster profile.

## ***Adoption Prices and Receiving Payment***

Found an adopter for your foster animal? Congratulations! A few things need to happen before you can officially hand them off. First, as with any adoption, the adopter will need to fill out an online application with the shelter. Please let the Foster Coordinator or Front Desk know when the adopter has completed the online application. Once the application is approved, if the animal has already been spayed/neutered, the front desk can send the adopter a link to pay the adoption fee via text message. The front desk will also mail the adopter the foster animals rabies certificate, microchip, and adoption information. If the animal has not already been spayed/neutered, the animal will need to be scheduled for surgery and stay in the foster parent's custody until the animal has their surgery and then the adopter can proceed with the adoption as stated above.

If the adopter is wanting to pay cash for their animal, they will need to come into the shelter and give the money to a GCAS employee and finalize the adoption at the shelter. Foster Parents are not allowed to take payment of any kind on behalf of GCAS or solicit money from potential adopters for any reason.

## ***Lost Foster Pet***

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your foster pet may escape from you or your home. If this should happen, please contact the Foster Coordinator immediately with the following information:

- The animal's Animal ID (EX: A012345) and Name (this can be found on your foster pet's paperwork)
- Last known location
- Date and time of escape
- What the situation was when escape occurred (opening the front door, walking the foster pet, etc.)

We suggest that you put up fliers around your neighborhood and place ads on local lost and found websites, Facebook pages (including your personal page and the GCAS page), Pawboost, the Nextdoor app, and Craigslist.

Should the animal be picked up by an Animal Control Officer of GCAS, the Foster Team will be notified and will contact you immediately. The Foster Team can request that an officer be sent out to survey the area if the animal was lost within Guilford County. Always keep the Foster Coordinator informed with any updates.

## ***Stolen Foster***

If you believe a foster pet is stolen while in your custody, please contact the Foster Coordinator immediately. We also ask that you call 911 and create a police report to give any information that you might know about the situation. In addition, follow the same steps that are outlined above in the "Lost Foster" section.

GCAS will also consider an animal stolen if we have been unable to contact you, the Foster Parent. The Foster Team will send out communication during the fostering process periodically. If at any point during this, we believe you as the Foster Parent have become unresponsive, we will make every attempt to reach you. If at 30 days in the foster home we have been unsuccessful in making contact, GCAS staff will proceed by releasing the animal as missing or stolen in the GCAS Database. This could prohibit you from being able to foster or potentially adopt from GCAS in the future.

## ***Deceased Foster Animal***

It is never easy to lose an animal and it affects each of us differently and personally. As a Foster Parent, it is important not to blame yourself for any loss that may occur. Please understand that sometimes we are operating against unknown illnesses or, especially in the case of neonatal animals, fragile populations. Due to this, we understand that accidents or a decline in health can occur. Remember that everything you do for these animals is in the efforts to create a positive outcome and to save a life. The Foster Team at GCAS is always here to assist you in case an animal in your care passes.

## **If an Animal Passes in Foster**

1. Make sure the animal has passed. In some cases, especially with neonates, a very cold, hypoglycemic kitten/puppy can appear to be deceased but may not be.
  - a. If the animal has not passed, please contact the foster coordinator immediately. If the shelter is closed, or if you cannot get in touch with the Foster Coordinator, please proceed to the emergency clinics authorized for the shelter (Carolina Veterinary Specialists or Happy Tails). See contact information for emergency clinics on last page of handbook or separate handout with the same information.
2. Contact the Foster Coordinator immediately via the contact information in your handbook.
3. Wrap the animal in a cloth and place it inside of a zip lock bag or a bag that is size appropriate.
4. With a Sharpie, write the animal's name and A# on the outside of the bag. This is very important as all deceased animals must be accurately reported in GCAS records

5. After you have gotten in contact with a GCAS Foster Team member and you have placed the body in an appropriate bag with identification, come to GCAS and a staff member will further assist you.
6. If you are not able to immediately bring the animal to GCAS, or it is overnight, the animal may be stored in its appropriately sized bag in a refrigerator until you are able to do so.

## ***Suspected Mistreatment of a Foster Pet***

If there is suspected mistreatment of a foster pet, GCAS will take appropriate measures to investigate. If you are found to have mistreated an animal, either as a Foster Parent or before joining the program, you will be immediately suspended or terminated from our Foster Program. The Foster Coordinator will contact you if there are any concerns.

## ***Returns to the Facility***

There are multiple reasons why your animal will need to return to GCAS. Whether you are returning your animal to the main shelter for the end of the designated foster period or returning due to your foster pet not being a good fit for your foster home, we ask that you always contact the Foster Coordinator. If the return is not an emergency, we will set up an appointment for you to bring your foster animal back to the shelter. If you are attempting to schedule your animal for a medical appointment, please see our "Medical Appointment Section" for more details.

If you need to return your foster pet due to an emergency that is after-hours and it is urgent, please call Animal Control Dispatch (336-641-5990). If Dispatch is unavailable, you can try calling Metro 911 non-emergency number (336-373-2222). For true emergencies, call 911.

## ***Bites***

Please alert the Foster Coordinator if you are ever bitten by a foster animal. It is extremely important to document an animal's behavior and ensures that GCAS can continue to make sure all foster families have a safe experience. North Carolina law requires any animal that bites and breaks skin to undergo a 10-day rabies quarantine under the supervision of a veterinarian. Failure to report any bites will result in immediate termination from the foster program.

For minor bites, please contact the Foster Coordinator during regular business hours. If the bite happens after hours and is severe and/or requires medical attention, please contact Animal Control Dispatch (336-641-5990). If Dispatch is unavailable, you can try calling Metro 911 non-emergency number (336-373-2222). For true emergencies, call 911.

## **Preparing Your Family, Pets and Home for a Foster Pet**

### ***Pre-Treating Your Dwellings and Yard***

North Carolina is home to several common viruses carried by wildlife and domestic pets that are found on most ground surfaces in our backyards. The warm climate, minimal freezes, and rainy springtime can allow highly contagious illnesses, such as Parvovirus and Distemper, to have longer gestation times outdoors than other states. Even if your backyard is fully fenced, wildlife can spread viruses through possible contaminants in your yard.

You can pre-treat hard surfaces, such as your patio or deck, with a bleach: water mixture of 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach) on any surface. With this pre-treatment, you should be able to safely let underage puppies out onto these locations. Puppies under 6 months of age should not go out onto the grass or dirt that you cannot pre-treat until they have had 2 rounds of booster vaccinations. Adult dogs that have been vaccinated are much less susceptible to contract these viruses and, in most cases, can go out into your fully contained yard onto the grass or dirt without the need for pre-treatment. We do always recommend pre-treating your dwellings if you are unsure of the tenant history.

If you have had a personal pet become sick with a virus in the past year, we recommend cleaning places that you can with a bleach: water mixture of 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach). This will ensure any foster pets you bring home will not catch the same virus.

## ***Prepping for First Day: Items and Expectations***

Here is a good list of items for you to have the first time you bring home a new foster pet.

GCAS will provide:

- Food
- Veterinary Care
- Collars/Leashes/Harnesses
- Formula and Bottles/Syringes
- Crates/Carriers
- Bowls
- Beds/Bedding
- Toys/Enrichment
- Foster Supplies via donation
- as they are received
- You will need to provide:
  - Fresh water
  - Warming devices
  - Treats (if not on a special diet)

## ***Housing Requirements***

When fostering a pet for GCAS, you are expected to provide a secure and caring housing environment. Puppies under 6 months of age should not go to outside public areas until they have received at least 2 rounds of booster vaccinations.

It is against the law for an animal to be unrestrained or tethered in Guilford County. All dogs should be on leash when outside or inside your secure, fenced yard. They should not be housed outside in your yard. Adult foster dogs should not be given free access to a 'doggie door' or any other access door to the outside when you are not at home. GCAS will lend you a crate to house your foster pet indoors when you are away from the home.

