

Canine Foster Carers Handbook



Lily's 4 Paws

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Lily's 4 Paws

02/08/2020

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Foster Carers Manual

What is fostering

How fostering works

Animal rescues would generally come in two types. Those that are kennel based where all the animals are kept together in a shelter environment and those that use foster carers and do not have a shelter.

Most shelters are always looking for suitable homes for dogs in their care. Even the best run shelter can be a stressful environment for most dogs and foster carers for both kinds of rescues are a valued resource. This manual has been written with the intention of helping and supporting foster carers throughout the fostering process, with the hope that they would go on to continue to foster for many years and dogs.

When you approach a rescue to foster for them they will organise at your convenience to come to your home for a chat and do a home check. Based on the information provided in your application, 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. It is important that initially early on in your fostering career you give a great deal of thought to what types, ages etc of dog you feel best able to cope with.

When this is done the rescue will consider your application and decide which dog in their care would be best suited to join your family.

Reasons to foster

There are many reasons to considering fostering. By offering a temporary space to a dog, you are freeing up kennel space which allows the rescue to help another animal. Fostering is a huge benefit to dogs by helping them to prepare, in a home environment for their new lives. 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.

Dogs that require fostering might be any of the following:

There are many different types of dogs that can benefit from being out of the kennels:

- Neglected or abused dogs that need some extra care and to learn that being around humans need not be a negative experience
- Older dogs and dogs that suffer from excessive stress in the kennels
- Dogs that have been injured or are recovering from surgery

- Dogs that have particular medical or behavioural needs
- Pups that are too young to be adopted, require some socialisation and are more prone to infection because of their underdeveloped immune systems
- Abandoned mothers with litters of pups, or pregnant bitches

How does fostering work and is fostering right for me?

When you foster a dog for a rescue you are responsible for that dog, with the rescues support for the period the dog is with you. You will be expected to care for the dog's daily needs. This would include feeding, exercising etc and any medical visits the dog may need while in your care. The rescue may or may not supply you with food and equipment. Please discuss this with your foster coordinator.

How long will I be fostering for?

Fostering may vary from a few nights to a few months. It would depend on the dog's needs and your personal circumstances, but this can be discussed before to the dog comes to stay in your home.

A foster placement could be anything from a few days to a few months. If a dog has to move from foster to foster it will be very stressful for it, so it is important that when you are asked to take a dog into your home that you are aware of this. Some dogs at first show challenging behaviour, but we will discuss this later.

Choosing the right dog

Well done you have taken the first step to become a foster, but what dog would be right for you? Dogs have different needs at different stages of their lives. Puppies require a lot of time and someone around all the time. Adolescent dogs can show very challenging behaviour which is why they often find themselves in rescue. An older dog may just be happy to lay in front of the fire snoozing the day away.

Consider your household. Is it a lively young household with lots of coming and going? Who lives in your home, what kind of dog would suit your family members? Are you at home for most of the day or do you work? The rescue will take you through the basics of what they require, but it is important that you give a great deal of thought to what kind of dog would suit your home and lifestyle.

Why fostering fails

Never be afraid to say no if you think that a dog you have been offered is too much for you. The rescue will appreciate your honesty. As you become more experienced as a foster you will find these dogs less of a challenge. Positive experience is gold.

Saying goodbye

When you have fostered a dog and it finds its new forever home it can be sad to say goodbye but remember you are now available to help another dog prepare for its new life and forever home.

Preparation, be ready

Preparation is the key to getting off on the right road with a foster dog. With any dog whether it be a rescue dog or not it is important to set the dog up for success by preparing your home and family for its arrival.

Equipment

The rescue may or may not supply you with the equipment you will need for your rescue dog. Below is a list. It is not inexhaustible but will hopefully help you to prepare.

Bowls for food and water



A comfy bed plus fleeces or blankets

A crate



A puppy pen



A stair gate or two



A harness and collar with tags attached with your contact details, and a six foot lead



Toys of lots of different substances

Two of each preferably to that you can start teaching 'exchange'



Kong's, snuffle mats or other activity feeders

These kinds of feeders can be made from items found around the house and can be a great activity/project for children to make and feel part of the dog's rehabilitation.



