



 **Multnomah
County
Animal Services**

MCAS Foster Care Handbook: Dogs



Introduction

Welcome to the foster program at Multnomah County Animal Services (MCAS). Some pups just need a little extra TLC before they are ready for adoption. Others may be too young for surgery, have an injury, are pregnant, are part of an investigation, or have a behavior or medical concern. We rely on our foster families to help by giving them time and facilitating treatment for our dogs! Thank you for becoming part of the MCAS foster family. We are excited you've joined us in the commitment to help animals.



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Fostering Process

Notification

The Foster Team sends all requests for dog and puppy fosters generally once a week. Additional emails go out, should the need arise. Notifications include information regarding each animal. These include age, breed, weight, special needs, anticipated time length, a photo if allowed, and any other pertinent information. Interested parties should respond to the email or call the Foster Team.

Pickup

At this time, we cannot facilitate meet and greets between fosters or personal pets and eligible foster animals. Please see the section on introductions between dogs and cats on page 19.

1. You will collaborate with the Foster Team to establish a pickup time. Notify them of the need for any supplies. The shelter can generally provide food, a crate, collar, leash, and potty pads.
2. Upon arrival, enter through the administration entrance.
3. Use the buzzer button to notify the front desk staff you have arrived. Tell them you are there to pick up a foster.
4. Once inside, check in with the front desk staff. This team will provide you with the foster agreement to read, sign, and date. If available or necessary, they will provide you with paperwork including medical records, medications, and any other supplies needed.
5. Once signed, the front desk will notify the appropriate team to bring your foster to the lobby.

Follow-up Appointments

Each foster has different follow-up appointment needs. If the foster requires frequent medical appointments, the foster team will note this in the request summary. At minimum, you should expect to come to MCAS at least once a month for rechecks. Please contact Animal Health, at foster-medical-help@multco.us to schedule these appointments.

Adoption

Medical and Behavioral Clearances

Dogs fostered for **medical reasons** must be officially cleared by Animal Health before they can be listed for adoption. This typically happens during a scheduled recheck appointment. Once cleared, these dogs may return to the MCAS shelter for adoption or be listed for adoption out of a foster home.

For dogs in foster care due to **behavioral reasons**, the timeline for adoption is determined by the shelter management team. Management will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the dog should return to the shelter environment or remain in their foster home while searching for a permanent owner.



Preparing the Adoption Profile

Before a dog is listed online, foster parents must provide the Foster Team with a clear photo and a compelling biography. To better engage potential adopters, please write the biography in the first person (from the dog's perspective).

Be sure to highlight the dog's unique quirks, exercise needs, and how they interact with people or other pets. If a dog does not receive interest within the first two weeks, please send a new photo or suggested edits to the bio. Highlighting a different characteristic can often help the right adopter find their perfect match.

The Adoption Process

Once an animal is cleared and the profile is live, foster parents are encouraged to network their foster pets to help find a home. All potential adopters must apply through the official website. Please note that adoptions are processed on a first-come, first-served basis for all qualified applicants.

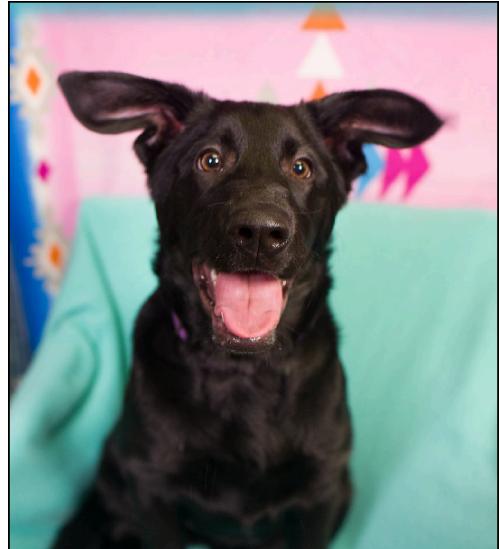
The Basics

Feeding

Unless otherwise specified by Animal Health, adult dogs should receive a decent quality dry dog food. Ensure that the food is breed and size appropriate. Refer to the brand's feeding directions on the bag. Feed your foster dog once or twice a day. You can add canned dog food if desired or needed to encourage eating. Unless otherwise mentioned in this manual, do not feed your foster dog any kind of human food. The following foods are poisonous to dogs:

- Chocolate
- Caffeine
- Grapes/raisins
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Garlic
- Xylitol – ingredient sometimes found in sugar free or low sugar items

Provide your foster access to fresh water at all times. Treats that are formulated for dogs are a great way to train and build relationships. Be mindful to give in moderation and reduce their regular food when treats are plentiful.



