



# **FOSTER GUIDE**

**MAY 2024**

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# **THANK YOU FOR FOSTERING**

To foster means to encourage or promote the development of something good. As a foster, you will encourage your dog and provide a sense of safety and security - you will promote their development because all dogs are good dogs! When working in animal rescue, a foster is typically the person meant to transition the animal from their current environment into their new environment - while reducing stress as best as possible. Usually, this means that the animal is living with the foster's family until the animal can find a permanent home. You are not only assisting the animal in their environmental transitions, you are also likely fostering the adoption process.

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your decision to open your home to a deserving rescue dog. Your act of fostering is a testament to your compassion and commitment to animal welfare. Thank you for making a difference in these dogs' lives.

# GETTING READY

## WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- Secure Collar, Martingale Collar Preferred
- ID Tag
- Leash
- Properly-Sized Crate
- Waste Baggies
- Dog Food

## SAFETY CONCERNS

- If you are using ANY harness, please ensure that the device is SAFETY CLIPPED to the collar before attaching your leash. You can use a carabiner or a clip for this. Often, a new dog will spook and learn how to work their way out of the leash or harness to flee - and they will be gone, fast. Always be aware of your surroundings when with your dog, and ensure the tools are correctly fitted and secured. Back-ups are always a good idea, like the clips or clipping a backup leash to your belt.

# CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

Understanding canine body language is essential for anyone fostering dogs. It helps identify a dog's emotional state and prevent potential issues before they escalate. This lesson will cover key signals that dogs use to communicate, focusing on body postures, facial expressions, and specific behaviors.

Understanding canine body language is vital for creating a safe and comfortable environment for foster dogs. Learning to read their signals, you can better meet their needs, prevent potential issues, and build a trusting relationship.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

### 1. Body Posture:

- **Relaxed Posture:** A relaxed dog will have a loose, wiggly body with their weight evenly distributed. Their tail will be held naturally, wagging gently, and their ears will be in a neutral position.
- **Tense Posture:** A tense or stressed dog may have a stiff body, weight shifted forward or backward, and a tail held high or tucked between the legs. Ears may be pinned back or standing erect, and fur along the back might be raised (piloerection).

### 2. Facial Expressions:

- **Relaxed Face:** Soft eyes, relaxed mouth, and normal pupils indicate a relaxed dog. They might appear to be “smiling” with their mouth slightly open.
- **Tense Face:** A tense dog might have a closed mouth, dilated pupils, and visible whites of the eyes (whale eye). They may also have a furrowed brow and tight lips.
- **Yawning and Lip Licking:** These behaviors can indicate stress or anxiety, especially if the dog is not tired or hasn't just eaten.

### 3. Tail Signals:

- **Neutral Tail:** A tail held in its natural position, wagging gently, indicates a relaxed state.
- **High Tail:** A tail held high and stiff can indicate arousal, excitement, or dominance.

- **Tucked Tail:** A tail tucked between the legs signals fear or submission. Rapid, low wagging can also indicate nervousness.

#### 4. Ear Positions:

- **Neutral Ears:** Ears held naturally indicate a relaxed dog.
- **Forward Ears:** Ears perked forward can indicate interest or alertness.
- **Pinned Back Ears:** Ears pinned back against the head are a sign of fear, anxiety, or submission.

#### 5. Specific Behaviors:

- **Growling:** Growling is a clear warning signal indicating that the dog is uncomfortable and needs space. Never punish a dog for growling; instead, address the underlying cause of their discomfort.
- **Barking:** Barking can have various meanings depending on the context. It can indicate excitement, alertness, or a call for attention. Pay attention to the dog's body language to understand the reason behind the barking.
- **Play Bow:** A dog lowering their front legs while keeping their rear up is a play bow, indicating a desire to play.
- **Freezing:** A dog that suddenly becomes very still is often displaying extreme fear or anxiety. This is a sign to give the dog space and avoid further stressors.

## **TIPS FOR OBSERVING CANINE BODY LANGUAGE**

### 1. Context Matters:

- Always consider the context in which the behavior is occurring. The same body language can have different meanings depending on the situation.

### 2. Look for Clusters:

- Observe multiple signals together rather than focusing on a single aspect of the dog's body language. This provides a more accurate understanding of the dog's emotional state.