[Just a few ideas for homemade enrichment toys](#)

[How to make a snuffle mat](#)

[More homemade ideas](#)



Dog proofing your home

It's important to prepare your home for the dog before it arrives. It is not a good idea to let the dog have full run of your house at first. But controlling their environment you are setting them up for success and making things a lot easier for yourself to help the dog settle in. Have all in place ready for the new arrival.

Environmental control

Environmental control is often where things go wrong early on in fostering. Dealing with a large adult dog that is not house trained can be exhausting and frustrating but by controlling where they can go in your home can help with getting these basic skills under control.

Decide where you are happy to allow the dog access in your home. Decide where the dog will sleep and eat. This will often be the kitchen and or utility room. 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

Use stairgates and puppy pens. If you already have a dog, which many foster carers do, remember you are bringing a strange dog into their home and this will very likely cause the resident dog/dogs some distress, introductions should be done slowly and carefully. See introducing your foster dog to your family and resident dogs later.

Set up the crate in a quiet area where the dog can see all that is going on. If at all possible use stairgates instead of closing doors. Dogs are far happier if they can see all that is going on if it is through a stairgate. If you start to shut doors on a dog it can lead to crying scratching and chewing. A dog placed in the utility room with his comfy bed, toys and a yummy Kong will happily allow you to eat your tea in peace and will be restricted from climbing and jumping up at people, or the table. Rescue dogs often have come into rescue because their previous owners omitted to train them in essential life skills. The most important gift a foster carer can give a dog are the skills to live happily in the human world.

As behaviour becomes better then allow the dog greater access, until finally the dog has access to all the areas you wish it to.

The first few days

It's often during the first few days that things start to go wrong when a dog is fostered. Dogs fighting because they are not comfortable with each other or people feel overwhelmed by a dog's behaviour. As I said before preparation is the key. Make sure you have all in place for the dog before it arrives. When it does, allow it time to become accustomed to its new surroundings.

Remember dogs see the world through their noses so there will probably be a lot of sniffing, especially if you already have a dog. Often when a dog arrives it is shut down and afraid. It will display this by its body language. See body language later. Settle it in the area you have readied for it, making sure it has access to water and leave it alone. Try not feel sorry for the dog. Try and think more that its past is in the past and be positive, by feeling sorry for a dog we can sometimes not give a dog the support and direction it needs to move forward, but equally we must always allow the dog to progress forward at its own speed, and in its own time.

The best way to greet a new dog is as unthreatening as possible. Do not stare at a dog as eye contact with a dog you do not know might consider it a threat. Turning your head to one side will help the dog understand you are not looking for a fight, make your body as unthreatening as possible, turn sideways, let the dog come to you and sniff you if it wishes to. Stay calm and only when the dog initiates it by seeking your attention should you give affection.

If the dog walks off, allow it, give it space, however much you might wish to try and get the dog to come back to you.

If the dog hides in its bed and doesn't want to come out do not be tempted to try and coax the dog to come to you. A hungry dog will be tempted to come towards you if you use treats but, by hiding the dog is telling you how close it is comfortable to be to you, by insisting the dog interacts with you, bringing it into the area between you and its 'safe place' once the food has gone and it will realise it is in an area it's not comfortable in and might behave inappropriately. Give the dog time, allow them to come to you. Allow the dog to be in charge of what speed it progresses forward. This always brings the best results. Time is your friend.

Introducing your foster dog to your family and any resident dogs

Often foster carers have pets of their own and more often or not dogs get on well enough when they meet if they are social natured. It is important to introduce any foster dog to your own dog carefully. We have already spoken about environmental control and not allowing the foster dog access to your home. Have an area where your own dog only has access to without having to deal with the new family member.



Remember, your dog will be there when the foster dog has gone, we often forget what affect new dogs in the home can have on our own pets, so always make time to spend with your dog's away from the foster dog. A good dog will help a shutdown unhappy dog learn to cope and trust, sometimes our own dogs are our best resource.

Often when we bring a new dog home to foster a quick sniff and all is well. Saying this it is far better to do introductions over a period of time and with care.

