



Foster Dog Manual

A Guide for Foster Dog Parents

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual is designed to provide foster parents with an overview of the CAW foster program. We have tried to answer many of the questions you may have both before and during foster care. Throughout the manual the word 'dog' refers to all dogs, irrespective of age, size or breed, including pups, and they are either referred to neutrally or as he/his. All information is subject to change.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Thank you for agreeing to be a foster parent. You are giving the opportunity to a dog to settle in an indoor family life. Also, a young, old, injured, sick, abused, or under-socialised dog gets a chance to learn what a home is before finding their own forever home.

How fostering works

Once you have signed up, and have been approved, to be a foster parent, you will be contacted by one of the team when a dog in need of fostering has been identified. Based on the information provided in your application and your previous conversation with the fostering coordinator, specific classifications will have been applied to your record, e.g. yes to pups, yes to oldies, no to small dogs, etc. and your perfect foster match should have been found!

Reasons to foster

There are many reasons to considering fostering. First of all since we work exclusively with fosterer you allow us to rescue more animals. Fostering gives our rescued dogs a head-start in learning what it feels like to be part of a home again and allows them to integrate more easily into their forever home when it arrives. There's also the personally good feeling involved in the fact that you are directly helping to save a dog's life, even if you're not in a position to be their forever home. While parting with a beloved foster dog can be hard, the next dog in need is waiting to steal your heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS3**
- IMPORTANT RULES AND REMINDERS REGARDING YOUR FOSTER DOG6**
- TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FOSTERING6**
 - **Where to keep your foster dog7**
 - **Dog-proofing a room.....7**
 - **Items you may need7**
- INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS TO FOSTER DOGS8**
- FOSTERING – THE FIRST WEEK8**
- GENERAL INFORMATION ON FOSTERING A DOG9**
 - **Behaviour9**
 - **Illness9**
 - **Vaccination and worming9**
 - **Poisonous foods and household items9**
 - **Feeding schedule and amount10**
 - **Special requirements10**
- EXERCISE, TRAINING AND ATTENTION10**
 - **Exercise.....10**
 - **Lead walking11**
 - **Training11**
 - **Housetraining12**
 - **Attention and play13**
 - **Socialising14**
- BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES14**
 - **How To Perform The Canine Consent Test15**
 - **Ready The Dog15**
 - **Ready Yourself15**
 - **Start The Canine Consent Test16**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I become a fosterer?

- Complete the application form on the website, giving as much detail about your home/circumstances/preferences as possible
- The fostering coordinator will contact you to arrange a home check
- You will sign foster agreement
- A suitable dog is found and placed in foster with you

The procedure is quite simple and we try to make it as painless and quick as possible, however, please bear in mind that all of our coordinators are volunteers with personal lives and the process may take longer than you would like. Our catchment area is also quite large and it may take a while before we have someone in your area who can do a home check.

2. How long will I be fostering for?

Fostering requirements vary from a few nights to a few months – it really depends on the dog and your personal circumstances, but this can be discussed prior to the dog moving into your home. Ideally the minimum fostering period is two weeks as otherwise it is very disruptive to the dogs to be transferred between homes and results in them finding it harder to initially settle in their forever home.

3. I live outside of Clare, can I foster?

Because of the logistics involved in transporting an animal long distances, it is not always possible to foster dogs outside of Clare. However, in the case of long-term fostering or fostering animals with particular special needs, it may be possible.

4. If I have my own animals, can I foster dogs?

Absolutely! However, it will totally depend on the temperament of your own animal(s) and how they behave with other dogs. We will try our best to match you with a dog that can settle comfortably into your home. To avoid territorial behaviour we advise to arrange for the first meeting of the dogs to take place on neutral ground, e.g. by parallel walking.

We are extremely vigilant with the health of the dogs in our care and try to make sure their vaccination records are up to date on arrival in your care, however, occasionally a dog may become ill. Bear in mind that it is always a risk to expose your animal to other animals, whether it's out walking, at the vet, or in other common areas. The risk of either your foster dog or your own animal becoming ill is minimal but, should the situation occur, guidance is given in FAQ 8 as to what you should do.