### 3. Practice and Patience:

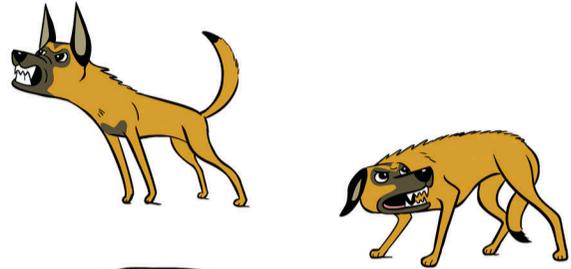
- Spend time observing dogs in various environments to improve your ability to read their body language. Patience and practice are key to becoming proficient.

## THE SPECTRUM OF FEAR, ANXIETY, AND STRESS

### THE SPECTRUM OF FEAR, ANXIETY & STRESS

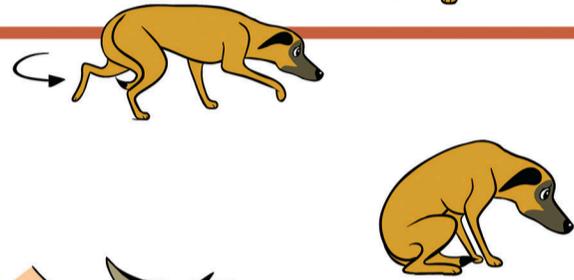
#### RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FIGHT/AGGRESSION (FAS 5)

- Offensive aggression: lunging forward, ears forward, tail up, hair may be up on the shoulders, rump, and tail, showing only the front teeth, lip pucker - lips pulled forward, tongue tight and thin, pupils possibly dilated or constricted.
- Defensive aggression: hair may be up on the back and rump, dilated pupils, direct eye contact, showing all teeth including molars, body crouched and retreating, tail tucked, ears back.



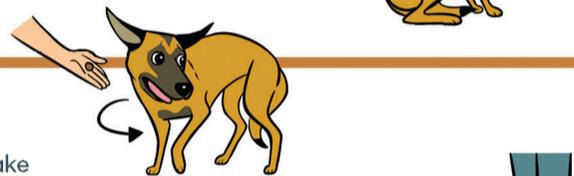
#### RED: SEVERE SIGNS - FLIGHT/FREEZE/FRET (FAS 4)

- Flight: ears back, tail tucked, actively trying to escape - slinking away or running, mouth closed or excessive panting - tongue tight instead of loose out of mouth, showing whites of eyes, brow furrowed, pupils dilated.
- Freeze/Fret: tonic immobility, pupils dilated, increased respiratory rate, trembling, tense closed mouth, ears back, tail tucked, body hunched.



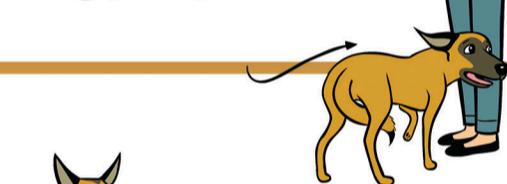
#### YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 3)

- Similar to FAS 2 but turning head away, may refuse treats for brief moments or take treats roughly, may be hesitant to interact but not completely avoiding interaction.



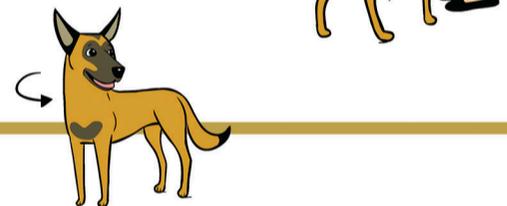
#### YELLOW: MODERATE SIGNS (FAS 2)

- Ears slightly back or to the side, tail down but not necessarily completely tucked, furrowed brow, slow movements or unable to settle, fidgeting, attention seeking to owner, panting with a tighter mouth, moderate pupil dilation.



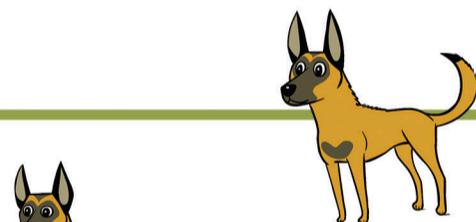
#### GREEN: MILD/SUBTLE SIGNS (FAS 1)

- Lip licking, avoids eye contact, turns head away without moving away, lifts paw, partially dilated pupils, slight panting but commissures of lips are relaxed.