For the first few days keep the foster dog and your own pets apart if at all possible. Divide up the areas of the house, keeping all separate, remember environment control will help with this. If at all possible we don't want the dogs to come face to face by accident and things to go badly.

Put both dogs on a lead and go for a walk. Don't get too close together, and watch body language, are they both showing signs of being comfortable with each other? Walk one behind the other, side by side, keeping a safe distance, with the dogs on the far side of the handlers, moving to both dogs being on the inside. If all goes well consider letting the dogs have a quick sniff of each other. Remember the three second rule. A quick sniff and then apart. Continuing, if the dogs are showing signs they want to meet for a longer period, sniff butts etc then allow this but keep a good eye on behaviour. Some dogs are uncomfortable on a lead for whatever reason and might be better off meeting off lead but be careful. Keep a good eye on body language and split the dogs up if there is any signs that things are going a wye. Consider having the dog on a harness and a long line (a very long light lead. 15 – 45ft) if things look like they are going to escalate into a fight, the lead can be picked up and the dogs moved apart without the risk of handler or dog being hurt.

Once you are happy that the dogs are getting along together allow short periods of being together in the home, but always supervised until you are as sure as you can be that all is good.

[Some good information about introducing a new dog into your home](#)

When it comes to introducing your rescue dog to your human family go carefully. If you have children in your home make sure they are aware it is best to leave the new dog allow to become accustomed with its new home and all the new smells and sounds. Remind children the rules of being around dogs.

- Do not touch the dog while it is sleeping.
- Do not put your face to the dog's face.

- If the dog has something it shouldn't have, to tell an adult, and under no circumstances to try are remove it themselves.

And lastly, and most importantly wait for the dog to come to them for affection. Dogs can find children hard to be around. They generally find adults easier. We walk in straight lines and talk in one tone. Children's movements can be erratic and their voices high pitched and some dogs can find that a struggle. Give the dog time to settle before letting children interact with them. And always always child and dog interactions must be supervised. Over 70% of dog bites occur in children under seven. Dogs generally adjust well but need time to get used to all the sights and sounds of a new environment. [Dogs and children](#)



What to expect behaviour wise

We have talked a little about what to expect behaviour wise. Dogs come into rescue for many reasons. Some are strays, some had loving homes, but for whatever reason their owners could not keep them. Some dogs are puppy farm dogs or cruelty cases. Each of these dogs come with their own challenges or not, it really depends on the individual dog. It is know that dogs that are strays and come into shelters do better than surrenders. Initially surrenders, may appear to be doing well but they behaviour declines and they become



more unsettled and stressed. Strays on the other hand may arrive in a right state but slowly improve physically and mentally as time passes. This is not always the case, we are very much generalising, but something worth bearing in mind. The thing to remember is all dogs are different and they will have different needs are requirements from you as a fosterer. Having a good routine in place can work wonders and environmental control.

Even if a dog has challenging behaviours, by controlling the dog's environment, where and who they have contact with and keeping the home quiet will pay dividends.

We have mentioned some of the situations that have caused dogs to come into rescue. Your rescue would be best to advise you as to specific needs of particular dogs, but generally we should consider what we can do to help prepare the dog in our care so that it is able and confident enough to settle happily into its new family.

Stress

What is stress

Before we talk about stress in our dogs we need to understand stress and what it is. There are two kinds of stress, good and bad.

Eustress

Is a positive form of stress. It is felt when confronted with demanding and challenging situation which we are capable of handling. For dogs, this might be learning a new behaviour that is challenging but they are enjoying the process.

Eustress is a healthy kind of stress because it motivates and inspires daily activity and work. It can give you a positive feeling of success or enthusiasm.

Distress

Distress is a negative stress. It's a stress that can cause anxiety, fear, aggression and negative behaviour in our dogs. The signs of negative stress in our dogs are:

- Licking of lip or nose
- Yawning
- Panting
- Appetite changes
- Diarrhoea
- Tail position lowered or tucked
- Ear position pulled back or pinned back
- Body posture, cowering, crouched or hiding
- Trembling or shaking
- Whining, barking or howling

So what can cause stress in our dogs?