## ***Additional Renter Information***

Some apartment complexes and home rental managers have restrictions on having pets. Check with your management to see if you have any type of pet deposit that must be paid in order to foster pets. As a Foster Parent, GCAS expects that you have done this research prior to taking an animal into your home. GCAS does not require you to provide renters agreements or leases prior to fostering. By taking an animal into your home, you are acknowledging that you will accept the risk of taking an animal home.

## ***Health and Temperament***

GCAS does not guarantee any health or temperament of an animal entering your care. By taking an animal into your home, you are acknowledging that you will accept the risk of taking an animal home with unknown or limited history. All known medical and behavioral information will be divulged at the time of pick up. It is the responsibility of the Foster Parent to ensure they are following the proper protocols for keeping their foster pet and family safe. We highly recommend familiarizing yourself and family with the prospective foster pet before taking them into your home.

## ***Decompression Period***

Remember that this is more than likely a confusing time for your new foster pet. They have just left the busy environment of the shelter and are bound to be feeling a little overwhelmed. It can be tempting to bring them with you to shop or visit friends or go out to eat, but your foster pet should go straight to your home and be allowed to settle in before taking them anywhere. It can take days to several months for an animal to become comfortable in your home and with your routine. Be patient and allow for them to have some time to decompress.

You should plan to create a quiet space for your foster dog with a crate setup that is "den like" or give them a room like an unoccupied bathroom. If the foster dog you bring home appears stressed out or shut down, allow them to have a space that is entirely theirs. Allow your foster pet to relax before immediately subjecting them to social situations.

When you first arrive home, walk them around outside on their leash to allow for a chance to go to the bathroom. Keeping them on leash at first can be helpful, especially when entering a new environment with so many smells and potentially scary new sounds. A leash will keep them from running away from you or chasing objects that could be potentially harmful. Once you're inside the house, it might take a bit of time for your new foster pet to relax. The more you can relax into a routine, the more your foster pet will, too.

Please also note that all animals are individuals; they all have different adjustment and decompression periods.

## ***Foster Pet Isolation***

A 7-10 day minimum period of isolation is recommended for the safety and protection of your personal animals. We can give no guarantees about the health and behavior of an animal coming from our facility into your home. Animals receive a medical evaluation upon intake when arriving at GCAS, but it is always a good idea to be on the safe side when it comes to your personal animals. Please note that some diseases will not always appear within the first 24-48 hours of arrival to the shelter or your home and can incubate in the body for longer than that time frame.

## ***Getting Started as a Foster Parent***

Commitments as a Foster Parent range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose an option that fits your lifestyle. It is through this vital and supportive role for GCAS that we can provide more lifesaving opportunities to and create a safety net for the animals that have come into the shelter facility. Our staff will do their best to match you with your perfect fit based on experience level.

## ***Opportunities for a Foster Parent***

Our large-scale foster program is all encompassing and provides a variety of different avenues. We encourage all Foster Parents through GCAS to help us on our lifesaving mission.

Opportunities currently are:

### ***Behavioral Fosters***

The foster team and foster parent will stay in touch to determine how long the foster animal will stay in the home for. We are looking to see if behaviors in the new home environment are improving, staying the same, or declining. This will help us get more information on how the animal will adjust to a home life when adopted.

### ***Medical Fosters***

The time stayed in the home will depend on the medical issue at hand. Upper Respiratory infections (or URI's) will generally be a shorter stay and will be reevaluated after the medications are complete. Animals that have had surgeries may need to stay in the home for longer periods of time depending on the recommendations from the medical team.

## Underage/Neonatal animals

Neonates and babies need to stay in the home until they are at least 8 weeks of age and 2 pounds. This amount of time will depend on how old the puppies are when you receive them, but the time should not exceed two months. Mothers with babies are included in this type of foster.

## In the Home with a Foster

### Feeding Guidelines

GCAS will provide food for your foster animal. This will be Hill's Science Diet or Hill's Prescription Diet depending on the animal's dietary needs. The animal(s) should be kept on this diet unless they are not eating. If this should happen, contact the Foster Coordinator to see what else should be done before switching to a different brand of food. You should never give your foster pet food intended for people, nor should you feed them scraps off your plate. Certain types of human food can be toxic to animals and cause symptoms from allergic reactions, lethargy, organ failure, and even death.

Keep the number of treats to a minimum; treats should only be about 1% of their daily diet. Make sure treats are labeled safe for appropriate age for your foster pet. Never leave your pets and foster pets with unattended treats. No rawhide, leather, or bone-type treats are allowed at any time. Never give treats to a foster animal on a specified diet unless approved by the Foster Coordinator or medical team.

### Can My Foster Eat This?



## Dog to Dog Introductions

Please be sure to bring your dogs to the shelter to meet any potential foster dogs to do a dog test. This will help to determine if your dogs and a foster dog may be a good fit. A successful dog test at the shelter does not mean that the dogs will get a long in the home or that they should be left alone together. A successful dog test at the shelter will only determine if it might be a good fit. Please follow the guidelines below once at home with the foster dog and your personal dog(s).

With all animals, we highly recommend following the isolation protocol before doing any introductions. This is meant to be a guide for introducing two social dogs to each other. Do not use this procedure if either dog has had a history of dog aggression and/or displays On Leash Reactivity (OLR) or Barrier Reactivity (BR) to other dogs. This reactivity can manifest as barking, lunging and even fighting or biting and can be displayed while the dog is either on the end of a leash or behind a barrier (fence, gate, etc.). While OLR and BR are not indicators of canine aggression, it can cause on leash introductions to go poorly. If you are attempting to follow this procedure and either of the dogs seems uncomfortable or begins to display OLR or BR, please cease the introduction and contact the Foster Coordinator.

## How We Set Dogs Up to Fail

Many dogs have forgotten or never learned at all how to properly greet other members of their own species. Dogs are mostly on leashes, behind fences, rushed into greetings by their well-meaning people, and/or kept from situations that would have otherwise helped them learn canine greeting etiquette. Leash reactivity is one of the biggest dog behavioral issues caused by humans. Tight leashes can create frustration when your dog sees other dogs on the street. This can cause body language in your dog that may look offensive to other dogs. Other behaviors often facilitated by humans – pulling, hard stares, and running up to other dogs head-on – can turn greetings sour.

Dogs aren't all that different from people – they have personal space just like we do – and may become offended when a stranger invades that space. Think of it this way: if I were to wave to you from a distance, that would be a nice gesture. If I were to rush up to you and wave my hand right in your face, that would be rude, intrusive, and somewhat threatening. Dogs are constantly placed into situations in which they are forced to endure invasion of their space and are set up to fail at greetings. The sad thing is that the dogs get blamed for snappy behavior or are said to be "aggressive" in these situations but it's a normal reaction for a dog to get cranky about another dog running up, acting rude, and rushing a greeting (especially so when the dog is on its own territory).

## Some considerations first, please!

Before you set up a foster dog introduction, consider your own dog's general attitude towards other dogs. If your dog has a solid history of playing well with properly matched playmates, then you have a better chance at success. Pairings of the opposite sex tend to be most successful. Some dogs are uncomfortable with or reactive to new dogs and need slow introductions. Realize that, like humans, dogs don't necessarily like every single dog they meet, and some do best as an only dog. If your dog has a history of reacting negatively to the company of other dogs, then it is probably best to just have them as an only dog.

## Successful Introductions Lead to Successful Integration!

It is a must to properly introduce your current dog to a new foster dog. Do not just walk a foster dog into your home with your current dog waiting inside. Your dog will naturally feel that the newcomer is an intruder, not a new friend. First impressions matter! Properly introduced dogs are more likely to become buddies. The goal is to emulate the natural greetings talked about above.

