PROMISING PAWS INC
DOG RESCUE
Saving Lives, One Paw at a Time

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Foster Carer Guide

Helping Your Foster Dog Feel Safe, Supported and Set Up for Success
(This information is to help ensure your foster dog gets the best chance at a second chance!)
IMPORTANT: This guide supports your signed Foster Agreement and Promising Paws policies. Where a contractual requirement applies, the signed agreement or applicable policy takes precedence.

1. Introduction

Thank you for opening your home and heart to a dog in need. By fostering with Promising Paws Inc., you play a vital role in saving lives by providing comfort, stability and care while a dog waits for their forever home.

Fostering can be rewarding, but it also involves responsibility, patience and careful supervision. Even a confident or affectionate dog may behave differently after entering a new environment. Your foster dog may need time to decompress, learn the household routine and feel safe.

This guide explains what to expect, how to help your foster dog settle and your responsibilities as a valued member of the Promising Paws foster family.

2. The 3-3-3 Rule

The 3-3-3 Rule is a helpful guide, not a deadline. Every dog is different, and some foster dogs may need significantly longer to settle.

When a new foster dog enters your home, remember the 3-3-3 Rule:

- First 3 Days: Your foster may be overwhelmed or unsure. They may hide, not eat, or test boundaries. Keep things calm and predictable.
- Next 3 Weeks: They begin adjusting to routines, showing their personality, and feeling safer.
- After 3 Months: They feel secure, bonded, and confident. This is when their true self shines.

Patience, structure, and reassurance are key to helping your foster thrive.

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The first 3 days

Your foster dog may:
- Feel overwhelmed, anxious, shut down, restless or unsure
- Hide or sleep more than usual
- Eat less or refuse food temporarily
- Have toileting accidents
- Test boundaries
- Behave differently from how they behaved in foster care, kennels or previous environments

Keep the environment calm, quiet and predictable. Do not expect the dog to immediately show their full personality.

The next 3 weeks

Your foster dog may begin to:
- Learn the household routine
- Become more comfortable
- Show more of their personality
- Develop trust with household members
- Display new behaviours as they gain confidence

New behaviours can emerge during this period. Report meaningful changes to Promising Paws rather than assuming they will resolve without support.

Around 3 months and beyond

Many dogs are beginning to feel more secure and bonded by this stage, but some dogs take much longer. Continue providing patience, structure, routine, boundaries and positive reinforcement.

Progress is not always linear

Dogs can have good days and difficult days, particularly after changes, stressful experiences or new situations. This does not necessarily mean they are going backwards.

The most important thing is to **move at the individual dog's pace,** provide consistency, patience and appropriate boundaries, and contact Promising Paws if you notice concerning behaviour or need support.

3. The First Few Days: Decompress, Don't Impress

Your foster dog's entire world may have changed. Their first days should focus on safety, rest and adjustment.

The first few days are not about making the dog fit into your life. They are about showing the dog that their new environment is safe.

- Keep life quiet, calm and predictable.
- Avoid inviting friends or extended family over specifically to meet the dog.
- Avoid parties, gatherings, cafés, markets, pet stores, dog parks and other busy environments.
- Keep outings minimal. If the dog is comfortable walking, choose short, quiet walks close to home.
- Very nervous dogs may benefit from settling safely at home initially.
- Provide a designated safe space, such as a bed, crate, pen or quiet room.
- Ensure household members leave the dog alone when they retreat to their safe space.
- Allow plenty of sleep and uninterrupted downtime.
- Do not force cuddles, handling or interaction.
- Allow the dog to choose whether to approach you.
- Keep feeding, toileting, rest and bedtime routines predictable.
- Introduce household members calmly and avoid crowding the dog.
- Keep the dog securely contained.
- Do not test the dog with children, cats, poultry, birds, reptiles, livestock or other small animals.
- Watch and learn the dog's body language, triggers, likes and dislikes.

4. Settling-In Tips and Building a Routine

A predictable routine helps a foster dog feel secure.

- Feed, walk, toilet and rest the dog at consistent times.
- Provide fresh water at all times.
- Establish a quiet, comfortable sleeping area.
- Provide appropriate exercise and mental enrichment without overwhelming the dog.
- Increase new experiences gradually as the dog demonstrates that they are comfortable and coping.
- Use positive reinforcement by rewarding behaviours you want to see with food, praise, play or access to something the dog enjoys.
- Ensure all household members follow the same expectations and use consistent cues.

- Avoid punishment-based methods, intimidation, yelling or physical corrections.
- Use only positive, reward-based training methods.
- Contact Promising Paws early if behaviour is concerning or difficult to manage.

Changing the dog's name

Do not change your foster dog's name unless Promising Paws has provided approval.

A dog's name may be connected to their records, microchip information, veterinary documents, adoption listing and previous history. If an approved name change is required, Promising Paws will advise you about the process.