Anything new - This includes new people, new toys, new places and anything new which has been added to your dog's world. Loud noises, this might be fireworks, thunder or even a car backfiring. When moving home, a dog's world can be turned upside down when his accommodation changes. For some dogs changing or moving bedding can be enough to upset them.

When the household changes - This might be a new baby, or even a new puppy, or the loss of a family member or dog

Training measures which are aversive - This can include shock collars, hitting or shouting.

Personal space invasion - This would be experienced when someone interrupts your dog's nap to kiss, hug or otherwise forcibly try to restrain him. A visit to the vets for example.

Most family pets will bond with one or more family members and will feel varying degrees of anxiety when separated from those family members. Dogs are even able to pick up on animosity and friction which can exist in a household.

Trigger stacking

Stress in our dogs can not only have a detrimental effect on the health, physical and mental wellbeing, but also on their behaviour. One stressor can stack up on another and all of a sudden, the dog cannot cope and behaves inappropriately, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

[Trigger stacking in dogs](#) [Trigger stacking in dogs two](#)

As you can see by the chart, a dog will show lots of signals before it becomes aggressive. But that's not to say that a dog will not jump steps if it feels particularly threatened or frightened. Once a dog has reached growl you can be pretty sure you have missed some of the earlier signs or in past situations the dog has been ignored when it has been trying to communicate its feelings.

Body language

Please watch the You Tube links below

[Dog Body Language](#) [Canine body language for children](#)

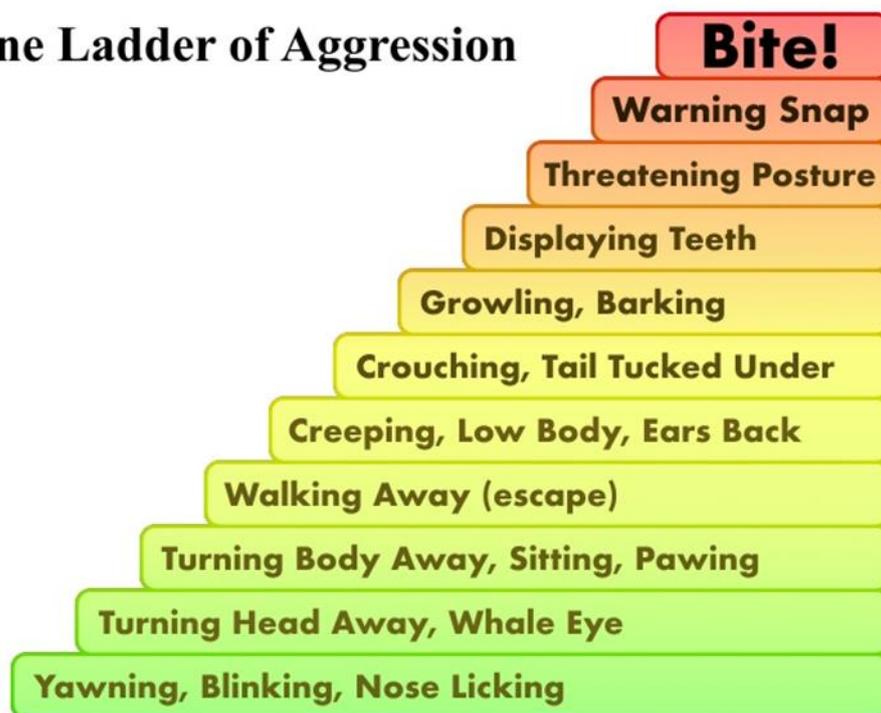
Celebrate the growl

A dog's growl is important and there are different types of growl. Often a dog may growl in fun when it is playing with its owner or other dogs. This growl sounds very different to the growl of a dog that feels threatened.

Never punish a growl

Never ever punish a dog for growling. If you do you are taking away his first form of vocal communication with you, this leaves him with very little option except snap and bite.