Cleaning Up

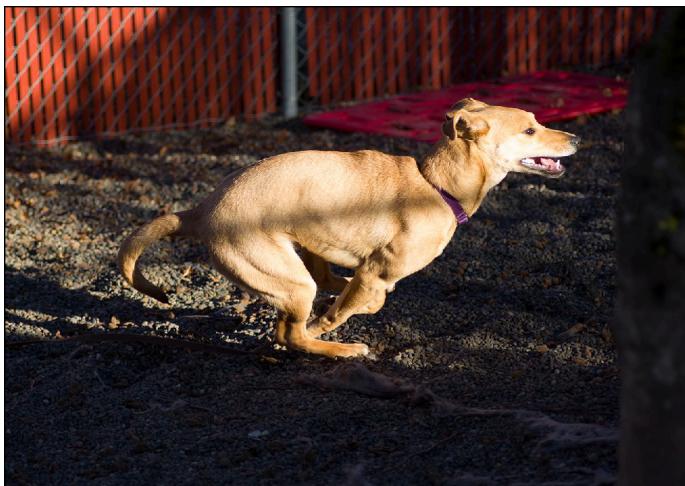
Foster dogs must always have a clean home environment. Wash bedding, blankets, toys, and materials in which they come into contact. In general, you should assume that anything you cannot clean with a 1 to 32 parts bleach and cold-water solution, could have the potential to transmit germs to other pets.

Scoop the yard regularly, ensuring all excrement is removed. Practice good stewardship in our community and always pick up after our dogs when on walks. If you have a dog with something that may be contagious, contact Animal Health for effective cleaning protocols.

Creating a Safe Place to Foster

Prior to bringing home a foster dog, create a plan for when you are not home or able to monitor them. The shelter recommends crate training your foster dog (See Crate Training on pg. 20). If crating is not an option, make a separate space for the dog. Ensure the space separates the dog from any of your personal items and they do not have visibility to a busy street. Street activity such as loud cars, people walking by, or other dogs may be a trigger for reactivity.

Your foster dog's history may be unknown. Some have never experienced home life, been alone, and some may react to unanticipated actions. Dogs express frustration, fear, and/or anxiety in a variety of ways. They may chew, scratch, or have accidents. Dedicating a crate or space to them will minimize the impact on you and your home and set everyone up for long-term success.



Inspect all aspects of your yard and fence. You may foster a dog determined to get out, who is stronger or much smaller than your pets or yard guests. Look for holes, broken boards, gaps between the fence and ground, or items they can climb and jump over. MCAS does not require foster parents to have a fenced yard. If you do not, you must always maintain control of your foster dog. This means on a leash or lead line any time you are outside. MCAS also recommends that your

foster dog drag a leash for the first few times in the yard in case they try to escape. Dogs must be under supervision when outside at all times.

Tools for Fostering

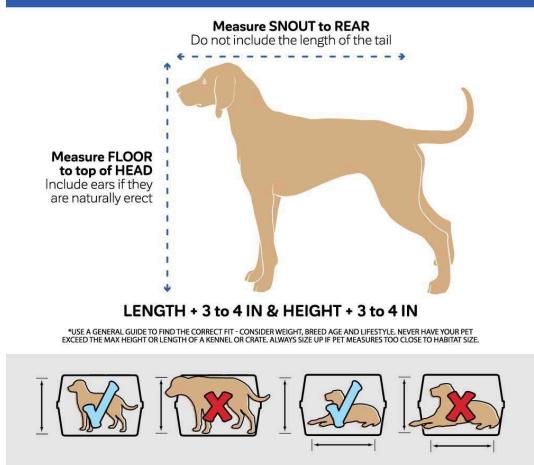
Leash: If outside of a fully confined yard, you must leash your foster at all times. MCAS recommends avoiding flexi-lead/retractable leashes, especially when walking your foster. These leashes make it difficult to maintain control of your dog and can cause serious injuries. Utilize a 4-to-6-foot leash for walks and training opportunities. For times when you need a longer leash, use a long-line and make sure that you are in a secured space away from other dangers.

Collar: Your foster dog must always wear a flat buckle or martingale style collar with an MCAS Foster ID tag. The collar should be snug with the ability to fit only two fingers underneath. MCAS prohibits the use of any form of corrective collar.

Harness: MCAS encourages you to utilize a properly fitting harness for walks with your foster dog. Harness styles vary and all serve slightly different purposes. They all relieve pressure from the neck and create a safer and more enjoyable walking experience for the dog. Let the Foster Team know if you are interested in using a harness or need assistance with fitting a harness for your foster dog.

Crate: A crate can be plastic or wire. The crate should be big enough for the dog to be able to turn around and stand up, but not too much bigger as this can allow them to have a “potty space” and a sleeping space which can delay housetraining.

Need Help Finding the Perfect Fit?



X-Pen/Baby Gates: When appropriately sized, both are great tools. They limit your foster dog's space in the home, while still allowing them to observe and acclimate to normal household activities. MCAS highly recommends these tools for fearful dogs.

Dog toys: Toys should be durable and a safe size for the dog. Avoid items such as rawhides, human toys, and household items such as old socks or shoes. Always pick up all toys when your foster dog is around young children or other pets. Rotating toys can help keep them new and exciting, and provide a unique enrichment activity

without having to spend more money.

Puppies

Set Up

All puppy, or mom and puppy, spaces must include:

- A warming source
- Ability to fully sanitize
- Separate from all household pets
- Puppy proof

You can create this with an x-pen or use a separate room such as a bathroom or laundry room. Puppies are very curious and put everything in their mouths. The space should have nothing harmful or swallowable, such as electrical cords, small children's toys, and anything breakable. If using a bathroom, make sure to close the toilet lid, place toilet paper out of reach and all toiletries are in a cabinet. If using the laundry room, always check the washer and dryer before starting, and ensure all cleaning supplies and chemicals are off the floor.



