

MUTTVILLE SENIOR DOG RESCUE



FOSTER MANUAL

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About This Manual

This manual is designed to provide foster parents with a comprehensive overview of the Muttville Senior Dog Rescue Foster Program. It is meant to be a helpful resource for foster parents and should answer many of the questions that may arise before and during foster care. Throughout this manual, dogs are referred to neutrally, or using the female gender (she/her), but only for convenience and consistency. Foster parents should always consult with their Foster Mentor or the Foster Manager for specific help and assistance. All information is subject to change.

Program Overview

Muttville was founded in 2007, and since then has given a forever home and new life to over 6,200 senior dogs (as of December 2018) that might otherwise have been euthanized. Muttville is a foster-based program, allowing us to save more lives than would be possible if we were restricted to the space of our headquarters facility. Muttville foster homes provide temporary homes for senior dogs until a forever home is found.

Muttville's Foster Program is designed around an initial Mentoring System, then direct interaction with the Foster Manager and shelter staff. Each foster family is assigned a Foster Mentor—an experienced Muttville foster parent that provides guidance and support to help make the foster experience a success.

The Foster Mentor serves as the initial point of contact for the foster family: answering questions, assisting with training issues, connecting the family with any needed supplies and services, and serving as a foster's liaison to Muttville operations. The Foster Mentor also provides initial orientation for new foster families, and serves as a resource throughout the foster process, beginning with connecting the foster family with a dog in need and culminating in a successful adoption.

Be a Successful Foster Home

In order to become a foster parent, you will need to:

- Agree to and sign the Foster Agreement
- Have a Foster Matchmaking Session at Muttville HQ
- Bring your foster to at least two weekend events a month at Muttville HQ

Responsibilities of a Foster

Being a foster parent is more than just caring for a homeless dog. You are helping this dog get ready for her forever home. Our dogs often come from difficult situations; they may have been dumped at a shelter, or their human may have passed away. These are stressful circumstances, which may impact their behavior. As foster parents, we are helping these dogs learn how to adjust and this may include providing some training. There is no such thing as a “perfect” dog, so be prepared to put some work into your foster dog.

In order to do this we ask that foster homes follow these guidelines:

- Provide a safe and loving home to a senior dog
- Provide training to help your foster dog become more adoptable
- Foster dogs must be on leash at all times when outdoors unless in your own secured, fenced yard
- Ensure your foster dog attends at least 2 adoption weekend events monthly
- Any behavioral issues that you believe may hinder adoption must be reported to your Foster Mentor, the Foster Manager, or another Muttville staff member immediately
- Get your foster dog to veterinary appointments
 - Foster dogs must be seen by Muttville-approved veterinarians
 - Mentors need to be informed
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communication from Muttville, and specifically when dealing with potential adopters always CC your mentor or the appropriate Muttville teammates
- Be in contact with your foster mentor on any updates, appointments, or milestones
- Be your foster dog’s advocate, help her get adopted
- Provide text, photos, and/or videos to complement your foster dog’s online profile—this can be done easily by emailing photos@muttville.org with any files and your foster’s name
 - This may require attending an official Muttville photo event
- Have your dog wear an “Adopt Me” vest when out of the house
- Carry Muttville palm cards with you to share with the public

Before Bringing a Foster Dog Home

Before you bring your foster dog home, it is important to prepare yourself, your family, and your home for a new canine companion. Fostering is a family affair, so please make sure that everyone in your household is ready, willing, and able to provide a loving home. Make sure everyone understands their responsibilities, and as well as the temporary nature of fostering.

Fostering is a big commitment. While having a dog in your home is a lot of fun, they also take a lot of time. Dogs need to be fed twice per day and require daily exercise. If you don't have access to a backyard, your foster dog will need to be walked at least 3 times per day. It is important to be realistic about what you are able to provide a foster dog.

Bringing Your Foster Dog Home

Planning where you will keep your dog before you bring her home will make the entire process easier for everyone. When you first bring a foster dog home, you may want to confine her to a single room, such as a kitchen or family room. This room should not be an isolated room, but a room where you spend a large part of your day or evening, as dogs are pack animals and want to be with you—dogs are not to be kept outside. This room is especially important when you're at work or away from the house, as it will be a new environment in which the dog needs time to become familiar and comfortable.

It is important to establish a regular routine quickly so that your foster dog can begin to adjust to your household. During this period, it might be appropriate to keep stimulation to a minimum. Every dog is different! If your foster needs time to decompress, we recommend avoiding lots of visitors, your neighbors' dog(s), or parties during the first few days while the dog is acclimating. Give your foster dog some time to get used to you before you introduce additional new situations and potentially overstimulate the dog.

Remember that every dog goes through a transition period when it moves into a new home. Every dog is different, so some may acclimate in a day, while others may take a week or more. Your new foster dog has to learn your routine and your expectations of her. During this transition period, accidents do happen. But with patience, you will find that once your foster starts to become comfortable in your home, she will blossom and you may see a whole new personality emerge. It is incredibly satisfying!

If you have other animals in your home, it is important to introduce your new foster dog slowly. For the health and safety of both your animal(s) and the foster dog, please be sure your animals are current on their vaccinations. This is a stipulation in the foster agreement.

Your Foster Dog and Children

Fostering is a wonderful family experience and can build a foundation of philanthropy in your children. It's important to select a dog that is appropriate with your children, and as a general rule, children under 16 years old should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with any dog. You must also be diligent about providing guidance, instructions, and rules to your children about safe interactions with all dogs as well as how to care for your particular foster dog.

Introducing Your Foster Dog to Your Dog(s)

Introducing your foster dog to your dog(s) should be done gradually and calmly. It is best to do introductions outside of your home, just in case your dog becomes territorial inside her home. If possible, introductions should be done with 2 handlers. One person should have your dog on a leash, and the other should have the foster dog on a leash. Walk them next to each other, side by side, allowing them to sniff each other. Make sure you don't pull the leashes tight; tension in the leashes may be picked up by the dogs and cause them to become tense. Be prepared to pull them apart if there are any signs of aggression. Be sure you are giving your dog lots of love and praise during the introduction. You'll want to supervise the dogs together before leaving them alone to make sure they get along well. Remember, this is a new situation for both dogs and can be very stressful.

