



Purpose of Weekend Fostering

One of the characteristics that makes a great assistance dog is orientation to people. We intentionally select dogs that want to be close to people. Some of these dogs have a hard time living in a kennel environment for long periods of time. Letting these dogs live closely with people in a home environment will help to minimize their stress and make their assistance dog training more successful.

The training staff at Service Dogs, Inc. certainly understands that it is a difficult task for you to welcome a dog into your home for only the weekend, and then bring it back after you have bonded. We want to stress, though, how important this position is for the dogs, and thank you for your willingness to participate in this program!

Suggested reading for all fosters:

- *Don't Shoot the Dog* by Karen Pryor
- *The Other End of the Leash* by Patricia McConnell
- *The Culture Clash* by Jean Donaldson

This reference material can be found at major bookstores or www.dogwise.com.

Household Manners- living with your Foster Dog

How do we expect our dogs to behave in your home?

- Dog follows you from room to room, unless he is in the crate.
- Dog relaxes (lies calmly) when your attention is elsewhere.
- Dog does a down stay on a rug, or stays in his crate, while you eat.
- Dog chews on chew toys left out for him, but not on inappropriate items.
- Dog sits and gives you attention before going in and out of doors.
- Dog lies on floor, not on furniture.

Use anything the dog likes – treats, playing, belly rubs, praise words – and apply these reinforcers when the dog engages in these behaviors.

Introduction to the house

When your foster dog first comes home, introduce him to your yard and allow him to relieve himself before entering your home. Then walk him around your entire house (on leash.) Let him sniff and become familiar to his new environment. Of course if he chooses to pay attention and focus on you reward him. It is a good idea to tether him to you until he is used to following you from room to room (also prevents housetraining accidents). If you get tired of such close contact put him in his crate. After he is following you around you may discontinue tethering him but keep his leash attached to his collar so he is dragging it around the house. You can also tether him to stationary locations, and reward him for relaxing. He should never be left outside unattended – your yard is an extension of your house, and good manners are just as important in the yard as in the house.

Crates

Crate training is important because it allows you to teach your dog good habits and curb all sorts of destructive behavior, from digging to chewing to house soiling. It also satisfies a natural instinct for your dog to hide out in a den. Your dog is accustomed to spending time in his crate and this is where he should be left when you leave the house. He should also sleep in his crate every night. To keep the crate positive be sure to give him access to exciting toys like Kongs when you leave him in his crate. Also be sure to put him in his crate for short periods of time when you are home. This way he does not begin to see the crate as a place he goes only when you leave.

Things to keep in mind:

- Do not use the crate as punishment—you want your dog to associate the crate with positive feelings.
- Do not let your dog out if he is whining or barking this rewards the whining and barking in the crate.
- Do not keep an adult dog in the crate for more than 8 hours at a time - this long of a stay should be avoided.

Toileting

Our dogs have been living in a kennel environment, not a home. It is best to follow basic potty training procedures each time a new dog moves into your home. There may be accidents. Never scold the dog for eliminating in the house. This just makes him afraid of you and he will wait until you are gone and then toilet. When he makes a mistake, calmly clean it up. Then say to yourself, "I WILL keep a better eye on my dog!" You will become very good at keeping his toileting on schedule and learning what his needs are.

Potty Training Procedure:

1. Establish a reward history

Take the dog out first thing in the morning and last thing at night to the same place and at frequent intervals in the beginning and reward all elimination in that spot with treats, praise, and play time.

2. Prevent mistakes

Crate the dog except when directly supervised. Never allow him to venture into other rooms without you. This will not only prevent potty training accidents, but is also essential for maintaining the foster dog's house manners – if he is with you, he will not be jumping on furniture, chewing on inappropriate items, etc.

3. Rule out wrong options

After a solid reward history is established (step 1) interrupt the dog if he begins to eliminate in the house and escort him outside. This will only be effective if you catch him right in the beginning of the act. Do not punish the dog by yelling or any other means. The dogs must be willing to eliminate in our presence. If you punish the dog he may stop the behavior all together not just in the house.

Doorways

Going through doorways and gates is very rewarding to most dogs. Like all other rewards, this reward must be earned. Dogs must sit *and* give us eye contact before going through a doorway. If you are walking with the dog, he must go through the door beside or behind you. Ultimately you should not even have to cue your dog to sit or down, the door itself becomes the cue. This is referred to as an environmental cue.

When you eat

Your dog should stay in his crate while you eat meals. This will prevent annoying behaviors such as begging and grabbing food off the table. You can feed him his meals in his crate while you are eating to reward him for staying in his crate.

Playing

Play sessions are as important for dogs as they are for young children. They provide appropriate outlets for energy while providing the trainer with opportunities to reinforce suitable levels of excitement and play. Playtimes can become inappropriate with loud barking, jumping and roughhousing; therefore appropriate play should be rewarded. It is important for you to have a good time when you play with your dog. This will make the play more exciting to him. Use an excited voice and keep in mind dogs find objects that are moving away more exciting than objects shoved in their face. If you pretend to be thrilled about an object, keeping it just out of the dog's reach, they often want to join in the fun!

Please do not play tug with foster dogs. Appropriate toy games include hide-and-seek, chase, play retrieve, etc. Do not try to take toys out of foster dogs' mouth – if you need to take a toy or other object away from a dog, please trade: either get him interested in another toy, and give him the other toy for dropping the first object, or toss a handful of treats on the ground and take the toy when he's distracted by the treats.

Toys are also huge distractions for some dogs in public, and it is possible that your foster dog's trainer will have strict rules about playing with toys in the house. Following these rules will help tremendously with the training of the dog and will make him a much more successful assistance dog.

Training your Foster Dog

Service Dogs, Inc. uses very specific training techniques for teaching the dogs all the behaviors they know. This includes knowing when and how to cue the dog, knowing what the behavior looks like with each individual dog, and knowing the individual dog's limitations and skill level. We ask that you do not cue the dogs to do any behaviors except those specifically discussed with you by SDI trainers.

Behaviors we do not want you practicing with the dog include obedience cues such as down, stay, leave it, heel, etc.; as well as assistance dog behaviors such as retrieve, closing/opening doors, alerting to sounds, etc. *We also ask that you not take any training advice about your foster dog from anyone other than a SDI trainer – including family members, vets, friends/neighbors, other trainers, people on TV, etc.* If a training problem arises, please talk to a SDI trainer about the problem as soon as it begins, so that the dog does not practice doing the bad behavior.

Behaviors that you may need the foster dog to do:

- Sit: Dogs are taught to sit by getting rewarded when they offer a sit (do the behavior without being cued). Most foster dogs should be expected to offer a sit at doorways and at their kennel door without being cued (with the exception of new dogs that do not have to sit at doorways). To “cue” the dogs, go to the door and look at the dog; it may take several seconds, but with practice and consistency, the dogs should begin offering sits faster and faster. Going through the door is the dog's reward.
- Dog's Name: When someone says the dog's name, the dog is expected to make eye contact with that person; the name is a “look at me” cue. This is one of the hardest cues that dogs learn. Keep in mind that *every time* you call the dog's name, you should expect him to look at you, and then

you should reinforce that response with some kind of reward. It is a good idea to use a nickname that you use to get the dog's attention when you are not ready to reinforce the name response.

- Recall: When training, we *only* use this cue when we are absolutely positive that the dog will respond by coming directly to us. It is not necessary, nor do we want, for you to use this cue when you need the dog to come to you. Instead, you can call using a nickname, clap your hands, cheer for the dog, etc. If you have a problem getting the foster dog's attention, or getting him to come to you, please talk to the trainers.

Other Family Members

Everyone who lives in the same house as the foster dog will be teaching the dog simply through day-to-day interactions with the dog. Please make sure everyone in the household understands all the rules for the foster dog. Please also remember:

1. All family members must understand the importance of not reinforcing inappropriate behaviors such as jumping up on people – it is useful to involve everyone in a “greeting” training session when the dog first comes home.
2. Watch closely and intervene if you observe a family member interacting inappropriately with the foster dog.
3. Children should not be left unsupervised around any dogs including foster dogs.

Other Dogs

Household Dogs- We do not allow our recipients to have other dogs in the house because it is a difficult situation to manage. Foster trainers can be successful with other dogs in the home, but it takes management. The situation will be easiest if your dog or the foster dog (or both) are indifferent to other dogs. The dogs may only play while supervised, and the foster dog must learn to come away from the pet dog when called. This will help to keep dogs the service dogs encounter in public less exciting, and helps to teach your foster dog self-control.

Please also be mindful of resource management – feed the foster dog meals in his crate (with the other dogs out of the room or away from the crate) or in a separate room from the other dogs. Do not leave toys, bones, or any other treats out if the dogs show signs of guarding the objects – posturing, growling, raising their lips, tensing, etc. Please remove all resources, giving them to dogs only when dogs are separated, and immediately contact a trainer if these behaviors do occur.

Doggy Play Dates- Always discuss with your foster dog's trainer before introducing your foster dog to other dogs or people. Some foster dogs do not yet know how to play appropriately. Most dogs at the training facility have play time with other dogs daily, so the trainers are aware of which dogs will be able to play and exactly what you should do to introduce the foster dog to other dogs/people, if they determine it will be acceptable. Please do not hesitate to ask your trainer any questions!

Basic Care of Your Foster Dog

Type of Food

Your foster dog eats a high quality food. We require that you continue to feed the foster dog this brand of food. Changing dog foods can make your dog sick and an inferior food with less nutrition will cause your dog not to work as well. We will provide weekend fosters with food, but it is your responsibility to make sure that you will have enough to last the weekend, or to come to the training center to pick up more food during the weekend.

Many fosters find it helpful to have a container to keep the foster dog's food in. If you choose to do this, you are welcome to bring it with you on the weekends and we will refill it whenever necessary.

How Much to Feed

We will inform you how much your foster dog is eating, stick with that amount. One extra pound on an adult dog is like 5 extra pounds on a human. Also be aware of how many treats and other supplements (Kong's, biscuits, etc.) your dog is getting, as too much of these can also make him sick.

Becoming overweight is a common cause for Assistance Dogs to stop working. Obesity shortens life-span in dogs just as it does in humans; obesity is grounds for SDI to repossess an Assistance Dog.

Time to Feed

We typically feed dogs in training twice per day, morning and evening. You can feed at your convenience, but preferably between 7-10 a.m. and 4-7 p.m.

Getting dogs to eat well

1. Allow at least 15 minutes for a dog to eat its meal.
2. If a dog is still eating after 15 minutes, allow it to finish.
3. If the dog walks away from or seems disinterested in its bowl at any time before it's finished and it does not appear that it will return to eat, pick up the food bowl with the remainder of the food.
4. Do not offer a meal again until the next scheduled feeding time.
5. Many dogs will skip meals when they move to a new environment, this is normal. Please let us know if the dog is skipping meals.

What Not to Feed

- Food from the table
- Food dropped or found on the floor
- Any types of bones like cooked chicken or beef bones – dogs can choke on fragments.

Heartworm and Flea Control

All dogs receive heartworm and flea preventative at the beginning of each month at the training facility. You will not be expected to administer these unless specifically asked.

When to see a Vet

It is not abnormal for dogs to experience isolated incidents of vomiting or diarrhea. If your dog has only one condition, vomiting or diarrhea but seems to be feeling fine (perky, attitude normal) this is not cause to see a vet. You may try taking him off his food for a day so his system can clear up. Please contact the SDI training staff if both conditions occur or he just acts like he feels bad, as these are indicators he may need to see a vet. Do not continue to feed a dog

meals when he has both vomiting and diarrhea, his system needs a break.

If the dog gets injured and needs to see the vet, you may need to see an emergency vet. Please contact an SDI trainer if you have any questions or problems.

Basic Grooming

Bathing

It will not be necessary for you to give your foster dog a bath on the weekends. It is not healthy for dogs to be bathed too often, and bathing them around the time they receive flea preventative will stop it from working. If you feel like your foster dog is in need of a bath, let us know and we will bathe him during the week, or discuss with you a bathing procedure.

Brushing

It is not necessary for you to brush your foster dog over the weekends. Brushing will, however, help if you are experiencing a lot of shedding, and does help to keep dogs cleaner.

If you choose to brush your foster dog, keep in mind that brushing is a training session for the dogs. Recipients often have difficulty physically brushing their dogs, and the dogs need to learn how to act while they are being groomed to make it easier on the recipients. Here are some things to reward while brushing:

1. standing calmly
2. allowing brushing/combing without unreasonable resistance or squirming

3. happily, willingly allowing handling anywhere on body

Other Grooming

All other grooming (ear cleaning, teeth brushing, nail clipping, etc.) will be done at the training facility during the week. It will not be necessary, nor do we want, for you to do this grooming on the weekends.

Public Behavior/ Socialization

As a weekend foster, not a trainer, you will not have public access with your foster dog. In the beginning you will not be allowed to take your dog out of your yard, except to go to and from the training facility. As you and your dog progress in fostering over several weeks, you can start discussing with your dog's trainer whether or not he can go outside your yard (on walks, to the park, etc.). He will never be allowed to go places with you where pets are not allowed. If you wish to take an assistance dog in training into public, please discuss with a trainer the possibility of becoming a SDI Foster Trainer.

Empathy 101 – from Jean Donaldson’s *The Culture Clash*

Imagine you live on a planet where the dominant species is far more intellectually sophisticated than human being but often keep humans as companion animals. They are called the Gorns. They communicate with each other via a complex combination of telepathy, eye movements and high pitched squeaks, all completely unintelligible and unlearnable by humans, whose brains are prepared for verbal acquisition only. What humans sometimes learn is the meaning of individual sounds by repeated association with things of relevance to them. The Gorns and humans bond strongly, but there are many Gorn rules which humans must try to assimilate with limited information and usually high stakes.

You are one of the lucky humans who lives with the Gorns in their dwelling. Many other humans are chained to small cabanas in the yard. They have become so socially starved that they cannot control their emotions when a Gorn goes near them. Because of this behavior the Gorns agree that they could never be House-Humans. They are too excitable.

The dwelling you share with your Gorn family is filled with numerous water filled porcelain bowls, complete with flushers. Every time you try to urinate in one, though, any nearby Gorn attacks you. You learn only to use the toilet when there are no Gorns present. Sometimes they come home and stuff your head down the toilet for no apparent reason. You hate this and start sucking up to the Gorns when they come home to try and stave this off, but they view this as increasing evidence of your guilt of some unknown act.

You are also punished for watching videos, reading certain books, talking to other human beings, eating pizza or cheesecake, writing letters. These are all considered behavior problems by the Gorns. To avoid going crazy, once again you wait until they are not around to try doing anything you wish to do. While they are around you sit quietly, staring straight ahead. Because they witness this good behavior you are so obviously capable of, they contribute to “spite” the

video watching and other transgressions which occur when you are alone. Obviously you resent being left alone, they figure. You are walked several times a day and are left crossword puzzle books to do (you have never used them because you hate crosswords; the Gorns think you are ignoring them out of revenge).

Worst of all, you like them. They are after all often nice to you. But when you smile at them, they punish you, likewise for shaking hands. If you apologize, they punish you again. You have not seen another human since you were a small child. When you see one on the street you are curious, excited and sometimes afraid. You really don't know how to act. So the Gorn you live with keeps you away from other humans. Your social skills never develop.

Finally you are brought to "training" school. A large part of the training consists of having your air briefly cut off by a metal chain around your neck. They are sure you understand every squeak and telepathic communication they make because you sometimes seem to get it right. You are guessing and hate the training. You feel pretty stressed out a lot of the time. One day you see a Gorn approaching with the training collar in hand. You have PMS, a sore neck, and you just don't feel up to the baffling coercion about to ensue. You tell them in your sternest voice to please leave you alone and go away. The Gorns are shocked by this unprovoked aggressive behavior. They thought you had a good temperament. They put you in one of their vehicles and take you for a drive. You are watching attractive planetary landscape going by and wonder where you are going. The vehicle stops, and you are lead into a building filled with the smell of human sweat and excrement. Humans are everywhere in small cages. Some are nervous, some depressed, most watch the goings on from their prisons. Your Gorns, with whom you have lived your entire life, hand you over to strangers who drag you into a small room. You are terrified and yell for your Gorn family to help you. They turn and walk out the door of the building. You are held down and given a lethal injection. It is after all the human way to do it.

This nightmarish world is one inhabited by many domestic dogs all the time. Virtually all natural dog behaviors- chewing, barking, rough play, chasing moving objects, eating any available food item within reach, jumping up and pawing to greet, settling minor disputes with threat displays, establishing contact with strange dogs, guarding resources, leaning into steady pressure against their chest or necks, urinating on porous surfaces like carpets, defending themselves from perceived threat – are considered by humans to be behavior problems. The rules which seem so obvious to us make absolutely no sense to dogs. They are not humans in dog suits.