Feeding

You should always feed pregnant and nursing moms, and all weaned puppies under the age of six months, a food formulated for puppies. All dogs and puppies over three weeks old must always have access to fresh, clean water. Always monitor the food intake of puppies to ensure that each puppy gets enough, and no one is pushed away or blocked from the food.



Each puppy advances at their own rate, so use the below information as guidelines. Begin weaning the puppies at around the age of four weeks. Create a "gruel" from canned puppy food and water. Blend the two into a soupy consistency. Offer this mixture to the puppies. Sometimes you need to help them get the food in their mouths. Be prepared for very messy puppies as they learn to coordinate their bodies.

Over the course of the next week, gradually reduce the amount of water to make the gruel thicker. By week five, begin to introduce soaked kibble. At six weeks, you can offer dry kibble. By eight weeks, they should all be fully weaned. If this happens, or you have any questions during the process, contact the Foster Team.

Bathing

If you have a mom with your puppies, she will most likely take care of cleaning the young pups. Young puppies cannot regulate their body temperature. Due to this, if you need to clean your puppies, try to avoid a full bath. Full submersion in water significantly increases the potential of lowering their body temperature, which can result in sickness and very quickly death.

Instead, use a damp rag or wash cloth. Cleanse only the necessary parts of the puppies. Sometimes, a full submersion bath is necessary. Use warm water and make the process as short as possible. When finished, place them in a warmed towel and ensure that the puppy is fully dried prior to returning to their beds.

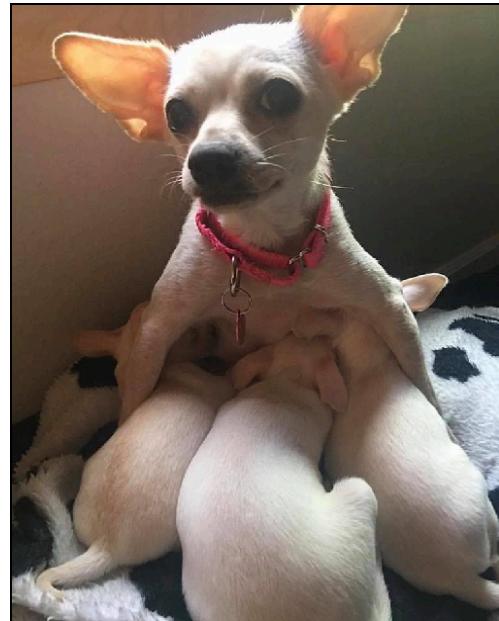
Socialization

Puppy socialization and exposure is crucial for long-term development. You should slowly and intentionally introduce puppies to a variety of people, places, and other pets in the home. Any animal that they come in contact with must be healthy and fully vaccinated. Always avoid places like dog parks or daycares. Create positive associations between your foster puppies and the things they experience. Introduce them to people of all ages, sexes, clothing types, surfaces, toys, and household sounds. This will help them adjust in their new homes. Do not force your puppy to engage with anything that causes them to be afraid. You can find a list of items for exposure at www.multcopets.org/training-resources.

Mother and Litter

Having a mother with a litter is usually easier than having only puppies. Usually, she will feed, clean, and provide total care to the puppies until they start to wean. If possible, keep the mom with the puppies until they reach six weeks old and are ready to be adopted out on their own.

Pregnant moms, or a mom with young puppies, require a quiet, separate space of their own. She may feel more agitated or protective while she is getting ready to give birth or during the time that she has puppies. A low traffic area will help her feel more secure.



Once the puppies reach four weeks, begin allowing the mom some breaks from them.

Gradually increase her time away and the frequency of the time away as the puppies age. If she seems uncomfortable with this, simply allow her the choice to leave without encouraging her. This may look like opening the X-pen door, but not calling her out. She will make the choice when she is ready.

If you feel that the mother is not providing enough care for the puppies or she seems to be distancing herself from the pups, contact the Foster Team.

Weeks	Feeding	Development
0-1	Puppies will eat every 2 - 3 hrs. Confirm all puppies are nursing. Restless or excessively crying puppies can be indicative of a concern .	Handle the puppies minimally . Pay special attention to keeping them warm, as getting chilled is the greatest risk for them .
1-2	Puppies will continue with the same feeding regime	Healthy puppies will be round & warm, wiggly when picked up, rarely cry, eyes & ears beginning to open
2-3	About one ounce every 3 to 4 hours	Beginning to crawl & almost standing up. Beginning to play with each other. Beginning to teeth.
3-4	Eating ~ every 4 hours May start to lap up liquid food from a bowl	Beginning to see well. Beginning to groom themselves. Starting to benefit from playing with their siblings.
4-5	Weaning process slowly begins Offer gruel from a flat dish. See "weaning" section for more details.	Puppies can begin to "meet" normal household inanimate objects. Example: Allow them to observe a vacuum from a comfortable distance
5-6	Feed gruel 4 times a day Gradually thickening the substance. Have a dish of dry food available Dry food can be soaked in water to make it easier to eat	Puppies will begin to wander. Begin introducing them to a variety of toys and surfaces. Make every new interaction a positive one and never force the puppy to do anything they find frightening.
6-7	Feed at least 3 meals a day Should easily eat dry food	Begin introducing potty training
7-8	Continue to offer them dry food meals 3 to 4 times a day	
8+	Feed dry food 3 times daily	Contact the Foster Team to schedule spay or neuter appointments

Court Case Animals

MCAS operates as a branch of law enforcement for Multnomah County. As a result, at any time, we are actively investigating a portion of the animals housed.