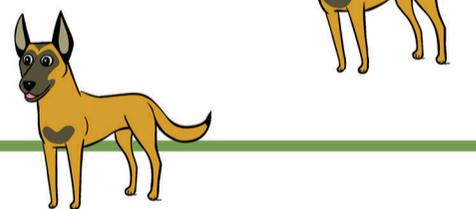
#### GREEN: ALERT/EXCITED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Tail up higher, looking directly, mouth closed, eyes more intense, more pupil dilation, brow tense, hair may be just slightly up on the back and tail, may be expectant and excited or highly aroused.



#### GREEN: PERKED/INTERESTED/ANXIOUS? (FAS 0-1)

- Looking directly but not intensely, tail up slightly, mouth open slightly but loose lips, ears perked forward, slight pupil dilation.



#### GREEN: RELAXED (FAS 0)

- Sleeping.
- Neutral: ears in neutral position, not perked forward, brow soft, eyes soft, mouth closed but lips relaxed, body loose, tail carriage neutral, pupils normal dilation.
- Friendly greeting: slow back and forth tail and butt wag, ears just slightly back, relaxed brow and eyes, may have mouth slightly open with relaxed lips and loose tongue.



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# HOW TO GREET YOUR NEW FOSTER

Greeting a new foster dog properly is essential to ensure a positive start to your relationship and to maintain safety for both you and the dog. Here are some guidelines and tips on how to greet your new foster dog and what to avoid:

## 1. Ask for Permission:

- Always ask the rescue, shelter staff or the previous caregiver for any specific instructions regarding the dog's behavior and preferences. Understanding the dog's background can provide valuable insights into the best way to approach them.

## 2. Approach Calmly:

- Move slowly and calmly towards the dog. Avoid making direct eye contact initially, as this can be perceived as a challenge.
- Turn your body slightly to the side rather than facing the dog head-on to appear less intimidating.

## 3. Let the Dog Come to You:

- Allow the dog to approach you at their own pace. Stand or crouch down with your hands relaxed at your sides. This shows that you are not a threat and gives the dog the choice to initiate contact.

## 4. Observe Body Language:

- Pay close attention to the dog's body language. Signs of relaxation include a wagging tail, soft eyes, and a relaxed body. Signs of stress or fear include a tucked tail, pinned-back ears, and avoidance behaviors.

## 5. Use Gentle and Quiet Behavior:

- Speak in a soft, calm voice and avoid sudden movements. Offer the back of your hand for the dog to sniff if they approach you.
- Pet the dog gently on the side of the face, under the chin, or on their chest if they appear comfortable. Avoid reaching over the dog's head or making fast movements.

## WHAT TO AVOID FOR SAFETY PURPOSES

## **1. Avoid Forcing Interaction:**

- Never force a dog to interact with you. If the dog shows signs of discomfort or tries to move away, respect their space and give them time to adjust.

## **2. Avoid Direct Eye Contact:**

- Direct eye contact can be seen as a threat or challenge. Keep your gaze soft and avoid staring directly into the dog's eyes.

## **3. Avoid Sudden Movements and Loud Noises:**

- Quick movements and loud noises can startle a dog and increase their anxiety. Move slowly and speak softly to create a calm environment.

## **4. Do Not Hover or Lean Over the Dog:**

- Leaning over a dog can be intimidating and make them feel trapped. Stay low and to the side to avoid appearing threatening.

## **5. Avoid Invading Personal Space:**

- Do not put your hands or face directly into the dog's personal space, especially when they are new and still adjusting to their environment. This can lead to defensive behavior if the dog feels threatened.

## **6. Avoid Overwhelming the Dog with Too Many New Experiences:**

- Give the dog time to acclimate to their new surroundings before introducing them to new people, places, or other animals. Gradual exposure helps prevent overwhelming the dog and reduces stress.

# INTEGRATING YOUR FOSTER DOG

## DECOMPRESS FOR SUCCESS

Proper Decompression for a Shelter Dog Heading into a Foster Home

Decompression is the process of helping a shelter dog adjust to a new foster home environment. This involves reducing the dog's stress and anxiety, providing safety and security, and gradually introducing them to new experiences. Proper decompression is essential for a smooth transition and successful fostering experience.

