DOG & PUPPY ADOPTION

GMHS
Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society

GLOUCESTER-MATHEWS HUMANE SOCIETY

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Gloucester, VA 23061
(804) 693-5520
www.gmhumanesociety.org

Dog & Puppy Care Information Package Contents

Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society Contacts

General Questions

Adoption Counselors 804-693-5520
animalplacement@gmhumanesociety.org

DOG Animal Behavior Questions

Sharon Paul, Canine Enrichment and Behavior Coordinator

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Medical Questions

Medical Staff 804-693-5520

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Other Questions or Other Assistance

Jasmine Jutras

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Shopping List for Puppies or Dogs

Food

- Feed your dog a dry, high quality, brand-name puppy or dog food (avoid generic brands).

- Dogs are carnivores so their diet must consist of meat for them to remain healthy. Choose a brand that has real meat (not byproducts) as its #1 ingredient.

- Purina One, Purina Pro-Plan are great options, which are two foods we feed our cats at the shelter. Other great options are Science Diet, Eukanuba, Nutro. It is best to avoid, for dry food, Gravy Train, Pedigree Dog Chow,

- Choose food appropriate for your pet. Puppy, weight management, large breed, or senior food may be the type your dog needs depending on his/her age, size, and weight.

Food/Water Bowls

- Stainless steel is recommended as plastic bowls can hold bacteria. For some dogs, you may have to investigate weighted bowls.

Crate

- Choose one that is sturdy and the correct size. As a minder, the dog should be able to stand up inside the crate and be able to turn around.

Collar

- We recommend martingale collars that help with reducing pulling and to help with training.

Leash

- We do not recommend retractable leashes as these are a safety concern, and they do nothing to train your dog.

Identification Tag

- If you adopted your dog from GMHS then your dog has a microchip that is already registered. However, you must keep it up to date.

- We do recommend that you attach an ID tag along with your rabies tag.

Toys/Treats

- Choose treats that promote chewing and aid in cleaning teeth. Brands we recommend, especially for hard chewers, are Nylabone and Kong. Training treats are also great for training and teeth cleaning.

- Push toys are also great! Just be mindful of the squeaker inside the toy if your dog destroys the plush toy so they do not swallow it.

Dog Toys and How to Use Them

"Safe" Toys

Many factors contribute to the safety or danger of a toy, and several of them depend upon your dog's size, activity level, and preferences. Another factor is the environment in which your dog spends his time. Although we can't guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or their safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines.

Be Cautious

The things that are usually most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Dog-proof your home by safely storing string, ribbon, rubber bands, children's toys, pantyhose, and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes, or other parts that could be chewed or ingested. Discard toys that are starting to break into pieces or have pieces torn off.

Ask your veterinarian which rawhide toys are safe and which aren't. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears, and rawhides should only be played with under your supervision. Very hard rubber toys are safe and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the sources of the squeaking, and they could ingest it – in which case squeaking objects should also be used under your supervision.

Recommended Toys

Active Toys

Very hard rubber toys, such as Nylabone - type products and Kong - type products, are available in a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.

“Rope” toys are usually available in “bone” shape with knotted ends.

Tennis balls make great dog toys but keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through and discard them.

Distraction Toys

Kong-type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats – or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and peanut butter – can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog get to the treats, and then only in small bits. Doublecheck with your veterinarian about whether you should give peanut butter to your dog. Be sure to choose a Kong-type toy of appropriate size for your dog.

“Kong Wobblers” toys are large rubber toys with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the toys around with his nose, mouth, and paws can your dog get to the goodies.

Comfort Toys

Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes but aren’t appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs who want to shake or “kill” the toy, the toy should be the size that “prey” would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size, or duck-size).

Dirty laundry, such as an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel, or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if the item smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying, and nosing.

Get the Most Out of Toys!

Rotate your dog's toys weekly by making only a few toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. Changing toys avoids boredom for your dog.

Hide-and-seek is a fun game for dogs. "Found" toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is obviously introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good "rainy-day" activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space.

Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because they need active "people time" - and such play also enhances the bond between you and your pet. By focusing on a specific task – such as repeatedly returning a ball, Kong, or Frisbee, or playing hide-and-seek with treats or toys – your dog can expel pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation, and boredom. For young, high-energy, and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, such as jumping up or being mouthy.

Positive Reinforcement

Training Your Dog with Treats and Praise

We all like to be praised rather than punished. The same is true for your pet, and that's the theory behind positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement means giving your pet something pleasant or rewarding immediately after they do something you want them to do. Because your praise or reward makes them more likely to repeat that behavior in the future, it is one of your most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet's behavior.

Correct timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately – within seconds – or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if you have your dog "sit" but reward them after they have already stood back up, they will think they are being rewarded for standing up.

Consistency is also essential. Everyone in the family should use the same commands. It might help to post these where everyone can become familiar with them. The most used commands for dogs are:

- "Sit"
- "Stay"
- "Down" (which means "lie down")
- "Off" (which means "get off of me" or "get off the furniture"
- "Stand"
- "Come"
- "Heel" (or "let's go" or "with me")
- "Leave it"
- "Settle"

Consistency means always rewarding the desired behavior and never rewarding undesired behavior.

Using Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement training offers several benefits for both dogs and their guardians:

Build a Trusting and Lasting Bond: Positive reinforcement strengthens the bond between dogs and their guardians by promoting trust and mutual respect. Dogs perceive their guardians as kind leaders rather than dominators, leading to a more harmonious relationship.

Gentle and Non-Aversive Approach: Unlike more traditional training methods that involve physical force or harsh punishments, positive reinforcement relies on rewards and positive feedback. This gentle approach avoids causing fear or anxiety in dogs, creating a safe and enjoyable training environment.