It is important to take measures to prevent resource guarding, as this can escalate quickly. Before you bring the dogs inside, be sure there aren't any chews or toys around the house. You should also feed your dog and your foster dog separately and supervise them, especially in the beginning. These small steps can help set your foster dog up for success.

Introducing Your Foster Dog to Your Cat(s)

Cats must also be introduced to your foster slowly. If you remember nothing else from this section, please remember that! S-L-O-W-L-Y. Begin by keeping your cat and foster dog in different rooms. Allow the dog to become comfortable in her own room. Once the dog is comfortable, let her explore the rest of the house for short periods while the cat is in another room. This will allow them to pick up each other's scent. After a few days, allow the two to meet but keep the dog on a leash. During the first few meetings, the cat and dog will probably not interact face to face. A dog is a predatory animal. It is a natural instinct for a dog to want to chase a cat. Assume the dog will chase the cat so that you are prepared. Never allow the dog to intimidate the cat by barking or chasing.

Each time the dog acts inappropriately (e.g., barks), let her know these behaviors are unacceptable; try using a quick sharp tone, like "uh uh" to get her attention and redirect her energy. On the other hand, if the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, that's a good sign and should not be discouraged. When they set up boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a

working relationship. Let them interact for about 30 minutes, keeping your foster dog on leash in case you have to restrain her. Then return the cat back to its safe haven and give the dog lots of praise and a treat.

Increase the amount of time they are together each visit. It's important to be patient and encouraging in their interactions. If you're relaxed, they will be more at ease. Always praise friendly behavior profusely. Don't rush the introduction or force them to interact more than either is willing. Pressing them to accept each other will only slow down the adjustment process. You should use your best judgment as to when they can interact with the dog off-leash. Observe their interactions carefully. A dog that is showing overt aggression, such as snarling, growling, or baring teeth, will probably never accept a cat. If there is any aggression, the foster dog is probably not the right fit for your home and you should contact your Foster Mentor or Muttville immediately. Until the dog can be re-homed, the cat and dog should be kept securely separated by baby gates or in separate rooms.

Transporting Your Foster Dog

The safest way to transport your foster dog is in a secure crate in the back of an SUV or station wagon. The crate should be secured so that it doesn't tip over or move around. Alternatively, a grill can be placed between the back of the vehicle and the back seat. Of course, not everyone has an SUV or a station wagon. It is important to secure the dog with a seatbelt in case of an accident, and to prevent the dog from obstructing your view or distracting you.

We recommend having towels available whenever you transport your foster dog. Like humans, dogs can get carsick, and accidents have been known to happen in cars.

You might need a few treats to encourage a larger dog to jump into a car. If you can get a dog to put her front paws up, then you can lift her back end by supporting her hind quarters. If you need to completely lift your foster dog, the best way is by putting one arm behind her hind legs and one arm in front of her front legs – essentially a scoop. Another way is to have one arm just behind her front legs, and one hand behind her hind legs. This way the dog's weight is being supported in the same general area of its legs. Keep in mind, many dogs don't really like to be lifted.

Muttville has a transport network that can occasionally help with transportation (to veterinary appointments, scheduled groomings, etc) if you aren't able to do it. Contact Muttville to arrange transport when necessary. **Please note:** foster parents are **required** to be readily able to transport their fosters to at least 2 adoption events a month at our facility on 255 Alabama Street in San Francisco. Muttville is **unable** to provide transport support for these events.

The Adoption Process

As the foster parent, you play a BIG part in finding your foster dog's forever home! Adoption applications are received by headquarters and reviewed for any red flags. Once approved, the application is forwarded to you, the foster parent! You are then responsible for following up with the potential adopter as soon as possible, within 24 hours of receiving the application, and including Muttville staff on your correspondence by "replying all" to emails. Remember, adopters may be looking for dogs at many rescues. We want to make sure they adopt from us, so we want to contact them immediately, so that we don't lose them!

Your initial contact with the potential adopter is an opportunity for you to learn more about them and ensure that this particular Muttville dog is the best fit for them. Remember, Muttville has approximately 90 dogs available for adoption at any given time. If your foster dog is not the best fit, please direct them to another Muttville dog! This is where keeping Muttville's staff members on the email chain comes in handy, because we know the dogs very well and can jump in to make a recommendation.

Some additional tips on application follow-up can be found below. After you're satisfied that this person/family can provide a safe and loving home, the next step is to schedule a meet-and-greet! This can take place at your convenience. You may choose to meet the potential adopter at your home, at a neutral place such as a park, or you can meet at Muttville headquarters. If you would like to meet at Muttville headquarters outside of one of our regularly scheduled weekend adoption events (Saturday and Sunday from 12PM to 4PM), please email programs@muttville.org to schedule. We are available during the week by appointment.

During the meet-and-greet please come prepared with the yellow adoption packet and any medication you were given when you took your foster home. After the meet-and-greet, you'll provide a recommendation on this adoption to headquarters. Or, if the applicant wants to adopt right away, you can process the adoption yourself! As the foster parent, you know your foster dog better than anyone, and will be best able to determine if the potential adopter is a good fit for your foster dog. This can be a difficult thing, as it can be very emotional. As a foster parent, we grow very connected to our foster dogs, and it is hard to let go. Be thoughtful about the standards you are setting for the potential adoptive home. Sometimes the best homes aren't what we expect.

When it is finally time to hand over your foster dog, please be emotionally prepared. Even if you feel sad, the new parents are excited and happy about finding a new companion! This is quite possibly the best day of their lives! You should be very excited for them. Please remember to rejoice and celebrate that you have helped an old dog find a new beginning – you were instrumental in saving a life. And every time one of our dogs is adopted, one more dog can come into our program and another life can be saved!