To properly introduce your dog to a foster dog, you'll need two people, one person per dog, and some high-value treats. These can be pieces of chicken, hot dog or cheese, anything that will get the dog's attention and that it doesn't get normally. Start by walking the two dogs on leash in the same direction in neutral territory. If you find that they pull toward each other, stare at each other or are overly excited, then you're too close too soon. Put some distance between the dogs and have them just hang out for a bit at that distance before continuing to walk. Use your treats to reward your dog for remaining calm and focusing on you. This gives them something to do while they get used to each other's presence. Be patient and relax so the dogs can relax too.

As the dogs begin calming down in each other's presence, begin to move them closer to each other. At some point they should become more relaxed, and you can proceed with your walk. What you're looking for is calm, relaxed and confident behavior. Neither dog should be overly aroused, nervous, stiff, or fearful. (If the dogs are unable to relax and be friendly, it might be best to separate until you can speak to the Foster Coordinator.)

If they are relaxed and nicely interested in each other, then go ahead and let them get close enough to sniff. As they sniff, watch carefully. Warning signs include stiffening, low growling, avoidance, or hard stares. If you see these behaviors, calmly move the dogs away from each other. Remember, some dogs don't like the company of other dogs, and they should never be forced into a greeting. Some dogs may need more time or a few more introductions to get used to another dog.

If the dogs remain relaxed and pleasantly interested in each other, one or both may gesture to play. Keep the leashes loose and let them interact on leash for a bit to make sure all goes well. If both dogs are still relaxed and showing loose, happy body language, you can drop the leashes and let them play while dragging their leashes in an enclosed area. Take away all food from this point forward as it can be a trigger for an argument.

Watch the play for a while to be sure everyone is minding their manners: no rude behavior or pushy type of mounting behavior allowed initially. Every few minutes, before the dogs reach a state of high arousal or over-excitement, stop the play and get the dogs calm again or walk them. Then let the play resume. End the play on a good note; don't let them play into crankiness. With you as their leader to give them guidance and direction, the dogs will get to know each other and build a trusting bond.

## The Next Step

After they have successfully played for some time, you can bring both dogs into your house or yard with their leashes dragging behind them. Make sure that both dogs are fed in separate rooms or areas, and to not introduce high value objects like chewies or bones too quickly.

## What if it Doesn't Work Out?

We understand that sometimes it's just not a good fit. Please see the section in your foster manual about "Returns to the Shelter." This does not necessarily mean you would not be allowed to foster another dog with us, but we encourage following the steps outlined in this document or contacting the Foster Coordinator for more tips to ensure the greatest success.

## *Dog to Cat Introductions*

We highly suggest that you keep your personal cats away from any foster dog that you bring home. If you do end up introducing them, please follow the guidelines below. This is a slow process that needs time and patients.

## Necessary Separation

The dog and cat/s should not meet or see each other for at least a day so that the dog has time to get used to the new house and the scent of the cat. To give your cats a break and for them to also acclimate to the smell of the foster dog, you can rotate "free" time in the house by kenneling or putting your dog in a secured closed off room and then allowing the cat(s) loose in the house.

## The Introduction

The introductions should not last for hours on end. It is best for both animals to do several short 15-30 minute "introduction sessions" a day.

1. Grab some stinky treats, put the foster dog on leash and bring the cat into the same room using a baby gate to separate.
2. Reward the foster dog with food for staying calm while the cat is visible across the room. Do not move the dog any closer until you're able to get the dog's attention in the presence of the cat.
3. Reward the dog any time they look away from the cat and especially if the dog looks at you.
4. If the dog lunges or gets over excited, say "no" or "uh-uh" and back away or put them up. Be sure to reward your foster dog if they choose a calmer behavior afterwards. The dog can look at the cat but should be heavily rewarded for choosing to look away from the cat.

5. If your foster dog is showing appropriate/calm behaviors from across the room, begin to move closer and repeat the process. Only choose to move closer after the dog has successfully shown only positive behaviors at the previous distance three sessions in a row.

\*\*\*If your foster dog is still showing too much interest or aggressive type behavior around the cat, keep separated and alert the Foster Coordinator.\*\*\*

## Next Steps:

Assuming your foster dog is remaining calm around the cat and you have moved closer in proximity to the cat on the other side of a baby gate, you will start these exercises over again without the baby gate.

1. Start with your foster dog on a leash across the room with the cat loose on the other side. This will look different to the dog since the cat can move more freely and normally
2. A common trigger for dogs is when the cat runs across the room so be sure to heavily reward the dog if the cat does move quickly or jumps up on something and the foster dog remains calm.
3. Work up to a closer proximity to the cat but not allowing the cat to approach the dog or for the dog to have access to the cat
4. If the dog is doing well on leash and is responsive to you around the cat, you can try them loose. Keep a leash on your dog but allow it to drag on the ground beside them like an extended handle that you can step on or quickly pick up if you need to interrupt the dog. Allow your cat to give appropriate warnings like hissing or swatting to indicate that they need space. Your foster dog should respond to this by moving away; reward him when he does this. If the dog does not understand the cat's warning or thinks that it is play, help your dog by calling or guiding him away by the dragging leash. Continue to reward your foster dog for relaxed behavior and for any time that the dog looks at the cat but chooses to look/move away.

## Reminders:

Even dogs that respect cats indoors may chase or lunge toward cats outdoors so be very careful having your dog and cats in the backyard together. Foster dogs and cats should not be left alone together for at least the first 6 months. You are still getting to know your foster dog and what he/she will do in every circumstance. Every animal might have a different reaction to the other, so please be mindful and aware of your animal's comfort level.

## *Dog Parks, Public Outings and Leash Etiquette*

There is a saying that "a tired dog is a good dog" and that is very true! Dogs are like humans in that they're happy when their physical and mental state is healthy. Giving a dog mental and physical exercise sets them up for success and understanding a dog's age, temperament, energy level and health overall will help you in creating a satisfied pooch. When you bring home an animal that has an immeasurable amount of energy, take advantage of it! Taking a dog for a walk (or a run) not only exercises and tires them out, it creates a bonding experience for you and the animal.

Knowing how to act in the public setting will set you and your foster pet up for success. We encourage you to exercise your foster pet, but we want you to be smart and considerate of others while you do. As the Foster Parent, you are always required to keep your foster dog on a leash in any public area. Foster dogs are not allowed to go to dog parks. As fun as dog parks may seem, they can be a very high stress environment for any animal. When you are in public with your foster dog, understand the pet's limitations and be able to recognize the signs of what makes the animal uncomfortable. See Basic Dog Body Language Infographic for more information.

Remember that you are not permitted to introduce your foster dog to privately owned dogs. Along those lines, it is incredibly inappropriate to allow a foster dog to run up on other animals on the leash. Not only does this set up a meeting for failure, as outlined in the dog-to-dog meet and greet sections, but it might not be a welcome greeting by the other animal. Retractable leashes should never be used as they do not hold

enough control if your animal becomes frightened or over-aroused. If you need a leash, please let the Foster Coordinator know so that you can be accommodated.

Remember that you are your foster pet's ambassador and showcasing your foster pet is especially important in finding their forever home! Allowing your foster pet to be a rude and intrusive dog does not show off their best qualities, nor does it help them find a forever home. If you are struggling to have a nice outing with your foster, we recommend checking out the walking equipment and Common Behavioral Tips section to see if this alleviates behavioral concerns.

## Walking Equipment

Whether you are struggling with a dog who pulls, barks, or tries to flee, having the appropriate walking equipment can make your outings go from annoying to enjoyable.

### Front Clip Harness

Front-clip harnesses have the leash attachment in the center of the dog's chest. Trainers often choose front-clip harnesses to lessen the dog's pulling on the leash. The chest clip gives the owner control over the direction the dog is moving and allows for the dog to be redirected to face the owner if needed. Common types of front-clip harness include the Freedom Harness, the Sensation Harness, or the Positively Harness. When being used, always clip the harness to the collar. This eliminates any possibility of your dog slipping out of the front of the harness.