Decompression is critical for a shelter dog transitioning into a foster home. By setting up a safe and predictable environment, minimizing stress, and using positive reinforcement, you can help the dog adjust more smoothly and build a strong foundation for future success.

**THIS DECOMPRESSION PROTOCOL SHOULD BE FOLLOWED FOR AT LEAST THREE DAYS.**

## THE FIRST THREE DAYS WITH YOUR NEW FOSTER DOG

### 1. Create a Predictable & Nurturing Environment

- **Crate Training:** When the dog arrives, prepare an appropriately sized crate. The crate is a personal den where dogs can retreat and feel safe. Make the crate comfortable with a soft bed and toys.
- **Quiet Area:** Place the crate in a quiet area of your home, away from high-traffic zones. This helps minimize exposure to overwhelming stimuli. Do not put the crate by the front door if you can avoid it. A crate should be a quiet “off-duty” space.
- **Enrichment Activities:** Provide mental and physical enrichment through toys, puzzle feeders, and safe chew items. This helps reduce boredom and stress.
- **Environmental Management:** Use noise machines, white noise, TV/radio, or calming music to block out stressful noises and keep the environment calm and quiet. Block views of windows or doors to prevent over-stimulation from outside stimuli.

### 2. Establish a Routine

- **Consistent Schedule:** Dogs thrive on predictable patterns. Stick to a consistent feeding, walking, and potty breaks schedule. Predictability helps reduce anxiety and builds a sense of security.

### 3. Minimize Stressful Interactions

- **Limited Socialization:** Initially limit interactions with new people and animals. Gradually introduce the dog to new experiences in a controlled manner.
- **Avoid Over-Stimulation:** Prevent over-stimulation by keeping interactions calm and controlled. Use a leash to manage interactions and avoid overwhelming the dog. Provide a calm setting with minimal changes. Gradually introduce new experiences and objects to the dog's environment.
- **Gradual Introductions:** Your foster dog doesn't need to meet everyone else yet. Set them up for success by getting to know them first and letting their nervous systems calm down from the chaotic shelter.
- **Parallel Walks:** If you know your foster dog is dog-friendly and can be introduced to others, use parallel walks to introduce the dog to other resident dogs. Start with a distance and gradually move closer as both dogs become more comfortable. Do NOT force your new foster dog to interact with any resident animals.
- **Calm Interaction:** Avoid over-coddling or excessive affection initially. Let the dog approach you and initiate contact.

### 4. Observe, Assess & Understand

- **Monitor Signs of Stress:** Pay close attention to the dog's body language. Signs of stress include panting, pacing, yawning, lip licking, and cowering. Adjust the environment or interaction if these signs are observed.
- **Respect Boundaries:** Allow the dog to express their need for space. If they show signs of discomfort, back off and give them time to relax.
- **Monitor Behavior:** Observe the dog's behavior and body language closely. Recognize signs of stress, such as pacing, excessive panting, or hiding, and adjust the environment accordingly.
- **Learn Preferences:** Note the dog's preferences and comfort zones, and respect their boundaries. Allow the dog to initiate contact and interactions.

- **Give Time:** Understand that every dog is different and will decompress independently. Be patient and allow the dog to adjust gradually.
- **Avoid Forcing:** Never force the dog into interactions or new experiences. Encourage and guide them gently, allowing them to explore at their comfort level.

## 5. Provide Enrichment and Exercise

- **Mental Stimulation:** Use puzzle toys, Kongs filled with treats, and interactive games to keep the dog mentally engaged and reduce boredom.
- **Physical Exercise:** Ensure the dog gets adequate physical exercise through walks, playtime, and safe off-leash activities ONLY in a controlled environment (like your or a friend's yard or a Sniffspot).
- **Training:** Use short, positive reinforcement sessions to build trust and communication. Reward the dog with treats, praise, and gentle petting (whatever they like the best) for desirable behaviors.

## 6. Use Calming Aids if Necessary

- **Calming Products:** Under the guidance of a veterinarian, consider using calming aids such as Adaptil (a synthetic dog-appeasing pheromone), Thundershirts, or natural supplements like CBD oil. Remember to look for the NASC seal!

## 7. Seek Professional Help

- **Ask Your Rescue for Support:** Your rescue organization is there to help you and your foster dog thrive and get them adopted!
- **Veterinary Support:** If the dog exhibits extreme anxiety or stress, consult a veterinarian for advice and possible interventions.
- **Professional Trainers:** If the dog shows signs of severe behavioral issues, engage a professional dog trainer or behaviorist.

