

Dog Foster Program Manual



Ventura County Animal Services

600 Aviation Dr.

Camarillo, CA 93010

*****For additional resource, scheduling, and an electronic copy of this manual please visit:**

[VCAS.US/Foster-resources](https://vcas.us/foster-resources)



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Is Fostering for VCAS Right for You?

Here are some frequently asked questions that may help you decide.

What is fostering?

Fostering is providing a temporary home for a homeless pet, who for whatever reason, needs to be housed outside of the shelter. Fostering is truly lifesaving.

Why should I foster?

Fostering can be a wonderful experience for you and your family. You can feel good knowing that you have made a positive difference in an animal's life, and each animal fostered in a home opens a cage or kennel space for us to save another animal! Fostering can also provide individual attention that certain special needs animals require. Foster commitments range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose foster options that fit with your lifestyle.

Do I need to have any special training or skills to be foster parent?

Foster families should be compassionate, caring and patient. You will be informed of your foster animal's known history, medical and behavioral health before they are placed in your care. Our foster coordinator will help answer questions and provide guidance to resources and information that you may find helpful.

What are the requirements?

- Be willing to abide by policies and procedures in this manual and Foster Care Agreement
- Be able to access email regularly
- Be able to transport your foster pet to and from VCAS
- Spend time with foster pets and treat them like your own animals while they're in your care
- Have up-to-date rabies vaccinations for all animals in your home

What types of dogs need foster care?

- Puppies too young to be in the shelter
- Dogs recovering from illness or injury
- Dogs that need a break from the shelter environment
- Dogs with special medical or behavioral challenges
- One of our biggest needs is foster homes for large shepherd, husky, and pit bull type dogs. If you are able and willing to foster these dogs, please let us know!

How long do animals need to be in foster care?

Every situation is different! Our foster program is very flexible. Needs range from just one day to animals that need foster until they are adopted, which can sometimes take several months. The length of time you keep your foster is up to you.

How much time do foster parents have to devote to the animal(s) in their care?

It depends on the situation. Foster animals need all of the things that owned animals do and may even need more attention if they are recovering from illness/injury or need extra exercise or training. We will do our best to match you with a dog that fits your lifestyle and availability.

What are some of the potential risks of fostering an animal?

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences that you can have, but there are some potential risks. While rare, below you will read some of the possible risks.

- Foster animals may destroy personal items
- Owned animals could be injured or killed by a foster animal.
- Foster families, members of the household, or visitors could be injured by a foster animal
- Foster animals could die in foster care or need to return to the shelter to be euthanized
- Owned animals could catch a disease and/or a parasite from a foster animal
- Foster families, members of their household, or visitors could catch a disease and/or parasite from a foster animal (We do not, as a practice, send animals with known diseases transmittable to humans to foster)

What happens if my foster animal needs medical care?

VCAS will provide medical care for the animals in its foster program. (see pg. 8-9)

Can foster parents adopt their foster animals?

Yes. Foster parents can adopt their foster animals and are given first choice.

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are under the care and control of Ventura County Animal Services and are subject to all applicable VCAS policies, rules and restrictions.

Ventura County Animal Services reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.

If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster animal upon request by VCAS staff or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and VCAS may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the animal.

Housing and Care Requirements

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc.
- Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by VCAS veterinary staff unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the Foster Coordinator or VCAS Managing Veterinarian.

Dogs & Puppies

- Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors, and high traffic areas, such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
- Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. While outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash in the hands of a capable adult or in a securely fenced yard. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised.
- Foster dogs that do not have a prior history with each other should not be combined in a foster home unless the foster care provider has sought and been given permission by the foster coordinator.
- Foster dogs are prohibited from socializing with other dogs, except those living in the foster care provider's home.
- Foster dogs are prohibited from going to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- During walks, a minimum 10-feet should be maintained between fosters dogs and other animals, except those also living in the foster care provider's home.
- It is recommended that foster dogs be kept separated from the fosters personal pets until they feel safe. Slow, safe introductions are required. Some foster animals will require separation for longer periods of time, or may never be able to be integrated with other animals.

Additional Requirements

- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.
- Foster care providers must notify the shelter immediately if a foster animal bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between animals in your home and foster animals, Ventura County Animal Services will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster pet for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.
- If a foster pet gets loose, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator or shelter immediately.

Supplies

VCAS will provide foster care providers with certain supplies

- Food for dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens (this includes formula when needed)
- Any medications, supplements or prescription diets that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff
- Crates, beds, blankets, food and water bowls, leashes, collars, and toys
- Other items (based on availability and need)

Health and Temperament

VCAS will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of animals seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any animal.

Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical treatment, training and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the animal.