### Gentle Leader/Head Harness

The Gentle Leader harness sits high on the dog's neck without putting pressure on the throat. The Gentle Leader headcollar fits securely over your dog's nose. The nose loop redirects their head towards you when the dog pulls forward, preventing pulling and giving you full attention. If your dog is barking or lunging at objects on leash, this is typically the best tool to use to prevent continued bad behavior. See the section on "On- Leash Reactivity" for more information. Most commonly, people look at this equipment and think the animal is wearing a muzzle, but this is not the case at all! The dog still has full control of their mouth to pant, drink water, and play with toys. Common types of Gentle Leader are the Halti and Pet safe Gentle Leader harnesses.

### Martingale Collar

Martingale collars, also called no-slip or limited-slip collars, are a type of dog collar that provides more control than a typical flat collar and prevents dogs from backing or slipping out. Fearful or extra rambunctious dogs benefit from the design of a martingale collar, due to the inability (when properly fitted) to slip out of the typical buckle style collar. The collar works by constricting when the dog pulls on the leash. Tension on the leash causes the smaller loop to tighten, which in turn pulls the larger loop tighter—but not too tight. Martingale collars are adjustable and should not tighten past the width of the dog's neck.

## Teaching Your Foster New Tricks

Positive reinforcement training is a wonderful and positive way to not only teach your foster pet basic helpful home-living behaviors (such as sit, down, and off) but also a way for you to bond with your foster pet! The basics of positive reinforcement training involve using reinforcements, or things a dog wants, to encourage the behavior we're asking for. Reinforcements can include treats (in moderation) and human interactions such as petting and praising to encourage good behavior. Praise and reinforce the behaviors you DO want - ignore the behaviors you don't. You do not punish by hitting, pushing, or striking your pet. These types of corrections have been scientifically proven to not only not work long term in building good behavior in pets but can also cause unwanted aggressive behaviors to appear or increase.

## Puppies and Socialization

When we hear the word "socialization" we tend to recognize the need for introducing a pup to other dogs and people. However, it's important we choose appropriately. Puppies, especially the very young, would do best to interact with other young puppies and well-socialized adult dogs. We also want to be careful about the people we introduce to our young puppy (or those who introduce themselves without asking). Make sure you pay attention to how the person is interacting with your foster dog AND the signals the dog is giving. It is okay to remove your foster dog from a situation when they seem uncomfortable.

Never force a dog to approach anyone or anything, let them explore on their own terms! If a dog encounters a novelty and their initial response is wariness, praise them when they overcome it. Positive reinforcement will teach them that the "scary" thing is not so bad after all! Toss treats around the object the puppy is unsure about and let your puppy go at their own pace.

Keep in mind that you are not trying to overwhelm your foster dog with new experiences - quantity is not better than quality. Make sure your foster dog is confident, well rested, and having a good time whenever you introduce them to something new. Do not overdo it either. Puppies get tired very quickly, and most importantly give your foster dog lots of downtime after a new experience to recuperate and rest in a safe, quiet place.

## Dog and Children Interactions

**How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs**  
It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food	Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating
Avoid stealing other people's toys	Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys
Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face	Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face
Avoid bothering when asleep	Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.
Avoid pestering	Avoid grabbing tail/rear
Avoid climbing on or trampling	Avoid climbing on or trampling
Avoid pinching	Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.
Avoid screaming around	Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.

For additional low stress handling information, posters, flyers, books, and DVDs, please visit our website at <http://DrSophiaYin.com>

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## Marketing Your Foster

Foster Parents are strongly encouraged to let others know that their foster pet is available for adoption using resources such as friends, family, work colleagues and social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor. Fosters of adult dogs may bring their foster pets to public places on leash to show off their foster pet as available for adoption. GCAS can help market your pet for fostering and transports when you send updated photos and videos of your pet. A good photo is bright, clear, and happy. Getting photos that are well-lit, in focus, and that give the viewer a window into a pet's personality can be tricky, but we have some ideas that can make this much easier for you.

### *Always Have Your Camera Handy*

Without a camera handy, you may not be able to capture those intimate moments that will help your pet make an emotional connection, like when your own dog and your foster dog curl up together on the couch.

### *Take Photos with People and/or Other Animals*

Photographs taken with people and/or other animals are great because they not only feature the dog, they give information as well. A photo of two dogs together looking happy tells potential adopters, "This dog is good with (at least some) other dogs." Please note, that any photo you share on social media, can be used to market the animal on various online platforms. If you are taking photos of others with your foster pet, please ask them first and make sure they are ok with their picture being used to market said animal. We can always blur out faces, but please, get permission before sharing photos of others.

### *Take Multiple Photos*

Whether you're an ace photographer or not, taking multiple photos increases the chances of coming up with something good!

### *Take Photos of Dogs Outdoors*

Studies have shown that photographs of dogs taken outside can help dogs get adopted more quickly. Outside, the options for nice-looking backgrounds are unlimited, and dogs' stress levels may be lower, enabling you to get better photos.

### *Make Sure the Dog Is Looking into the Camera*

The eyes are the window to the soul, so it follows that eye contact is helpful in establishing an emotional connection, even if it's just from a photograph.

### *Use Photos to Showcase Personality*

We want potential adopters to get a feel for our foster pets' personalities, so use photos in a way that does just that. Take photos that capture an aspect of a pet's personality. When viewed together, one gets a more accurate picture of who they are.

### *Videos*

Great videos can give the best idea of who your foster is. Videos have the power to make a connection before an official meet-and-greet happens. Make sure to hold the camera horizontally unless taking a video with Facebook Live. You also want to make sure to keep the videos 30 seconds or less. Attention spans are short, so make sure your video is fast-paced and clearly expressed.

## Getting Your Foster Adopted

### *Responding to Adopters and Scheduling Meet and Greets*

Fosters are instrumental in finding the animal the right home – and it can be a tough job! Letting go of an animal that is basically a member of our family can be an intense experience sometimes. As the foster, you are not obligated to adopt out your foster pet to the first person who wants them. You are always allowed to "screen" your potential adopters by asking appropriate questions to ensure your adopting household understands and is comfortable in adopting your foster pet. After all, who knows the animal better than you?

Do not let anyone rush you or intimidate you. If it doesn't feel right, move on to the next potential adopter.

With your main priority as a foster being to find an adoptive home, we set expectations that you will need to answer any incoming inquiries within 72 hours. Until the Foster Team has received adoption paperwork for your foster animal, it will remain active on the website, and you will continue to receive inquiries that will need to be responded to. Failure to respond to Meet and Greet requests could affect your ability to foster with GCAS.

### *Meet and Greets and Discussing Your Foster with Adopters*

Inquiries for your foster animal will be sent to you through via text message, phone call, or email, so it is important to ensure that it is up to date. When you receive an inquiry through us and decide to move forward, it's best to do this where the pet is most comfortable. It's best that the first meeting starts off with only the humans of the household before adding any other animals, especially if there are children involved. This can also be done in the home or out in a neutral area like a park or restaurant.

During the meeting, we strongly encourage you to listen to the way people discuss their animals, and not focus on any factors such as wealth or status. Have an open and honest discussion about what the adopter is looking for and how well it matches your foster pet. Do trust your instincts; if you don't feel good about the adopter then that's okay. It also just might not be the right fit.

Here are some standard questions that you might ask with a potential adopter:

- Have you had any pets? If so, how are they doing?
- Is this pet for you or someone else? Does that person know a pet is entering their life? \*We do not restrict adoptions of pets as gifts, but we do encourage the potential adopter to understand the species, size, and activity level of the dog they are getting.
- What drew you to this pet?
- Do you have other pets at home?
- Do you know if this type of pet is allowed in your residence? Are there breed or size restrictions where you live? \*We do not restrict renters or ask for copies of leases, but the potential adopter should always check on their pet policy just to be sure they would not have to unexpectedly return.
- What is your lifestyle like – Active/Couch potato/Active on Weekends/etc.? How do you see that changing with this animal?