The law considers these animals as “evidence” in an active court case. Because of this, they must remain in the care of MCAS until case resolution. We have no control over hearing timelines. Cases may last a few days or up to a couple years.

Whenever possible, we try to place the animals into foster homes to minimize the time that they have to stay in the shelter. Foster parents **do not have to commit to the entire time of the case**. Just a few weeks out of the shelter can prevent the mental and behavioral decline that often occurs in high-stress kennel environments. If you foster a court case animal, and have another commitment, you can collaborate with the Foster Team to provide alternate temporary or permanent placement.



In the same way that evidence is very carefully tracked and handled in the legal system, these animals must also be very carefully handled. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- No photographs – No social media posts
- No unmonitored time outside
- No discussions with outside parties about their cases or condition

These animals come with some extra work and rules, but they are often some of the most grateful creatures in our care. Your home may be the first family that has ever provided them with

stable affection or a warm bed to call their own. **Common Behavior Concerns**

Your foster dog has experienced several transitions over the last few days. Everyone and everything is new and strange. When first brought home, give the foster time, space, and minimal stimulation. This allows the animal to decompress from all the recent activities. Give them time to adjust and go slow with introductions to new things. Unfortunately, some dogs have never seen



common household items such as stairs, TVs, or toys.

We do our best to provide you with any behavior information available, but in general, we cannot know everything you will experience. Since their history and behaviors are usually unknown, never leave them unattended with children or other pets.

MCAS takes a strong stand against any form of corrective or aversive training methods. MCAS requires foster parents to avoid using these methods. The dog's ultimate success relies on a consistent training plan from home to shelter, and on to their new home.

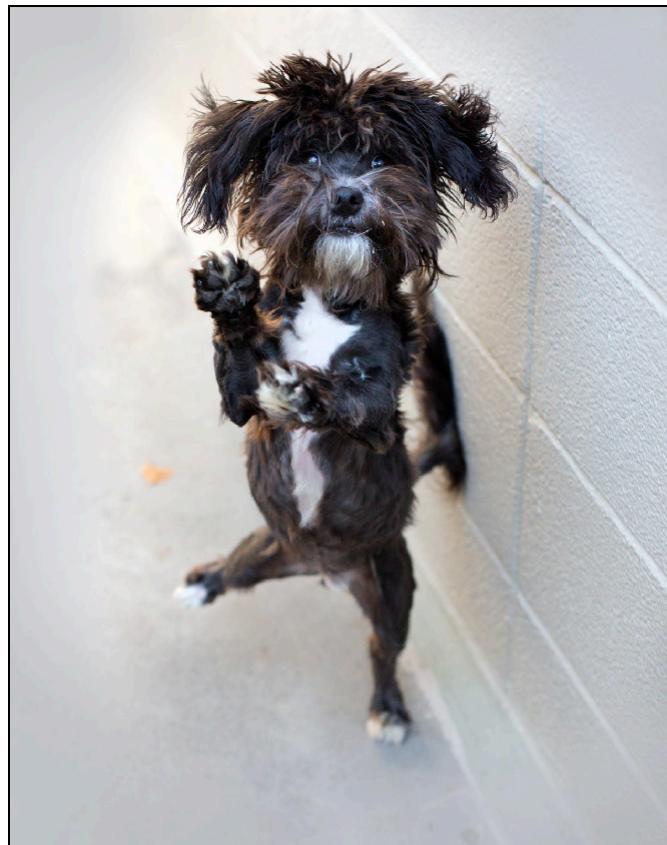
If you feel that behavioral modification is necessary, you have concerns, or feel uncomfortable with your foster dog's behavior, contact the Foster Team as soon as possible. **You are always supported.** MCAS can provide training tips or resources or find another placement for any reason.

Resource Guarding

Your foster dog may feel the need to protect their items or space. This is known as *resource guarding*. They may show their discomfort by freezing, growling, snarling, and/or snapping. **Never punish your dog** for exhibiting these behaviors as this is likely to make the problem worse. Your foster dog may not have always had consistent access to needed resources or valued items. This may be the only way they know how to communicate. Notify the Foster Team of any guarding you notice.

Tips for improving resource guarding:

- Teach them to share by strengthening your bond with them through basic obedience. They learn that we provide good things when they respond to our communications.
- Limit the situations where they may feel the need to guard. If it's a food item, try feeding them in a crate or in a separate room and make sure that no one disturbs them.
- Teach your dog to trade. Offer them a higher value item than what they are protecting. Call them to you and give them a treat. Always return the original item to them after they have taken the treat. Utilize the command "trade" for this exercise.
- If they are guarding a space such as a bed or couch, teach the dog "off". Utilize high value food to lure them off the item. You should also limit their exposure to this item when possible. Close a door or place something uncomfortable in the space to discourage them going to it.



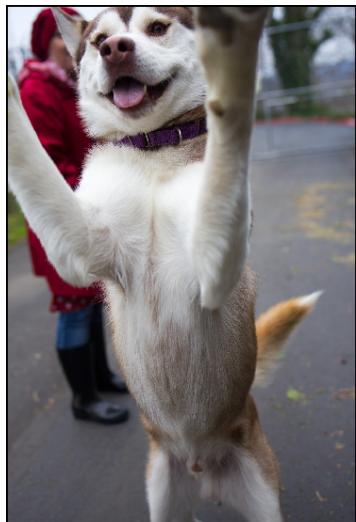
Separation Anxiety

Your foster dog may feel distress by being left home alone. They are adjusting to a lot of change, and this can cause higher levels of anxiety as they try to learn their new routine. Separation anxiety can vary in symptoms and intensity. Examples include pacing, whining, restlessness, barking, whereas a more intense reaction may include things like inappropriate elimination, destruction of objects, escape attempts, and self-injury. Report any persistent minor symptoms or any severe symptoms to the Foster Team. Separation anxiety signs are difficult to identify in the shelter environment, meaning we may not be able to notify you ahead of time. Proactivity to prevent any anxiety is your best chance at success.

Tips to help ensure a smooth transition to your home:

- Before you leave, exercise your foster dog for 20 - 30 minutes.
- Provide them with a long lasting, special, and safe treat for your departure.
- Leave and return calmly. Ignore over excitement upon your return and only interact with them once they have calmed.
- Perform aspects of your leaving routine at random times throughout the day. Grab your keys and then make dinner. Put on your coat and then sit with them. This will desensitize your foster to your “leaving routine,” making each exit less stressful.
- Utilize pheromone products - Speak with the Foster Team prior to using these.
- Only leave for a short period of time at first. Assess how your foster did in your absence to assure they remain safe when you are not home.

Jumpy Mouthy



Dogs commonly get over excited. This often manifests as greeting people by jumping up, clawing, or using their mouths. Be sure to discourage these actions as they often lead to accidental injury.

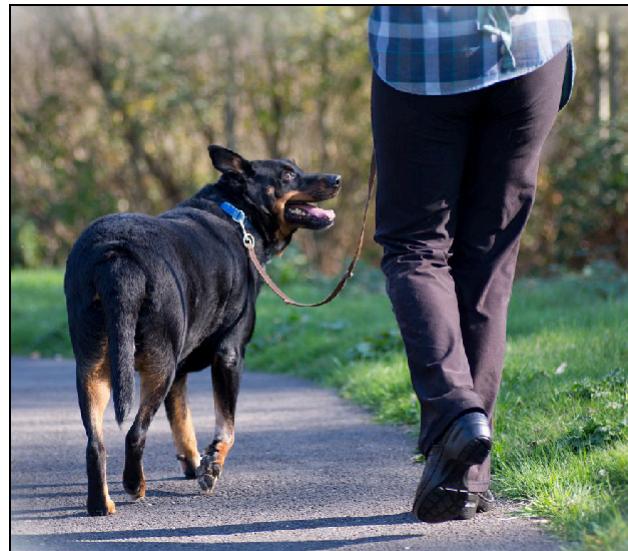
Tips for teaching appropriate excitement:

- Make sure your foster dog gets enough exercise.
- Completely ignore your dog when they jump on you. Turn your back to them instead of pushing them off with your hands. Even negative attention can reinforce the behavior.
- Reward them for four on the floor or sitting. Start this process when they are less excited and gradually work your way up to a time that is more exciting, like your return.
- Instruct other people coming to your home to engage with your dog in the same fashion.

Reactivity

Over reactivity can manifest in many ways. Examples include hiding, barking, lunging, or growling. Reactivity can happen in numerous situations, but is most common when a dog sees something through a window, fence, or while on a leash. If your foster dog presents with any of these behaviors, but is not easily redirected with food or a happy voice, contact the Foster Team. The best method to reduce reactivity is to avoid triggers and use the following tips:

- Pick a low-traffic walking path
- Pay attention to your dog's body language. Watch for subtle signs of discomfort:
 - Erect tail
 - Freezing, stiff or raised body
 - Puffing of cheeks
 - Raised hackles
 - Slowed or lowered walking
- Keep distance from your dog and the trigger object. Cross the street to avoid a dog barking from a yard or another dog on a leash coming toward you.
- Always have treats on hand. Give your dog treats while they are at a comfortable distance from the trigger in order to create a positive association between the treats and the trigger.



Fear

Fear can form from lack of proper socialization or a negative correlation. Dogs present several indicators of discomfort. See the infographic on page 22 for body language guidance. Identifying the more subtle signs of fear can enable you to avoid placing your foster dog in a stressful situation. This reduces the risk of the dog presenting a more exaggerated response such as growling, snapping, or biting. When fostering, we hope to reduce uncomfortable situations for your dog. For example, if they show signs of fear around quick or unexpected movements, avoid having them around small children. Notify the Foster Team of situations that make your foster dog uncomfortable.

Housetraining

Patience is key to housetraining. Your foster dog may be completely housetrained but still have accidents. They do not know your routines, you may not know their cues, they may have had potty pads or a dog door or they may have had a setback while they were in the shelter. There are other times where your foster dog genuinely does not know how to go potty where it is appropriate.

Guidelines for dogs and puppies over 8 weeks old:

- Determine a consistent place where you want your foster to eliminate and take them there every time.
- Take them out every time there is a transition in activities such as:
 - Waking up
 - After eating or drinking
 - After play time
 - At least once every two hours for adults & every 45 minutes for puppies.
- Once outside, stand with them for five minutes.
 - If they eliminate, reward them with a treat or praise; whatever excites them most.
 - If they do not eliminate, take them back inside, and try again every 15 minutes until success.
- Supervise closely while inside. Watch for wandering and sniffing. When this starts, quickly take them out to the elimination area.