5. Your Responsibilities as a Foster Carer

As a foster carer, you agree to:

- Provide a safe, loving, secure and suitable home.
- Provide appropriate food, fresh water, shelter, companionship, exercise and enrichment.
- Keep the dog safely contained.
- Keep the dog indoors overnight unless another arrangement has been approved.
- Keep the dog on a secure lead outside the home.
- Keep the dog on-leash unless in a fully fenced and secure yard.
- Not use off-leash areas unless written approval has been provided. Off-leash areas are generally discouraged.
- Maintain secure fencing, gates, doors and boundaries.
- Supervise the dog appropriately around people and other animals.
- Follow Promising Paws' directions regarding care, training, veterinary treatment and placement.
- Attend approved veterinary appointments and adoption meet-and-greets as arranged.
- Obtain approval before making purchases or committing Promising Paws to expenses.
- Report health, safety, behavioural or compatibility concerns immediately.
- Keep Promising Paws informed about significant changes in the dog's behaviour or condition.
- Return the dog immediately if requested by Promising Paws.
- Not sell, give away, advertise for rehoming, transfer or surrender the dog without Promising Paws' approval.
- Not change the dog's name without Promising Paws' approval.

6. Safety & Supervision

Newly relocated dogs can be significant flight risks, even if they have never previously escaped. A great thing to consider when fostering a dog is placing a name tag on them with your address and contact number as well as PPI's contact number.- Always use a secure lead outside the home.

- Check collars, harnesses, leads and gates regularly.
- Do not leave the dog unattended in an unsecured yard.
- Check fences for gaps, digging points, climbable objects and areas where the dog could jump or squeeze through.
- Keep doors and gates securely closed.
- Take extra care when entering or leaving the property.
- Do not allow the dog off lead unless specifically approved and in a legally permitted, secure location.
- Do not expose foster dogs to unknown animals or unvaccinated dogs unless approved by Promising Paws or a veterinarian.
- Puppies must not mix with other litters or unvaccinated dogs.
- Separate the foster dog from other animals whenever you cannot actively supervise.
- Do not leave children unsupervised with the foster dog.
- Never tie the dog up unattended.

If the dog escapes, goes missing or is impounded, contact Promising Paws immediately and take reasonable steps to help locate and safely recover the dog.

7. Introducing Resident Dogs and Other Pets

A successful first meeting does not guarantee that animals will immediately live together without adjustment.

- Use separate spaces initially.
- Introduce animals gradually, calmly and under supervision.
- Keep initial interactions short.
- Provide separate beds, feeding areas and safe spaces.
- Feed animals separately.
- Remove bones, chews, toys and other high-value items during early introductions.
- Do not expect animals to immediately share food, toys, beds or personal space.
- Allow resident pets time away from the foster dog.
- Separate animals whenever you cannot actively supervise.

Watch for:
- Stiff posture
- Freezing
- Staring or fixating
- Raised hackles
- Growling or lip lifting
- Snapping
- Chasing
- Avoidance or hiding
- Guarding
- Escalating arousal

Create distance before conflict develops and contact Promising Paws early.

8. Cats, Poultry, Livestock and Small Animals
Previous exposure to another species is not a guarantee of future safety. Behaviour may change as the dog becomes more comfortable.

- Never assume the foster dog is safe with cats, chickens, birds, reptiles, livestock or other small animals.
- Use secure physical barriers.
- Introduce animals gradually and in a controlled manner.
- Do not force or test interactions.
- Do not leave the dog unsupervised with another species unless Promising Paws has specifically approved the arrangement.
- Take chasing, stalking, intense staring, trembling, fixating or an inability to disengage seriously.

If you are concerned about prey drive or safety, separate the animals and contact Promising Paws immediately.

9. Children and Visitors
Children must always be actively supervised around a foster dog.

Teach children not to:
- Climb on the dog
- Hug, corner or chase the dog
- Take food, toys or chews
- Disturb the dog while eating, sleeping or resting
- Enter the dog's crate, pen or safe space
- Touch the dog when they are trying to retreat

Visitors should be calm and should not crowd, stare at, touch or call the dog. Allow the dog to choose whether to approach.
If the dog appears uncomfortable, create distance and allow them to retreat.

10. Food, Bones, Chews and Resource Guarding
- Feed animals separately and give the dog space while eating.
- Do not allow animals to compete over food, bowls, bones, chews or high-value toys.
- Avoid giving bones or high-value chews when multiple animals are together.
- If you provide a chew, use an appropriate product and supervise the dog.
- Avoid suddenly changing the dog's diet.
- Avoid giving large amounts of rich food or table scraps.
- Remove items that create tension or guarding.

Resource guarding may emerge after the dog has settled, even if it was not previously observed.
Do not punish growling. Growling is communication and may warn that the dog feels threatened or needs space. Separate animals safely and contact Promising Paws for behavioural guidance.