For dogs, we recommend doing slow controlled leash introductions for children that join meet and greets, even if your foster has been around children before. Please also see the infographic on "How Children Should Meet Animals." This will help gauge how the foster dog will react to children and children to your foster pet. If the potential adopter has another dog and would like to introduce them together, please ensure that you are following appropriate guidelines set by the "dog-to-dog introduction" section. We do not allow any dog to cat meetings but encourage the adopter to follow the "cat to dog guidelines" for meeting each other should they decide to adopt.

## ***Handing the Animal to the Adopter***

Until the animal has been fully processed in the GCAS system, meaning the adopter has signed all paperwork and the animal has been spayed or neutered, the animal is still the property of GCAS. This means that the animal cannot go to the adopter's household. Once paperwork has been processed, a Foster Parent can either bring the animal to GCAS or meet the adopter at another location to transfer ownership. Remember, if you do not get the approval from the GCAS Foster Team, the animal is not eligible to leave the foster home.

## **Important Medical Information**

GCAS can make no guarantees about the health of an animal entering your home. During pick up, the Foster Coordinator will review your foster pet's medical notes and do a quick visual observation for any obvious signs of illness or injury. You will also be given a copy of the most current medical file of the foster pet, as well as any medication that they might be on. Please speak to a Foster Team member directly with any questions regarding your foster pet's medical history.

Please contact the Foster Coordinator first. If you are unable to contact the foster coordinator, please contact the Vet Tech phone or Vet Tech Supervisor. If an emergency arises outside of our normal business hours, please contact Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic or Carolina Veterinary Specialists. If it's nonurgent please contact the appropriate number at 8 AM the following day. If an emergency should arise during our regular business hours from 8 am to 5 pm, please call the Foster Coordinator or Vet Tech phone to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

### **Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic**

336-288-2688  
4525 Lawndale Drive  
Greensboro, NC 27408

### **Carolina Veterinary Specialists**

336-632-0605  
501 Nicholas Road  
Greensboro, NC 27409

If you need to go Happy Tails or Carolina Veterinary Specialists, please bring your foster paperwork with you and tell the staff you are a foster parent for GCAS. GCAS will cover all medical expenses if an emergency occurs. Once an animal is taken to the clinics, GCAS will resume care of the foster animal and contact you at a later time to discuss if the animal needs to return to foster care.

## ***Scheduling an Appointment with the Medical Staff***

If your foster pet is showing signs of illness or injury, they will need to come to the shelter for a medical appointment. This includes booster vaccines! See "Mandatory Vaccinations and Preventatives" for more information on booster vaccines for your foster.

A medical appointment needs to be collaborated with the medical team, and therefore it is incredibly important that this is appropriately scheduled. This can be done by calling our foster coordinator or the Vet Tech phone.

Due to the busy schedule of our Medical Team, we ask that you plan to arrive 10 minutes before the scheduled appointment. If you are late for your appointment, you may be asked to reschedule. Please note that an emergency in the shelter can always occur. In this case, we will either ask that your foster animal stays with us until a member of our medical team can examine the animal or ask that we reschedule the appointment time.

## ***Medical Emergency and Contact Information***

An emergency can be described as:

- Trauma –sustaining a severe injury or suspected poisoning or burn
- Difficulty breathing –struggling for breath, gasping, or shallow breathing
- Seizures
- Deep cuts and gashes that will not stop bleeding with pressure
- Extreme lethargy and the animal is not able to waken or move
- Extreme instability or falling over
- Liquid diarrhea with blood and vomiting
- Rectal temperature 104.5 or above.
- Pale and tacky gums paired with slow capillary response time (CRT)

If your foster is not having a medical emergency, please contact the Foster Coordinator and they will get back to you for an appointment during business hours.

## ***Sick or Injured Foster Pets***

The symptoms listed below are not always indicative of an issue, but you should alert the foster team if you notice any of the following:

### *Ears*

- Dark, flaky debris, especially in cats
- Dark, waxy discharge accompanied by yeasty smell
- Painful when rubbed or cleaned
- Consistent scratching at ear

### *Nose*

- Yellow, green or heavy oozing discharge
- Excessive sneezing with discharge

### *Eyes*

- Yellow or green discharge
- Uneven pupils
- Swollen or bloodshot eyes, including 3rd eyelid

### *Stomach (Internal)*

- Loss of appetite past two meals
- Multiple Vomiting episodes – either heavy gagging with bile or phlegm

### *Mouth*

- Trouble eating or chewing
- Ulcers or lacerations on gums or lips

### *Fecal/Urination Issues*

- No bowel movement for more than 48 hours
- No urination for more than 24 hours, especially in male cats

## *Gait*

- Sudden lameness that does not improve with rest within a day
- Animal exhibits pain or stiffness upon walking or handling

None of these symptoms should be considered an emergency. However, if you have concerns, please contact the Foster Coordinator.

## ***Mandatory Vaccinations and Preventatives***

All dogs will receive:

- Rabies Vaccine (will receive if the animal is over three months)
- Dewormer
- Species appropriate flea/tick prevention
- Heartworm test (must be over 6 months of age)
- Heartworm prevention
- Bordetella vaccine
- DAPPV-1 vaccine (given every three weeks until the pet is over four months OR two vaccinations have occurred)

The Foster Coordinator will alert you when your foster pet will need to come in for vaccinations. All medical treatment will be provided through GCAS or through Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic or Carolina Veterinary Specialists in the case of an after-hours emergency. GCAS does NOT allow Foster Animals to be taken to private clinics unless otherwise stated by the medical team.

## ***Scheduling Spay and Neuter Surgery***

All animals that are intact are scheduled for their spay/neuter surgeries when you come to pick up the foster unless they are under 2 months of age or not medically well. All animals under 2 months of age will have their spay/neuter surgeries scheduled when they reach 2lbs AND reach 2 months of age. If you have small kittens or puppies, please always be sure to weigh the animal the night before surgery and contact the Foster Coordinator if the animal weighs less than 2lbs. The Foster Team can always reschedule an animal if it has not reached the proper weight for surgery.

If you need to reschedule a surgery day for any reason, please contact the Foster Coordinator immediately before the scheduled day. All animals that are adopted through GCAS MUST be spayed or neutered.

Please let the Foster Coordinator know if you will be coming back for your foster after surgery or if we will need to find kennel space for them at the shelter.

## ***Surgery Complications***

Complications can sometimes arise with your foster spay/neuter surgery. If you notice an issue with your foster pet after surgery, contact the foster coordinator to schedule an appointment for a medical evaluation.

## **Common Medical Terms and Conditions**

### ***Heartworm Disease***

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets transmitted from a single mosquito. It can easily be prevented by providing a monthly preventative, which all dogs are given at the time of intake. When an infected mosquito bites an animal, the larvae enter the animal's bloodstream where they eventually

make their way to the heart. Here they grow into adult worms, sometimes reaching a length of 14 inches. Adult heartworms obstruct the chambers of the heart and large blood vessels leading from the heart to the lungs. Eventually other organs, such as the lungs and kidneys, can also be damaged. If left untreated, heartworm disease usually causes death.

A heartworm diagnosis can potentially be treated if it has not progressed for too long. The damage done to the heart can never be fully reversed, but the heartworms inside of the body can be killed and their reproduction stopped.

### ***Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)***

The term "upper respiratory infection" is used to refer to any illness that affects an animal's upper respiratory system; it is basically a cold. URI's are common in shelter animals that can cause symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes, fever and loss of appetite. The symptoms of this virus are typically treated with antibiotics. Be certain to keep animals warm until they have recovered from a URI. URI's are contagious to other animals through direct contact and can also be airborne.