Detailed instructions for finalizing an adoption can be found later in this section. When you transfer the dog to the adoptive family, you'll need to collect the adoption fee, a signed adoption

agreement (found in the yellow adoption packet), and take a new family photo for us to post on Facebook.

Remember that throughout this process your Foster Mentor and the Muttville staff are available to help! Your Mentor and/or the Muttville staff will be heavily involved during your first adoption, and can accompany you on the meet-and-greet and/or during the transfer to the adoptive home if schedules permit. You are not alone in this process!

Promoting Your Foster Dog

The goal of the foster program is to get your foster dog adopted. Muttville relies heavily on its foster families to help promote their foster dogs. You should get in the habit of walking your foster dog while wearing an adopt-me vest. This is a great way to advertise your dog, and invites passers-by to talk with you. It is also a good idea to have Muttville palm cards readily available, so you can hand them out when people ask you about your foster dog.

Muttville also relies on foster families for help with online profiles. You know your foster dog better than anyone else; help us tell the world what makes your foster dog so special! When she does something extremely cute, send a write-up to the Foster Manager so we can add it to her profile. Better yet, take some pictures or video of your foster dog. Not sure what kind of information to send? The Foster Manager always sends new fosters a link to an easy-to-use Google Form with personality prompts—bookmark this link to use for all of your future foster dogs!

Other things you can do to promote your dog include using social media and flyers. Do you use Facebook and Instagram? Post your foster dog's profile for all of your friends to see. One friend may tell another friend and who knows... Also, feel free to post flyers at your workplace, at your child's school, at the local coffee shop, or wherever might be appropriate.

When an Application Comes In

Muttville will continue to market your foster pup while they are with you. During this time an inquiry may come in regarding your dog. Since you have more intimate knowledge regarding your dog, Muttville will put you in touch with the possible adopter. We ask that you respond to the possible adopter with a quick description of your dog and their personality. Keep it positive and include information about the following: how they do in your home, how they do with people and other dogs, house training, leash walking, and behavioral information. We also ask that you work out a meet and greet with the possible adopter. You can arrange this so that they meet you at your home, or you can drop your foster dog at Muttville Headquarters so that they can meet the dog here. Please check in with the Programs team at programs@muttville.org if you'd like to have the meet & greet happen at Muttville headquarters.

Finalizing an Adoption

If you are meeting a possible adopter outside of Muttville Headquarters, we ask that you have an Adoption Agreement on-hand. This Adoption Agreement can be found in the yellow adoption folder you were sent home with when you picked up your foster! Once you have spoken with the adopters and no red flags have popped up, you will need to do the following:

1. Have the adopters fill out the Adoption Agreement carbon copy contract.
 - a. Be sure to bring the yellow adoption packet with the carbon copy adoption agreement when you meet the adopter; Muttville gets the white copy and the adopter gets the yellow copy. Please take a photo of the executed adoption agreement and email it to programs@muttville.org immediately after the adoption is finalized. Please mail the hard-copy signed adoption agreement and payment (if paid by check) to Muttville, P.O. Box 410207, San Francisco, CA 94141.
2. Collect the adoption fee.
 - a. If the adopter is over 62 years old, the adoption would be part of our Seniors-for-Seniors program. In this case, the fee will be waived, but we do invite the adopter to make any donation they can. For all other adoptions, the adopter can either submit a check, cash, or [complete payment online](#). If the adopter chooses to pay online (so convenient!) please make sure that they complete this before you hand over your foster. The adoption fee is not tax deductible. Alternatively, they can become a monthly Mutt Guardian (at a minimum of \$25/month), which can be tax deductible, and we will waive the adoption fee. We do not waive the adoption fee for current Mutt Guardians (it must be a new sign up, or they must increase their current donation by \$25/month).
3. Ensure you discuss any medical needs or issues with the adopter, and send them home with medications, the adoption packet, and any of the dogs' belongings.
4. Take an adoption photo!
 - a. Please take a sweet adoption photo of the happy family and send a quick email with a caption to fb@muttville.org so we can post the wonderful news to our Facebook page!

Matchmaking Questions

Foster parents often say their goal is to find a home even better than their own! Your input is critical so it is important for you to be prepared to speak with the applicant. Remember, we aren't

trying to “grill” anyone – but, it is our responsibility to the foster dog to ensure she goes to a safe and loving home. To this end we offer the following guidance:

- This should be a two-way dialogue, rather than just a one-sided question and answer session. Instead of just answering a question, use this as an opportunity to learn more about the potential adopter and find out if they are a good match. For example, if they ask you how much exercise does she get, turn this around to “she gets a fair amount of exercise, how do you plan on exercising her?” and probe for specifics.
- Don’t over-sell or under-sell your foster dog. This should be an open and honest discussion about what the potential adopter is looking for and how this matches the needs of your foster dog.
- Be objective about personality traits. The best way to approach this is to ask about what they are looking for in personality before you talk about what type of personality your foster dog has. This way you can find out if they really are a good match, or if they are going on appearances alone.
- Find out how they would approach training and/or behavior problems. Again, don’t tell them what you are doing, but find out how they would handle this. Better yet, find out how they handled this with previous dogs. This is where the hypothetical questioning can come in handy. For example, you can ask, “What would you do if you came home to find out she just chewed your brand new \$200 shoes?”
- Find out what the family’s expectations of a “rescue” dog are. Inquire about how are they going about finding a dog? Is this a thoughtful process?
- On a final note, just because the potential adopter might approach something differently than you, this doesn’t mean they wouldn’t be a great home! Even if you hate clicker training, this doesn’t mean that everyone must hate clicker training. That said, trust your instincts. If you don’t feel good about the potential adopters, let your Foster Mentor and Muttville staff know.

Basic Foster Dog Care

Feeding Your Foster Dog

The food you feed your foster dog is important because, as the saying goes, “you are what you eat,” and this applies to dogs as well as humans. Muttville can provide dog food if you need it.