Motivate Dogs with Their Favorite Rewards: Positive reinforcement allows trainers to use a dog's favorite motivators, such as treats, toys, or praise, to reinforce desired behaviors. By associating these rewards with positive actions, dogs become motivated to engage in training and learn new cues or tricks effectively.

Progresses from Simple to Complex Behaviors: Positive reinforcement training starts with basic commands and gradually goes to more complex behaviors. By breaking down tasks into smaller steps, dogs can grasp each concept and build upon their existing skills, leading to successful learning outcomes.

Boosts Confidence and Openness to New Experiences: Positive reinforcement training helps build a dog's confidence and willingness to explore new environments, interact with unfamiliar people, and engage in various activities. It instills a sense of security and encourages dogs to approach new situations positively.

Tips for Effective Positive Reinforcement Training

To maximize the benefits of positive reinforcement training, consider the following tips:

Understand Your Dog's Motivations: Identify what motivates your dog, whether it's treats, toys, praise, or a combination thereof. Knowing their preferences allows you to tailor the rewards to their individual needs and increase the effectiveness of the training.

Use Variable Reinforcement Schedules: Implementing variable reinforcement schedules, where rewards are given intermittently rather than consistently, can help maintain your dog's motivation and prevent over-reliance on treats. This technique encourages dogs to engage in desired behaviors.

Gradually Reduce Treat Dependency: As your dog becomes proficient in responding to cues, gradually decrease treat frequency and rely more on verbal praise and other non-food rewards. This helps avoid treat dependency and ensures that your dog responds reliably in various situations.

Keep Training Sessions Short and Engaging: Short and frequent training sessions are more effective than long, exhaustive sessions. Keep the training sessions engaging and end them positively to maintain your dog's enthusiasm and focus.

Practice in Different Environments: If your dog maintains success, expose them to various environments and gradually increase distractions during training. By practicing in different settings, your dog learns to generalize their training and respond to commands regardless of the surroundings.

Resources:

https://www.gooddog-academy.com/blog/pros-cons-positive-reinforcement-dog-training

Crate Training Your Dog

Crate training takes some time and effort, but it is a proven way to help train dogs who act inappropriately without knowing any better. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit their access to the house until they learn all the house rules – like what they can and can't chew on and where they can and can't eliminate. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car or taking them places where they may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, they will think of it as their safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed.

As a reminder – **NEVER** use the crate as punishment. The crate should be a safe place.

Selecting a Crate

Crates may be plastic (often called "flight kennels") or collapsible, metal pens. They come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores. Your dog's crate should be just large enough for them to stand up and turn around in. If your dog is still growing, choose a crate that will accommodate their adult size. However, if your puppy is still learning house training, then the crate should not be so big where the dog can eliminate waste and still have good distance from it in the crate. Block off the excess crate space so your dog can't eliminate at one end and retreat to the other.

The Crate Training Process

Crate training can take weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament, and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training: The crate should always be associated with something pleasant, and training should take place in a series of small steps. Don't go too fast. You must be patient!

Step 1: Introducing Your Dog to the Crate

Place the crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Bring your dog over to the crate and talk to them in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is open and secured so that it won't hit your dog and frighten him.

To encourage your dog to enter the crate, drop some small food treats nearby, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If they refuse to go all the way in at first, that's okay; don't force them to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate util your dog walks calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If they

are not interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days.

Step 2: Feeding Your Dog Their Meals in the Crate

After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding them their regular meals near it. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, place the food dish all the way at the back of the crate. If your dog remains reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as they will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed them, please put the dish a little further back in the crate.

Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat their meal, you can close the door while they are eating. The first time you do this, open the door as soon as they finish their meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until they are staying in the crate for 10 minutes or so after eating. If they begin to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving them in the crate for a shorter time. If they do whine or cry in the crate, it's imperative that you not let them out until they stop. Otherwise, they will learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine, so they will keep doing it.

Resources:

https://www.humaneworld.org/

House Training

Housetraining a puppy or dog requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. By following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several). The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy or dog will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain; you must be patient!

Establish a Routine

Your dog will do best if they are taken outside on a consistent and frequent schedule. They should have the opportunity to eliminate after waking up from a nap, after playing, and after eating.

Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your dog on a leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Taking them for a walk or playing with them directly after they have eliminated will help them to associate good things with elimination. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels and leave them in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place they are supposed to eliminate. While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like “go potty”, that you can eventually use before they eliminate to remind them what they are supposed to be doing.

Praise your puppy lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him or treat him immediately after he’s finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital; because rewarding your puppy with eliminating outdoors is the only way he’ll know that this is appropriate behavior.

If possible, put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he’ll eliminate at consistent times as well. This makes house training easier for both of you.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don’t give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. They should always be watched when they are indoors. Watch for signs that they need to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take them outside, on a leash, to their bathroom spot. If they eliminate, praise them lavishly and reward them with a treat. You can say things like “Good Potty” as an example.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, they should be confined to an area small enough that they won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for them to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around. This area could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room, blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your dog and use the crate to confine them.

When Accidents Happen

Expect your dog to have an accident in the house – it's a normal part of housetraining.

When you catch them in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt them, like make a startling noise but never yell at them. Immediately take them to their bathroom spot, praise them, and give them a treat if he finishes eliminating there.

Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house! If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking them to the spot, and scolding them (or any other punishment or discipline) will only make them afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after that fact, even if it's only seconds later. Punishment will only do harm.

Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

Other Types of House Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your dog continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for their behavior.

Medical Problems: House soiling can often be caused by physical problems, such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your local veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.

Fearful/Excitement Urination: Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings or intense play. There are ways to work on this through behavior training.

Separation Anxiety: Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization. Training with this behavior usually helps.

Fears or Phobias: When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your dog is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, they may house soil when they are exposed to these sounds. There are training methods to help with this, and other things such as "Thunder Jackets" if the fear is loud noises.