## THE 3-3-3 RULE IN RESCUE

The "3-3-3 Rule" is a guideline that helps adopters understand the phases a rescue dog goes through when adjusting to a new home. It breaks down the adjustment period into three key stages: the first 3 days, 3 weeks, and 3 months.

Understanding the 3-3-3 Rule can help set realistic expectations and provide the necessary support for a rescue dog's transition into a new home. Each dog is unique, and while the rule serves as a general guideline, some dogs may take more or less time to adjust. Patience, consistency, and positive reinforcement are key to helping your new dog feel safe, secure, and loved in their new environment.

Here's what to expect during each phase and how to support your new dog:

### **The First 3 Days: The Introductory Period**

- What to Expect:
  - Your new dog may feel overwhelmed, scared, and unsure about their new environment.
  - Common behaviors include hiding, lack of appetite, and possible accidents in the house due to stress.
  - The dog is trying to figure out where they fit in and what the new environment is like.
- How to Help:
  - Provide a safe, quiet space where the dog can retreat and feel secure, such as a crate or a designated area in your home.
  - Limit interactions with new people and other pets. Give your dog time to explore and get comfortable at their own pace.
  - Use a calm and gentle approach, and avoid forcing interactions. Let the dog come to you when they are ready.

### **The First 3 Weeks: Settling In**

- What to Expect:
  - Your dog will begin to settle into their new environment, becoming more familiar with the routines and rules.
  - They may start to show their true personality and begin to trust you more.
  - Some behavioral issues may start to surface as the dog becomes more comfortable.
- How to Help:

- Establish consistent routines for feeding, potty breaks, and playtime. Consistency helps the dog feel secure and understand what to expect.
- Gradually introduce the dog to other family members and pets. Use positive reinforcement to reward good behavior.
- Start basic training sessions to establish communication and build a bond. Use treats and praise to reinforce positive behaviors.

### **The First 3 Months: Building Trust and Bonding**

- What to Expect:
  - By this time, your dog should feel more comfortable and confident in their new home.
  - They will have formed a bond with you and understand their place in the household.
  - The dog's true personality will shine through, and they will be more settled into their daily routine.
- How to Help:
  - Continue to reinforce positive behavior with consistent training and routines.
  - Introduce the dog to new experiences gradually, ensuring they are comfortable and confident.
  - Consider enrolling in obedience classes to further build the dog's confidence and skills.
  - Be patient and continue to provide love and positive reinforcement to strengthen the bond between you and your dog.

## **CONSTRUCTIONAL AFFECTION**

Constructional Affection is a training method developed by Sean Will and Chase Owens. It focuses on using affection as a primary reinforcer to encourage desirable dog behaviors. This approach is particularly beneficial in shelter environments, where traditional rewards like food might only sometimes be practical or effective.

Constructional Affection offers a compassionate and practical approach to training shelter dogs, focusing on their natural desire for human interaction. By implementing this method,

shelters can improve the behavior and adoptability of their dogs, creating a more harmonious environment for both animals and humans.

#### Key Principles:

- **Affection as a Reinforcer:** Affection, such as petting, gentle scratching, and praise, reinforces positive behaviors. This method capitalizes on dogs' natural desire for human affection, making it a powerful motivator.
- **Building on Current Strengths:** The method leverages the dog's existing behaviors and gradually shapes them into more desirable actions. For instance, if a dog already seeks attention by jumping, the goal is to redirect this behavior into sitting calmly for affection.
- **Step-by-Step Process:** The training follows a structured process, starting with simple interactions and gradually increasing the complexity. This helps dogs learn incrementally and reduces the likelihood of overwhelming them.

#### Applications in Shelters:

- **Reducing Problem Behaviors:** By consistently rewarding calm and appropriate behaviors with affection, dogs learn to replace undesirable actions like jumping or barking with behaviors more conducive to positive human interaction.
- **Improving Adoptability:** Dogs trained with Constructional Affection often become more appealing to potential adopters. They exhibit calmer and more manageable behaviors, making them more attractive to families looking to adopt.
- **Enhancing Human-Animal Bond:** This method fosters a stronger bond between the dog and caregivers by focusing on positive interactions. It helps build trust and a sense of security in the dog, which is crucial for their overall well-being.
- **Practical and Accessible:** Constructional Affection is practical for shelters as it does not rely on treats or food rewards, which might not always be feasible. It requires minimal resources, making it accessible for shelters with limited budgets.