However, many foster families choose to provide their own food. If you decide to provide food, please use only high quality dog food from a pet store; please do not feed your foster dog food that you can buy in the grocery store. Senior dogs tend to do better with easy-to-digest, highly palatable food. Wet food is your best bet as kibble is hard to digest, and can cause dehydration and weight gain. Canned foods, healthy frozen foods, and raw foods are all good options for your dog.

Some older dogs like their food on the “soupy” side. Adding unsalted beef or chicken broth will make the meal more “slurpable.” Be sure to check labels if you do decide to add broth, as many broths contain onions which can be toxic for dogs.

The *Whole Dog Journal* suggests looking for specific words and ingredients on food labels:

- “Chicken” is better than “poultry”
- “Chicken meal” is better than “chicken by-products” which is better than “chicken digest” which is better than “animal digest” (which is the worst!)
- Good sources of protein (whole meats or single source meat meal, like “chicken meal” rather than “poultry meal”)
- Whole meat source as one of the first two ingredients (chicken or chicken meal)
- Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables and other foods (unprocessed food has a greater chance of having its nutrients and enzymes intact)

Food should NOT contain:

- Meat by-products
- Fat or protein named generically (e.g., animal, poultry fat, meat meal), it should instead read “beef” or “chicken fat” or “lamb meal”
- Food fragments (brewer’s rice, corn gluten, etc.)
- Artificial preservatives (BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin)
- Artificial colors
- Sweeteners
- Propylene glycol
- Corn

Dogs can have sensitive stomachs, and may react to a change in diet with diarrhea and/or vomiting. If this happens, feed your foster dog cooked rice mixed with cottage cheese (two cups rice to one cup cottage cheese) for a day or two, or plain chicken and rice. Once the stomach distress is gone, you can gradually re-introduce the dog food.

Feed your foster dog several small meals each day rather than one large meal. At Muttville headquarters, we feed breakfast around 8:30 AM and then dinner around 6:00 PM. Dogs do best with consistency. Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Feed at the same times every day. Create a separate space for your foster dog to eat so they will feel comfortable.

The quantity of food you provide your foster dog will vary depending on weight, age, and activity level. Please refer to the suggested amounts on the dog food package you are feeding your foster dog as the amounts may change depending on the brand. Remember to reduce this amount to compensate for any treats, including chews. Obesity is an epidemic for pets in the US, and can lead to health problems, exacerbate existing health issues, and reduce overall quality of life. Please do not overfeed your foster dog. And always provide plenty of fresh water!

Supplements

Just like humans, many of our senior dogs have issues with arthritis and joint stiffness. We encourage giving glucosamine or Phycox to help relieve some of the discomfort associated with these issues. In fact, many of our dogs are prescribed this supplement so it is likely that you will have it on hand.

Exercise

Exercise is essential for all dogs, senior or otherwise. An overweight and sedentary dog will develop health problems. Muttville recommends walking your foster dog at least twice daily so she stays in great shape. It will benefit your dog's lungs, heart, digestion, and joints to have daily, consistent exercise, and you! Typically, we recommend fosters get walked first thing in the morning, immediately when arriving home from work, then at least one more time before bed.

Every dog is different in the way she ages and the exercise she can handle. Watch your foster dog for overexertion. Heavy panting without recovery, drooping head and tail, or coughing can be signs of overexertion.

Some older dogs love going outdoors even though they can no longer walk as well as they once did. We use doggie strollers for our older but curious dogs. Getting them out is important for their mental and emotional health as well as their physical well being. We usually have a good supply of doggie strollers at HQ, so if you'd like to borrow one please ask a Muttville staff member! It's a fun way to enjoy the outdoors with your foster dog.

Leash Walking

Muttville recommends using the "six foot rule" when walking your foster dog. This means leaving at least six feet between your foster dog and any other dog you meet. This keeps handlers and dogs safe from possible conflicts and also reduces the transmission of diseases. This rule can be challenging, as many dog parents encourage their dogs to greet new dogs while walking. However,

nose-to-nose greetings can be stressful for many dogs, as dogs typically greet each other from an angle. One simple way to avoid an oncoming dog is to just cross the street, or start to walk in a wide semicircle around the oncoming dog. Most people recognize that this is a sign that you don't want your dogs to meet. If this isn't possible, you can announce to the oncoming walking that you are walking a foster dog and you would prefer that the dogs don't greet each other. Sometimes it is impossible to avoid another dog, so just stay calm, walk between your foster dog and the oncoming dog and move past quickly. Muttville recommends against using retractable leashes when walking your foster dog. It is impossible to have control with a retractable leash, and they can easily tangle or break. We can provide a leash if you need one.

Behavior and Training

Most potential adopters are looking for dogs with basic manners. Some of our senior dogs were previously in loving homes and have some basic house manners. However, some dogs need some remedial training, or have never had any obedience training. This is where the foster family is so important. Dogs learn best with positive reinforcement, not punishment. Reward good behavior with treats and praise.

Basic Training Tips

- Short, five minute training sessions several times per day are more effective than longer periods of training all at once. Dogs will tire out, both physically and mentally, if you try to do too much.
- A positive reward can be anything your foster dog really responds to. This could be treats, special toys, praise, affection, or a game she really loves. Each dog is different. It is important to find the treat that your foster dog responds to best, as this will be the best motivator.
- Be consistent with your terminology. If you're teaching your foster dog to sit, always use the same command. If you say "sit," "please have a seat," "sit down," etc., you will confuse the dog and she won't know how to respond.
- Use a sound like "uh uh" or "tsk tsk" instead of saying "no." The canine mother would use this type of sound to correct her pup. Only use "no" for very serious matters. If it is overused, the dog will no longer respond. Dogs also tend to respond to quick, sharp sounds that "snap" them out of the behavior. However, some dogs are much more sensitive than others – what might hardly get one dog's attention might be overwhelming and terrifying to another. Be sensitive to each dog's temperament and find the best way to

get their attention in order to redirect them away from undesirable behaviors without seeming frightening or threatening.