Introducing Your New Dog to Your Resident Dog

Like most animals who live in groups, dogs establish their own social structure, sometimes called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict, and promote cooperation among pack members. Dogs also establish territories, which they may defend against intruders or rivals. Obviously, dogs' social and territorial nature affect their behavior whenever a new dog is introduced to the household.

We always tell adopters that even if the meet and greet at the shelter went well, we recommend following the techniques below to ensure safety!

Introduction Techniques

Choose a Neutral Location

Introduce the dogs in a neutral location so that your resident dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. With both dogs on leashes, the introductions begin in an area unfamiliar to each, such as a park or a neighbor's yard. If you frequently walk your resident dog in a nearby park, your dog may view that area as their territory, too, so choose a less familiar site.

Another good option is taking a walk around the neighborhood before going into your house.

Use Positive Reinforcement

From the first meeting, help both dogs experience "good things" when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other briefly, which is normal canine greeting behavior. As they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice; never use a threatening tone. After a short time, get the attention of both dogs and give each a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as "sit" or "stay." Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with the "happy talk," food rewards, and simple commands.

Being Aware of Body Postures

One body posture that indicates things are going well is a "play-bow." This is an invitation to play, and a posture that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog.

Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hair standing up on one dog's back, teeth baring, deep growls, a stiff-legged gait, or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly getting each dog interested in something else. For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down, and reward each with a treat. The dogs' interest in the treats should prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time and/or at a greater distance from each other.

Take the Dogs Home

When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other's presence without fearful or aggressive responses and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can take them home. By "taking them home" means inside your home.

Space Your Introductions

If you have more than one resident dog in your household, it may be best to introduce the resident dogs to the new dog one at a time. Two or more resident dogs may tend to gang up on the newcomer.

Inside The Home

Once you're inside with the dogs, one recommended tip is to put the resident dog away such as in a bedroom or bathroom. Once that is done, take the new dog around the house to smell the smells of the resident dog. This is scent swapping. In return, put the new dog away and then let the resident dog walk around to smell where the new dog went.

Monitoring

It is always important to monitor playtime and feeding time. Dogs may develop such behaviors as food aggression or toy aggression, especially when another new dog is present. Monitor feeding times and body language, as well as play time when toys or high value treats are involved. We recommend never to leave the dogs alone in the house until you are positive that the two dogs get along and the dogs are safe to be alone.

Introducing a dog and a cat

How to introduce a dog to a cat depends largely on the individual animals. Some dogs do fine living with cats; others simply cannot live safely with felines. And sometimes, a dog can live with certain cats — depending on their age, temperament, and activity level

— but not others. Even if your dog has successfully lived with cats in the past, or vice versa, it is important to remember that each dog and each cat is an individual, environments are different, and each introduction is different.

Have safe zones

Safe zones for cats is very important, which may include a room that the cat can be in by itself and high places that the dog cannot access. It is important that the cat can retreat to regroup and relax away from the dog and then venture back into dog territory at their own pace. The cat should have access to food, water and litter in this area so no interactions with the dog are forced.

Slow Process

Never force either animal into proximity by holding them, caging them or otherwise restricting their desire to escape. This is stressful and does not help. Aside from it being inhumane, stress is a common reason for cats to break litter box training. Never put a cat in a carrier and let the dog sniff the career, this is extremely stressful and inhumane for cats!

Keep Separated

We recommend keeping the cat and the dog separate, we recommend at least a week, but sometimes you might need more. Have the cat set up in a bedroom or bathroom where the cat has their items such as a litter box, food bowl and water bowl. Allowing the cat and dog smell from under the door gets them used to each other's scent and acknowledges there is a new scent and new animal in the house.

Give this a few days, once that is done, we recommend using a baby gate where the cat and dog can see each other. Place a tall baby gate across the doorway in a room the dog does not need to access. Make sure your cat is not able to get past the gate, either, since this is intended to be a barrier where your dog and cat can see each other but not have no contact.

Let the dog view the cat briefly. Try to get your dog to focus on something else, such as a toy. If necessary, keep your dog on a leash so you can move your dog away if they get riled up. When your dog focuses elsewhere, praise and reward your dog generously. Repeat this thought the day.

If the above steps are too much for the dog, close the door and feed each animal on their side of the door. Swap out blankets or rub a towel over each and exchange, so the cat can get used to the dog's scent and vice-versa.

First Few Weeks

In the first few weeks, observe the trend: ***Are things getting better or worse?***

Monitor interactions until there is a pattern or plateau in their relationship. If the dog is the newcomer, be sure to give plenty of extra attention to the cat so they do not associate this change with reduced attention and affection. Similarly, if the cat is the newcomer, it's a good idea to make sure the dog associates the new guest with good things for them. Always shoot for positive associations.

Resources:

https://bestfriends.org/pet-care-resources/how-introduce-cats-dogs

Kids and Dogs: Being Respectful!

While playing and exploring the world side-by-side, children and dogs can build incredible memories together. However, having a multi-species household requires

educating everyone on how to safely and appropriately interact with one another. Even the most well-tempered dog deserves autonomy and respect, and it's your job to teach your children how to safely interact with dogs.

Teach your child that dogs can be dangerous

It's never a fun topic, but your little one must understand that any dog can bite, including large and small breeds. There's no need to go into gruesome details or scare your child to death about dogs. However, you should explain to your kiddo (in an age-appropriate manner) that not every dog is friendly, and that dogs who're frightened or don't want to be bothered may bite.

Teach your child to respect dogs

It is very important to teach your children to respect your new dog, and all dogs!

Simply put, you must teach your kids that they should be kind to your new dog — and all animals for that matter!

Acknowledging dog consent is important in building a healthy and safe pup-person connection. Essentially, this just means that everyone needs to respect a canine's agency and right to comfort – especially children, who tend to act impulsively and in ways dogs don't always enjoy.

