



## Important information and tips for foster parents

**Emergencies:** Please notify us in the event an emergency happens with your foster dog. Currently, APBF uses Animal Medical Hospital, (704)334-4684. You are welcome to use any of the emergency facilities in the area. Their names and locations are listed here:

Animal Medical Hospital – 3832 Monroe Road, Charlotte

CVS Charlotte – 2225 Township Road, Charlotte

CVS Matthews – 4099 Campus Ridge Road, Matthews

CVS Huntersville – 12117 Statesville Road, Huntersville

**Non-life threatening** injury or illness: APBF currently utilizes and recommends Carolina Pets Animal Hospital, (CPAH), (704)220-0226. With prior approval and arrangements, the Adoptions Coordinator can help you get your foster pet on a wellness plan, and/or receive discounted services through APBF. We also recommend Highland Pet Hospital and Poplar Road Animal Hospital if you are in Northern Charlotte.

If you are uncertain as to how urgent a situation may be, please call one of the hospitals listed and ask the advice of the technician or veterinarian on staff.

**Feeding:** We recommend feeding adult dogs twice daily and fully weaned puppies three times daily, then converting to twice daily around 8 months of age. Dogs one year of age and older should be on Adult dog food, dogs 8 years of age and older should be evaluated for switch to senior food, and puppies along with pregnant and lactating females should be on puppy food. High quality food such as Eukanuba Wild, Royal Canin, Blue Buffalo, and similar products is an important part of nutrition. Try to stay away from foods that contain chicken feet, beaks, snouts, and other unfavorable by-products. Foods that contain by-products such as organs and bone are desirable. Please do not feed your foster dog from the table, from the counter, or left over meal scraps; this is not healthy for companion animals and enforces the bad habit of begging and counter surfing.

It is recommended that you feed your foster dogs separately from your family dogs to avoid any food aggression triggers.

During the initial training period with your foster dog, we recommend halving their feeding portion and using the remaining half throughout the day as training incentive to reward good behaviors. For more in depth training throughout the day using this method, ask us for a Learn to Earn booklet, (created by Dr. Sophia Yin) which demonstrates an excellent and very successful way to work with your foster dogs.

**Treats:** Treats are an essential component in training. Purchasing treats are acceptable, or, you can use baby carrots, sliced apples, small chunks of hotdogs, blueberries, cooked egg yolks, or even homemade doggie treats, (recipes available). For a list of common foods that may potentially be harmful and which foods are acceptable to give, please visit: <http://www.aspca.org/Pet-care/ask-the-expert/ask-the-expert-poison-control/people-foods.aspx?qna=1>. As with feeding, chew toys initially should be given

separately from family dogs and other fosters as well until all dogs are familiar and comfortable with one another and there are no signs of tension when toys are out in a common area.

**Living arrangements:** All foster dogs are to be kept as indoor pets. APBF does not adopt dogs into outdoor living situations, nor outdoor foster situations for the welfare of the dogs involved. Pit bulls in particular are a very social breed that thrive off of being a part of the family and are truly companion animals. Our foster families help set our adoptable dogs on the best path to a successful adoption as a family companion.

**Routine:** Pit Bulls thrive off of routine. Try to keep your daily activities laid out in a similar manner. You will notice that once your foster dog gets the routine down, they will anticipate, and get excited about each step of the routine. Not to say that surprising them with a day of hiking or a simple ride in the car isn't also on the top of their exciting list; they will appreciate the daily routine as well.

### **Names**

A foster dog's name is also a part of their routine. Multiple names can be confusing to not only the dog, but to potential adopters who are looking to apply for a specific dog, as well. Please select one name for your foster dog/puppy. Once the foster pet has a listed name, it is not to be changed, or to be called by other names until he/she has been adopted.