- Be patient and calm. Dogs respond to your tone of voice and facial expressions as well as your emotions. Dogs were once predators and can read your body language quickly. Don't try to fake your emotions as your foster dog will know.
- Never ever lose your temper with a dog or strike her. We want to create and support a harmonious canine/human relationship.

If your foster dog exhibits behavioral issues, additional training may be warranted. Muttville has relationships with several trainers who are available to consult with our foster families. Let your Foster Mentor or the Muttville staff know if you need to consult with a professional trainer.

Socialization

After your foster dog has settled in and has acclimated to her new home, it is time to get her out into the world! The more you can do this, the better socialized she will be. Get her used to different people and different environments. Start slowly and don't over stimulate as many foster dogs may not have had exposure to what seems like a "normal" environment. When you are out and about, you should remain calm as this will help your foster dog key off of your behavior. Remember to always be aware of your surroundings. Always keep a good handle on your leash and be extremely careful around busy streets, or in parks where there are squirrels or birds or other distractions. If your dog reacts to someone or something on your walk, interrupt the behavior by crossing the street or walk in a different direction.

House Training

Be patient with your foster dog. Even house trained dogs make mistakes, especially when you first bring your foster dog home and she is trying to learn your routine! Smells from other animals may prompt some dogs to "mark" out their territory. Previous accidents should be cleaned with an odor neutralizer, as these odors may continue to encourage accidents.

If you catch your foster dog having an accident inside, immediately re-direct her with a calm "uh uh" and escort her outside where she can finish. Never put the dog's face in her mess or yell at her; she won't understand you and you will only be teaching her to fear you.

House training takes patience and consistency. It is unlikely that your foster is totally unfamiliar with house manners, but if your foster dog was never house trained, you'll need to take her out about every 2 hours while she is learning the ropes! Take your foster dog outside when she wakes up, after she eats or drinks, and after play. Stay outside with her about 5 minutes. If she eliminates, reward her with treats, praise, or a favorite game or toy. Have a "Potty Party" and really celebrate

her successes. If she doesn't go in 5 minutes, take her back inside and try again in 15-20 minutes, and repeat until she eliminates. Every time she eliminates, make sure you reward her!

You'll need to supervise your foster dog closely. If she starts to sniff the floor, or even starts to squat, interrupt with a calm "uh uh" and immediately take her outside. Praise her when she finishes. Keep in mind: every dog has a signal they use when they need to go to the bathroom. Some dogs might stand by the door and bark, while others may pace around the floor. Try to learn your foster dog's signal for when she has to go outside.

Crate Training

Crates can provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They can calm dogs and help prevent destructive chewing, barking, and house training mistakes. Don't expect your foster dog to be able to stay in a crate for 8-10 hours at a time. If you don't know your foster dog's past experience with a crate, it may take her time to learn to hold it and you'll have to start slowly. Senior dogs in particular may not be able to hold it for very long periods of time. **Please note:** while some dogs enjoy having a crate, another dog might find a crate stressful. Do not force your foster dog to be in a crate if it is clear she does not want to be in one.

Crates should never be used as a means of punishment for your foster dog. If used for punishing, the dog will learn to avoid going in the crate. Crates should be thought of as dog play rooms – just like child play rooms, with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure when they are there.

Steps for introducing the crate:

1. Place the crate (with a blanket inside) in a central part of your home. Introduce your foster dog to the crate after a good walk, when she is tired and sleepy. Keep all chew toys in the crate so that she can go in and out as she pleases, selecting toys to play with. Feed your dog in the crate with the door open. If the dog hesitates going in, place the bowl just inside the door so she doesn't have to go all the way inside the crate.
2. If your foster still refuses to go near the crate, put the smelliest, tastiest wet food in the crate and shut the door. Let the dog hang outside the crate for a while, smelling the food inside. Soon she should beg you to let her in!
3. Now that she is familiar with and willing to go near the crate, throw some of her favorite treats in the crate. Let her go in and get them and come right out again. Do this exercise three or four times. Then, throw more treats in and let her go in and get them. This time, when she goes in, shut the door and give her another treat through the door. Then let her out and ignore her for 3 minutes. Then, put some more treats in the crate, let her go in,

shut the door and feed her several treats through the door, let her out and ignore her for 5 minutes.

4. Next time, use a Kong filled with treats so that it is time-consuming to get the food out of the ball. Place the Kong in the crate, allow her to go inside, shut the door, and talk to her in a calm voice. If she starts to whine or cry, don't talk to her or you will reward the whining/crying/barking behavior. She must be quiet for a few minutes before you let her out.
5. Gradually increase the time in the crate until she can spend several hours there. We recommend leaving a radio (soothing music or talk radio) or TV (mellow stations such as educational, art, or food) on while she is in the crate and alone in the house. Rotate toys from day to day so she doesn't become bored with them. She will instinctively not go to the bathroom where she sleeps/lives. Put a blanket in her crate to endorse the fact that this is her cozy home.

Be wary of dog crates during hot weather. Some dogs may want to lie on the cool floor instead of a crate. And make sure the crate is not in direct sun. Be sure vigorous exercise is given before and after any long periods in the crate. Once your foster dog is used to and using the crate, keep toys inside the crate at all times.

Attention and Playtime

Lots of human contact is important. Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give her several minutes of playtime periodically throughout the day. "Play" will look different for every dog. Some dogs will want to play with a toy or a ball, while others will just want attention from you and a nice belly rub.

As a general rule, children under 16 year of age should not be left alone and unsupervised with any dog, but specifically a foster dog. Do not allow children to behave with the foster dog in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a dog alone when she is eating, chewing, and sleeping. Never allow a child to remove a toy or any other "prized" possession from a dog. Remember that senior dogs may be more fragile than younger dogs and children need to be gentle at all times.

Muttville recommends against playing tug of war or wrestling with your foster dog. If you have a shy or fearful foster dog, do not throw toys toward the dog, because she may think you are throwing something at her and become more fearful. After you have finished playing with a toy, put it away. This reinforces that you control the toy and the playtime. When giving the dog a toy or treat, have her sit before giving it to her. That way she has to work to get the toy or treat, making it a reward.