#### Implementation Tips:

- **Start Simple:** Begin with basic interactions where the dog receives affection for maintaining a calm posture, such as keeping all four paws on the ground.

- **Consistency is Key:** Ensure all humans follow the same protocols to provide consistent reinforcement, which helps the dog learn more quickly and reliably.
- **Gradual Progression:** Gradually increase the demands placed on the dog. For example, start with short periods of calm behavior and slowly extend the duration before providing affection.
- **Monitor and Adjust:** Continuously assess the dog's response and adjust the training steps as needed. If the dog becomes too excited or stressed, step back to a more straightforward task.

For more detailed information and resources, visit [Constructional Affection](#) and the [Animal Training Academy](#) ([Animal Training Academy](#)) ([ConstrAffection - BF](#)) ([Animal Training Academy](#)) ([TuneIn](#)) ([CCPDT](#)).

## DOG'S STRESS LEVEL: THE BAT (BEHAVIOR ADJUSTMENT TRAINING) ZONE

Dog's stress level is analogous to rising water level



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## THE LAYERED STRESS MODEL



# The Layered Stress Model

<b>Triggers</b>	<b>The Last Straw</b> Things That Set A Dog Off And Makes Them Blow Up
<b>Leash</b>	<b>Avoiding Frustration</b> Communication Tool vs. Restraint Device.
<b>Clarity</b>	<b>Understanding the Environment</b> Rules? Parameters of Interaction? Predict Outcomes of Actions?
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>Biologically Appropriate Lifestyle</b> Genetic Fulfillment, Exercise, Activities, Social Interactions.
<b>Health</b>	<b>Physiological Health</b> Acute and Chronic Issues.
<b>Base</b>	<b>Communication</b> Basic Understanding Between Beings.

## TREAT & RETREAT TECHNIQUE FOR FEARFUL DOGS

Treat & Retreat is a method developed by Suzanne Clothier and Dr. Ian Dunbar to help fearful dogs build confidence and reduce anxiety around people. This technique involves using food rewards strategically to allow dogs to choose their level of interaction, helping them feel more in control and less threatened.

Key Principles:

- **Respecting the Dog's Comfort Zone:** The core idea is to work within the dog's comfort zone, respecting their flight distance (the space within which they feel safe). Forcing a dog to come closer than it is comfortable can increase its fear and stress.

- **Using High-Value Treats:** High-value treats (something the dog loves) encourage the dog to approach voluntarily. The treats are tossed to the dog at a distance where they feel safe.
- **Avoiding Direct Contact:** The handler should avoid approaching or reaching towards the dog, as this can be perceived as threatening. Instead, the dog is allowed to approach at their own pace.

#### Steps in the Treat & Retreat Technique:

- **Start with Distance:** Toss a treat to the dog at a distance where it is comfortable. Allow the dog to eat the treat, and then toss another one slightly closer to you.
- **Encourage Movement:** Once the dog eats the treat, toss another treat behind it. This creates a cycle of the dog moving away (retreat) and returning (treat), which helps reduce pressure and makes the dog feel more at ease.
- **Gradual Progression:** Over multiple sessions, gradually reduce the distance between you and the dog, always allowing the dog to approach and retreat. The goal is slowly building the dog's confidence and comfort around people.
- **Monitor Stress Signals:** Pay close attention to the dog's body language. If the dog shows signs of stress (e.g., looking away, backing up, freezing), increase the distance again and proceed more slowly.

#### Benefits:

- **Empowerment and Choice:** The technique empowers the dog by allowing it to choose how close to approach, making it feel more in control of the situation.
- **Building Positive Associations:** Repeatedly relating treats to the presence of people helps create positive emotional responses, reducing fear over time.
- **Safe and Non-Threatening:** This method avoids confrontation, which can escalate fear and aggression. Instead, it builds trust gradually.

#### Practical Applications in Shelters:

- **Reducing Aggression and Fear:** Treat & Retreat is effective in helping fearful and aggressive dogs in shelters become more comfortable around staff and potential adopters.
- **Improving Adoptability:** Dogs that learn to approach people confidently are more likely to be adopted, as they exhibit less fearful and more sociable behavior.