5. What supplies do I need to foster?

We ask our foster parents to provide bedding, food, exercise, basic training, socialisation and love. Anything else we will help you with. CAW can pay for all vet care and medicine for the foster dog while it is in your care unless you want to extend your support to part of those expenses as well.

6. What should I feed my foster dog?

We always recommend feeding your foster dog the best quality dry food that you can afford, bearing in mind that supermarket foods, while cheaper, are not always of good nutritional value. Always read the label and do not be fooled by fancy brands or adverts. Ask us if you need any advice.

Even if your own dog eats a 'raw' diet, we recommend feeding your foster dog dry food as you don't know what his adoptive family might feed and it saves him having to change diet too much.

7. Should I crate-train my foster dog?

It's not essential but, it is an effective way to house train a pup or re-train an older dog. If your own dog is already crate-trained, we suggest you do the same with your foster dog. Some dogs just don't like crates and most of them, even pups need to be trained to use one. Being crate-trained can give both you and the dog a certain amount of peace of mind. It can be a safe place for them to be calm and comfortable and it means that, if you need to leave them alone for a while, they won't be able to do any damage to your house or themselves.

Crating should never be used as punishment. See page 12 for guidance.

8. If my foster dog becomes sick, what should I do?

CAW can cover all vet bills for any dog you are fostering. If the dog becomes sick, you must contact CAW so that the vet visit can be pre-approved and you will be given the name of the vet closest to you that we use. However, if it is an emergency, you should take the dog to your own vet and have them contact us directly for payment.

9. What if the dog is on medication?

This would be discussed with you prior to placing the dog in foster with you. If you are not comfortable dispensing medicine, we would not ask you to foster such an animal.

10. How much time is needed each day to foster?

This depends on the individual dog and their situation. It is essential to understand that rescue dogs may be stressed. Patience will be required and the same level of commitment you would give to your own dog.

Depending on the age and nature of the dog, exercise required could be a 30 to 45 minute walk/run in the morning and afternoon with lots of playtime in between. Older dogs may just need a shorter morning and evening relaxed stroll.

11. Can I walk my foster dog off-lead with my own dog(s)?

We have a strict requirement that no foster dogs are allowed off-lead in the first week with you while outside. Many of these dogs have ended up in our care because they have run off and there are far too many unknowns for it to be safe. Try to keep them out of situations like parks where there may be dogs running off-lead as this can create frustration and aggression.

Also the beach and busy areas like town, or anywhere there are large volumes of people, can be very stressful for your foster dog (or any dog). Your dog may be gentle and relaxed indoors but may react fear-aggressively when confronted with a stressful situation.

The rule can be reviewed after you and the dog get to know and trust each other and CAW should be notified of your intention to do so subject to a positive assessment of the dog.

12. What can I do to help my foster dog become more adoptable?

Take lots of pictures and send them to us, together with a short bio of how the dog is getting on in your home, and don't forget to tell all your friends and family about him.

- **Tips for writing a great bio:** Write a full description, accentuating the positive. Tell it from the dog's perspective and keep it fairly short. Start with 'who your dog is' and then go into personality traits, what training they know (sit, lie down, etc.), any cute tricks you might have discovered, and then what type of home they're looking for.

Bring the dog out on plenty of walks and be prepared to talk about him with anyone who asks.

13. Can I adopt my foster dog?

No, we really value your input in fostering a dog and preparing him for his new life. By adopting a dog, you close the door to many more that will require our and your help in future. As stated before, while it can be heart-breaking to let go of a dog so much love and time has been spent on, it is also very rewarding to see that dog thrive in his new home thanks to your efforts. The many positive feedbacks we get from happy adopters are testimony to the excellent work, you, our fosters do.

14. Am I responsible for finding my foster dog its forever home?

No, but we do value your help. Once a suitable forever home is identified, you may be asked to schedule a meet-and-greet with your foster dog and the potential adopter. You may also have found a perfect match through your own contacts and this is really appreciated. They must still go through the application process, however, and be approved by CAW.