Health and Wellness

Muttville takes great pride in the veterinary care we provide to all of our dogs. Our full-time veterinarian Dr. Becky Rader assesses each new dog in a 30 minute initial intake examination. During this examination, our vet team does a thorough check of each dog and determines what medications or procedures may be necessary. When you bring your foster dog home, you will be given her medical case summary which provides an overall view of her health. You will also receive:

- Medications, if prescribed. **For refills on medications:** please email vettech@muttville.org and indicate which medication you are running low on. Be aware that it takes 3-5 business days to process any requests, so pay attention to how many pills you have remaining to avoid last minute requests.
- Treatment sheets: these sheets show your foster dog's ailments, the medications she is on, and any side effects of these medications. These sheets need to be filled out as you dispense the medication to your dog. It is critical that you bring these treatment sheets AND any medications with your dog any time she is at HQ.

Dogs, like humans, get sick from time to time. Be on the lookout for any abnormal behavior, unusual discharge from the eyes, nose, or other body openings, abnormal lumps, limping, difficulty getting up or down, loss of appetite, or abnormal waste elimination. Keep your Foster Mentor informed of any health issues that might arise with your foster dog.

If your foster dog shows any of the following, you should monitor closely:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea with no other symptoms; the dog is active and is eating and drinking normally.
- Coughing and sneezing with no other symptoms.
- Slightly elevated or low temperature with no other symptoms.

A vet visit isn't necessary right away, but if the above symptoms continue or worsen, let your Foster Mentor know and follow-up with the vet.

If your foster dog shows any of the following signs or symptoms, a trip to the vet is in order; let your foster mentor know that you'll need to take her to the vet:

- continuous diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- black, tarry stool
- continuous vomiting or vomiting blood
- difficulty breathing
- bluish or white gums

- heavy bleeding that cannot be stopped (from any part of the body)
- rapid weight loss
- loss of appetite greater than one day
- severe lethargy or depression
- collapsing or trouble standing or appears uncoordinated
- unconsciousness
- sudden inability to bear weight on one or more limbs
- frequent urination or inability to urinate or move bowels
- bloated or distended abdomen
- ingested toxins or poisoning
- attacked by another animal
- confusion
- major trauma such as hit by a car or falling from a building
- sudden blindness or deafness
- severe itching and/or hair loss

Remember, these lists are not all-inclusive. If your foster dog doesn't seem to be him/herself, it may be time to see the vet.

What are normal vital signs for a dog?

Temperature: 100.5 – 102.5 °F

Heart rate – dogs under 30 lbs: 120 – 160 beats per minute (bpm)

Heart rate – dogs over 30 lbs: 60 – 120 bpm

Respiratory rate: 25 breaths per min

Gum color: pink

Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be caused by several factors, including change in environment, stress, change in diet, poor diet, eating garbage, parasites, or viruses. If your foster dog has diarrhea and has no other symptoms, feed her a bland diet (2 cups rice to 1 cup protein such as cottage cheese or chicken). If the diarrhea persists, she'll need to see the vet. **Please note:** diarrhea alone is **not** a medical emergency and your foster should not go to an emergency vet for diarrhea. Emergency vet care is expensive and should be pursued only when necessary.

Provide plenty of fresh water since diarrhea can cause dehydration. To check for dehydration, pull the skin up over the shoulder blades. If it snaps back quickly, the dog is not dehydrated. If the skin goes down slowly, then the dog may be dehydrated and need fluids.

Kennel cough / Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Kennel cough is the equivalent of a human cold. Like a cold, it is easily transmitted between dogs in a shelter. Kennel cough develops when a dog is stressed or when the immune system is compromised. Therefore, senior dogs may be at greater risk if their immune system is weakened.

Symptoms of kennel cough include a dry, hacking cough, which may be accompanied by nasal and/or eye discharge. Unfortunately, symptoms of kennel cough may not develop for several days, after a dog is already placed in a foster home.

Because kennel cough is highly contagious, infected dog should not be around other dogs until they are over their cough. Muttville recommends that if you have a dog of your own, you vaccinate your dog against kennel cough with the Bordatella nasal vaccination. If you have a dog and your foster dog develops kennel cough, you may consider treating your own dog prophylactically if she isn't already vaccinated or keeping your resident dog separated from your foster dog.

Dogs with kennel cough typically do not lose their appetite or show a decrease in energy. However, be cautious with exercise since strenuous activity can bring on coughing episodes.

Like the common cold, kennel cough often resolves once the dog has a warm, quiet and soothing place to sleep, drinks lots of water, eats healthy food, and receives lots of TLC. It typically resolves in 1-3 weeks. In senior dogs, it may take longer to resolve, and there is an increased risk of kennel cough turning into pneumonia, so it is important to monitor a dog with kennel cough closely.

Minor Wounds and Injuries

Via PetMD (http://www.petmd.com/dog/emergency/accidents-injuries/e_dg_cuts_bruises)

Minor wounds should be dealt with promptly, so that infection does not set in. If the wound is large or inflamed vet treatment may be needed. For more minor wounds:

1. Clean the wound with a non-stinging antiseptic diluted in warm water, just in case it is dirty.
2. Use a clean cloth to apply to the wound, avoid fabric that will stick to the wound.
3. Apply a cold compress for a few minutes, especially on bruises.
4. Bandage the wound to keep the dog from licking it.
5. Call Muttville for further advice, describing the injury and—if you know—what caused it.

6. Dog bites are prone to infection. If your foster dog was in a fight and was bitten by another dog, she will need to see a veterinarian to clean the wound sufficiently.

Parasites

Parasites can cause diarrhea, stomach bloating, or vomiting. Parasites include tapeworms, roundworms, hookworms, and mange.

- Tapeworms will look like pieces of rice coming out of your foster dog's anus or in her stool.
- Round and hookworms may be vomited, and roundworms look like spaghetti. Hookworms are smaller and rarely distinguishable without the aid of a microscope.
- Mange is an infestation of tiny mites that bite and cause intense scratching, reddened skin and loss of fur. Only rare cases of mange (sarcoptic) are contagious to humans.