- **Stress-Free Training:** This technique is gentle and non-invasive, ideal for high-stress environments like shelters.

You can explore resources such as Suzanne Clothier's official website and the Preventive Vet guide on Treat & Retreat ([suzanneclothier](#)) ([Preventive Vet](#)) for more detailed guidance and examples.

# LESSON ON POTTY TRAINING

**Objective:** To provide foster caregivers with effective strategies and techniques for potty training foster dogs, ensuring a smooth transition to their new environment and promoting positive behavior.

Potty training is essential for:

- Maintaining a clean and hygienic home.
- Reducing stress for both the dog and the caregiver.
- Increasing the dog's chances of being adopted by teaching them acceptable behaviors.

Steps to Successful Potty Training

## 1. Establish a Routine

- **Consistent Schedule:** Feed your dog at the same times each day. This helps regulate their digestion and makes potty times more predictable.
- **Regular Breaks:** Take your dog outside first thing in the morning, after meals, after playtime, and before bed. Young puppies may need to go out every hour.

## 2. Choose a Designated Potty Area

- **Consistency:** Always take your dog to the same spot outside. The familiar scent will prompt them to go.
- **Command:** Use a specific command like "Go potty" to encourage them to do their business.

## 3. Supervision and Confinement

- **Watch Closely:** When your dog is indoors, keep an eye on it. Look for signs that it needs to go, such as sniffing around, circling, or whining.
- **Crate Training:** Use a crate to confine your dog when you can't supervise them. Dogs are less likely to soil their sleeping area. Make sure the crate is appropriately sized—large enough for the dog to stand, turn around, and lie down but not so big that the dog can eliminate in one corner and sleep in another.

#### 4. Positive Reinforcement

- **Reward Success:** Praise your dog and treat them immediately after they eliminate outside. This reinforces the behavior you want.
- **Consistency:** Be consistent with rewards so your dog associates outdoor elimination with positive outcomes.

#### 5. Clean Up Accidents Properly

- **Immediate Clean-Up:** Clean up accidents promptly using an enzymatic cleaner to remove the scent. This prevents the dog from being attracted back to the same spot.
- **Avoid Punishment:** Never punish your dog for accidents. This can create fear and anxiety, making the problem worse. Instead, focus on positive reinforcement and supervision.

#### 6. Manage Mistakes

- **Interrupt and Redirect:** If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating indoors, calmly interrupt them and take them outside to finish. Reward them if they go outside.
- **Reevaluate Routine:** If accidents are frequent, revisit your schedule. Increase the frequency of outdoor breaks and ensure they are taken to the designated potty area consistently.

### Common Challenges and Solutions

#### 1. Regression:

- **Possible Cause:** Changes in routine, environment, or health issues can cause regression.
- **Solution:** Reestablish a consistent routine and monitor for health problems. Consult a vet if needed.

#### 2. Marking Behavior:

- **Possible Cause:** Territorial behavior, especially in male dogs.
- **Solution:** Neutering can help reduce marking. Increase supervision and clean marked areas thoroughly with an enzymatic cleaner.

#### 3. Submissive Urination:

- **Possible Cause:** Fear or excitement, often seen in puppies and anxious dogs.
- **Solution:** Build confidence through positive reinforcement. Avoid punishment and sudden movements that may trigger the behavior.

# HOW TO INTRODUCE YOUR FOSTER DOG TO A NEW PERSON

Introducing your foster dog to new people should be done carefully to ensure a positive experience for both the dog and the new person.

Introducing your foster dog to new people requires patience, calmness, and understanding of the dog's body language and comfort levels. Following these steps can ensure a positive experience that helps build the dog's confidence and social skills.

Here are the steps and best practices to follow:

## 1. Preparation

- **Know Your Dog:** Understand your dog's temperament and triggers. Some dogs may be more anxious or fearful, especially if they have had traumatic experiences.
- **Choose the Right Environment:** Pick a neutral and quiet location for the introduction. Avoid crowded or noisy areas that can overwhelm the dog.