### ***Fleas***

Fleas are bloodsucking parasites that are easily treated with a monthly preventative. On a mature animal, fleas are not particularly serious, but young animals do not have that much blood and they are virtually defenseless if they get fleas.

- Flea prevention that is specifically for one species can cause severe injury and/or death if used as a supplement for the other species. Only use flea/tick prevention that is given by GCAS
- Over-the-counter flea treatments are not used because they are not effective and are much more toxic than what our veterinarians use
- Flea treatments that are meant for older cats or dogs can kill a kitten/puppy, so if you find fleas or flea dirt on kittens or puppies of any age, we'll need to get them off! Since most flea treatments are too strong, we give warm Dawn baths. Do not use any flea shampoos or soaps other than Dawn dish soap to get rid of fleas as these products could be potentially harmful to kittens/puppies.

### ***Ticks***

Ticks are also bloodsucking parasites that can cause Lyme disease, anemia, and death in severe cases. GCAS will give all animals, age permitting, in our care ongoing prevention starting at intake for ticks. If you continue to keep your foster animal on schedule for their prevention, any tick that latches on to your foster animal should die quickly. Should you need to remove a tick, we have outlined the steps to take below:

- Ticks carry infectious agents that can seep into a human's bloodstream through breaks in the skin. It's better to play it safe and wear protective gear
- When you're getting ready to remove the tick you've got to keep your foster pet calm. Any unusual poking or prodding tends to make dogs and cats nervous. If there is another person available, have that person hold your pet and keep them relaxed
- Take a pair of tweezers—pointy ones work best—and grab hold of the tick as close to your dog's skin as possible. Be careful not to pinch your dog's skin
- Using steady pressure, pull the tick out using a straight motion. Do not twist or jerk the tick because you want to avoid leaving the tick's mouthparts behind. Also, make sure not to squeeze or crush the tick, since its fluids may contain infectious material. After removing the tick, examine it to make sure the head and mouth were removed. If not, contact the Foster Coordinator to make an appointment to remove what's left in the pet's skin
- Kill the tick by placing it in a container with rubbing alcohol

- After you've removed the tick from your dog or cat, praise your pet for being good. Give him or her a treat and add in some extra playtime as a special reward

## ***Roundworms, Tapeworms, and Hookworms***

Intestinal parasites affect the digestive system and are common. You can sometimes see these "worms" in or around an animal's rectum; you may see a long worm or what looks like rice protruding from its anus. Indications of worms are a large belly, diarrhea, and an inability to gain weight even when eating well. If you see signs of worms, alert the Foster Coordinator. There are various medications given to the animal, depending on the type of worm, that easily take care of the problem. Worms can sometimes be passed through the feces to other animals.

## ***Canine Distemper***

Canine distemper is a virus that primarily affects dogs, however it can also affect ferrets and some species of wild animals (raccoons, wolves, foxes, and skunks). It is NOT contagious to humans, nor domestic cats. Distemper can be spread by humans via secondary surfaces like shoes or clothes. Removing feces from the yard and not leaving water bowls out at night will help eliminate accidental spread from wildlife.

Distemper is spread to unvaccinated dogs just like the common cold, through contact with secretions. Unvaccinated dogs can also get distemper through sharing water bowls, touching noses, or being in the same place at the same time as dogs with distemper.

Fortunately, distemper does not live long in the environment. The virus dies very quickly - within minutes - as soon as it dries. It lives longer if it has a host or is in water or on wet surfaces, such as in food bowls or on water-soaked toys. However, the incubation period for distemper virus can last anywhere from two weeks to several months. The distemper vaccine (DAPP/DHLPP) is HIGHLY effective! GCAS does vaccinate animals at intake, but it is necessary for the animal to have received two vaccines before contraction to be considered a successful vaccine.

If your resident dog(s) are healthy and current on their vaccinations, they should not contract distemper. If you take home a dog who is distemper exposed, on distemper watch, or has distemper, your personal dog(s) and any dog(s) that may come in contact (even through a fence) with your foster dog must be fully vaccinated.

## ***Parvovirus***

Parvo is a highly contagious and life-threatening virus that infects the cells in the dog's body, most severely in the intestinal tract. The virus is highly resistant and can survive in the ground for up to nine months in the right conditions. The most at risk of contracting parvo are any unvaccinated dog, and/or young puppies under four months old who have not had their full round of booster vaccines. Parvovirus will present with the following symptoms:

- Lethargy (low or lessening energy, listless)
- Inappetence (diminished or nonexistent interest in food/eating)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (usually bloody)
- Fever (normal rectal temperature for a dog is 99-102 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Severe, bloody diarrhea

Parvo is typically spread directly from dog to dog, but contact with contaminated stool, environments, or people can also spread the disease. Once infected, a dog with parvo may contaminate food, water bowls, collars, and leashes – as well as a dog's bedding or crate. Once a dog or puppy is infected, there is an incubation period of three to seven days before the onset of first symptoms. Pet owners can transmit parvo infections through their hands, clothing and shoes if they touch infected dogs and their stools.

If you have ever had a dog in your house that has contracted parvo, you will be unable to take young or immunocompromised animals through GCAS. It is highly recommended that you only bring home adult dogs who are fully vaccinated moving forward. By continuing to bring unvaccinated dogs into the home, you might continue to infect new dogs to the parvovirus.

## ***Demodex Mange***

Demodectic mange is a skin infection that is caused by mites that naturally live on hosts, such as dogs, cats, and humans. Yep, humans have their own form of demodex mite. The mites are not rare; most healthy pets have demodex mites. The problem occurs if your pet has an immune system that does not work normally and cannot keep the mite population controlled. The mites multiply and cause intense itching. Your pet scratches and develops secondary bacterial infections with pus. Your pet's hair falls out and leaves bald, red, weepy, infected areas. The skin may become leathery. A skin scrape is used to diagnose this type of Mange. This type of Mange is NOT contagious and resolves typically after a change in diet, parasite prevention/ medication, or improved living situations. Speak to the Foster Coordinator to find out more about treatment.

## ***Sarcoptic Mange***

Sarcoptic mange is similar to Demodex mange, except it is contagious. This contagious skin disease affects primarily humans and dogs caused by specific mites. Sarcoptic Mange is a zoonotic (meaning humans can catch it from dogs)! These mites will burrow through the skin causing intense itching and irritation. The scratching that results from mange is what causes most of the animal's hair to fall out. This is a treatable medical condition. Like Demodex mange, a skin scrape is used to diagnose this type of Mange. It is treated typically with antibiotics for any skin lesions and a topical or oral parasite prevention treatment for the mites. Animals can become non-contagious in about 2-4 weeks, depending on treatment.

## ***Ringworm***

Contrary to its name, Ringworm is not a worm at all but a fungus – a lot like "Athlete's Foot." In fact, most ringworm is the exact same fungus as "Athlete's Foot." When this fungus grows anywhere other than the bottom of the foot, it is called ringworm. The fungi live on the surface of the skin and in the hair follicles.

## **Appearance**

The usual symptom is a round hairless lesion. However, the characteristic "ring" that we see on humans doesn't always appear as a ring on animals. This lesion will grow and often become irregular in shape. Ringworm is commonly found on the face, ears, tail and paws. The lesions are scaly, and the skin may be reddened. The spots may or may not be itchy.

## **Transmission**

Transmission can happen by direct contact with another infected animal or person. It can be passed from cats to dogs and vice versa and from pets to humans and from humans to pets. A ringworm infection in a person typically occurs after a person has pet an infected or carrier cat, but it can also occur after simply handling items that were used by an infected cat.

## **Can Humans Catch Ringworm from Animals?**

Yes, humans can contract ringworm by handling an animal with the condition or sharing a living area with them. Immunocompromised individuals, such as the elderly and very young, are more prone to contracting ringworm.