If you suspect that your foster dog has parasites, follow-up with your Foster Mentor and take her to the vet. Once diagnosed, parasites are easily medicated and treated.

Incontinence

Urinary incontinence in dogs is simply a loss of the dog's ability to control her bladder. Some of the causes of incontinence can be cured; some just have to be managed. In older dogs, kidney failure, hormone imbalance, and urinary tract infections are the main reasons for incontinence. If your foster dog begins to drink or urinate more frequently, she may need to see the vet. Incontinence is almost never a behavior issue.

In the meantime, Belly Bands, which wrap around your male foster dog's belly are a safe way to keep male foster dogs from marking or having an accident in your home. Britches for females work the same way. Muttville can provide both if they are needed.

Poisons

There are many household products – things we don't even think about – that are toxic to dogs. A *partial* list of poisons is below:

- Medications for people, including Ibuprophen.
- Recreational drugs, marijuana, etc.

- Flea and tick products. Problems can occur if dogs accidentally ingest these products or if small dogs receive excessive amounts.
- People food such as chocolate, coffee, alcohol, macadamia nuts, grapes, raisins, onions.
- Rat and mouse poison.
- Pet medications. Just as we can be sickened or killed by medications intended to help us, cases of pet poisoning by veterinary drugs are not uncommon. Some of the more commonly reported problem medications include painkillers and de-wormers.
- Household plants including azaleas and rhododendrons, tulips and daffodils, sago palms.
- Chemical hazards, antifreeze, paint thinner, and chemicals for pools.
- Household cleaners.
- Heavy metals.
- Fertilizer.
- Wild mushrooms.

If you have any questions about something your foster dog has ingested, call the Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-876-4766 and be sure to keep your Foster Mentor informed. If you suspect your foster has ingested something toxic, please take her to the nearest emergency vet hospital immediately.

Your Foster Mentor and the Foster Manager

Remember you have a Mentor assigned to you, who is there to help, and have the Foster Manager (foster@muttville.org) available to support you in any way you need. Both your Mentor and the Foster Manager are available for you to call on with any questions, concerns, or suggestions you may have. Your Mentor and the Foster Manager will be in touch with you frequently to get updates on the status of your foster dog. In addition, please reach out for the following:

- For help with arranging transport
- To provide updates to your foster dog's online profile
- If your foster dog shows signs of illness
- If your foster dog has behavioral problems
- If you need supplies or referrals
- For help with an adoption application
- To arrange a home visit

Foster Do's & Don'ts

Do

- Take pictures/videos of your dog
- Market your dog on social media and at work
- Make sure she wears her adopt me vest when on outings
- Read Muttville.org bio and communicate new information about your foster dog to your mentor or the foster manager
- Let us know if any behavioral/health changes are noticed
- Answer prospective adopters within 24 hours of getting an adoption application
- Bring your dog to at least 2 adoption events per month

Don't

- Leave your dog tied up outside a store/café
- Take him/her off leash
- Take to large parties (unless you have a very outgoing dog that would love a party!)
- Leave unattended with children
- Feed table scraps
- Leave your dog with a prospective adoption for a "trial"

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) How long is an average foster period?
 - a) Each foster dog is different. The average “length of stay” of a Muttville dog (measured from the moment they arrive at our facility to the time they are adopted) is 21 days. We’ve known a foster dog to be in a home for only a day, and there are also dogs that have been in homes 6-9 months. The more outreach events you attend and promote your dog the more likely they are to be adopted!
- 2) What if I need to go out of town?
 - a) Let Muttville know as soon as you can so we try to find a temporary foster home. Alternatively, dogs are always welcome back at Muttville HQ while you are away. Advance notice is especially important during holidays when many of our foster families are traveling at once.
- 3) What if my dog gets sick?
 - a) Check the Foster Manual for what qualifies as an emergency and for advice on handling basic issues (vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite). Let your foster mentor know of any issues - even small ones - the Muttville vet tech can treat minor illnesses at HQ, your foster mentor will help you set up that appointment. For emergencies, visit a local Muttville-approved vet (see provided list), and they will bill Muttville directly. If there is a situation in which you have to use your personal credit card for payment, please obtain an itemized receipt in order to be reimbursed.
- 4) What if I want to adopt my foster dog?
 - a) Hooray! This is great news! We lovingly call these “failed fosters”, and this happens all too frequently! **Please be aware:** if an applicant has met your dog and wants to adopt, they get first right of refusal. So the time to make this decision is before a meet and greet, not after! If you would like to adopt your foster, please let the programs team know by email programs@muttville.org. You do not need to fill out a an adoption application on our website, we can convert your foster application to an adoption application! You will still need to fill out and sign the adoption agreement in your adoption packet and pay the adoption fee which is \$200 unless you qualify for the Seniors for Seniors program. To reiterate: if you think you may adopt your foster dog, do not introduce your dog to other potential adopters. If your dog has met with an approved adopter and they want to adopt, they will be given priority at that point.
- 5) How will I know if someone is interested in adopting my foster?

- a) One of our adoption counselors will contact you via email with a copy of the adoption application for to review. You may also receive emails from Kristin Hoff, our Adoptions Manager, or another member of the Programs Team.
- 6) Where do meet and greets and adoptions take place?
 - a) We encourage you to set-up meet and greets at Muttville during our regular adoption events (Saturdays and Sundays from 12PM to 4PM) as this makes handling adoptions easier and faster to close. If you'd like to meet at HQ outside of these hours, staff are available to assist by appointment any time during the week. Please email programs@muttville.org to coordinate. If meeting at HQ does not work for you and the prospective adopter, you may meet at a mutually agreed upon location such as a park or one of your homes.
- 7) Who should be included in communications between you and the person interested in your foster?
 - a) Please “reply all” to any emails from adoption counselors or staff members. This helps us stay in the loop in the process as well as to provide support as necessary!
- 8) What part of the adoption process am I responsible for?
 - a) If the adoption process takes place off-site (i.e. at your house), you are responsible for obtaining a signed copy of the adoption agreement and returning this to Muttville. Please be sure to keep staff and the adoptions counselor who forwarded the application to you up in the loop when your foster is adopted so that they can communicate this with the team as soon as possible. You are also responsible for taking a cute adoption family photo and sending it to fb@muttville.org for us to post on social media!
- 9) What do I need to give to the person adopting my foster?
 - a) You should also give the adopter the adoption packet that you received with your foster, any files you may have been given, any medications your foster is on, and the harness and collar your foster is wearing.
- 10) Who do adopters follow-up with if they have questions?
 - a) They can follow-up with the person who referred them to you (usually this will be the adoptions counselor) or a member of the Muttville staff. If you are not sure who to contact, send an email to adoptions@muttville.org.
- 11) If I have my own animals, can I foster dogs?
 - a) Yes! However, keep in mind that it is important to introduce your animals to your foster dog slowly and appropriately. Please see sections above for more information.

- 12) What supplies do I need to foster?
 - a) Muttville can provide any supplies that you need, including dog beds, food and water bowls, leashes, and collars. It is also a good idea to have Muttville collateral (business cards, flyers, etc.) handy for when you are speaking with people about your foster dog. You need to provide space, basic training, exercise, and love!
- 13) Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or dog experience to foster a dog?
 - a) Not at all! Of course any previous experience will be of help, but it isn't required. Keep in mind that you may be asked to dispense medicine to your foster dog so you will have to be comfortable following a veterinarian's instructions.
- 14) Can I take my foster dog to an off-leash dog park for exercise and socialization?
 - a) No. Foster dogs must be on-leash whenever they are outside. The only exception is when they are in your fenced backyard. While off-leash dog parks can be fun for some dogs, there are far too many unknowns for them to be a safe and healthy experience for a foster dog. Diseases are easily transmitted and the temperaments of visiting dogs are unknown, thus creating a huge liability to Muttville. In addition, please do not take a leashed dog to an off-leash dog park. This can create barrier frustration and aggression in dogs.
- 15) Can an applicant take my foster dog for a weekend or week-long "trial period" before adoption?
 - a) No. Muttville does not do trial periods for adoption. We strive to make lasting adoption matches, and work hard to pair applicants with the dog that is right for them. If for any reason a match is less than perfect, we will help find an adopter the dog that *is* perfect!
- 16) What is my foster dog's number?
 - a) On some adoption paperwork you will see reference to your foster dog's "Animal #". This is a 4 digit number assigned to every Muttville dog, and it's used to identify them on the website along with their name. Please familiarize yourself with this 4 digit number!

Vet/Medical Care of Your Foster Dog

- 1) TREATMENT SHEETS – Show your foster dog’s medical ailments, medications the dog is on, and any side effects of these medications. *PLEASE BRING THESE SHEETS WITH YOU WHENEVER YOU BRING YOUR DOG TO HQ* along with the medications your foster dog is on.
- 2) MEDICATIONS – Again, please bring all of your foster dog’s medications (and treatment sheet) to HQ, off-site meet and greets, and adoption events.
 - a. Medication refills - The treatment sheet and Rx bottle will indicate if the medication should be “*refilled when gone*” or if it should only be “*given until gone*”. For medication refills, please e-mail the vet team (vettech@muttville.org) when you have 5-7 days of medication left. When filled, the medication to be picked up at HQ in the kitchen in the bin labeled “Medication for Pick-up”, or you can request it be mailed to you (mailed medications take 2-3 extra days to arrive).
- 3) SURGERIES
 - a. Surgeries in San Francisco - You will receive an e-mail instructing you when and where your foster’s surgery will take place.
 - b. All other surgeries outside of San Francisco - If you are not in San Francisco, you will receive an e-mail letting you know that authorization has been given for your foster mutt to receive surgery at a Muttville Veterinary Partner Hospital. Please contact the hospital to schedule the appointment. Hospital contact information will be provided to you.

Vet Suite Info: Muttville’s Veterinary Hospital is located at HQ and is open from **12PM to 5PM Monday through Friday**.. Exams typically take 45 minutes to complete.

If you cannot bring your Mutt during the available exam times, you can drop off as early as 7:30am and pick up later in the day. You can also drop off the night before as late as 7:30pm.

- 4) What do I do if I am concerned about my foster mutt’s health?
 - a. E-mail the vet team (vettech@muttville.org) — our staff can usually give you some tips as to what may be going on with your mutt over email alone. Our team might recommend having your foster mutt checked out by a veterinarian (either Muttville’s veterinarian Dr. Rader, or a Muttville Vet Partner in your area).
 - b. **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY** (difficulty breathing, uncontrollable bleeding, toxin ingestion etc.): Please take your foster mutt to the nearest veterinary emergency hospital. Muttville has an account with most ER vet hospitals in the bay area. A list

of emergency vets is listed below. These hospitals are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The hospital can contact our vet staff for authorization/treatment options.

Muttville Veterinarian Partners

North Bay

PetCare Veterinary Hospital
2425 Mendocino Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707-579-3900

East Bay

Sage Veterinary Specialty and Emergency- Concord
1410 Monument Blvd
Concord, CA 94520
925-627-7243

Sage Veterinary Specialty and Emergency- Dublin
7121 Amador Plaza Rd
Dublin, CA 94568
925-574-7243

Bay Area Veterinary Specialists- San Leandro
14790 Washington Ave.
San Leandro, CA 94578
510-483-7387

South Bay

Sage Veterinary Specialty and Emergency- Campbell
907 Dell Ave
Campbell, CA 95008
408-343-7243

San Francisco

San Francisco Veterinary Specialists
600 Alabama St
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-401-9200

Peninsula

Sage Veterinary Specialty and Emergency- San Mateo
251 N Amphlett Blvd
San Mateo, CA 94401
650-417-7243