If they do have an accident in the house, **do not correct them**. Simply clean the area with an odor neutralizer and reinstate the schedule. Punishment can have several damaging side effects and make housetraining much more difficult.

Use a crate when you cannot monitor the dog or puppy. This helps to prevent them from practicing improper elimination and make the housetraining process much easier. Ask for help from the Foster Team as needed.

Meeting other dogs

Our standard policy is that we do not facilitate dog to dog meets prior to sending a dog to foster.

Please know that even a dog who was previously noted to be dog social may not get along with your dog and caution should be used. You should introduce your foster dog to each of your dogs individually. It is best to introduce them outside in an open, secure space. All



high value items should be removed.

- Recruit a second person to help you.
- Put your resident dog out in the yard or in a separate room or crate. Allow the foster dog to explore your home off leash. They will want to check out all the rooms, toys and smells. They should be allowed to do this without the resident dog getting in the way.
- Leash both dogs and take them for a parallel walk around the block. This allows them to casually see each other but not have to engage and provides a neutral ground to meet. Keep them separate if possible. Walk them on the outside of you and have the two people walk together.
- If the walk seems to go well, take them back to your yard and allow them to meet on leash. Hold the leash at the beginning and move with the dog to prevent the leash from having tension on it or becoming tangled. It can feel a bit awkward but allows you to pull them apart easily if it is not going well.
- Next, drop the leashes and allow them to interact freely. Let them drag the leashes for the first several minutes.
- Continue to monitor all interactions. Never leave your foster dog with your dog unattended.
- Contact the Foster Team if you have questions or are having any concerns about the interaction.

Introducing Cats

MCAS rarely knows your foster dog's history with cats. Even if they have been noted to be good with cats, still use caution. A new home is exciting. We recommend waiting at least a week, preferably two before introducing them. Prior to face-to-face introduction, keep them entirely separate. They can still smell each other under the door or through a gate. They will know that the other exists without pressure to engage.



How to facilitate a face to face introduction:

1. Keep your foster dog on a leash and allow your cat to roam freely. If you have several cats, introduce them one at a time.
2. Allow the cat to approach the foster dog.
3. Calmly separate them if you see that either animal is becoming overly aroused or displaying aggression.
4. The interaction should be positive for everyone, and no negative reactions should be corrected.
5. If it does not go well, simply separate them, and contact the Foster Team for guidance.

Crate Training

The goal of crate training is to make the crate the dog's most comfortable place in your home. Create a cozy and welcoming environment for them. Put their favorite blanket in it, placing the crate where they can watch you and not feel isolated, like your office while you work, or the living room while you watch. Place their food and water in the crate.

1. Begin by encouraging the dog to go in on their own. Toss treats inside to help them practice going in the crate. Leave the door open. Continue this until they go in and out easily on their own.
2. Toss a couple treats and close the door. Open it immediately and praise them. Allow them to leave. Repeat this several times.
3. Toss treats, close the door, and wait 15 to 30 seconds. Treat and praise them again. Let them out.
4. Continue to gradually increase the crate time without you leaving the room. Do it while watching TV or reading a book. Make sure they can see you the entire time.
5. Toss a treat in the crate, close the door, and walk out of the room. Come right back. Treat, praise and let them out. Repeat several times. Begin increasing the time before your return.
6. Ideally, you would practice this routine for a couple of days before leaving the dog at home alone.
7. You should only leave them alone for a very short time at first. Never leave them the first time for an entire working shift.

Move through this process as slowly as needed to prevent panic. Use several short, 5-7 minute sessions throughout the day. With unknown histories, we can't predict how they will respond. Some may be perfectly crate trained and love it. Others may take some time. Dogs can take a wide spectrum of time to be comfortable with crate training, but we find only a low instance of animals who cannot ultimately acclimate. It is best to use a low-stress method of crate training from the beginning in order to set them up for success. Contact the Foster Team if you have any concerns.

Do not introduce pets that do not live in your home to your foster dog. **MCAS prohibits off leash areas and off leash dog parks.** As a rule of thumb, always enable the five-foot rule: keep all non-household pets at least five feet from your foster dog. Sometimes people will insist on an introduction. Inform them that this is a foster dog in training and ask that they refrain.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



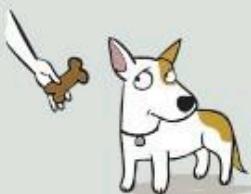
Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



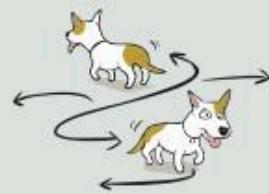
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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Common Health Concerns

All dogs should receive health exams before going into foster care. Any known health concerns will be discussed with the foster parent prior to pick up. However, it is possible for symptoms to develop after the dogs are taken home. Because of this, it is very important to keep your foster dogs in a separate area, with separate bedding and without contact to your other household animals for two weeks. MCAS is not responsible for treating any other animals in the foster home, even if something is shared from a foster pet.



It is expected that all veterinary care will be provided by MCAS or the approved emergency veterinarian (see pg. 26) under an emergency situation only. A foster parent may not take a foster pet to any other veterinarian. No medications, prescription or otherwise, are allowed to be given to foster pets unless previously authorized by MCAS veterinarian staff. Failure to follow this rule may result in no longer being a foster parent with MCAS. Any unauthorized veterinary care will not be reimbursed by MCAS.