The Canine Ladder of Aggression



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Puppies

Most people have at some time had a puppy and will often feel more capable of dealing with a puppy as a foster. This may or may not be true but there are things we should consider when taking on a puppy. Puppies are not all the same. Where they have come from has a huge effect on their behaviour and their ability to cope. Puppies from a puppy farm will have had little if any exposure to humans and the human world. A puppy born and raised in a home will from day one been exposed to all the sights and sounds of humans and

our homes and lives and will generally settle quickly into its new family and life. A farmed puppy will very likely struggle. It will need time, understanding and support and must be allowed to progress forward at its own pace, allowing confidence to grow slowly. Never be tempted to push a puppy into a situation it feels uncomfortable in. Take your lead from the puppy, learn to read its body language so the puppy learns to trust human judgment that you will never push it into a situation it cannot cope with.

Adolescent dogs

I would like to take a few moments to talk about adolescent dogs. Many many dogs find themselves in a pound or a rescue due to challenging behaviours. Between 7 and 18 months approximately a dog will hit adolescence and during this time can show behaviours that can be a real struggle to cope with. Adolescence is a normal part of growth, but often owners find themselves out of their depth trying to cope with the jumpy up, mouthy monster they feel their dog has become. Coping with this sort of behaviour requires patience, a calm household and a lot of self-control training.

See links [Impulse control, teaching calm behaviour](#) [Settle on a mat](#)

Adult dogs

Adult dogs can come into rescues for lots of different reasons. Family moving or divorce, owner unwell, stray, it's an endless list. Whatever the reason we need to consider the dog's needs and any information we have about that dog that might help us to help them cope. As we have mentioned before we should first consider the dog. A stray may very well seem very settled very quickly but after a few weeks' behaviour may change and become challenging. Not having put environmental controls in place at the beginning, like stair gates etc may now mean that your very large foster thinks your bed is his bed! By thinking ahead, you can save yourself issues in the future.

A surrendered dog may struggle. They have lost their whole life and family, and this may show itself in unwanted behaviours like floor wetting, chewing or resource guarding.

House training

House training whether it be a puppy, or an adult dog is the same. In my experience adult dogs usually house train quickly often quicker than a puppy.

House training does and don'ts

Do take the dog or puppy outside every hour at the beginning, slowly increasing the time between visits outside as housetraining progresses.

Do take the dog outside after eating, after playing and after sleeping.

Do go outside with the dog and wait for it to toilet.

Do praise the dog for going to the toilet when it has finished.

Do teach the dog to toilet on command by waiting for it start to wee and saying whatever word you would like the dog to toilet on. Proof it. After a few days of using the word as the dog toilets try taking the dog into the garden and saying the word if it wee's you know the dog understands what that word means, so no more standing outside in the rain for you!!

Don't use puppy pads. By using them you are confusing the dog as to where to toilet and also telling it that its ok to wee on soft things, which can become you mats, furnishings or bed.

Don't use treats to reward toileting outside. Dogs are smart and will soon work out that an easy way of getting a reward from you is to wee. Sometimes a dog will purposely keep going outside to do a tiny wee, only to need to go back out again a few minutes later for another. A kind word or a pat is enough.

Don't get upset or angry. Dogs are very good at picking up on our feeling, if they think you are mad at them for going to the toilet in the house they may think that you are mad at them for the act of going to the toilet itself and become reluctant to toilet in front of you. This can lead to a dog sneaking off to empty itself out of you sight in another room or worse still eating its own poo to 'hide the evidence'

Don't leave the back door open and let the dog come and go as it pleases. When the weather changes and the back door is closed it may become very apparent that the dog is very definitely not housetrained.

Crate training

Crate training has lots of benefits and people often have very mixed feelings about using them. The reality is, used correctly they can be a huge help when fostering a dog. Crates can help with house training. We know a dog doesn't like soiling in its bed, so a dog that is struggling to learn to hold itself will learn to wait until its crate door is opened and it is let into the garden before emptying itself.



For nervous dogs they can be a safe place where they can sleep and rest and feel safe. For a puppy that is teething, by using the crate to control the puppy's access to things it might chew when it



cannot be supervised. The important thing is a dog must be trained to be comfortable being in a crate, so crate training should be done slowly, let the dog set the pace don't be in too much of a hurry to shut that door.



It is important the correct size of crate is used and that it is set up correctly. [Crate-training](#) We want to enrich the crate, all good things happen in the crate. Feed the dog in the crate if possible. Put their toys in it, make sure it is the most comfortable place to lay down. Cover it over with a fleece or towel to make it cosy.