15. Can I return my foster dog if I am unable to foster any longer?

Of course. We would, ideally, prefer that you keep the dog for as long as possible as, it increases their chances of being adopted but we do understand that this is not always possible. If you need to return the dog, please contact the Fostering coordinator and they will arrange it. We will need to find an alternative fosterer so would appreciate as much notice as possible.

16. What if I have to leave for work or holiday for a while?

If we have enough notice, we can try to find an alternative foster home for the dog and bring them back to you again when you have returned.

IMPORTANT RULES AND REMINDERS REGARDING YOUR FOSTER DOG

In addition to the requirements and responsibilities outlined in the fostering agreement, and throughout this manual, foster parents **MUST** abide by the following rules:

- No off-lead park visits in the first week
- At least the first week in your care foster dogs must be on lead at all times and supervised when outdoors unless in your own secured fenced yard
- No aversive training techniques or tools may be used on foster dogs.
 - Aversives include prong collars, pinch/choke chain collars, electronic collars, spray bottles, physical reprimands, etc.
- Foster dogs may not be left unattended at any time outside, even in a secured yard
- Any aggressive behaviour must be immediately communicated to CAW
- All vet visits must be pre-approved by CAW unless it is an emergency
- Foster parents must respond within 24 hours to communications from CAW or potential adopters

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FOSTERING

After being approved by CAW as a qualified foster home, but before you bring a foster dog home, we suggest you prepare yourself, your family and your home for a new canine companion.

If you already have a dog, chances are they know your routine, what they are allowed to do in the house, where they are allowed to go, etc. Your foster dog won't have a clue!

Preparation

Make sure everyone in the family is on board with fostering and is aware of what will be involved. Some children and adults have difficulty adjusting to a new routine and also have difficulty letting an animal go to his forever home. Be clear that this is temporary but that the commitment to the dog must be the same as to your own.

Where to keep your foster dog

Initially it is a good idea to keep the dog in a single room, where the family 'live'. This allows them to adjust slowly to new surroundings without being overwhelmed. They need company and will want to be with you. If you need to block off entrance to other rooms, use a baby gate. If you are crate-training them, keep the crate in this room also.

Dog-proofing a room

Your own dog is already familiar with items throughout your house and can probably navigate quite easily without a problem. Dog-proofing your house can save you some inconvenience in the long-run.

Things to look out for:

- Is there room for a crate (if appropriate)? Where will I keep it?
- Is there easy and quick access outside for toilet breaks?
- What can be chewed (couch, rugs, etc.)?
- Are there electrical wires that can be chewed?
- Are there low tables with items that can be knocked off by a tail?
- Are there plants in the room? Some plants are toxic and the most poisonous commonly seen plants are: rhododendron, lilies, cyclamen, yew, tulip/narcissus bulbs, sago palm, oleander, castor bean.

Items you may need

If you already have a dog, you probably have most of the following:

- Food and bowls
- Crate – if crate-training is an option
- Bedding - a clean, old blanket or a dog bed that is washable
- Odour neutraliser; it's the only thing to clean housetraining mistakes; If you clean mistakes with soap and water, your dog will still smell the urine and go to the bathroom in that spot repeatedly. A simple, usually effective odour neutraliser is white vinegar mixed with a small amount of water. Bleach smells like pee to a dog so is not suitable
- Toys such as: hard rubber balls, Kongs, fleece toys, rope toys. Do not give your foster dog hooves, antlers, rawhide or vinyl toys that can cause diarrhoea or choke the dog
- Collar which must stay on the dog at all times. CAW will try to provide you with an appropriately-fitting collar
- 3m lead (10ft)
- Training treats such as string cheese, squeeze cheese, lunch meat or small dog biscuits
- Baby gate(s)

INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS TO FOSTER DOGS

Once you arrive home with your foster dog, or he is dropped off to you, the following are some guidelines to help make the transition go as smoothly as possible:

- Make the introductions gradually and calmly
- Go for a walk – if possible, do this with both dogs and two handlers
 - Walk the dogs side by side on leads and allow them to sniff one another and become familiar with each other
- Give your *own* dog LOTS of love and praise
- When you bring the dogs into the house, leave the leads on so that, if a situation arises, you can get immediate control. You should only need to do this for a short period of time
- Be patient with your foster dog and take things slowly. We may not know their background but, they have been through a lot of changes recently and may be quite stressed
- Don't leave your foster dog alone with your resident dog, without supervision. Even if they seem to get on well while you are with them, separate them when you leave the house, unless there is a valid reason to do so (e.g. separation anxiety). Always check with CAW first. If you do have to leave them alone, always remove toys, food and chews and start with short periods of time
- Feed the dogs separately initially and always supervise feeding
- Don't introduce your foster dog to too many people or your neighbour's dogs initially as this may over-stimulate them

FOSTERING – THE FIRST WEEK

CAW have a number of recommendations for ensuring you have a successful fostering and it all starts with the first week.

- Keep to a routine so that your foster dog can adjust to your household. Bear in mind also that they may have been in kennels for some time and are already used to routine so this will provide them with an additional feeling of security.
- Keep stimulation to a minimum:
 - Find a quiet route to walk with him – this will help to familiarise him with his new environment and will also make the bonding process easier
 - Don't introduce him to people you meet on your walk for the first week or so. Everything is already new to him and adding new people into the situation may just increase his stress. It will take him time to settle
 - Don't introduce him to other dogs (other than your own). This is because there is no way to tell how he will react. If he shows aggression or bites you are required to report it to CAW
 - Don't throw a party!!
 - This is the week where he learns the normal house rules
 - Learn 3-seconds rule – do not force contact, see page 15
 - Respect and use calming signals

If your dog is available for adoption, this is a great time to take new photos and complete an assessment for him. YOU are the one who is learning how he behaves in a house and this is valuable information for us. The sooner you can do this, the quicker we may find his forever home.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON FOSTERING A DOG

Behaviour

It can take some time for your foster dog to settle into his new environment so please be patient. Allow him time to adjust and watch his behaviour closely. It can take him a few days to settle in but he will take up to a month to bond with you so be realistic. Some dogs may want cuddles straight away while others may be more distant – like humans, they have individual personalities so don't expect the same reaction from every animal. If, however, your dog shows any signs of aggression or fear (snapping or hiding, growling over food or toys), contact CAW for guidance. Study **the Canine Consent Test** (page 15).

Illness

Your foster dog may not display any signs of illness until quite ill. Therefore, it's up to you to observe your dog closely each day. Call CAW if you see abnormal behaviour, unusual discharges from the eyes, nose or other body openings, abnormal lumps, limping, difficulty getting up or down, loss of appetite or abnormal waste elimination.

Vaccination and worming

Your foster dog's vaccination and worming history will be given to you. If you're fostering a puppy, you will need to bring him to the vet for his vaccination boosters.

Poisonous foods and household items

Many household products can be toxic to dogs. Store any rat or mouse poisonings, antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid as well as cleaning products and other items listed below securely out of reach of pets.

The following common food items are poisonous for dogs:

- Chocolate
- Mushrooms
- Xylitol
- Grapes/Raisins
- Onions
- Macadamia Nuts
- Caffeine

Diet

Some dogs can get diarrhoea from a change in diet. If this happens, feed them something bland for a day or so (e.g. cooked rice mixed with scrambled eggs) and then reintroduce the food.

Feeding schedule and amount

You should try to maintain a regular schedule for feeding your foster dog – remember, with routine comes a feeling of security. Feed him separately to your other dog(s) as this will prevent any arguments over food. Leave some distance between you and your foster dog so that they don't feel anxious and gulp their food (some dogs will do this anyway).

Don't feed your foster dog from the table or feed him 'people' food – this can start a habit that can be very difficult to break.

The quantity of food and the schedule will depend on the age and size of your foster dog:

- *Adult dogs*: dry adult dog food twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening
- *Adolescent dogs (4 months to 1 year)*: dry puppy food, twice a day
- *Weaned puppies (6-8 weeks to 4 months)*: dry puppy food three to four times a day. Can be soaked or moistened with water or puppy formula
- *Nursing mothers with puppies and unweaned puppies (4-8 weeks)*: CAW will advise

Please refer to the packaging for suggested amounts as the amount may change according to brand. Please do not overfeed your foster dog and, reduce the amount of food per meal if feeding treats outside of meal times.