Some names are very common and have been through our system multiple times thus far. In the event that you have named your foster dog something similar, we will need to alter their name for listing and medical records so as not to confuse potential adopters or mix up any of the pets in the program. Some of these very common names include Bella, Luci, Pumpkin, Grace/Gracie, Zeus, and Sam/Sammy.

**Exercise:** Pit Bulls are an energetic breed and typically require a good deal of exercise to keep them happy. Daily runs or walks, swimming and playing ball are great, healthy activities. For the more adventurous, getting involved in an agility class or fly ball lesson can benefit both foster parent and foster dog. Keep in mind that the interaction portion of the activity you choose is key. Simply letting your foster dog out to run on their own in a fenced yard will not provide adequate stimulation. Basic puppy and manners classes can be arranged through APBF if needed.

### **Forming good habits**

Working on training basics with your foster dog at home, is important to the success of their adoption.

- Basic commands such as sit, off, stay, down, heel, wait, place, and ok, should all be worked on while a dog or puppy is under the care of a foster parent.
- Avoid giving your foster dog or puppy attention and/or treats unless they do something for the reward first, (obey a command, settle down when overly excited, etc.). Ignore pushy behavior, (such as pushing their way into your lap or moving your arm) and reward quiet, calm behavior by calling the dog over and providing affection and/or treats.
- Ask incoming house guests to ignore your foster puppies and dogs at first, and then to greet them only after the excitement level has decreased.
- Avoid allowing your foster pets on your furniture or to sleep in your bed, even if your pets are currently allowed on the furniture/in the bed. Not all adoptive families allow dogs in their own beds or on the furniture and the habit can be difficult and confusing for the dogs to break. Families with small dogs will also often allow the smaller dogs on the furniture, yet not the larger dogs to provide a "time out" from play space where the smaller dogs can have their own

quiet, undisturbed area. Lastly, certain dogs can be/become territorial of beds and furniture; better to avoid the issue.

### **Training**

Basic training classes are available from time to time for foster parents to work with a professional trainer and their foster dogs. To inquire and join an upcoming class, please email your Foster Family Coordinator. If you are having specific behavioral issues, please also notify the Foster Family Coordinator and we will assemble a plan to handle the behavior and/or work with a behaviorist on the issue.

**Leash laws and your foster dog:** in Mecklenburg County, (where most of our foster families reside), there is a leash law ordinance in place for public areas and communities. Information about the leash law can be found at: [charmeck.org](http://charmeck.org). The basic overview from their site is as follows:

*The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have strict leash laws that apply to all animals except cats (see the nuisance animal section for laws pertaining to cats). Animals must be on a leash, contained within a fence or an **operable and marked** invisible fence. An animal may be loose in its own yard if there is an adult (18 years or older) immediately next to the animal **and** the animal responds to direct verbal commands of the person. All regulations aim to protect the health and safety of our citizens. Please be a responsible pet owner and abide by the law. Violations will be investigated and stiff fines may be applied. Fines range from a \$50.00 citation for the first violation and up to a \$500.00 citation and permanent seizure of the animal for a fifth violation. To report an animal at large, please call 311.*

We believe that leash laws are important and implemented for not only the safety of other dogs and people, but your own and your foster dogs as well from a disease and safety perspective. Please keep your foster dog leashed at all times unless in a fenced in area or indoors.

**Leaving your foster dog home while you are away:** During the getting acquainted period, a crate can be a very helpful tool in teaching your new rescued foster about boundaries, manners in the house, and is a safe means of confinement while you are away. You should not ever leave your own dog and your foster dog unattended in the case that something happens while you are away to spark a fight. With new dogs, it is often unknown if there are any “triggered” behaviors and if you are not home when a behavior is triggered, it could lead to a devastating incident.

Puppies in particular need boundaries. Utilizing a crate can help the process of potty training, can be a safe nap spot, and a great “time out” tool when play gets too rough. While away from home, puppies need to be kept in a safe spot such as a crate, to keep them from chewing items that could potentially be hazardous to their health, (wires, toxic items, ingesting toys, etc.).