Fleas

MCAS will administer flea treatment before sending your foster dog home with you. You may still see live fleas or flea debris for the next 24 hours as treatment works through the system. Contact Animal Health to schedule follow up treatments.

Ear Infections

Dogs commonly experience ear infections, but certain breeds or dogs with long, floppy ears are more susceptible. Ear infections will commonly have brown or yellow discharge, redness, and a bad odor. Dogs will often shake their heads or paw at their ears to soothe the itch. We can easily treat straightforward ear infections, but some are harder due to underlying conditions, such as allergies. Contact Animal Health if you suspect your dog may have an infection.

Ear Mites

A dog with ear mites will have crusty black debris that looks like coffee grounds in their ears. The dog may scratch their ears, shake or tilt their head and/or have a foul odor. Treatment is simple with medication, though sometimes more than one treatment is required for complete resolution.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be caused by a variety of things, including a change in diet and stress. You should expect soft stool or diarrhea the first couple days after coming to your home. Persistent diarrhea without improvement may indicate something more serious.

Contact Animal health if:

- Diarrhea persists for more than 72 hours (adults)
- Diarrhea persists for more than 24 hours (puppies)
- Diarrhea contains blood
- Your foster has diarrhea and any other sign of illness, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, hypersalivation with excessive lip licking, or vomiting.



Vomiting

Stress or diet change can also cause vomiting. If the vomiting continues for more than 48 hours in adult dogs and 24 hours in puppies or is accompanied with lethargy or loss of appetite, contact Animal Health.

Kennel Cough

Low Stress Medicating Tips

- ★ Hide the pill
 - Cheese
 - Liver sausage
 - Peanut Butter
 - Canned dog food
 - Bread
 - Pill pockets
- ★ Use your hands
 - Hold the dog's head and gently tilt it back
 - Drop the pill on the back of the tongue
 - Close the mouth and hold it shut while you run your hand on their throat or blow gently on their nose until you feel them swallow.
 - Follow with food and praise

Kennel Cough is similar to the human cold. It can be caused by either a bacteria or a virus. It commonly appears as a hacking cough but may also be present with sneezing, eye discharge and nasal discharge. The dog may cough up a foamy mucus that can be confused with vomiting. Mild episodes of kennel cough can be monitored and do not require treatment. If your foster dog has colored discharge, persistent coughing/sneezing or any symptom accompanied by lethargy, Animal Health should be contacted. Kennel cough is **highly contagious** to other dogs and they should be kept separate from all other dogs for **at least 2 weeks after** symptoms resolve. Wash your hands and arms up to your elbows and consider changing clothing after interactions with these dogs.

Parvovirus

Parvovirus is a **highly contagious and serious illness** in dogs. It usually presents in young puppies, but an occasional, not fully-vaccinated adult dog can also contract it. The symptoms include bloody diarrhea, persistent vomiting, and lethargy. Immediately report puppies with any of these symptoms to Animal Health. Isolate the puppy from other dogs, in an area easily disinfected, until seen by Animal Health.

Luxating Patellas

This is a condition where the kneecap will slip in and out of place as the dog moves. Luxating patellas are common in small breed dogs but can happen to any dog. It varies in severity but usually does not require treatment or surgery. You may observe the dog have a skip in their step, hold up a leg for a period of time while walking or running or bow out their back legs.

Tips for a finicky eater:

- Add no sodium chicken or beef broth to their dry food
- Canned dog food
- Boiled chicken and cooked rice
- Single ingredient meat human baby food (*no onions*)
- Freeze dried foods
- Use low fat options when possible

Emergencies

For emergencies between the hours of 8AM and 5:30PM:

1. Email the medical team at foster-medical-help@multco.us AND call 503-988-9075. Leave a message.
2. Come to the shelter **immediately!** Do not wait for a response.
3. Please have the animal ID number with you and provide this number at all points of contact whenever possible but do not let it delay you.

For emergencies between the hours of 5:30PM and 8AM:

- In case of an emergency or suspected emergency, call and/or take the animal to the following approved, after-hours veterinary clinic:

Dove Lewis
1945 NW Pettygrove St
Portland, OR 97209
503-228-7281

- If possible, bring your foster's medical records with you.
- Upon arrival at the ER clinic, tell them the animal is a foster with MCAS. This ensures that the care goes under MCAS's file along with follow-up and billing. They will not charge you for the care provided.
- Notify MCAS as soon as possible that you have taken an animal to an after-hours veterinarian via email at foster-medical-help@multco.us and a call to 503-988-9075. Please include the animal number in your message.
- **DoveLewis Emergency Animal Hospital** is the only authorized outside facility for emergency care.

Not Immediately Concerning - Appropriate to Monitor

- Kennel Cough (mild to moderate)
- Clear ocular/nasal discharge, sneezing or coughing
- Dog is otherwise eating and active
- Poor appetite of less than 48 hours (dog is otherwise doing well)
- Lethargy (low energy) of less than 48 hours
- Vomiting of less than 24 hours (dog still active and eating)
- Diarrhea of less than 3 days (dog still active and eating)
- Lack of bowel movement for less than 48 hours
- Weight loss of less than 10%

Non-Emergency - Notify Animal Health at
foster-medical-help@multco.us

- Kennel Cough (severe)
- Significant ocular/nasal discharge, sneezing or coughing
- Any degree of signs where the dog is also lethargic or anorexic
- Diarrhea
- No stool improvement after 3 days (if dog is active and eating)
- Diarrhea lasting 24 hours (if dog is lethargic and anorexic)
- Vomiting
- No improvement after 24 hours (if dog is active and eating)
- Vomiting of less than 24 hours (if dog is lethargic and anorexic)
- Poor appetite of over 48 hours
- Lethargy of more than 48 hours
- Lack of bowel movement of over 48 hours
- Weight loss of more than 10%
- Hair loss
- Skin, ear or eye infections
- Mild trauma, pain or lameness
- Mild bleeding that is no longer active
- Seizures (a single, short-lasting one)
- **Puppies:** 24 hours of diarrhea, lethargy or poor appetite

Emergency - Requires Immediate Attention –
See “Emergencies” on previous page for guidance

- Unresponsive or collapsed
- Severe trauma or pain
- Labored or difficulty breathing
- No urine production after 24 hours of straining to urinate
- Significant active bleeding
- Seizures (more than 3 in a 24 hour period or one lasting more than 3 minutes)
- Continuous vomiting over 24 hours and unable to hold down food/water

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I let my foster dog interact with my personal pets?

A: We do the best we can to notify foster parents of all known illnesses that a dog may have. Unfortunately, they may be carrying a disease or parasite without showing symptoms for quite some time. We highly recommend keeping foster dogs and personal pets separate at all times. At a minimum, we recommend a two-week quarantine period. Personal pets must be up to date on vaccines, parasite preventatives and be healthy.

Q: How much personal time will I need to dedicate while fostering a dog?

A: The time commitment varies with each dog. A bottle baby puppy requires feeding every 2 hours around the clock, but a senior dog may only need a brief walk or a short play session. Many foster parents work full time jobs or have other commitments. Work with the Foster Team to find a dog that matches your lifestyle.

Q: How does medical treatment work with an MCAS foster pet?

A: As an MCAS foster parent, you will be required to work with our onsite veterinary staff for all routine care and emergencies that occur during the hours of 8AM and 5:30PM. This may mean several visits to our location throughout the time you have the foster animal.

Q: How long will I be fostering each pet?



A: Fostering durations vary depending on each dog's individual needs. Usually, MCAS asks for a two to four week placement, though some dogs may need a significantly longer placement time. The request for foster will provide you with an expected time frame.

Q: What are the common reasons that dogs need fostering?

A: Dogs require foster care for numerous reasons, including puppies who are too young for adoption, animals with specific medical or behavioral needs, and those involved in ongoing legal investigations or holds.

Q: Will I get reimbursed for things that I buy for my foster?

A: While we truly appreciate the extra care you provide, our policy does not allow for the reimbursement of outside purchases. To support you, we will continue to supply all necessary basics—including food and litter—for as long as your foster animal is with you.

Q: What should I do if my foster dog bites someone?

A: If your foster dog bites someone and breaks the skin, please notify the Foster Team within **24 hours**. Per legal requirements, all bites must be documented and the dog must undergo a 10-day quarantine. This applies to all bites, including accidental or "play" bites. During this period, the dog must remain either at your home or the shelter, depending on the severity and circumstances of the incident. In either location, the dog must be kept strictly isolated from new people and pets. The final determination regarding the quarantine location is at the discretion of the shelter. We are here to guide you through this process and support both you and the dog.

Q: What should I do if my foster dog escapes?

A: If your foster dog escapes, make every attempt to get them back into the home as soon as possible. If you lose track of them, contact the Foster Team immediately and file a lost report on the MCAS lost and found page.

Q: What if I want to adopt one of my foster dogs?

A: We love it when our fosters decide to make it official! You are always welcome to adopt your foster dog or puppy. If the animal is already **listed for adoption**, you must apply online through the MCAS adoptions website. Please note that we review applications in the order they are received. However, if they **aren't listed yet**, simply reach out to the Foster Team; they'll send you a direct link to apply. Once you've submitted your application, an adoption counselor will contact you to walk you through the final steps.

Q: What if one of my friends or family members wants to adopt?

A: We invite you to share your foster's story with friends, family, and your social networks to help them find the perfect match. If you find a potential match, please send the person's full name, email, and phone number to the Foster Team. We'll follow up with a link to our application. If the animal is already listed on our website, please ask them to apply directly there.

Additional Resources

- www.aspcapro.org - A resource for a variety of topics regarding shelter animals and their care.
- www.maddiesfund.org-Another - A great resource for a wide variety of information including many how-to videos.
- www.sfsPCA.org - San Francisco SPCA has an online dog behavior library. Also has a great packet on hospice fostering and kitten fostering.
- <https://humaneColorado.org> - Humane Colorado has an extensive behavior library.
- www.dovelewis.org/pet-owners/pet-loss-support - Dove Lewis has a wide range of Pet Loss Support resources including art therapy, remembrance ceremonies, and grief support.
- <https://bestfriends.org/resources/cats> - Best Friends is the largest No-Kill Animal Sanctuary in the United States. Their website is full of great behavior and medical tips.
- www.dunbaracademy.com - Dunbar offers a vast website with both free and for purchase resources to learn about dog behavior.