## **Ringworm Diagnosis and Treatment**

If you see ANY hair loss on your foster animal, please immediately inform the Foster Coordinator. Depending on the photos, they might instruct you to bring your foster pet in for a vet examination. If your pet is found to have ringworm, you will have the option to continue treatment in your home or leave your foster pets at the

shelter. The Foster Coordinator will give you more information on treatment options for your foster should you decide to continue.

## ***Coccidia and Giardia***

Coccidia and Giardia are common protozoa that invade the digestive system and cause diarrhea. These are highly transmissible and can be spread through feces to humans and other animals. These parasites are easily treated with oral medications. Parasites can cause digestive problems as well as diarrhea. Diarrhea can be dangerous for a young animal and should be treated as soon as it shows up.

## ***Deciphering Your Foster Pet's Fecal Matter***

It might not be the most pleasant, but we can often find out an ailment from the consistency of your foster's bowel movements. There are several typical causes of diarrhea in our shelter animals. The most common reason why an animal might have diarrhea is due to a change in diet, such as changing brands, or adding an extra stinky treat. Changes in diet are sometimes necessary to ensure a consistency to an appropriate food. If you find your foster has a sensitive tummy, or is prone to gas/diarrhea, you can always add a small amount of plain canned pumpkin to their food. The best way to alleviate diarrhea is to keep your foster on a consistent diet. Some mild diarrhea will usually clear up on its own, however, if you find that your fosters are consistently having diarrhea a few days past a food change, there could be another issue going on. Please contact the Foster Coordinator if the diarrhea remains after a few days.

Additional reasons we see diarrhea might be:

- Stress/excitement
- Coccidia or other parasites
- Viral (corona, panleukopenia, etc.)
- Failure to keep an animal and/or living space free from filth.

## ***The Importance of Cleanliness***

Keeping the animal's body and living space clean is crucial to having a healthy and successful experience.

- Make sure the animal's face, mouth and genital areas are always clean from food and/or organic matter.
- Clean up all fecal matter after a dog relieves themselves.
- Remove ALL organic matter before cleaning/disinfecting any area.
- Consider yourself 100% contaminated if you came into contact with a contagious disease.
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated animals should not be allowed to interact unless purposely housed together.

The faster we can identify the causes and type of poop in an animal, the quicker we can get a treatment plan in order. Just when we think an animal might have a parasite infestation, we could be looking in the wrong direction! It is crucial to keep in mind that there are various reasons for diarrhea, and it is important to be able to understand why. If you are seeing diarrhea consistently after the first 48 hours from taking the animal home, please contact the Foster Coordinator so the animal can be treated accordingly.

## **Common Behavioral Tips for Dogs**

### ***Mouthing/Play Biting***

Aside from chewing, a common way in which dogs utilize their mouths is in play. It's very natural and (to a certain extent) acceptable for dogs to use their mouths when playing with one another. It's up to us humans to teach them that doing so is not acceptable when engaging with people. Here's how:

1. Redirect: As with chewing, you want to teach your dog what IS allowed so always have toys nearby. When it comes to mild mouthing, simply engage them with a toy and continue playtime. You will probably have to repeat this several times even within the same stretch of playtime to help your dog understand.
2. Remove all attention: If your pup isn't responding after several attempts to redirect, and/or the mouthing/play bites become more intense, say "no" or "eh eh" and then immediately walk away. Don't talk to them further, don't interact with them in any way. Simply remove yourself from them. To your pup, suddenly the game has stopped. With enough repetitions, they'll come to understand that being mouthy is what causes the fun to go away. Following this, if you catch your pup go to a toy or politely (not jumping or mouthing) approach you, you can give them lots of praise and re-engage them in playtime. (Note: Ignoring is also a great tactic for attention-seeking barking)
3. Teach a calming cue: You can teach your dog a cue called "touch" or "target" to redirect and calm them.

### ***Chewing***

Dogs interact with the world with their mouths. They don't have hands and opposable thumbs. Using their mouths is how they eat, play, explore, pick things up, etc. Not only is chewing natural for dogs, but it has health benefits as well (so long as they're chewing the right things). Then how do we make sure they don't chew what they shouldn't?

Management: Your dog can't chew on what it can't reach. Keep shoes, kids' toys, remotes and other curious and chewable items out of your dog's reach. If you need to cook dinner, make a phone call, or get involved in some other task that takes your attention away from your dog, have a dog-proof area. This can be a penned-off area or even the dog's crate. It's not a punishment, so make sure your dog has plenty of positive things to keep them occupied.

Redirect: If all we did was prevent and correct, we wouldn't give our dogs a clear message. We want to teach them what they CAN chew on. If you catch your dog chewing on something they shouldn't, interrupt them with a neutral (non-praise, but also non-punishment) noise that gets their attention. A mild "eh eh" or "no" or a light clap of your hands are a couple ideas. Offer them an appropriate toy or chew instead as a means of redirecting the chewing behavior. While your dog is in the process of learning, offer lots of praise any time your dog picks up something they can chew.

Exercise: Sometimes a dog chews for no other reason than they are bored (as one might chew on the cap of a pen in a dull meeting). It's important to make sure your dog has not only plenty of physical stimulation, but mental stimulation as well. Mental stimulation can include training games, puzzle toys, even a Kong stuffed with frozen treats. A dog can run around the yard for an hour and still have stores of energy (or at least enough for chewing!) but put that same dog in front of a puzzle toy that takes them fifteen minutes and suddenly you have one pooped pup!

### ***Jumping Up***

Puppy jumping is usually greeted with enthusiasm and affection. Then one day that same behavior is greeted with irritation or worse—all because the puppy grew up.

Never reward any dog for jumping. In fact, we want to engage them as little as possible. They jump for attention, and even a stern "no" or "eh eh" is attention; Many dogs consider pushing them away to be play.

Here are a few ways to effectively deter jumping behavior:

- Teach an incompatible behavior: A dog can't jump if they're expected to do something that requires all four paws on the ground (what we call having "four on the floor"). Give your dog a solid foundation of "sit". If your dog wants your attention, they must sit for it. They only get attention if they have all four paws on the floor.
- The moment they jump up, remove all attention: Again, this means not even scolding them. Stand up and either turn around and walk away or walk past them.

- Make a game of it: If turning away from and walking past the jumping aren't enough to get the message across, try this game. Tether your dog to a piece of heavy furniture or another stable object/fixture. Have one individual, either a family member or a guest, approach at a time. If the dog keeps all four on the floor, they get attention and affection. The moment they jump up, the person walks away out of the reach of the tether. This way the dog can't pursue attention. This is especially useful when managing an excitable, jumpy pup when guests are over. Just make sure your guests know the rules of the game! (Note: This technique is also useful for dogs who get mouthy out of excitement)

With enough repetition of both these steps, your pup will pick up on the pattern: four on the floor = attention; jumping = no attention. To dogs, it's really that simple. As your dog begins to show an understanding and offers a sit in a situation where they would usually jump, lavish them with praise and other rewards.

## ***House Training***

Whether you're bringing home a brand-new puppy or an adult dog who's lived in a home before, expect messes. Even a full-grown dog who is fully house trained will need to adjust to their new home and new routine and sometimes there might be an accident or two. The basics for potty training puppies and adults, whether previously house trained or not, are generally the same. There are some key points to keep in mind during this process that are almost universally applicable.

### **Holding it period**

Every dog has their time limit. Puppies under six months are typically unable to hold it in for more than a few hours. Prepare for this! Hire a dog sitter or walker to come once or twice a day while you're at work. A healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for 8-10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions.

### **Frequent Outings are Necessary**

To avoid accidents, you will want to make sure your pup has plenty of opportunities to go outside. You also want to give them ample time. Walk them for at least 15 minutes to encourage them and give them plenty of time to go. When they do go outside, you want to reward and praise this wanted behavior.