Special requirements

If your dog gets 'hot spots' or raw sores on the pads of their feet or between their toes, it may be due to food allergies. Some dogs can be allergic to chicken so we would recommend dry food made with potatoes and duck, or fish.

If your foster dog is in need of extra nutrition (very thin, ill or poor coat), we may recommend food supplements like fish oils to provide essential fatty acids and omega-3 oils.

Always provide plenty of fresh water!

EXERCISE, TRAINING AND ATTENTION

You should try to handle your dog and work with him every day. If you can work on some basic, force free, training that will increase his chances of being adopted.

Exercise

Foster dogs should be exercised every day, regardless of the weather. Two 30+ minute walks will help release excess energy and make for a calmer dog in the house. An exercised dog is more likely to sleep when you are not at home and this lessens the chance of undesirable behaviour (chewing, excessive barking, etc.).

Lead walking

CAW dogs should be walked, leaving an appropriate and safe distance between them and any other dog you may meet. This keeps both you and them safe from any possible conflicts. Some dogs are uncomfortable with the nose-to-nose greeting and some owners are oblivious to this and encourage their dog to greet all others when out for a walk. Ideally a 3m lead should be used.

If your dog shows signs of stress when being approached by another dog, ask the dog's handler to remove the dog while keeping calm yourself. Try your best to walk around the situation or turn and walk away.

If your dog is reactive on lead, there are some ways you can keep distance between him and another dog:

- Diplomatically tell the other handler to call their dog back
- Keep your dog at your side and create a body block
- Talk to your dog and feed him treats before he even starts showing signs of reactivity

NEVER use a retractable (flexi) lead when walking with your foster dog – it is impossible to control your dog and the leads can get tangled or easily break.

Training

Although most potential adopters would prefer a dog with basic manners and some training, we can't make that guarantee. However, while in foster is an ideal time for the dog to start learning these things. Even something as simple as being able to sit when asked, or to 'watch you' will impress someone coming to see the dog, and make the dog much more adoptable.

Any training you might undertake must be **force free**. If you feel you cannot do that, we would prefer you not do training with the dog as forceful or aversive methods of training can damage your relationship with him and could potentially result in an increase in anxiety or aggression. Most dogs will learn by observation so, if your own dog is well-trained and practicing good behaviour, chances are that your foster dog will mimic this behaviour of his own accord. Working in a force free environment will strengthen the dog's bond with you and so will make learning progressively easier.

There are many excellent online resources available relating to force free or positive reinforcement dog training, e.g. Kikopup on YouTube.

Additional training tips:

- Short 5-minute training sessions 4 to 6 times a day is more effective than one long session
- Dogs will learn new behaviours quicker in a reward-based environment. A reward will not always be food – some dogs prefer a game or a rub – you will quickly learn what motivates your foster dog

- Set him up to succeed, not fail – keep things simple at the start and gradually increase the criteria
- Keep the environment calm – indoors in a quiet location with no distractions and no other dogs is best
- Dogs are not good at generalizing. A “sit” for you in the sitting room is not the same as a “sit” for your partner in the kitchen
- Be consistent – if you don’t want your foster dog on the couch, NEVER let him on the couch!
- Never lose your temper or hit your foster dog – **EVER!** If he’s not getting it, it’s because he doesn’t understand or is tired or bored – end the session and come back to it again later

Housetraining

Even if a dog was housetrained, in the first couple of days they may make mistakes – they are in a new environment with different smells and they are unsure of their surroundings. Some dogs may instinctively ‘mark’ out their territory. If this happens, neutralise the area with your odour neutraliser (see items you may need on page 7).