**Rat bait and Anti-freeze:** There are many toxic substances that can pose a threat to dogs. Rat Bait and Anti-freeze are two very common toxins that are considerably dangerous; not only are they both lethal, they are also very enticing to dogs. Please do not use Rat Bait; no matter how well you hide it, dogs always seem to find it. Please use alternative methods that do not involve poisons if you are experiencing an issue with mice or rats. With Anti-freeze, please be sure your dog is not able to reach containers that hold the substance, and that they are not close to leaks on the driveway, in the garage, or other areas where vehicles are parked.

Should your foster pet or family dog ingest either of these substances, it is an emergency and you should proceed to the emergency hospital immediately.

**You are your foster dogs' biggest advocate:** Adoptable APBF dogs and puppies are featured on our website, petfinder.com, adoptapet.com, pbrc.net, and affiliate websites. In order to efficiently find the right families, we ask foster parents to network in order to help increase the exposure to adoptive families. Each of the adoptable dogs is featured on the APBF adoption flier which is available on the website, (or a copy can be emailed to you). Foster parents are encouraged to post fliers at local coffee shops, gyms, and other community boards to help get the word out about rescued dogs in need of loving homes. Foster parents are welcomed to make their own fliers featuring their foster dog or puppy and publicly post as well.

Frequent pictures and updates are a great tool in keeping your foster dog's profile fresh on the websites and attracting new viewers. Please keep your Adoptions Coordinator updated on specific personality characteristics of your foster pet to help match them with the best home.

You may be asked to be involved in the interaction and adoption process. Foster parents come to know their foster pets better than anyone and are very valuable in determining whether a family will be able to provide the best environment and lifestyle to suit a foster dog's needs.

**When in doubt, call us!** If at any time you are faced with a behavior you don't understand, an ailment you are concerned about, or have any questions in regards to fostering or adoption, please do not hesitate to call. We are here to support our foster families and help make their fostering experience as rewarding as possible.

#### **Attending events with your foster dog and/or puppy**

Positive hands-on experiences with APBF foster parents greatly helps to curb the negative public images that often surround pit Bull dogs. This is also one of the best ways to get your foster dog noticed by potential adopters.

- Only bring one dog per handler to any event, (this includes puppies)
- If you would like your foster pet to participate, however, cannot stay at an event, please make arrangements with the event coordinator ahead of time to secure volunteer assistance, and to schedule specific drop off and pick up times. Please be courteous of other volunteers and do not be late.
- Please do not give out your personal information to any member of the public for any reason. If someone is interested in adopting your foster dog or puppy, please have them fill out an APBF application and contact the Adoptions Coordinator. It is dangerous to give out personal information to strangers without them having been screened prior. It is a direct violation of the Foundation to arrange an interaction and/or home visit without pre-screening and permission from the Adoptions Coordinator first.
- Remember to let the volunteers do their job. As a foster parent, you can provide great insight to the personality of your foster dog; volunteers know the ins and outs of the Foundation and can best cover the policies.

**Can I keep up with my foster pet after he/she is adopted?**

We ask adopters to feel free to post information about their newly adopted pets on the APBF facebook page so that everyone can join in the excitement of a new adoption with the new owners.

Owners do not have an obligation to foster parents; only to APBF. Once a dog or puppy is adopted, the new owners are allowed their privacy in raising their new family member.

APBF follows up with adoptive parents to make sure that everything is going well in the new environment, and that the new owners are following through with their commitment and adoption contract appropriately.

In the event that an adopter wishes to communicate with the foster parent regarding their new pet, we will contact the foster parent to first ask permission, and will then exchange the information if the foster parent agrees.

In the event that a foster dog/puppy is returned, we will ask the original foster parent to take the foster pet back to avoid a minimal amount of stress in transitioning a dog/puppy back into the APBF Adoption Program.