Crates come in different styles. Metal framed crates, plastic crates and soft fabric crates. Some have two doors, some one.

The crate should be big enough that the dog can lie down stand up and turn around comfortably.

If the crate has two doors close the door on the long side and open the door on the short end. Get some yummy treats. While keeping the door open encourage the dog to enter the crate by throwing treats into it. At this point it doesn't matter if they are going right to the back of the crate. The dog may only put its front feet in the crate at the beginning, and that's fine. Remember the dog is in control of how fast we progress with crate training. If we push the dog to go to fast we might unintentionally make the dog afraid of the crate. When the dog is regularly going part way in try and get your treats to the back of the crate. If the dog goes in completely, quickly start to drop treats through the back of the crate, trying to encourage the dog to stay inside for a few moments. Keep this up until the dogs is happily going into the crate and out, without fear. At some point the dog will turn around to come out of the crate rather than reversing out.

If this happens quickly drop treats just in the front of the crate to try and keep the dog in for a second or two. You could also ask the dog to sit or down and reward heavily for this. When the dog will stay in the crate for a few minutes comfortably, then it's time to start closing the door. If at any point the dogs becomes stressed go back a step. Close the door over without locking it, just for a second then open it again and invite the dog out, rinse and repeat, slowly extending the time the door is shut.

when you are happy the dog is confident with this step lock the door for a second or two then open and invite the dog out. Build this up until the dog can be shut in for a time and the dog is happy. Leaving the room. When you are confident the dog is happy its time to start leaving it alone. Put dog in crate leave by closest door then come straight back into room and let dog out. Continue with this until the dog can be happily left unattended in its crate for a period of time.

Jumping up

Generally, there are three things owners find frustrating with their dogs' behaviour and jumping up is one of them. When that small cute puppy is jumping up looking for attention its cute, when the pup turns into a 35kg Labrador it all of a sudden isn't so cute.

Dogs jump up for reason that are important to them. They like to look at our faces and it gets them attention; even negative attention is better than nothing if you are a dog. Teaching a dog not to jump takes time and consistency and its hard to ignore a dog that is getting more and more frustrated as you ignore it. But jumping up is a huge issue and the more we can do to help solve this issue the better chance the dog has of finding a new home. Never reward jumping up. If a dog jumps up you stand very still, disengage your eyes and do not speak to the dog. Completely ignore the dog until all four paws are on the ground and then reward. Remember reward the behaviour you want, all paws on the ground, and not the one you don't want, jumping up.



[How-teach-your-dog-not-jump](#) [Teaching your dog not to jump up strangers](#)

Walking on a lead



The next issue tend to be walking on a lead. Most owners are not looking for heel work they just want their dog not to pull on the lead and it's important that we teach our dogs how to walk on a lead, it's a safety issue after all. And a big strong dog can easily injure its owner. There is a lot of equipment on the market to help teach dogs to walk on a lead, some good some not so good. It can be quite a controversial topic. Ideally to

teach a dog to walk nicely we need a well-fitting harness possibly with a front attachment for the lead if the dog is strong and a two metre training lead. We use harnesses because we know that a dog can do itself harm by pulling on a collar to it throat etc.

[Is it harmful to attach a leash to your dogs neck](#) front attaching harnesses are safer if the dog is a heavy puller. They come in various types, the most popular being the Perfect fit and ruff ware.

[Loose lead walking](#) [Loose lead walking](#) [Shy reactive dogs](#)

Recall

And last but not least is recall. If you are going to teach a dog recall it is imperative that it is in a safe enclosed area or wearing a harness and a long line. A long line is a long light lead that you can either hold the end of or allow the dog to drag about as it runs around, only picking it up when the dog does not come back as asked.

Recall goes wrong because we are predictable. We let the dog off at the park entrance then put it back on the lead at the other end of the park.

The dog soon starts to realise that all the fun stops at the other end of the park and refuses to come back. Start teaching recall in the house. Call the dog backwards and forwards between you, rewarding the dog as it goes backwards and forwards. Then more outside into a safe area with more distractions. If you are on your own, call the dog to you attach the lead, unclip the lead and release it, keep doing this so the dog does not know when you will finally put the lead on for good. Always reward the dog for coming back and be careful with the tone of voice you use. Dogs are very sensitive to our voices. If you are unsure whether the dog will not return when asked always use a long line.