Foster Animal Adoptions

- All foster animals must be spayed/neutered, have a current rabies vaccination, and be microchipped before they can go to their forever homes.
- Foster care providers can adopt their foster animals, and are given first choice, but if another interested party reaches out before you have committed to the adoption, please honor the effort VCAS has put in to finding this adopter or rescue. If you are thinking you want to adopt your foster, please do it ASAP.
- Foster care providers can process adoptions for their foster animals or meet adopters at the shelter for processing.

Directions for offsite adoptions (processed by foster provider) are as follows:

Adoption Paperwork is the same for adoption events, adoptions from foster, and adoptions from partner pet stores. Please note that if you conduct your adoption at one of our partner pet stores and let the store manager know, the shelter receives an additional donation from PetCo, PetSmart or Unleashed by Petco.

- The adoption packet is the same no matter where the adoption occurs! The folder has species specific information in it including an information packet, vet list, uri or kennel cough info, discount coupons, pet emergency card and microchip card.
- Animal specific paperwork includes the medical record, free exam, and adoption agreement.
- VCAS supplies two copies of the “Adoption Agreement”. One is for the adopter / pet parent, and one is to be returned to VCAS.
 - o Both copies of the Adoption Agreement need to be signed by the adopter / pet parent
 - o One copy is given to the Adopter / Pet Parent
 - o The other copy is returned to VCAS.
- VCAS is including the ASPCA “Meet Your Match” (MYM) form with all adoptions. This is given to every adopter at VCAS as part of the adoption counseling process. This helps the VCAS Front Office staff complete the adoption paperwork after it is returned to VCAS.
- Please instruct the adopter to complete (in print) the top section on the front of the form that requests contact information (name, address, phone number, email, alternate phone number, etc.). Then turn form over and sign the signature section on the back side of the form
- As a VCAS representative, please print your name as the adoption counselor on the back of the form
- Adopters also receive a voucher for a free vet visit from a Ventura County Vet that participates in this program. The participating veterinarian list is included in the Adoption Package Folder, on back side of the post spay / neuter care instruction document.
- You are the acting VCAS representative. Please sign and date the form then give it to the adopter.
- Adopters must contact the participating vet within three days of adopting the kitten or cat; but the actual appointment that they make may be at a later date.
- Please always include the kitten or cat’s A-number in all paperwork. Numbers are permanent; names not always so.
- Three things need to be returned to the shelter in order for the adoption to be processed. 1: completed and signed MYM form, 2: signed agreement of adopting animal owner, 3: \$60 payment

How it Works

Getting Started

After your foster application has been received and you have attended a Foster Orientation you will be added to our foster contact list.

Prior to fostering any animals, you will be required to sign the foster agreement (see pages 21-22), which will be kept on file at the shelter. Please note, if at any time you have questions regarding the foster program, potential foster animals, etc., those questions should be directed at the foster coordinator.

Choosing a Foster Animal

If you are interested in fostering a particular animal that you have been notified about via email or the VCAS Foster Families Facebook page, or the VCAS Foster Dogs Trello board you will need to schedule a “foster matchmaking appointment” via email. All questions regarding an animal’s history, behavior, medical needs, special care instructions, etc. can be answered during this appointment. If you do not have a particular dog in mind, you can STILL schedule a matchmaking appointment. Please be sure to add notes when scheduling the appointment if you have special needs or concerns regarding fostering an animal.

You may also visit the shelter to browse long stay, medical, and behavior animals that are available for foster care, but will still need to schedule a “foster matchmaking appointment” in order to bring them home.

Picking Up

You can choose to take home a foster on the same day as your foster matchmaking appointment, or if you can’t bring them home that day, we can schedule a pickup day after the appointment. When picking up a new foster animal on the scheduled pickup date, please go to the front office. Let the Customer Service staff member know that you are a foster and that you are picking up a foster animal. You will need to have the animal’s ID number (found in the original posting or on the animal’s kennel card) with you. After picking up your foster animal you will receive a “new foster” email with additional details regarding their care and their future medical needs. Please be on the lookout for this email, it will be sent within three days from the day that you pick up.

Medical Care

Flea/Tick and worming medication is given to all foster animals. This medication needs to be given every 1 to 3 months, so depending on the length of time you foster, you may need to schedule them wellness checkups.

Sick or Injured Fosters: If you notice that your foster animal has mild, cold-like symptoms (sneezing or coughing occasionally, clear ocular or nasal discharge), diarrhea or vomiting, but are alert, active, eating and drinking well, please make an appointment with the vets office. **Appointments can be made via the foster resources page at VCAS.US/FOSTER-RESOURCES. On this page you will find a ‘scheduling’ category. Simply click the link to make an appointment and follow the instructions. If you are unsure whether your foster animal’s symptoms warrant a check-up or emergency visit, please contact the foster coordinator or shelter directly during working hours.**

If your foster animal has more severe symptoms, such as frequent vomiting, extreme lethargy, severe physical injury, etc., please follow the emergency contact protocol found on page 19

Medications and Prescription Diets: If your foster animal is on medication or a veterinary prescribed diet, refill requests must be submitted to the foster coordinator. Please plan ahead as it may take one week or more to fill your request.

In Case of an After-Hours Emergency; If your foster animal is having an urgent, life threatening medical issue while the shelter is closed please follow the emergency contact protocol found on page 19

Foster animals taken to the emergency vet clinic for treatment may be kept overnight at the clinic and an Animal Control Officer will be contacted in the morning to transfer the animal back to the shelter for further treatment/care. The foster must receive express permission from the foster coordinator, or after hours Animal Control Officer in order to transport their foster animal to one of our partner emergency clinics.

Any vet care provided during a visit to a veterinarian outside of the VCAS veterinary clinic which is not authorized by the Foster Coordinator or other VCAS staff the foster parent will take full responsibility for any expense incurred.

How can I help my foster animal find a forever home?

When fostering an animal for VCAS, you can be the animal's number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you won't just be a foster care provider. You will be a photographer, videographer, biographer, a marketing specialist, and an adoption counselor!

Take at least one clear, short video of the foster animal and email it to the foster coordinator at vcar.foster@ventura.org to be added to the shelter's website

Write a short bio of your foster animal highlighting all their best qualities and email them to the foster coordinator at vcar.foster@ventura.org. Remember, we do not want to focus on any of the negatives in these bios, any conversations regarding those issues can be addressed later during adoption counseling.

Promote the foster animal on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Craigslist, and Nextdoor.

Create and put-up flyers for the foster animal in appropriate locations

For additional tips on marketing foster animals, please visit the links under "Marketing Foster Animals for Adoption" in the required reading sections on pages 16 and 17.

Please be aware that animals in our foster program are not on a first come, first served basis. As the foster parent, you may take several applications and/or meet with different potential adopters before deciding which would be the best fit for the animal(s) in your care. However, foster care providers should check their email inbox, and spam folder daily for inquiries from potential adopters about the animal(s) in their care, and respectfully respond to all inquiries within 48 hours.

For tips on effective adoption counseling, please visit the links under "Effective Adoption Counseling Tips" in the required reading sections on pages 17 and 18.

My foster animal has an adopter, now what?

- All animals MUST be spayed or neutered and microchipped before the adoption can take place. If you have found an adopter for your foster, but the animal has not yet been spayed/neutered you will need to make a surgery appointment online through [VCAS.US/Foster-Resources](https://vcas.us/Foster-Resources) under the 'Surgery Scheduler'.
- The adopter must meet the animal, complete the Adoption Information Form, complete the Agreement of Adopting Animal Owner, and pay the adoption fee. The paperwork can be found in the 'adoption packet' which the foster care provider will receive once the animal has been spayed/neutered.
- After the foster animal has been spayed/neutered and microchipped, and all paperwork has been completed, it may be transferred to the adopter. Upon transferring the animal, the foster care provider should collect the Adoption Information Form, the Agreement of Adopting Animal Owner, and the adoption fee. The remainder of the Adoption Packet will be given to the adopter.
- The Adoption Information Form, the Agreement of Adopting Animal Owner, and the adoption fee should be put into an envelope and returned to the shelter by the foster care provider.

See page 7 for more in depth information about processing adoptions

Adoption events are an opportunity for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the animals in their care. These events are typically held on weekends, at various locations Ventura County. Details about these events are posted to the Foster Families Facebook Page and email notification.

Returning Foster Animals to the Shelter

If you need to return a foster pet to the shelter for any reason, please contact the foster coordinator to let them know the day and time you plan to return the animal. When returning foster pets to the shelter, you will go to the front counter with the animal and their ID# and let Customer Service staff know you are returning a foster pet.

Please provide all relevant pictures and notes you have gathered during the animal's time with you via email to vcar.foster@ventura.org. This information is VERY helpful in finding homes for shelter animals.

The front counter is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please try to arrive no later than 6 p.m. If you are not able to come during these hours and would like to make arrangements to come outside of our open hours, please contact the foster coordinator.

Deceased Animals

In some cases, sick or weak pets may die in foster care. If your foster animal passes away, please contact the foster coordinator by phone, and provide written notification through email to vcar.foster@ventura.org. Please include the ID# of the animal in the written email notification. You will be asked to provide detailed information as to what happened at the time of the death so that we can determine if other foster animals in your care may be at risk. You will be asked to bring the body back to VCAS.

Short-Term Fostering Overnights and Outings

Want to give a shelter dog a break from the stress of the shelter and an opportunity for new experiences? Want to get valuable information about the dog's personality, behavior and needs, thereby helping adopters or rescuers make more informed decisions? The shelter has two different options for short-term fostering.

- **Overnights/Sleepovers:** Check out a foster in the evening, or a couple days.
- **Hound on the Town (HOTT):** Check out a foster dog for a couple hours, or the whole day.

Please note:

- Fosters interested in short-term fostering opportunities are required to complete the Foster Program Orientation Training.
- These types of outings are most important for longer stay dogs (dogs that have been at the shelter for more than 30 days), those who have behavioral challenges, or those that are overwhelmed in the shelter setting.

Requirements:

- You must be an approved foster and have a completed and signed Foster Agreement on file.
- You must be available to pick up and return the dog during regular business hours.
- You must review the "Public Outings and Walks - Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog" section on pages 14 and 15

Steps:

1. If you are interested in taking a specific dog for an overnight or outing, please contact the foster coordinator to verify that the dog is available, review the dog's behavior records, and to confirm a pickup date and time. If you were not able to confirm with the foster coordinator in advance, please check in with customer service staff at the front counter for more information about the dog that you are interested in.
2. Once you have confirmed with staff that you will be picking up a specific dog. Staff will make a note in the dog's record concerning where it is going and when it will be returning.
3. When you are ready to pick the dog up, you will need to visit the front counter and speak to customer service staff.
4. Customer service will need to see a valid ID, get your DL#, confirm your current address/contact information, and have you sign a Foster Agreement if you haven't already.

Timing for taking a dog out:**For an overnight/weekend:**

- Make arrangements ahead of time for taking a dog out.
- Pick up the dog prior to 5:30 p.m. in order to complete arrangements.
- Return the dog prior to 5:30 p.m. the following day.
- Be sure to notify the foster coordinator when the dog has returned.
- Email all pictures and notes taken during the outing to vcar.foster@ventura.org
- Return a completed Foster sleepover/HOTT checklist

For a Hound on the Town (HOTT):

- Pick up anytime between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- Return the dog by 5:30 p.m.
- Be sure to notify the foster coordinator when the dog has returned.
- Email all pictures and notes taken during the outing to vcar.foster@ventura.org
- Return a completed Foster sleepover/HOTT checklist

Keep the following in mind:

If the dog will be visiting a place other than your home during your time together, consider whether they will truly benefit from, and enjoy the particular environment to which you will be taking them. Think about the surroundings, the traffic (both people and other animals), and whether or not the environment may cause further stress to your chosen dog.

Crowded public areas should be avoided, including school grounds.

You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.

You are prohibited from having your short-term foster dog socialize with other animals.

Have a blast! Ride in the car, walk in the neighborhood, play, watch TV, whatever you want to do within the limits outlined above. Use structure, kindness, attention, and training as needed. Some dogs will want to spend their time resting and some will want to do lots of fun things. Keep in mind the dog's safety and needs and yours, and have fun!

Share the experience:

- Post fun pictures and details to the "VCAS Foster Families" Facebook page.
- Email all pictures and notes taken during the outing to vcar.foster@ventura.org

Public Outings and Walks Safety Tips for You and Your Foster Dog

Before the Outing/Walk

- Make sure that you have the appropriate supplies. These include: a cell phone, poop bags, a bottle of water, a bowl, and a list of emergency numbers.
- Make sure that the dog is properly fitted with a collar. If needed, a harness can be used in addition to the collar. If you aren't sure whether or not the dog is properly outfitted, ask staff to check.
- The dog should have a leash properly attached to their collar, or harness. Check to be sure that all equipment is fastened, and that no equipment is frayed, worn or has stitching coming out. Flexi / retractable leashes should NOT be used.
- Take time to introduce yourself to the dog that you'll be walking. The dog may be excitable. Be calm and assertive and try not to get the dog any more excited or playful than it already is. If you feel that you cannot control the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Do not wrap the leash around your body or attach it to yourself or your clothing using a clip or any other device. You should be holding the leash at all times.
- If you feel that a dog is pulling you off your feet or that you are at risk of losing control of the dog, please return it and select a dog that you can safely handle.
- Walk your dog on a short leash – a long leash gives the dog more strength and leverage and increases the risk of inappropriate interaction with other people or animals.

During the Outing/Walk

- Be aware of other dogs, bicyclists, runners and walkers that might cross your path and give them the right of way. Keep your distance from other animals and do not introduce shelter dogs to privately owned dogs.
- Be visible! Wear bright colors so that you can be easily seen by oncoming traffic.
- Cross safely. Look both ways when you cross traffic and remember that the prey drive of any dog can kick in at any time. Be aware of your surroundings and do not let the dog walk far in front of you or far behind you.
- Do not use headphones or talk on a cell phone while walking the dog. Use all of your senses to ensure that you, those around you, and the dog remain safe.
- Pay attention to the dog's respiration rate and overall appearance and attitude. Since many of the dogs have been relatively non-mobile for weeks or months, they may become fatigued quite quickly. Make sure to offer water regularly and take breaks periodically so the dog can catch his breath.
- If you notice the dog acting strangely or you find yourself in a dangerous situation, do not hesitate to contact the shelter for assistance. You can also contact the foster coordinator cell phone at 805-336-5277.

Additional Tips

- Use distance or distraction to reduce aroused behavior
- Keep two hands on leash for best control
- Let faster traffic pass on left, keep slower traffic on your right.
- Reward & praise the dog for calm behavior, easy walking or jogging, and sitting for greetings.
- Have fun!

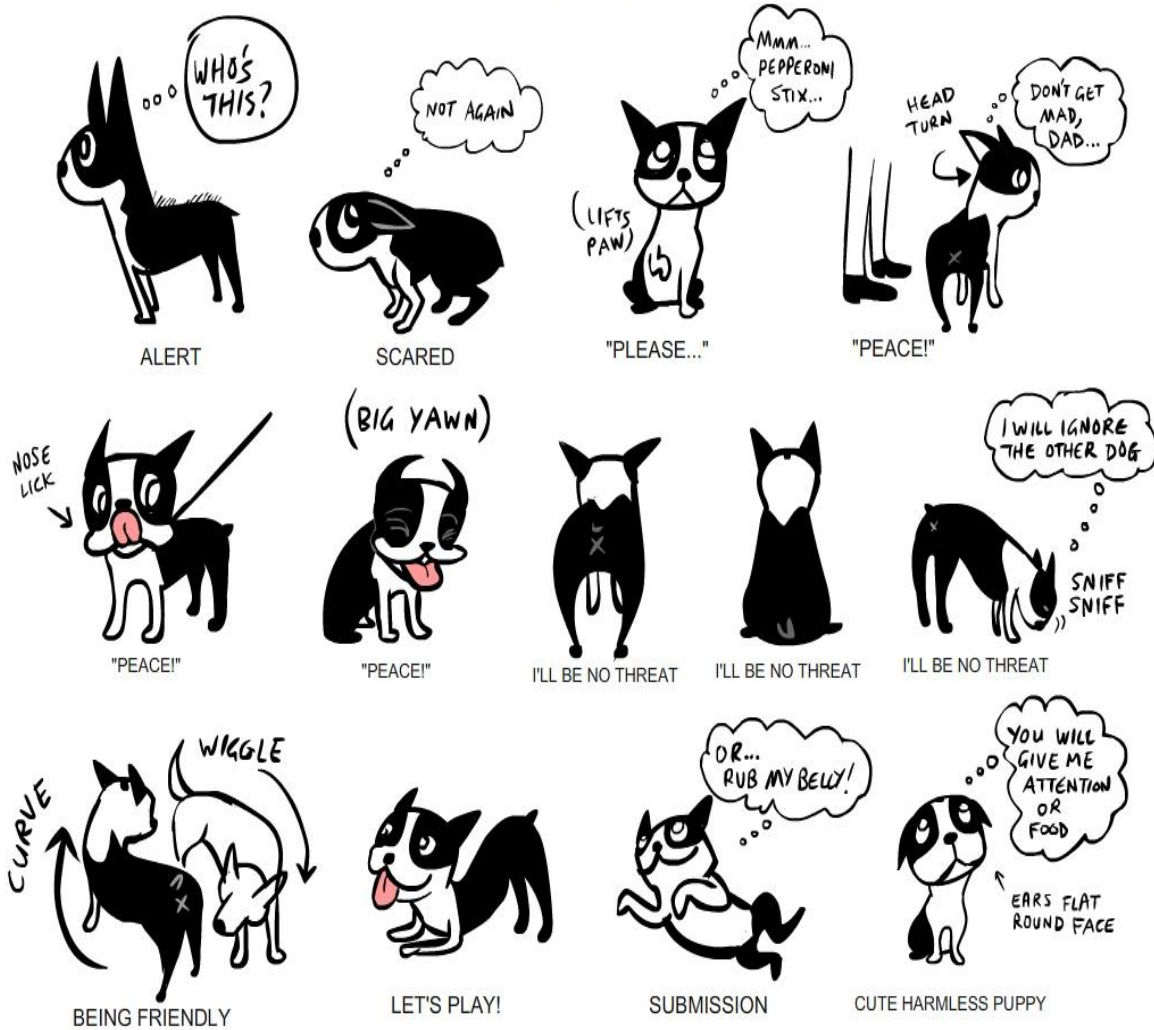
**For Required Training Videos and Resources
for ALL Dog Fosters:**