This means not pestering dogs for pets, avoid bothering dogs while they're eating, nor doing things like pulling a dog's tail. Your little one also needs to understand that dogs are just like people and don't like to be treated or grabbed roughly.

Teach your child to approach dogs slowly

Dogs can easily become startled if you rush at them, so it is important to teach your child to go slow. Unless the child is playing with the dog, it is best for the child to approach the dog slowly to avoid startling the dog. It is also important to teach your child to never approach or startle a sleeping dog, a dog that is eating or taking a toy out of a dog's mouth.

Knowing Canine Body Language

We recommend you go over dog body language with your children.

Go over some of the common dog body language signals, covering some of the signs a dog is stressed or nervous (such as lip licking, yawning, and whale eye), as well as signs that a dog is up for a play session (such as when a dog performs play bows).

It's also wise to remind children that a wagging tale does not always indicate a friendly or happy dog. It can be tricky to analyze the tail speed or direction (which body language pros often use to assess a dog's feelings), so instead, have kids look out for stiff vs loose body positioning, ear direction, and posturing to better asses if a wagging tale is exhibiting friendliness or anxious arousal.

Petting Your Dog

Kids can be a tad boisterous when displaying affection, so you want to make sure your tiny one learns the proper way to pet a dog. Always avoid hitting, pulling ears or tails, or touching the dog's paws.

It is best for you, as an adult, to show your child how to pet your new dog and slowly. Go over details of things what not to do as mentioned above.

How to Play

Of course, most kids won't be satisfied simply petting a dog – they'll want to play too! And as with meeting and petting dogs, children need to be taught the proper ways to play with dogs.

Start by covering the four-footed fundamentals, including not jumping on the dog or causing harm during play. Roughhousing and rounds of tug aren't recommended for children, but other dog-friendly games are a great way to tire out the duo together.

And make sure you monitor play time closely. If things get too rowdy, skip the play and have your kiddo accompany you and the pooch for a walk instead.

Again, tell your child to never pull their ears, tails, hit the dog, or yell at the dog. We also recommend to never sit on the dog, ride them "like a horse" on their back, or climb on the dog.

Always Supervise!

It's important to point out that no matter how well your children understand the rules of canine-kid interaction, you cannot leave your children alone with dogs.

Dogs and kids must be supervised when together!

Resources:

https://www.k9ofmine.com/teaching-kids-interact-with-dogs/

The Importance of Training Your Puppy

Training a new puppy should begin as soon as you bring them home, ideally by 6 weeks of age, and should focus on basic commands like "sit," "stay," and "come". Positive reinforcement, using rewards like treats and praise, is the most effective training method. Consistency and patience are key, as puppies learn at their own pace.

We recommend enrolling your new puppy in obedience training right away! Shelters, unfortunately, see puppies returned when they are older due to behavior problems as the dog received no training as a puppy, or very little. Training your new puppy creates a path of success for them, and for you! Below are other reasons why training is so important.

Establishing a Strong Bond

One of the most significant advantages of puppy training is the opportunity to build a strong, lasting bond with your furry companion. Training involves spending quality time with your pup, teaching them commands, and providing positive reinforcement. This interaction fosters trust and strengthens the bond between you and your dog.

Ensuring Safety

Safety is a top priority for any pet owner, and proper training plays a pivotal role in keeping your puppy safe. Basic commands like “heel”, “sit,” “stay,” and “come” can be lifesavers in certain situations, such as preventing your puppy from darting into traffic or approaching aggressive dogs. A well-trained dog is less likely to engage in risky behavior, reducing the chances of accidents or injuries.

Socialization and Behavioral Development

Early puppy training exposes your dog to various environments, people, and other animals. Socialization is crucial to helping your puppy develop into a well-adjusted adult dog. It helps them learn how to interact with humans and other dogs, reducing the likelihood of fear, aggression, or anxiety issues later in life.

Preventing Problematic Behaviors

Addressing undesirable behaviors early on is much easier than trying to correct them later. Without proper training, puppies can develop habits such as excessive barking, chewing, digging, and house-soiling. Training can help prevent these issues from becoming ingrained and challenging to rectify.

Mental Stimulation

Puppy training isn’t just about obedience, it’s about a solid foundation where the dog “learns how to learn”; it also provides mental stimulation. Learning new commands

and tricks engages their brains and prevents boredom. An intellectually stimulated puppy is less likely to develop destructive habits and is generally happier and healthier.

Better Communication

Effective communication is essential for a harmonious relationship with your dog. Through training, you and your puppy learn to understand each other. You'll be able to convey your expectations and commands clearly, while your dog will respond more effectively to your cues, making day-to-day life together more enjoyable. Understand that dogs do much more of communicating than humans, as they are always watching you and attempting to mimic and converse with you.

Building Confidence

Training boosts your puppy's confidence as they master new skills and commands. This newfound confidence can positively affect their overall demeanor, making them more self-assured and less prone to anxiety or fear.

Enhancing Quality of Life

A well-trained puppy can enjoy a broader range of experiences. Whether it's taking them on hikes, visiting dog-friendly cafes, or participating in dog sports, a trained dog can actively participate in various activities, leading to a more fulfilling life for both you and your fur friend.

Setting Your Puppy Up for a Bright Future with Training

The importance of training your puppy cannot be overstated. It sets the foundation for a happy, safe, and well-behaved dog. Investing time and effort into puppy training is a commitment that pays off in the long run, ensuring a stronger bond between you and your four-legged companion and creating a harmonious living environment for your entire family. So, if you've just welcomed a new puppy into your life, remember that training isn't just a choice – it's a necessity for a brighter future with your beloved pet.

Dog Body Language

While your dog cannot speak as you do, they do rely on their feelings and emotions through a series of

body postures, gestures and vocalizations. This body language can be subtle and wide-ranging, with a little practice you can learn and understand it. Your dog will use

their ears, eyes, tail, legs and general body movement/postures to communicate to you. They may also use vocalizations.