Resource guarding



Resource guarding is normal in dogs but saying that it can be a huge problem if it leads to aggressive behaviour. Generally, it is around food but not always, it can be toys or an armchair. A dog will guard the resources it decides is important. Dogs will only give up something for something else of an equal or higher value. If the dog has something it shouldn't have try this. Get something yummy. Break it into small pieces. Without getting too close to the dog throw some treats to the side and if possible a little behind the dog. With luck, if the treats are yummy enough, the dog will spit out what is in his mouth and go investigate. While his back is turned and he can't see, pick up the item. With resource guarding we don't want to get confrontational, it's a complex issue and the dog needs help from a trainer who will help the dog and give the care giver advice on how to deal with it safely.

Separation anxiety

Many many dogs suffer from separation anxiety. It's important that our dogs can be left on their own for periods of time. It can be a very complex issue and all cases are different and generally requires professional help. If you suspect the dog in your care has separation anxiety be careful if you are crating as this can sometimes make matters worse. Contact the rescue for advice.



Food

Many dogs that come into rescue have spent time in their lives where they may not have received enough food. And their diet may need to be adjusted to suit their dietary needs.

Why the right diet is important



Dogs at different stages of their lives will have different dietary requirements. There is a lot of controversy around feeding dogs and what is good and what is bad. The rescue will decide usually what the dog should be fed and may or not supply it, this would depend on the rescue.

Rule of thumb is the higher the meat content the better. Always read the ingredients on the packet know what you are feeding. Food can have a huge effect on behaviour and health in some dogs seek advice from the rescue.

How to feed

The traditional way to feed a dog is in a bowl and for the first wee while this is probably the best idea when your rescue first arrives with you. Allow the dog to eat in peace. Find a quiet area where the dog can relax and enjoy its food. Do not try and take the bowl away from the dog while it is eating. If you have other dogs in your household do not feed the dogs together. If you do this may at best encourage the dogs to bolt their food at worse a fight may break out.



Enrichment



We talk a lot these days about enrichment. Enrichment can come in many forms but in this instant we are talking about food enrichment. Basically, more fun ways to eat. We know that exercise comes in to forms physical and mental. With enrichment feeding we are exercising the brain. A dog that is fed in a more enriching way will generally be more satisfied and easier to live with.

As humans we bred different breeds to do different jobs, so dogs can be driven to do certain things. We all know that collies generally like to herd and chase so are excellent at agility or flyball and enjoy flirt pole games. A Jack Russell was bred to kill vermin so likes nothing better than ripping things apart. With enrichment feeding we can use food to help the dog satisfy its drive or need to do certain behaviours. Enrichment doesn't need to cost the earth. Food sprinkled around the garden on a dry day will keep most dogs happy for ages sniffing out each piece of food. A shoe box filled with screwed up newspaper and loo rolls intermingled with food can be great fun.



There are also many toys and feeders on the market that can be used for enrichment feeding. Think about the breed of the dog in your care. What would they find enriching? How can I feed that side of their nature? If a dog is fed twice a day for example try to find a fun way of feeding them for one of those meals.

[DIY homemade toys](#)

[More enrichment ideas](#)

[Enrichment video](#)

And Finally...

I hope you have found the information in this handbook useful. Foster carers are such special people, they give up their time and their homes to help change the lives and futures of dogs in need and without them many rescues couldn't survive. Fostering isn't for everyone for many reasons but all of us can help in some way, whether it be donating or fundraising or doing home checks. All of us at Lily's are proud to make our small contribution to this worthwhile cause.

Carole, Chris and the Lily's team

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About us

Lily's 4 Paws was opened in 2012 in Cavan two years after Chris and Carole started Lily's Dog Rescue. Originally run as a dog training and boarding business it now offers various canine related accredited courses to dog owners and those considering a career in the canine profession and works nationwide running courses for the public, college and school students and government organisations.

With thanks

We would like to thank all the rescues and volunteers that helped in the writing of the handbook and all the dogs that have passed through our lives and taught us so much.

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