**Please visit VCAS.US/FOSTER-RESOURCES for
links to required resources/videos as well as
additional information AND Vets Office
scheduling!**

Dog Body Language

Remember to give dogs **SPACE** if they are displaying concerning body language. Most dogs do not enjoy being hugged, followed, or approached when they are laying down. This is especially important during the first few days in the home. Respect your foster dog's space and listen to their body language!

signals



DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE!"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



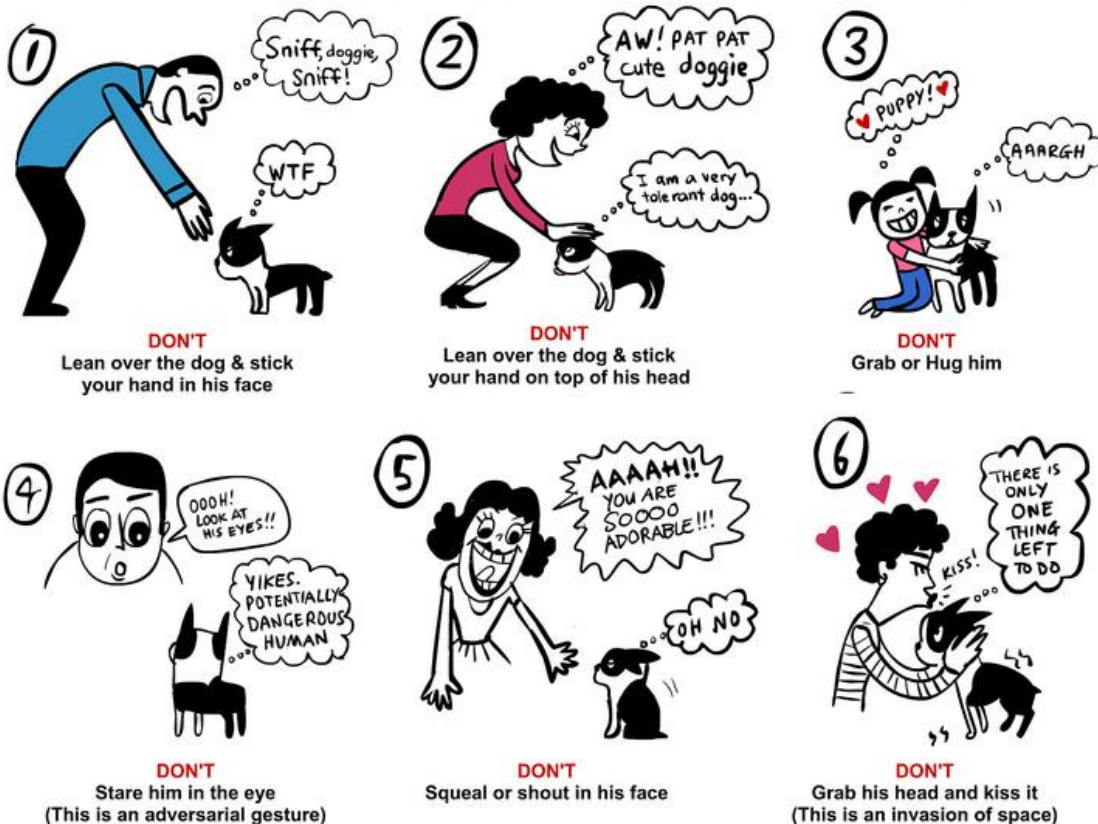
"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"

© 2011 Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net

lili

HOW NOT TO GREET A DOG

Most people do this stuff and it stresses dogs out so they BITE!
 I don't care how cute you (or your kid) think Boogie is. Please show him some respect.



Doing this to a dog who doesn't know you is like a perfect stranger giving you a great big hug and kiss in an elevator. Wouldn't that creep you out? And wouldn't you have the right to defend yourself?

THE CORRECT WAY:



- * No Eye contact
- * Let the dog approach you in his own time
- * Keep either your SIDE or BACK towards the dog (non-threatening posture)



- * Pet or stroke him on the SIDE of his face or body. Or on his back.

www.doggiedrawings.net *Lili*

Contact Information

- Foster Care Coordinator cell/text 805-336-5277 – text during working hours (8am-5pm) for non-urgent matters. Call during working hours (8am-5pm) for urgent/emergency matters.
- Foster Care Coordinator email vcar.foster@ventura.org
- Shelter Main Line 805-388-4341
- Emergency between 8am and 5pm – Please call and then come to the Camarillo shelter!
- Emergency after hours (5pm-8am)- Call 805-388-4341, press 4, leave a message and you will receive a return call ASAP.

Contact Protocol

- For urgent/time sensitive matters during working hours: Call the foster coordinator cell phone directly
- For non-urgent matters: Text the foster coordinator cell or email the foster coordinator.
- For urgent/time sensitive matters after hours (5pm-8am) or any time that you cannot get ahold of the foster coordinator cell: Call the shelter main line (press 4 after hours).

Emergency Contact Protocol

Be sure to have your foster animal's A# handy.

- **8am-5pm MEDICAL or OTHER emergency:** Call the foster coordinator cell (call the shelter main line if you are unable to reach the foster coordinator cell)
- **5pm-8am MEDICAL emergency:** Call the shelter main line and press 4 to reach an afterhours animal control officer. You must first leave a voicemail and describe your foster's medical emergency. Based on the nature of the emergency, the officer will do one of the following: 1. give permission for you to bring your foster to one of two approved afterhours emergency clinics 2. Go to your house and pickup the animal to transport 3. Instruct you to wait until morning and bring the animal to the shelter for medical care.
- **5pm-8am OTHER emergency:** Call the shelter main line and press 4 to reach an afterhours animal control officer and describe the nature of the emergency. (non-medical emergencies include bites, escaped animals, behavior you feel is unsafe, or any other event where the safety of the animal or foster is potentially at risk)

Want to connect with other fosters, volunteers and staff?

Join the VCAS Foster Families Facebook Group! This group is open to current, active fosters and staff members.

What is the purpose of the page?

There are several ways this page can be used:

- Fosters and volunteers are urged to take candid, cute photos and videos of shelter pets. We use these, along with your stories and observations, to construct posts for the shelter's external Facebook page. This helps find homes for more difficult-to-adopt animals. Always include the Animal ID of the pet you are photographing at the end of your post so they can be easily identified at the shelter.
- Have non-urgent medical or behavioral questions about a foster pet? Ask it to the group and you're likely to get immediate responses.
- Want to share a happy story or informative article with the group? Go ahead. We all love to learn and there are so many great resources out there.

The Facebook group is a wonderful tool and is a key part of our Volunteer and Foster program. There are certain things we ask you not to post on the Facebook group page, as they are better addressed with the coordinators.

Two of these are:

- Concerns or complaints about a staff member, another volunteer/foster or an issue at the shelter.
- Complaints, suggestions or concerns about shelter policies and procedures.

If you have a Facebook account and would like to be in the group, request to join here (please be sure to answer the three questions which appear as part of your request to join):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/475516222635437>

To see a list of VCAS dogs and cats in the greatest need of foster please visit the VCAS Foster Trello page (this is a list of animals in the greatest need, it does not include all animals available for foster):

<https://trello.com/b/nKvIUyR5/vcas-foster-dogs>

Ventura County Animal Control Foster Care Provider Agreement and Release of Liability

I, _____, make the following statements and voluntarily enter into this Foster Care Agreement (hereinafter "Agreement") to provide temporary care as a foster caregiver for Ventura County Animal Services (hereinafter "VCAS").

1. I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment. I agree to notify VCAS within two business days if I am arrested for, or convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment in the future.
2. I agree to comply with all federal, state, and local laws that pertain to companion animals and pet ownership in the jurisdiction where I reside.
3. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the VCAS Foster Care Manual ("Manual"), and that I have read the Manual. I agree to fully comply with the policies, guidance, and requirements set forth in the Manual as applicable to my foster animal(s), and as otherwise modified by this Agreement and will follow all directions/instructions of the VCAS Foster Coordinator and all VCAS staff members.
4. I understand that VCAS reserves the right to check on the welfare of my foster animal(s), which may include a visit to my foster home. I further understand that VCAS may remove any foster animal from my care for any reason at the sole discretion of VCAS.
5. I agree to not take my foster dog(s) or my foster cat(s) to dog parks, off-leash areas, daycare facilities, crowded public areas, or any similar locations, unless given prior specific written approval by the VCAS Foster Coordinator.
6. I agree that the animal(s) that I foster will reside in my home, will be kept as household pets, and will not be used for breeding.
7. I agree to promptly return my foster animal(s) at any time upon the request of the VCAS Foster Coordinator or any VCAS staff member.
8. I agree to receive and respond to calls and emails concerning my foster animal(s), from VCAS shelter staff, veterinary staff, and potential adopters, and to provide the VCAS Foster Coordinator with updated contact information if any of my contact information changes.

9. I agree to transport the animal to VCAS or an approved veterinary clinic to receive medical treatment as requested by the VCAS Foster Coordinator or VCAS staff. If any foster animal experiences a medical emergency, I agree to follow the instructions outlined under “In Case of an After-Hours Emergency” in Manual.
10. I understand that VCAS will not reimburse me for any routine or non-emergency care for my foster animal(s) that is not pre-approved in writing by the VCAS Foster Coordinator.
11. I understand that VCAS recommends that my foster animal(s) is/are to be kept separate from any other animals currently living in my home. I agree that if I choose to introduce my foster animal(s) to any other animal living in my home, I will be solely responsible for any illness or injury to other animals. I understand that I must have current vaccinations for my animals at home.
12. I agree to notify the VCAS Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at 805-336-5277 and vcar.foster@ventura.org immediately if my foster animal(s) becomes lost or separated from me.
13. I agree to notify the VCAS Foster Coordinator immediately by phone and in writing at 805-336-5277 and vcar.foster@ventura.org immediately if any foster animal demonstrates any aggressive behavior, including but not limited to, biting or otherwise injuring, a person or another animal. I agree to promptly complete and return a written incident report whenever subsequently requested by a County of Ventura representative.
14. I understand that because I may handle animals, it is important to discuss the tetanus vaccine with my physician. I release VCAS from all responsibility that may occur because of my not pursuing this matter further and I understand that whatever decision I make is at my own risk.
15. I agree to seek any required immediate medical care if I am bitten by my foster animal(s), or if I receive any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal(s). I further agree to seek any required immediate medical care for any member of my household who is bitten or suffers any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal(s).

16. I warrant that as of the date of the signing this Agreement, I currently have sufficient health, disability, and life insurance as determined by me or my advisors to cover me and the other members of my household. Moreover, I fully assume any and all risk for any lapse in or insufficiency of coverage in said health, disability and life insurance in the event of my injury, disability, or death resulting from my acting as a foster care provider.

17. I understand and agree that I will be solely responsible for any personal injury, disability, death, or property damage caused by my foster animal(s) on or off my home premises. I understand that if I pay out-of-pocket for any expenses attributed to the actions of my foster animal(s), the County of Ventura will not reimburse me for my out-of-pocket expenses. I agree that if any person requests that I pay for any expenses attributed to the actions of my foster animal(s), that I will immediately notify the VCAS Foster Coordinator of such a request by phone and in writing at 805-336-5277 and vcar.foster@ventura.org.

18. I give permission for VCAS to photograph or film me for use in any publication, educational, or advertising purposes VCAS may designate.

19. I acknowledge that my Foster Care status with the county is classified as unpaid, and that I am ineligible for County Workers Compensation coverage if injured while providing foster care services. I understand that I will not be compensated monetarily for the work I do while providing Foster Care Services with Ventura County Animal Services.

20. I agree to contact the VCAS Foster Coordinator at 805-336-5277 for any other emergency or non-emergency matters.

21. I understand that if I fail to abide by the terms of this Agreement, VCAS Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct, or am otherwise unable to meet the requirements of the Foster Care Program, which are subject to change by VCAS from time to time, I may be terminated from the program. I also understand that I may at any time be removed from my position as a Foster at the sole discretion of the Foster Coordinator or other Senior Managers.

I agree to assume the risks implicit in working with foster animals who may have been abandoned, neglected, mistreated, or who may suffer from an illness or disease, and including, but not limited to, the risk of property damage, personal injury, disability, and death. My participation in the VCAS Foster Program is entirely voluntary and without the promise or

expectation of compensation. I understand and acknowledge that it is my responsibility as a foster care giver not to exceed any guidelines that my physician or other health care provider has established or may establish for me. It is solely my responsibility to determine what my medical limitations are or maybe and that I should disclose these limitations on my foster care provider application. I understand that while VCAS staff carefully monitors all animals, VCAS may have limited knowledge of their behavioral or medical backgrounds. Therefore, I understand that VCAS makes no warranties or representations regarding foster animal health, behavior, temperament, age, breed, or suitability for my household. I further understand that environmental changes may affect and change the temperament of my foster animal(s).

In exchange for the privilege to serve as a foster care giver and interact with my foster animal(s) on or off my home premises, I do hereby release and forever hold harmless the County of Ventura, its Board of Supervisors, the Ventura County Animal Services Division, and their officers, agents, employees, representatives, successors and assigns (collectively herein "County") from and against any and all claims for injury, disability or death sustained by me or for damage to my property, and from any other claims, demands, liability, judgments, awards, costs and expenses of whatsoever kind and nature, which may arise from or during my service as a foster care giver. I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the County from any against any and all liability to third parties arising out of related to the actions of my foster animal(s) and/or my negligent performance of duties under this Agreement.

I state that I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this Agreement and Release of Liability.

By my signature below, I affirm that all statements and stated agreements contained in this Agreement are truthful. I affirm that I have read and understand this Agreement in its entirety, and I agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____