## 2. The Introduction Process

- **Calm and Controlled:** Ensure the new person remains calm and moves slowly. Sudden movements or loud voices can startle the dog. The new person should stand or sit down to avoid towering over the dog, which can be intimidating.
- **No Direct Eye Contact:** Advise the new person to avoid direct eye contact initially, as this can be perceived as a challenge or threat.
- **Let the Dog Approach:** Allow the dog to approach the new person at their own pace. The new person should remain still with their hands at their sides or gently offer the back of their hand for the dog to sniff.
- **Use Treats:** The new person can have treats to offer the dog as a positive reinforcement for calm behavior. Ensure the dog approaches voluntarily and is rewarded immediately.
- **Observe Body Language:** Watch for signs of stress or discomfort, such as yawning, lip licking, backing away, or tail tucking. If the dog shows any of these signs, give them more space and time to adjust.

- **Positive Reinforcement:** Use positive reinforcement by praising the dog and giving treats when they display calm and friendly behavior.

### **3. What to Avoid**

- **Avoid Forced Interaction:** Never force the dog to interact if they are uncomfortable. Forcing can increase anxiety and lead to negative reactions.
- **Avoid Overwhelming Situations:** Introduce the dog to one person at a time. Too many new people at once can be overwhelming.
- **Avoid Hovering or Leaning Over:** Instruct the new person not to hover or lean over the dog, as this can be perceived as threatening.
- **No Rough Petting:** The new person should gently pet and avoid rough or sudden movements.

### **4. Gradual Increase in Interaction**

- **Short Initial Meetings:** Keep the initial meeting short and positive. Gradually increase the duration of interactions as the dog becomes more comfortable.
- **Frequent Breaks:** If the dog seems overwhelmed during the interaction, allow it to take breaks and retreat to its safe space.
- **Build Confidence:** Over time, increase the number of people the dog meets, ensuring that each interaction is positive and not overwhelming.

# HOW TO DO A MEET & GREET WITH A POTENTIAL ADOPTER

Conducting a successful meet and greet with a potential adopter is crucial for ensuring a good match between the dog and the new owner.

A fantastic meet and greet involves careful preparation, clear communication, and attentive observation. By creating a calm environment, guiding positive interactions, and providing thorough information, you can help ensure a successful match between the dog and the potential adopter.

Here are steps and best practices to follow:

## 1. Preparation

- **Know the Dog:** Understand the dog's temperament, behavior, and needs. Be ready to share this information with the potential adopter. Ensure the dog is well-exercised and has had a potty break before the meeting to reduce restlessness and stress.
- **Choose the Right Environment:** Select a quiet, neutral location for the meeting, such as a designated room at the shelter or a calm outdoor area. Avoid high-traffic or noisy areas that could overwhelm the dog or the adopter.

## 2. During the Meet and Greet

- **Initial Introduction:** Greet the potential adopter warmly and provide a brief overview of the dog's background and personality. Allow the dog to approach the adopter at their own pace. Avoid forcing interaction. The adopter should remain calm and let the dog come to them.
- **Observe Body Language:** Watch for signs of stress or discomfort in the dog, such as yawning, lip licking, or backing away. Address any signs of stress by giving the dog more space and time. Encourage the adopter to observe the dog's body language and explain what different signals mean.
- **Positive Interactions:** Guide the adopter on how to interact with the dog. Encourage them to use a calm voice and gentle petting on the side of the face, under the chin, or on the chest. Avoid petting the top of the head or sudden movements. Offer treats to the adopter to give to the dog, reinforcing positive behavior and building trust.

- **Answer Questions:** Be prepared to answer any questions the adopter may have about the dog's behavior, needs, and care. Provide honest and detailed information to help them make an informed decision.
- **Demonstrate and Discuss Care Routines:** Explain the dog's daily routine, including feeding times, potty breaks, exercise, and special needs or preferences. This helps adopters understand what to expect and how to integrate the dog into their home.
- **Training and Commands:** Demonstrate any training the dog has received, such as basic commands (sit, stay, come). Encourage the adopter to try these commands with the dog to establish communication and build rapport.

### **3. Evaluate the Fit**

- **Assess Interaction:** Observe the interaction between the dog and the adopter. Look for signs of a positive connection, such as relaxed body language, mutual interest, and comfortable handling.
- **Discuss with the adopter** how they feel about the interaction and address any concerns or questions they may have.
- **If the meeting goes well,** explain the next steps in the adoption process, including any paperwork, home visits, or follow-up support. Ensure the adopter understands their responsibilities and the resources available to them.