Learning to read your dog's body language will help keep you, your dog and other people safe. It will also allow you to recognize when they are stressed so you can act accordingly to do what you can to make them feel better. Below are some common dog body language to know and understand.

Fearful and Anxious

Lip licking

Yawning

Closed mouth

Lowered head

Ears back, toward head or pinned to the side

Tucked or low tail

Whale eye (whites of eyes showing)

Trembling or shaking

Avoiding eye contact

Tucked or lowered tail

Happy and Relaxed Dog

Loose, wiggly body

Open mouth

Wagging tail with wiggly rear end

Play bow (front end down, back end up)

Relaxed body (no muscle tensing)

Relaxed face (no muscle tensing)

Tongue hanging out (straight)

Tail down (but not between legs)

Laying with one paw tucked under

Light panting

Defensive Dog

Growling

Snarling (growling while showing teeth)

Snap (bite without contact)

Lip Curling

Stiffening/freezing of body

Hard, intense stare

Tight, closed mouth

Curled lips

Lunging

High, stiff, fast wagging tail

Squared off body

Baring teeth

Playful Dog

Open Mouth

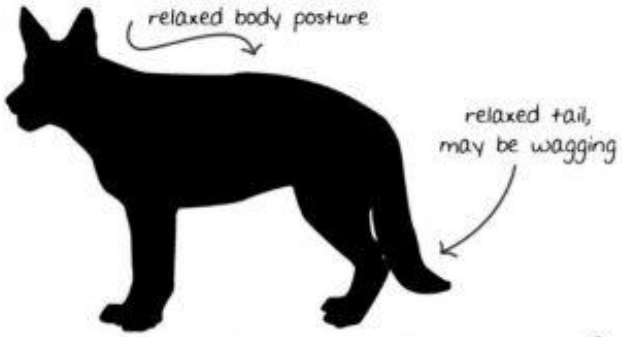
Relaxed Body

Play Bowing

Exposing the Belly

Wiggly Body

DOG TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION CHART



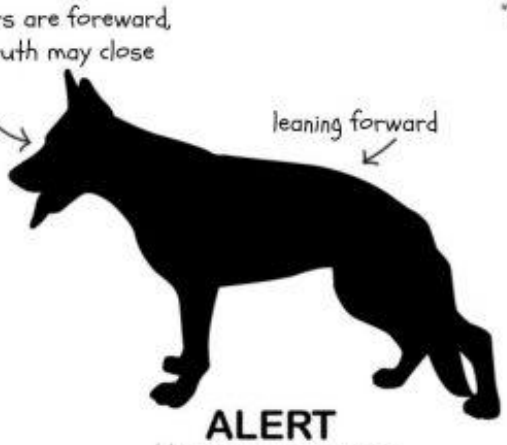
CALM & NEUTRAL

This is the dog you'll want to pet. He's calm, neutral, and relaxed. There is no tension in his body and he's probably panting happily and waiting for you to come over and just say "hi".

SUBMISSIVE

"I give up, don't hurt me" pose

You'll mostly see this behavior when two dogs interact, but a dog that was abused or is really scared may do it as well.

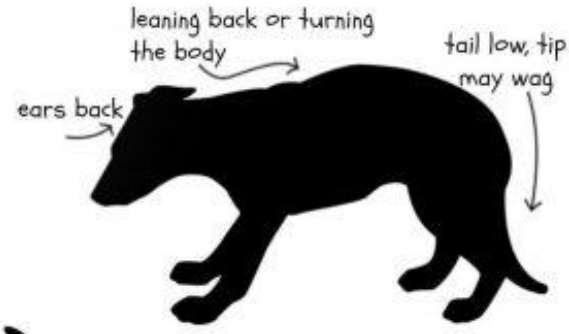


ALERT

He may just be really interested in what's going on.

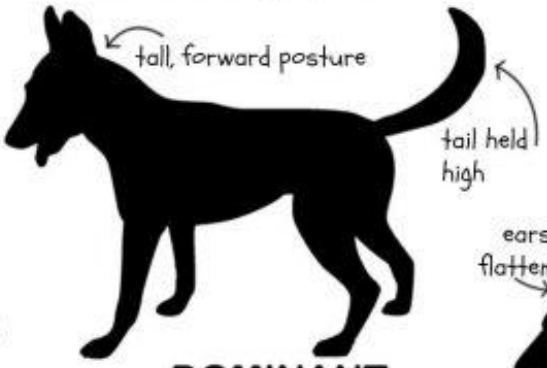
RELAXED

It's usually safe to pet a relaxed dog, but make sure he hasn't fallen asleep!



ANXIOUS & NERVOUS

This dog is uncomfortable or doesn't know what's going on. It's best not to pet him.

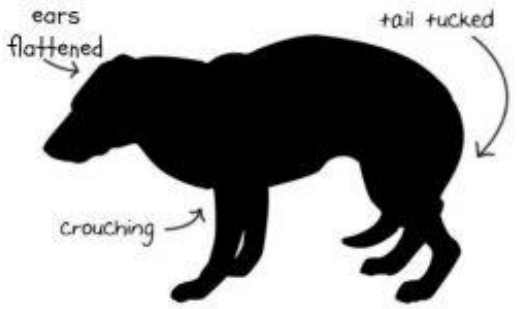


DOMINANT

Toward another dog: "I'm in charge!"

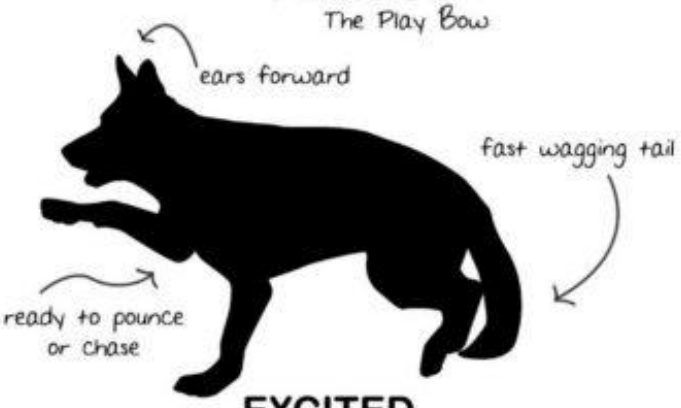
PLAYFUL

The Play Bow



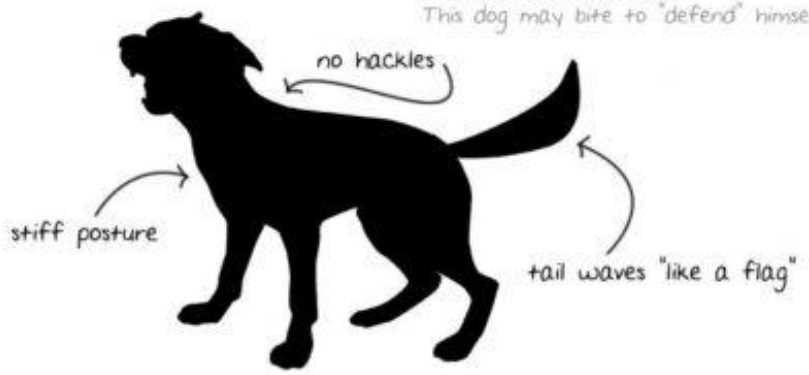
FRIGHTENED

This dog may bite to "defend" himself.



EXCITED

An overly excited dog may jump up, knock you over, scratch you with his paws, or even nip you with his teeth.



AGGRESSIVE

Don't run away from an aggressive dog. Stand still "be a tree" and look away.

Dog Health 101

Healthy dogs should be taken in for a checkup once per year; dogs who have a medical problem may require more frequent visits.

Vaccinations

All puppies at GMHS receive at least their first round of vaccinations (DHPP and Bordetella) if you have adopted a puppy, sometimes their second round and rabies vaccinations.

All adult dogs will have their DHPP vaccination, rabies vaccination and Bordetella vaccination.

However, vaccinations are typically once a year or once every three years depending on your veterinarian, previous vaccination history and the health of your dog. That is why once year veterinarian exams are extremely important. Not keeping your dog up to date can lead them to be at risk for possible illness and diseases, especially if you take them out regularly or to the dog park as you cannot assume that every person vaccinates their dogs like they should.

Rabies vaccinations are **REQUIRED** by Virginia state law. Make sure you keep your dog's rabies vaccination up to date, and your dog's collar has a rabies tag attached.

City License & Microchip

While not health related, it is required to register your dog with your county. It is **REQUIRED** in Gloucester County to have dogs registered through the city and have a city license. Cats are not required to. You can obtain this license at the local treasurer's office, and there is proof needed for rabies vaccination for dogs four months and older. This tag, along with the rabies tag, must be attached to your dog's collar.

All GMHS dogs are microchipped, which is registered with the information you gave us on your application. If you ever need to update this microchip, you need to contact the company which the animal has a microchip through. Most GMHS dogs are microchipped with 24-pet watch microchips unless the dog was surrendered to us with a microchip already implanted through a different company.

Fleas and Parasites

It is always important to make sure your dog is on routine flea and tick prevention and heartworm prevention this is to prevent fleas, heartworm disease and other parasites your dog might pick up from going outside. Your veterinarian will go over the best medication for you and your dog, and we highly recommend reading the section on heartworm disease in this packet. Having routine flea and tick control and heartworm protection ensures your dog stays healthy!

Dental Health

Dogs can get cavities and develop periodontal disease, so their teeth should be cleaned with pet toothpaste at least twice per week. It is best to use a small toothbrush that has soft bristles. Cleanings performed by a veterinarian may also be required.

Heartworm Disease

What is heartworm disease and how is it transmitted?

Canine heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease of dogs. Mosquitos are the cause, and in an area like Virginia where mosquitos are common, heartworm disease is a serious problem. Essentially, it causes worms in the heart, which adult worms, which can reach a length of 6-14 inches, live in the right side of the heart. Adult female heartworms produce offspring called microfilariae that float freely in the blood of an infected dog. When a mosquito feeds on the blood of a heartworm infected dog, it ingests microfilaria, now making it a carrier of heartworm disease. The adult heartworms if allowed to continue to develop and reproduce can cause extensive damage to the heart and lungs.

Are all dogs at risk?

Yes. All dogs are at risk of being infected with heartworms. Virginia has a higher incidence of heartworm disease because the mosquito season is longer than in the northern states. Shelters in the area, especially GMHS, see a lot of dogs come in with heartworm disease.

What are some of the signs my dog may exhibit?

Heartworm disease isn't immediately fatal; your dog may live for a number of years showing no outward signs of this disease. At the point when your dog exhibits outward signs of the disease, it has progressed to the moderate or severe stage of heartworm disease.

The most common clinical signs include coughing, exercise intolerance, difficulty breathing, weight loss, anorexia and depression.

How is my dog diagnosed with heartworm disease?

A blood sample was drawn from this dog and an occult test was run. This test detects the presence of antigens (proteins) produced by adult heartworms. Every dog over 6 months old at GMHS is tested for heartworm disease. GMHS does provide heartworm treatment if a dog is heartworm positive, however, after adoption it is very important to put your dog on heartworm prevention.

What treatment is available for a dog with heartworm disease?

Most dogs can be successfully treated for heartworms. A thorough examination and pretreatment evaluation by your veterinarian will determine if your dog is a candidate for treatment. Heartworm disease treatment is both expensive and distressing for your dog.