### **Reward the Wins!**

It's vital to successful housetraining that we NEVER scold a dog for going potty inside, even when we catch them in the act. Often, the dog won't understand that you are scolding them for going inside. They are more likely to think you are scolding them for going at all, and as a result they will want to hide from you to do their business. This means sneaking off to quiet, isolated corners of the home or behind furniture, and no one wants to play "Find the Smell!" Instead, our focus should be on praising and treating every time the pup goes outside.

### **Prevention & Redirection**

If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you always have eyes on your puppy. The second they start to go, quickly walk them outside. Remain neutral until they're outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there, you can reward! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please.

If you're having difficulty with frequent inappropriate urination or bowel movements, contact us for an appointment to rule out possible medical causes.

## ***How to Leave your Foster Alone***

While GCAS does their best to give you as much information as we have on each pet we send home, for many pets at the shelter we simply do not have extensive background information on some of the pets that are in our care. Because of this, we recommend housing your pet in a secure manner whenever you need to leave home. GCAS cannot guarantee that a foster pet is house trained or will not chew on furniture and

belongings when you are not home supervising. If needed, we can provide a crate for your foster animal. See the below section on crate training for more information.

## ***Crate Training***

Dogs are, by nature, denning animals. This doesn't mean every dog will take to the crate with ease, but it does mean you shouldn't feel guilty about crating your pup. For a puppy, a warm crate can work as an aid to house-training and a temporary playpen when they can't be directly supervised. Crates can offer a safe space all to their own for recuperation, whether it's from an injury or simply just to get away from the kids and other animals in the home.

As long as we aren't using crating for punishment, it can also help correct some undesirable behaviors, such as destructive chewing. More importantly, crates can help prevent problem behaviors before they even start by helping establish a routine for your dog. It's completely reasonable to crate our pups for up to 8-9 hours each day, so long as we set them up for success with the crate! The most fundamental and vital thing to remember about crate training is the crate is never a punishment.

### **What type of Crate Should I use?**

Plastic and metal wire crates each have their pros and cons, but the choice largely comes down to preference of either the dog or the human. Go with what works best for you and your pup! As for size, the crate should be big enough for your pup to stand up and easily turn around.

### **How to Acclimate to a Crate**

Encourage your dog to investigate the crate. Toss some treats or a favorite toy in to begin the positive association. Work on this until your dog goes in and out of the crate without displaying any nervous body language. This could take a few minutes or several days. Food is an excellent training aid. Even if your dog isn't highly food motivated, we can still use this basic necessity to our advantage.

1. Start feeding your pup around the crate. Begin by setting the bowl in front of the crate and over the next several days (or longer, depending on the dog's comfort level) gradually move the bowl further into the crate. Do NOT work on closing the gate until your dog has eaten a few meals, while relaxed, when completely inside the crate.
2. Once they've reached this point, you can begin closing the door while they're eating. Open the door once they've finished. Lengthen this over several meal times until they can stay in the crate calmly for up to ten minutes after eating.
3. If at any point they begin to bark or cry or paw at the gate, DO NOT open the gate until they have stopped. Otherwise they will think complaining will make the gate open.

After you get to this point, you can start crating your pup outside of mealtimes. In the beginning, they should be able to see you while in the crate. Wait a minute or two (this doesn't have to be while you are standing right in front of the crate, so long as your pup can see you) and then let them out. Once you've worked up to at least thirty minutes of calm, you can start leaving the home for short periods of time with your pup crated.

### **Departures and Arrivals**

Even if your pet loves their crate, they might whine a little when you first leave. Avoid an emotional departure, as it can increase the nervousness of your dog. By being a source of excitement, we reinforce that our being away was something to be upset about in the first place. As much as we want to see how excited our dog is when we come home, we can intensify their stress when we leave by making a big to-do of our comings and goings.

### **Exercise to Crate More Successfully**

If your pet is tired, they'll be faster to lay down and go to sleep when you leave, versus anxiously waiting for you to return home. Giving them plenty of exercise before they are crated will help them relax.

## Other Alternatives

Ideally, we don't want to crate a dog for longer than they're used to. Many of us have full time jobs away from home and still want to prevent destructive behaviors and messes. There are ways to work around this reality without ruining progress with the crate. You can keep your pup in a bathroom or laundry room where they can't get into anything that might hurt them. Tiled and linoleum floors are also much easier to clean up than carpet. Another option is to buy a plastic playpen or metal x pen to keep them contained in a specific area.

## Resource Guarding

This is a broad-spectrum term that means showing possessive, or "guarding," behavior over any object. Guarding food and/or edible objects can be defined as "food guarding." When guarding behavior occurs towards a variety of objects, not specifically only food or toys, it may be referred to as "generalized guarding." An easy way to describe resource guarding with the public is that "the dog doesn't like to share." This behavior may present itself towards other animals, people or both. However, showing resource guarding towards one is not indicative of the other. Ex: A dog showing food guarding towards another animal in the household is not guaranteed to show guarding towards a human in the house. Contact the Foster Coordinator if you see resource guarding in your foster.

## On-leash Reactivity

This is a behavior that occurs usually in the form of barking towards something while the dog is on leash. This is not necessarily an indicator of aggression, but more indicative of the dog feeling excitement, fear, arousal, and/or frustration towards said object or individual. When a dog is displaying leash reactivity towards an individual, it is advised to not allow a dog to engage with them until they have shown more relaxed behavior. Environment can play a big factor in this dog's behavior on leash. If a dog displays this behavior in a shelter environment, it does not necessarily mean they will display it while in a home. Some dogs display this behavior only when near an individual or object, others at a greater distance. Providing the appropriate equipment for your foster can provide greater control of a foster who is showing this behavior.

## Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a complex issue that can have many levels and variables that compound it. Typically, a dog with Separation Anxiety will display a dramatic response within a short time of their person leaving. This can range in intensity, depending on the dog or the length of time that the dog is left alone. It is important to note that most symptoms of boredom share characteristics with minor separation anxiety, but dogs who are bored might display these behaviors less consistently. Addressing boredom first could eliminate the unwanted behavior. The most common of these behaviors are: chewing or knocking down easily accessible items, and howling, barking and/or crying.

Depending on the severity, we are looking for someone who either has a flexible schedule or is home most of the time/works from home. They should be willing and able to devote time to crate-training and working on the separation anxiety. Additional counseling may be needed if they live in an apartment or are renting (due to possible noise complaints or destruction to rental property). Depending on severity, anti-anxiety medication and/or an indestructible crate may be recommended.

## Important Contacts

If you need to return your foster pet due to an emergency that is after-hours, you may first attempt to contact the foster coordinator. If you are unable to reach the foster coordinator and the situation is urgent, please contact Animal Control Dispatch (336-641-5990). If Dispatch is unavailable, you can try calling Metro 911 non-emergency number (336-373-2222). For true emergencies, call 911.

For Animal Control emergencies, questions or comments, call (336-641-5990).

Guilford County Animal Resource Center  
336-641-3400  
980 Guilford College Road  
Greensboro, NC 27409  
[AS\\_CustomerService@guilfordcountync.gov](mailto:AS_CustomerService@guilfordcountync.gov) (email is best)

Stephani Crandall Foster Coordinator  
336-937-1867 (texting is the best way to reach)  
[scrandall@guilfordcountync.gov](mailto:scrandall@guilfordcountync.gov)

Erica Marion, Foster/Rescue Administrator  
336-471-2054 (texting is the best way to reach)  
[emarion@guilfordcountync.gov](mailto:emarion@guilfordcountync.gov)

Vet Tech: 336-279-4944

Katie Bivona, Vet Tech Supervisor  
336-803-2710

## After-Hour Emergency Contacts

Happy Tails Emergency Veterinary Clinic  
336-288-2688  
4525 Lawndale Drive  
Greensboro, NC 27408

Carolina Veterinary Specialists  
336-632-0605  
501 Nicholas Road  
Greensboro, NC 27409

## Important Links

Foster Luv QR Code:



Dog Foster Facebook Chat:

