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# Adult Dog Foster Care

A guide on how to care for your temporary  
canine companion.

by Animal Ark Rescue

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**Are you ready?**

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# Fostering an adult dog

Are you ready to help us save the lives of Columbus' most at-risk population? Adult dogs over 30lbs are euthanized more than any other animal population in the city. Why? There are many reasons, but a key factor is lack of information. Fostering an adult dog helps bridge the information gap by allowing us to see how a dog does in a home setting, giving a more complete and honest view of a dog's true personality. Shelters are stressful! Many dogs act very different in a home setting as opposed to a noisy kennel.

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Did you know that a majority of our long-stay dogs that go into foster care get adopted...

**STRAIGHT  
OUTTA  
FOSTER**

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# How Long Do I Foster For?

The Timeframe is up to you!

You can foster for as little as one night (doggy sleep-over) or until your foster dog gets adopted.

Every little bit helps! Getting a dog out of the shelter for even a single night helps reduce the stress hormone, Cortisol.

Lower stress levels=higher adoptability

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# Preparing to Foster

Adult foster dogs don't need as much as you may think.

They will need:

- Crate or Pop-Up Kennel
- Food/Water Bowls
- Purina Adult Dog Chow (unless they require a special diet)
- We will provide the leash and collar.



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# Other Things to Have on Hand:

Not necessities, but very helpful:

- Treats
- Bedding/Old Blankets/Towels
- Baby Gates
- Variety of toys
- Kennel Enrichment/Busy Work  
(Kongs, Nylabones, Chew Bones)



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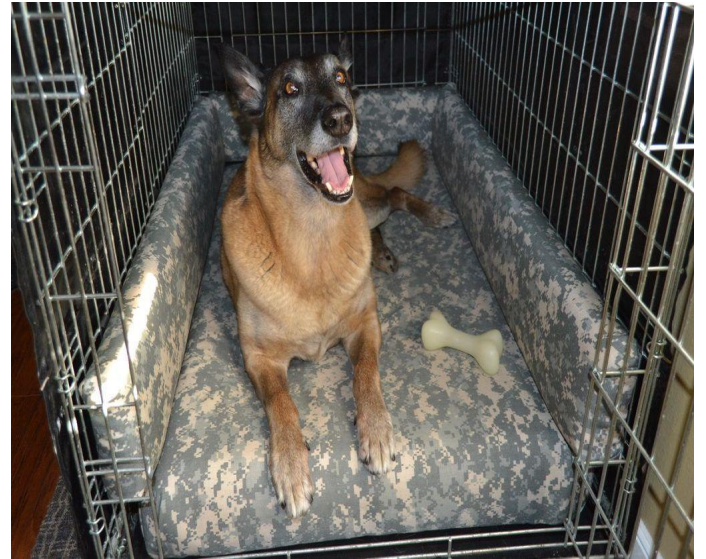
# Housing your foster dog

Select a space in your house for your foster dog to stay.

This space should be somewhere quiet and “dog-proof”. (A spare room, baby gated off area, or crate)

Creating a space for your foster allows them to have a “safe space” for when they are stressed or afraid.

It should also be comfy and associated with positive things like: food, blankets, treats, and toys.



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# Choosing Your Foster Dog

Which Adult dog should I foster?

We prefer to get our long-stay shelter residents into foster homes because they typically get adopted very quickly after spending time as a foster dog.

Most adult dogs that have been at the rescue for over 30 days are eligible for foster.

You can browse our website to search for potential fosters.

The best way to select your foster is to come to the shelter, meet the dogs, and let our foster coordinator find you a perfect match!



Dexter spent over a year at the shelter before going into a foster home and getting adopted!



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## Introducing Your Foster Dog

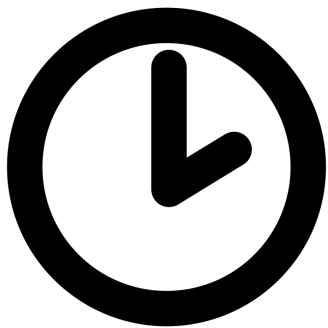
Your foster dog needs to meet children and dogs that it will be sharing the home with. We require that you bring your family (human and canine) to the shelter to do a meet and greet with your potential foster.

Just because your dog and foster dog got along at the shelter does not mean they will be immediate BFF's at home!

Remember the “safe space”? Having separate areas for your dogs will give both parties time to decompress.

(See our “Introducing a New Dog to Your Home” resource.)

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## Allow the Dog to Acclimate

Bouncing around from place to place is stressful for a dog! Give your new foster proper time to acclimate.

Things you may see in the first 24 hours include: Decreased appetite, lethargy/exhaustion, diarrhea, panting/drooling/excessive shedding, fearful behavior (hiding).

All of the above are signs of stress. Do not panic! Your foster dog should level out in a few days.

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# Getting them on a schedule

Dogs love routine! Getting your foster on a schedule will help them settle in quickly.

-Feeding: We feed 2x a day.

-Walks: Adult dogs need at least 2 potty walks a day.

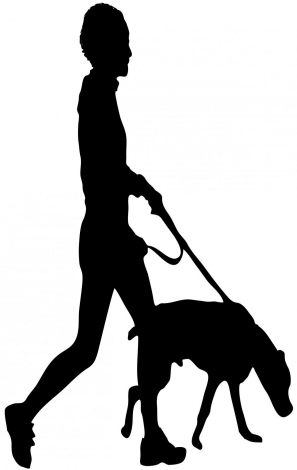
-Exercise: Got a big back yard? Great! Feel free to play with your foster in the yard. **NEVER** leave your foster unattended in the yard until you know they are not a flight risk!

What is a flight risk? Fearful or stressed dogs may try to run away or escape.

-Play time with other dogs in the home: Supervise playtimes to be sure everyone is getting along nicely.

-Kennel time: Don't leave your foster dog alone with free run of the house (unless you want a big mess!). Confine your foster dog to a crate, room, or baby gated off dog friendly area. **We do not reimburse for property damaged by foster dogs!**

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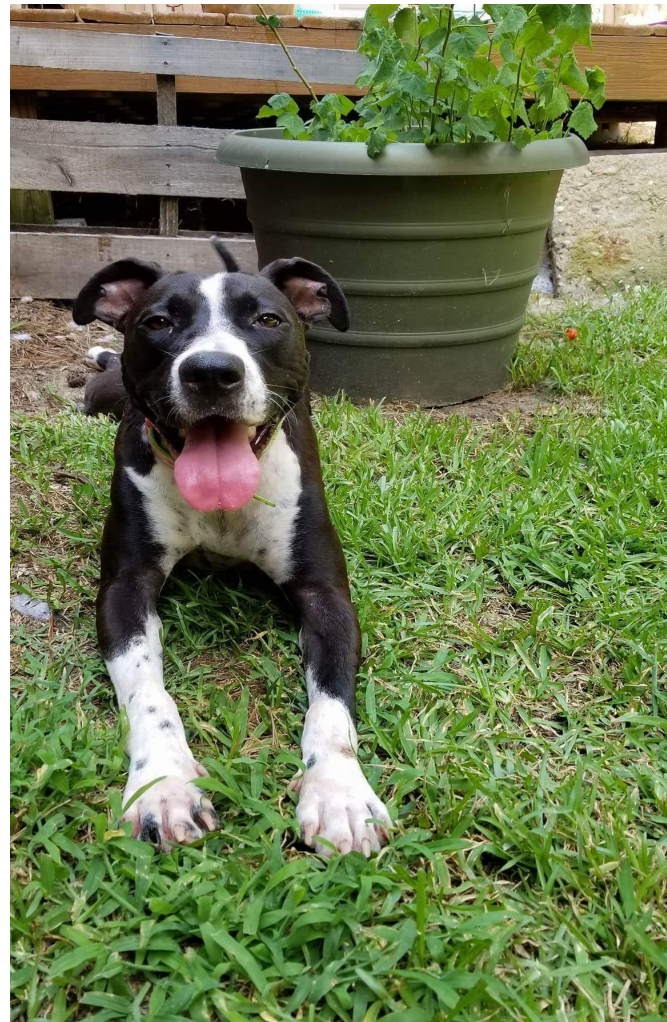


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# What does my foster dog need?

1. Food
2. Shelter
3. Exercise (at least a walk)
4. Attention
5. Patience
6. LOVE!

Meeting these basic needs will keep your foster pup happy!



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# Medical Concerns

The next few slides list common medical concerns/issues you may encounter with adult foster dogs.

## **-Flea and Heartworm prevention:**

We administer flea and heartworm prevention on the 1st of every month, bring your foster to the shelter on the first for their monthly dose.

**-Worms:** Adult dogs are dewormed when they come in. If you notice worms in their stool. Contact us to bring your foster in for a fecal exam.

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# Heartworm Positive Dogs

Heartworm positive dogs may be on 30 days of antibiotics when they first arrive at the shelter.

If your foster is HW positive and has been at the shelter for a while they will be finished with antibiotics.

**HW positive dogs will need their prevention twice a month, on the 1st and the 15th.** Bring your foster by the shelter for their bi-monthly dose of prevention meds.



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# Diarrhea

Loose stool is VERY common! If your foster has diarrhea, don't worry.

Many things can cause diarrhea: stress, change of food, food allergies, parasites.

Plain white rice or canned pumpkin may help with loose stools.

If the diarrhea persists for 5 days or more and/or you notice blood in your foster dog's stool, call the shelter to set up a time to bring your foster in for a fecal exam by our medical staff.

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# Kennel Cough

Another very common illness is kennel cough.

Kennel cough is like a doggy cold. If you notice your foster dog coughing and see green runny discharge from the nose, it is likely kennel cough.

A dog with kennel cough may have decreased appetite and be lethargic as well. If you think your foster has kennel cough. Contact the shelter and set up an appointment with our medical staff.

Kennel Cough is an easily treatable illness.

Kennel Cough can be contagious to other dogs, but if your dog is your dog is healthy and up to date on their Bordetella vaccine they will most likely be protected.

**\*\*Note:** Heartworms can cause a persistent non-productive cough. If your heartworm positive foster dog is coughing and does not have a runny nose it may be a heartworm symptom. **\*\***

When in doubt contact us!

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# Allergies

Dogs, just like humans can suffer from allergies. Dogs can be allergic to anything from food to grass.

It may be allergies if your foster: seems itchy, you see hives or redness, hair loss, they are scratching/licking their skin.

Things to try: Grain Free Food, Benadryl 1mg/lb twice a day.

Contact the shelter for a consult if you think your foster is suffering from allergy issues!

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*“Allergic to bees, but I eat them anyway!”*

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# DemodexMange/Hair Loss

We get lots of demodex mange cases at the rescue. Demodex is not contagious to humans and it is highly treatable in dogs.

If your foster is a mange case, our medical staff will consult you about care prior to taking your foster dog home.

If your dog is losing hair and you suspect it is not due to fleas or allergies, please contact the shelter to bring them in for a skin scrape.



*Gabby came in with both mange and kennel cough. She still found a foster!*

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# Other Medical Issues

If you have other questions or concerns regarding your foster dog's health, please contact the shelter.

**We DO NOT reimburse vet bills!** If you take your foster dog to the vet without notifying the shelter we will be unable to reimburse you.

If you think your foster requires veterinary care, contact the shelter ASAP!



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# 100%

The amount that fostering helps us to get our large adult dogs adopted!

Fostering provides us with valuable information about how dogs behave in a home setting and enables us to better match a dog with potential adopters.

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Can you guess which of these is a foster dog???

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# Getting Your Foster Dog Out There!

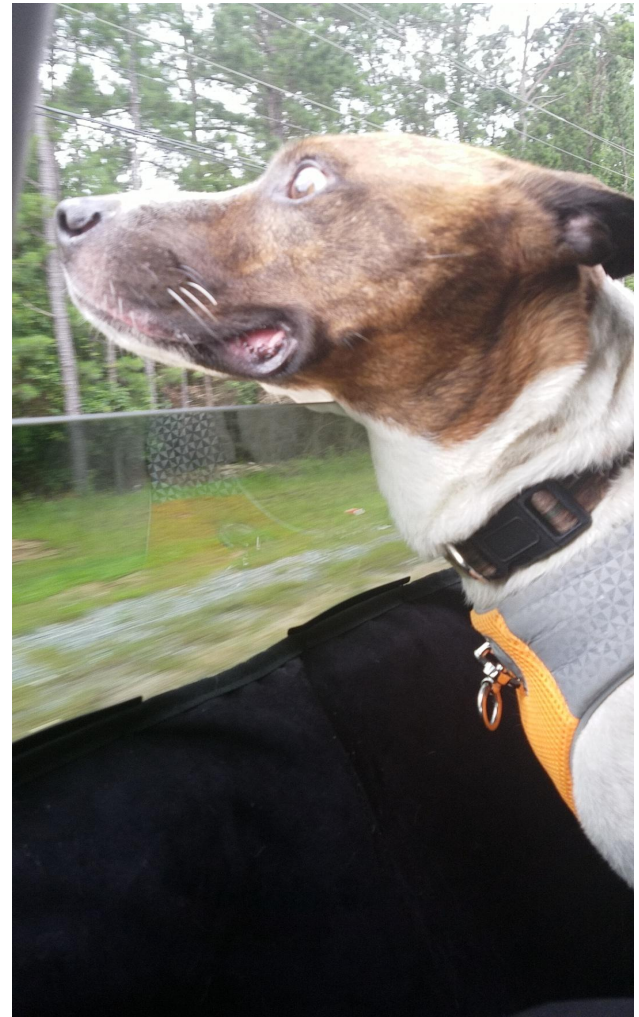
We encourage you to get your foster dog out there! Take them for a walk, patio lunch, off-site adoption event.

**Safety Tips:** Ensure your foster has a properly fitted collar! Not so loose it can slip over the head, tight enough to fit 2 fingers under.

Avoid retractable leashes, they give less control and break/tangle easily.

Watch for body language and follow your instincts. If your foster seems uncomfortable in a situation, move them away to somewhere more quiet and calm away from strangers.

**We DO NOT ALLOW SHELTER DOGS TO GO TO OFF-LEASH DOG PARKS!!!**





We require fosters to bring their dog to at least 1 off-site adoption event per week.

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# Off-site Adoption Events

Off-site adoption events take place at Petsmart Bradley Park in Columbus, GA:

Fridays (depending) : 4pm-7pm

Saturdays: 11am-4pm

Sundays: 11am-4pm

**Fosters MUST post on the FB group to let us know what day(s)/ time you plan to bring your foster.** If we do not know your foster is coming they will be unable to be adopted due to lack of adoption paperwork on-hand!

You do not have to stay at the event with your foster, you can simply drop-off/pick-up (if they are not adopted) or you are welcome to stay and speak with potential adopters. Fosters interacting with adopters typically helps get the dog adopted faster.

**Please bring a crate for your foster. All dogs must have a crate for off-site events!**



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# Marketing Your Foster Dog



Foster families play a crucial role in helping us to market adoptable foster dogs.

The next few slides are just a few ways to market your foster:

- Write them an adorable bio!
- Take TONS of cute pics & videos!
- Share them on social media.

(PM cute pics and videos to our @Animal Ark All Stars FB and tag us on Instagram @animalarkrescuecolumbus)

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# Writing a Bio for your Foster Dog

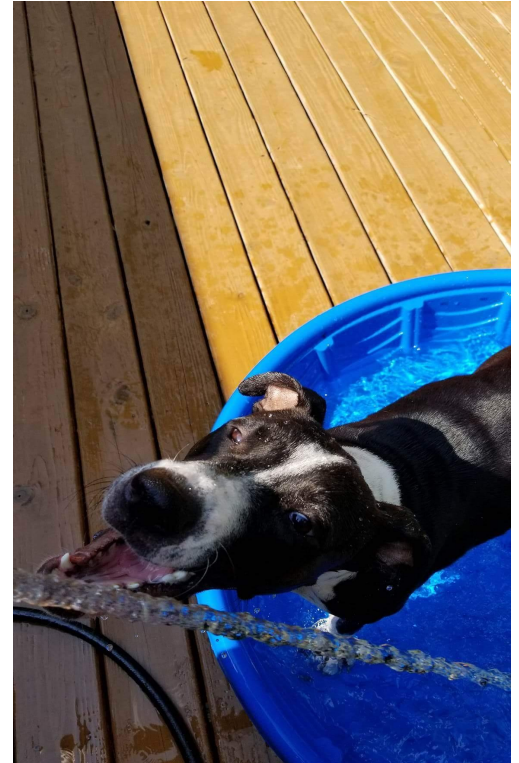
You don't have to be a master creative writer to come up with a cute bio for your foster.

Here are a few tips:

- Be honest
- Focus on the POSITIVE!
- Mention qualities that make your foster unique. (ex: carries their blanky around like a baby; loves to drink from the hose)

For more bio writing tips visit:

<http://animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Writing-Bios>



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# Taking Adorable Dog Pics



## BE CREATIVE!!!

- Good lighting is everything! Make sure you have proper light when taking pictures indoors. Dark pictures get passed over by viewers.
  - Happy:** People love pictures of happy, smiling animals. People also love pictures of dogs with humans so jump in and take a selfie with your foster.
  - Play dress up!** Fancy up your foster with cute accessories.
  - A squeaker or treat above the camera helps get the dog's attention.
- <http://animalfarmfoundation.org/pages/Photography> has more photo tips!
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# Creating Engaging Videos



**AGAIN, BE CREATIVE!!!**

**-Film videos in landscape** (horizontal) instead of vertical to avoid black bars in the shot

**-Fun:** Capture your foster playing or being downright adorable. Keep it happy and upbeat to connect with more viewers.

**-Play:** Play with different camera settings or editing apps. Slow Motion treat catch videos can be quite entertaining.

**-Short and sweet:** Keep videos under 1 min. 10-45seconds is perfect for getting views!

**Apps:** There are tons of apps, but we love “Quick” app by go-pro. (It’s free!)

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We created this video of long stay resident, Dolly using the “Quick” app by Go-Pro

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# Social Media Marketing

Please share your foster on social media!  
Make sure to make any marketing posts public so others can share also.

PM cute pics and videos to the Animal Ark All Stars FB Page. This page is where we market our fosters and long stay animals.

Instagram! Hashtag it up to get more likes  
Be creative! Don't forget to tag us also:  
[@animalarkrescuecolumbus](#)

Other social media outlets work as well.  
The more you share, the better!



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# Someone I Know Wants to Adopt My Foster...

Great! If a friend or family member, or even someone you met out and about wants to adopt your foster dog. Have them contact the rescue. We will need to coordinate a time for you to bring your foster up and the potential adopter must come to the shelter (or an off-site event) to complete all of the necessary paperwork.

\*\*If an adopter contacts the shelter and wants to meet your foster we will contact you to schedule a time for a shelter meet and greet. **We require fosters respond to any and all shelter communications within 24hrs!**\*\*

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# Returning Your Foster to the Shelter

DO NOT FEEL GUILTY!!!!

If you are unable to keep your foster dog until it gets adopted, do not feel bad.

Remember what we said about lowering stress levels? Any time spent in a home is better than being cooped up in a noisy kennel all day and night.

It's ok to cry. Fostering can be emotional. It can also be very rewarding.



**Please give the shelter at least a 24hr notice before returning your foster!**

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# Foster Failure

When you fall in love with your foster and you decide to keep them forever!

*\*\*Hey, it happens!\*\**



**“Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog, the world will change forever.”**

- Karen Davidson

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**Fostering large adult dogs  
is the key to getting them  
adopted.**

**Thank You for  
Helping Us  
Save Lives!**

Contact us:

Animal Ark Rescue  
7133 Sacerdote Lane  
Columbus, GA 31907

[www.animalarkrescue.com](http://www.animalarkrescue.com)

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Large Dog Foster Coordinator  
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