Every veterinarian has different treatments for heartworm disease, and not all treatments are the same. Typical heartworm treatment involves an injection called Immitcide that is injected into the muscle of the dog's back, it is two to three injections depending on what your veterinarian recommends and the stage of your dog's heartworm disease. This treatment can be very hard on the dog, and they must be kept extremely quiet for a period of several weeks to avoid post-treatment complications. The microfilaricide part of the treatment involves high doses of a medication given orally to kill the circulating microfilariae.

Best thing? Keep your dog on routine heartworm prevention to avoid all of this!

Canine Parvovirus

How is canine parvovirus diagnosed and treated?

Veterinarians diagnose canine parvovirus based on clinical appearance and laboratory tests. No specific drug is available that will kill the virus in infected dogs. Treatment should be started immediately and consist primarily of efforts to combat dehydration by replacing electrolyte and fluid losses, controlling vomiting and diarrhea, and preventing secondary infections. Sick dogs should be kept warm, receive good nursing care, and be separated from other dogs. Proper cleaning and disinfection of contaminated kennels and other areas where infected dogs are housed is essential to control the spread of parvovirus.

How is parvovirus prevented?

Vaccination and good hygiene are critical components of canine parvovirus prevention.

Vaccination

Vaccination is important. Young puppies are very susceptible to infection, particularly because the natural immunity provided in their mothers' milk may wear off before the puppies' own immune systems are mature enough to fight off infection. If a puppy is exposed to canine parvovirus during this gap in protection, it may become ill. An additional concern is that immunity provided by a mother's milk may interfere with an effective response to vaccination. This means even vaccinated puppies may occasionally succumb to parvovirus. To narrow gaps in protection and provide optimal protection against parvovirus during the first few months of life, a series of puppy vaccinations are administered.

To protect their adult dogs, pet owners should be sure that their dog's parvovirus vaccination is up to-date. Ask your veterinarian about a recommended vaccination program for your canine companion.

Hygiene

Until a puppy has received its complete series of vaccinations, pet owners should use caution when bringing their pet to places where young puppies congregate (e.g. pet shops, parks, puppy classes, obedience classes, doggy daycare, and grooming establishments). Reputable establishments and training programs reduce exposure risk by requiring vaccinations, health examinations, good hygiene, and isolation of ill puppies and dogs. Contact with known infected dogs and their premises should always be avoided.

Finally, do not allow your puppy or dog to encounter the fecal waste of other dogs while walking or playing outdoors. Prompt and proper disposal of waste material is always advisable to limit spread of canine parvovirus infection.

Canine Distemper

What is Canine Distemper?

Canine distemper is a highly contagious and serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and, often, the nervous systems of puppies and dogs. The virus also infects wild canids (e.g. foxes, wolves, and coyotes), raccoons, skunks, and ferrets.

How is Canine Distemper virus spread?

Puppies and dogs usually become infected through airborne exposure to the virus contained in respiratory secretions of an infected dog or wild animal. Outbreaks of distemper tend to be sporadic. Because canine distemper also affects wildlife populations, contact between wild and domestic canids may facilitate spread of the virus.

What dogs are at risk?

All dogs are at risk but puppies younger than four months old and dogs that have not been vaccinated against canine distemper are at increased risk of acquiring the disease.

What are some signs of Canine Distemper?

The first sign of distemper is eye discharge that may appear watery to pus-like. Subsequently, dogs develop fever, nasal discharge, coughing, lethargy, reduced appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. In later stages, the virus may attack the nervous system, bringing about seizures, twitching, or partial or complete paralysis. Occasionally, the virus may cause footpads to harden. Distemper is often fatal. Even if a dog does not die from the disease, canine distemper virus can cause irreparable damage to a dog's nervous system. Distemper is so serious and the

signs so varied that any sick dog should be taken to a veterinarian for an examination and diagnosis.

How is Canine Distemper diagnosed and treated?

Veterinarians diagnose canine distemper based on clinical appearance and laboratory tests. No specific drug is available that will kill the virus in infected dogs. Treatment consists primarily of efforts to prevent secondary infections; control vomiting, diarrhea, or neurological symptoms; and combat dehydration through administration of fluids. Ill dogs should be kept warm, receive good nursing care, and be separated from other dogs.

How is Canine Distemper prevented?

Vaccination and avoiding contact with infected animals are key elements of canine distemper prevention.

Until a puppy has received its complete series of vaccinations, pet owners should use caution when taking their pet to places where young puppies congregate (e.g. pet shops, parks, puppy classes, obedience classes, doggy daycare, and grooming establishments). Reputable establishments and training programs reduce exposure risk by requiring vaccinations, health examinations, good hygiene, and isolation of ill puppies and dogs.

To protect their adult dogs, pet owners should be sure that their dog's distemper vaccination is up to date. Ask your veterinarian about a recommended vaccination program for your canine companion.

Contact with known infected dogs should always be avoided. Similarly, contact with raccoons, foxes, skunks, and other potentially infected wildlife should be discouraged.

Resources

This information has been prepared as a service by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Is It Too Hot for Spot?

With the weather warming up, it's time to discuss an important topic for pet owners: When is it safe to leave your dog in the car? You may be tempted to leave your dog in the car while you run a quick errand or pick up lunch, but even a ten-minute detour can be unsafe for your furry friend depending on the temperature. You must be cautious and understand how dangerous it is to leave your dog in the car when temperatures rise!

Dogs and Heat Stroke

Before discussing when it's too hot to leave your dog in the car, it's important to understand some of the risks hot weather can pose to your pet. The American Kennel Club emphasizes that all dogs are susceptible to heat stroke which can leave them disoriented, uncomfortable, and in severe cases, unconscious with kidney failure and other complications that could lead to death.

Any hot environment, like a locked car parked in the sun, can cause heat stroke. If you have a dog with thicker fur or a broad short skull (known as brachycephalic breeds like pugs and bulldogs), you should take extra precautions to ensure they don't overheat because they are more susceptible to these negative effects.

When is it Too Hot to Leave a Dog in the Car?

You should never leave your dog alone in the car when the outside temperature is below freezing or above 70 degrees. Heat stroke in dogs can occur even at moderate temperatures. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the inside of a car parked in 70-degree weather can easily reach 100 degrees in just 20 minutes. In even warmer weather, idle cars can reach an internal temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit in less than an hour. These extreme temperatures can be life-threatening to dogs. Always prioritize their safety and never leave them unattended in a vehicle.

Resources:

https://thevets.com/resources/pet-health-care/is-it-too-hot-to-leave-my-dog-in-the-car/

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A CAR TO GET TOO HOT?

VEHICLE TEMPERATURE		
OUTSIDE F°	INSIDE F° 10 MINS	INSIDE F° 30 MINS
70°	89°	104°
75°	94°	109°
80°	99°	114°
85°	104°	119°
90°	109°	124°
95°	114°	129°

Bringing Your New Dog Home – the 3, 3, 3, rule

Set Realistic Expectations!

You can expect that it will take your dog some time to get used to the new routines and environment. The 'Rule of Three' means that you can gauge the time it might take for your dog to fully acclimate to his home in threes: three days, three weeks, and three months.

First Three Days

The first three days in a new home can be very overwhelming for your dog — and every dog will react differently. Some may exhibit signs of fear and withdrawal, while others might pace or eagerly investigate every nook and cranny of your house. Your new pup might also have accidents, even if they're already house-trained.

This is all normal behavior for a dog suddenly thrust into a new environment with unfamiliar people and scents, so try not to panic. These first few days are not a reflection of how your dog will behave forever.

Think of your new dog's first three days as their time to decompress. Here's how to care for and respond to your dog during this phase:

Limit interaction

While you'll likely want to immediately shower your new dog with affection, it's important to allow them to settle in without overwhelming them with too much attention. Giving them space to explore their new surroundings at their own pace will help avoid overstimulation and allow them to feel more in control. (But if your pup actively seeks your attention, then, give them some love!)

Keep things quiet

Avoid hosting gatherings or exposing your dog to loud noises and commotion that could overwhelm them.

Provide a cozy space

Provide your dog with a comfortable space of their own, like their own bed with a cozy blanket and plush toy.

Introducing them to a routine

Start a simple daily routine for feeding, bathroom breaks, and short walks around your home. Predictability and consistency can help them feel secure and understand what to expect.

First Three Weeks

The second phase of the 3-3-3 rule extends over three weeks. During this time, your new dog is likely to gradually settle in and grow more comfortable. You may notice them starting to let their guard down and reveal glimpses of their true personality.

But most dogs will still feel some uncertainty about their new environment and daily routine, which can manifest as occasional anxiety or restlessness. It's also not uncommon for a new dog to start testing boundaries, like a teenager seeing what they can get away with.

The focus of these three weeks should be on establishing a routine, introducing basic training, and deepening your bond with your new canine companion. Here's how to navigate this crucial period:

Build a solid routine

Continue to reinforce a daily routine for feeding, bathroom breaks, and exercise. Consistency is key, as it helps your dog feel more secure and confident in their new home.

Teach basic training

Begin teaching your dog their name and basic commands like "sit," "stay," and "come." Use positive reinforcement by giving your dog a treat and praise when they're successful. Keep training sessions short and engage to maintain your dog's interest and motivation.

Begin socialization

Slowly introduce your dog to other pets and people in your home but do so in a controlled manner.

Provide consistent feedback

Give your dog calm, clear feedback when they're engaging in behavior you wish to discourage. It's important to set boundaries from the outset, such as establishing rules about not climbing on furniture or not chasing other pets in your home. Conversely, praise and/or reward every success and positive behavior they exhibit.

Encourage light exploration

Allow supervised exploration of various areas in and outside your home. This allows your dog to become familiar with their environment and build confidence.

First Three Months

The final phase of the 3-3-3 rule spans three months. During this phase, most dogs will feel quite comfortable in their new home. They'll build trust and a bond with you and will know their routine well. This phase is all about nurturing your dog's development, gradually expanding their horizons, and deepening your connection.

In addition to continuing your daily routine and providing consistent feedback, here's what you can do during this period:

Add more advanced training

Build on the basic training your dog has learned and introduce more advanced commands, such as "watch me," "wait," "down," and "leave it." Consider enrolling your pup in a dog-training class to further enhance their obedience and socialization skills.

Facilitate new environmental exposures

Continue to expose your dog to different environments, people, and situations. This helps them become more adaptable and confident in various settings.

Learn their preferences

Pay attention to your dog's favorite toys, treats, activities, and types of exercise. This knowledge will not only help strengthen your bond but also allow you to provide them with the best possible care and enrichment.

The 3 Days, 3 Weeks, 3 Month Rule of Adopting a Rescue Dog

The 3-3-3 rule is a general guideline, every dog is unique and will adjust differently. Give your dog space and allow him to go at his own pace.

3D

In the first 3 days,

- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed
- ☐ May be scared and unsure of what is going on
- ☐ Not comfortable enough to be "himself"
- ☐ May not want to eat or drink
- ☐ Shut down and want to curl up in his crate or hide under a table
- ☐ Testing the boundaries

3W

After 3 weeks,

- ☐ Starting to settle in
- ☐ Feeling more comfortable
- ☐ Realizing this could possibly be his forever home
- ☐ Figured out his environment
- ☐ Getting into a routine
- ☐ Lets his guard down and may start showing his true personality
- ☐ Behavior issues may start showing up

3M

After 3 months,

- ☐ Finally completely comfortable in his home.
- ☐ Building trust and a true bond
- ☐ Gained a complete sense of security with his new family
- ☐ Set in a routine

RescueDogs101™
ADOPT LOVE TRAIN