Pups can be housetrained from a very early age (8 weeks) and even adult dogs will respond quickly (after all, they don’t WANT to toilet where they live). The following guidelines will make the process as painless as possible for all:

- Decide on the area you want your dog to toilet
- Take him, on lead, to that exact spot every time and use a cue word like ‘toilet’
- Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours (pups should go out every 45 minutes or so until you learn their pattern). Stay there with him for about 5 minutes. If he ‘goes’ reward him (treats, praise, game, whatever he responds to) and bring him back inside. If he doesn’t go within 5 minutes, bring him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Reward him every time he goes
- Keep an eye on the dog when you’re inside – if he starts to sniff the floor or squats to go, interrupt him calmly and bring him outside to his spot
- If he goes in the house when you’re not paying attention, don’t correct him – he couldn’t help it. Clean it up and resume your schedule. NEVER put the dog’s face in his mess or yell at him – he doesn’t understand you and you’re only teaching him to be afraid

Crate training

A crate can be a safe space for a dog. It’s a place where they can be calm and it can also help prevent destructive behaviour and housetraining mistakes. Do not crate your dog for long periods of time, unless recovering from a medical condition which requires inactivity – CAW will guide you on this.

Never crate a dog for more than 4 hours during the day.

You should exercise your dog well before and after any long periods in the crate and you should provide him with toys or a Kong while in the crate.

NEVER use a crate as a means of punishment for your foster dog. He should feel that the crate is his playroom and safe place.

Introducing the crate

- Put the crate, with a blanket and chew toys inside, in a central part of your home. Bring him for a long walk and introduce him to the crate when he's already tired. Let him go in and out as he pleases. Feed him in the crate with the door open. If he is hesitant, put the bowl of food just inside the door so that his head is in but his body is outside
- If he still won't go near it, put some smelly, tasty wet food in the crate and shut the door. Let him hang around outside, smelling the food and pretty soon, he should beg you to let him in!
- Once he is willing to go in, throw some of his favourite treats inside, let him go in to get them and come right back out. Do that a few times, then let him go in and close the door. Throw another treat in and then let him out and ignore him for 3 minutes. Then put some more treats in, let him go in, feed him a few bits through the door, then let him out and ignore him for 5 minutes
- Next time, put the treats, peanut butter, liver paste or something similar in a Kong so it will take him time to get the food out, and put the Kong in the crate. After he has gone in, close the door and talk to him calmly. If he starts to whine or cry don't talk to him. When he has been quiet for a few minutes you can let him out
- Gradually increase the crate time until he can spend 3 to 4 hours in there. It can be a good idea to leave a radio on with some mellow music or talk radio while he is in the crate. Rotate his toys from day to day so he doesn't become bored. Don't use newspapers, instead put a blanket in there so that he knows it is his cozy home
- If you're fostering a pup, you can try placing a warm hot water bottle wrapped in a towel on the outside next to him as warmth makes pups sleepy

Be wary of dog crates during hot weather - a dog may want to lie on the cool floor, instead of the crate. Make sure the crate is not in direct sun.

Attention and play

Gentle handling is particularly important for the development of pups and attention and play is a reward for your foster dog. Attention periodically throughout the day is more beneficial than one hour-long session.

As a general rule, children under 16 years old should **NOT** be left alone and unsupervised with any dog, but particularly your 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 he is eating, chewing and sleeping and never allow a child to remove a toy or any other 'prized' possession from a dog.

A child will not differentiate between a foster dog and a dog they have grown up with, so you must make sure to keep everyone safe.

Gentle play is recommended with your foster dog, to avoid over-stimulating him. Don't play tug-of-war or wrestle with him and, if you have a shy or fearful dog, don't throw a toy towards him as he may think you're throwing things at him and become more afraid. Reinforce any training you may be doing by having the dog sit before giving him a toy – this makes the toy the reward.

Socialising

After your foster dog has acclimatised to his new home, it's a good time to bring him out, to get him used to different people and places. Start slowly and make sure it is a positive experience for him. Always stay calm and aware of your surroundings – this will allow your foster dog to relax. If you find him reacting to somebody or something on your walk, change direction or cross the road.

If you want to run with your dog, remember that he has probably not been too active recently and will need to increase his fitness gradually. If he is inclined to pull on the lead, running can intensify his behaviour and you may need to stop and start many times. Do not run with a dog under 1-year-old.

Try to give pups lots of new positive experiences so that they will be well socialised and adaptable when they grow up. You should not bring pups out in public until they are fully vaccinated so bring the experiences to them. This can be different textures for them to stand on (paper, vinyl, wood, carpet), plastic bottles that make noise, etc. Introduce them to men and children and take them in the car (crated for safety) to get used to travelling. There are fabulous puppy socialisation noise clips on YouTube, e.g. fire works, thunder storms, traffic, etc.

BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES

Some foster dogs may have specific behavioural or training needs. CAW will let you know if a problem has been identified that may need your help, e.g. an abused or fearful dog who needs help with socialising or confidence. Sometimes, a dog with an unknown history just needs to be observed in a home environment before being adopted and many times, it is the foster parent that learns about its specific behaviour.

Many behaviours that humans consider to be a problem are actually just normal dog behaviours – barking, whining, digging, chewing, hunting other animals. The best way to deal with them is to provide alternative outlets

The following are some common behavioural issues:

- Excessive Barking
- Destructive chewing
- Fearfulness
- Begging
- Digging
- Lead pulling
- Resource guarding
- Separation anxiety
- Attention seeking
- Submissive and/or excitement urination
- Humping
- Prey drive

Some questions to ask in these situations are:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?
- Does he have interesting toys to play with?
- Is he getting enough attention
- Am I reinforcing bad behaviour (e.g. shouting when he is looking for attention)

We don't expect our foster parents to work miracles. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, the best solution for you and your foster dog might be transferring the dog to a different foster.

Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, as this is rarely effective in resolving behaviour problems. Punishment will not address the cause of the behaviour, and in fact it may worsen any behaviour that's motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs that aren't currently fearful. Never discipline your dog. People often believe their dog makes this connection because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away, or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behaviour, but may provoke other undesirable behaviours, too. Teach the dog what you want him to do.

How To Perform The Canine Consent Test

Ready The Dog

- The dog usually should not be on leash – so take the leash off if you are in an enclosed space such as your home or a fenced yard
- Do the canine consent test when the dog is relaxed
- Plan to conduct the test in a space where the dog can freely move about. Don't put the dog on the sofa or in a crate or in the corner of the room where you are in between them and all exit points

Ready Yourself

- Put the treats away, you will not need them
- Make sure you have reviewed canine body language and understand all the various ways a dog can say "no." This is REALLY important, don't skip this step
- Learn the 3-second rule (see below)
- Sit down. Don't do this test standing up, unless you are working with a giant breed, perhaps. Note if you seem to be towering over the dog; if you are, get lower. For a toy breed, you'd probably need to be on the ground
- Keep your petting hand neutral and relaxed, resting on your lap or leg
- Learn to wait. Don't lure the dog to you with food

Start The Canine Consent Test

- Use one hand, not two when beginning this test
- Open up your hand to the dog, while keeping it resting on your leg or lap
- When the dog approaches, initiate petting somewhere you think the dog will like. **The chest is usually a good place**; the top of the head is a place to avoid at first. Pet using rubs or scratches. Petting using repeat pat-pat-pat can be annoying. Don't do that
- Watch the dog's body language as you pet
- Using the **3-second rule**: count out your seconds in half-beats as you pet. "One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand." At two-and-a-half beats, you are thinking/preparing to move your hand away. When you say "three" you should be retracting your hand, putting it back in your neutral position and waiting for the dog to respond
- If the dog moves toward you or nudges your hand, you can resume petting for another 3 seconds. If they show behaviours that say "No" then stop petting

3-Second-Rule in summary: pet for three seconds, then see if your dog says "Yes, more pets, please!" or "No" I don't want any petting right now.

Dogs Saying "Yes" I Want More Attention

- The dog moves closer in
- The dog nudges the hand
- You observe relaxed eyes, mouth

Dog Says "No" I Don't Want More Attention

- Dog makes no behaviour change. You might observe that the dog stands or sits still after petting, disengaged
- The dog physically moves away
- The dog demonstrates nervous behaviour like:
 - lip licking
 - head turns
 - full body turns
 - moving away by shifting weight to the back or avoiding the hand
- Dog avoids eye contact

And finally.....

THANK YOU from all of us at CAW. Without our foster parents, we would not be able to rescue as many animals each year. You are a valuable resource for us and we appreciate your help.

If at any point you need help or advice, please contact us.

Clare Animal Welfare CLG

foster@clareanimalwelfare.ie

085 1911369