11. Walking, Leads and Off-Leash Safety
- Use a correctly fitted collar and secure harness where appropriate.
- Check all equipment before every outing.
- Consider additional safety equipment for nervous or high-risk dogs if recommended by Promising Paws.
- Start in quiet areas and increase stimulation gradually.
- Avoid dog parks and busy off-leash areas.
- Do not allow the dog off lead unless written approval has been provided and the location is legally permitted and secure.
- Do not force a frightened dog to continue through an environment they are struggling to cope with.
- Create distance and return to an easier situation.
- Never leave the dog tied up unattended.

12. Health and Veterinary Care

All routine veterinary visits must be approved by Promising Paws before attendance, unless otherwise directed.

Promising Paws generally covers approved care in accordance with its policies and instructions, including applicable vaccinations, microchipping, desexing and parasite prevention. Confirm approval before incurring any expense.

- Provide fresh water and an appropriate diet.
- Monitor appetite, drinking, toileting, energy and general behaviour.
- Give medication exactly as directed.
- Do not give human medication unless specifically instructed by a veterinarian.
- Keep veterinary records, invoices and medication information.
- Notify Promising Paws about diagnoses, treatment recommendations and changes in condition.
- Seek veterinary advice promptly if the dog is unwell or injured.

Veterinary emergencies

In an emergency, attend the nearest appropriate veterinarian and contact Promising Paws as soon as possible, or call while travelling where safe and practical. Do not delay emergency treatment while waiting for approval or attempting to contact Promising Paws.

Urgent veterinary care may be required for:

- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse or severe weakness
- Suspected poisoning
- Serious injury or bleeding
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhoea
- Seizures
- Severe pain
- Inability to urinate
- Suspected heatstroke
- A serious bite or attack

13. Behaviour and Training

Information about a dog's behaviour is based on observations available at the time. A foster dog may behave differently in a new home as they decompress, gain confidence or encounter new situations.

Behaviours that may emerge include:

- Fear or anxiety
- Separation distress
- Reactivity
- Resource guarding
- Escape behaviour
- Prey drive
- Handling sensitivity
- Toilet-training difficulties
- Destructive behaviour
- Barking or vocalisation
- Difficulty settling

A behaviour change does not automatically mean the dog is "bad" or unsuitable for adoption. However, all significant or concerning behaviour must be reported to Promising Paws.

- Use positive reinforcement only.
- Do not use physical punishment, intimidation, yelling or fear-based techniques.
- Behavioural support may be available through Building Better Dogs or another trainer approved by Promising Paws.
- Do not engage an external trainer or behaviour professional on behalf of Promising Paws without approval.

14. Incidents That Must Be Reported Immediately

Contact Promising Paws immediately after:

- A bite, attempted bite or attack
- A fight between animals
- An escape or missing dog
- Impoundment
- Serious injury or illness
- Suspected poisoning
- A serious incident involving a child
- A serious threat to a person or animal
- A significant property-damage incident
- Any event that may result in a council complaint or legal issue
- Any situation where you can no longer safely contain or care for the dog

Provide factual details about what happened, who was involved, injuries, witnesses and any veterinary or council information.

15. Adoption Process
All adoption applications, meet-and-greets, trials and adoption decisions are handled by Promising Paws.

Foster carers may be asked to:
- Provide honest feedback
- Complete behaviour or care updates
- Provide photographs or videos
- Assist with an approved meet-and-greet
- Explain the dog's routines, preferences and needs

Foster carers must not:
- Promise the dog to a person
- Accept adoption money
- Approve an adoption independently
- Arrange a private transfer
- Misrepresent the dog's health, behaviour or history
- Share confidential applicant information

If you would like to adopt your foster dog, notify Promising Paws and follow the normal adoption assessment and approval process. Fostering does not automatically guarantee approval or priority.

16. Promising Paws Policies
Health and veterinary care
Veterinary care must be approved in advance unless there is an emergency. Promising Paws' responsibility for veterinary expenses is governed by its policies and any specific instructions provided.

Adoption and placement
Promising Paws manages all adoption applications, introductions, trials and final placement decisions.

Behaviour and training
Only positive, reward-based training methods are permitted. Promising Paws may arrange or approve behavioural support where required.

Confidentiality
Do not publicly share confidential information about the dog, previous owners, applicants, foster carers, volunteers or Promising Paws operations without approval.

Property, injury and liability

Promising Paws Inc., its volunteers and representatives are not responsible for injury, illness or damage to persons, animals, property, belongings or premises during the foster period, to the extent permitted by the applicable agreement and law.

Foster carers are responsible for appropriate supervision, management and containment of the foster dog.

For More information, please see our INSURANCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT on our foster care agreement.

17. If the Foster Placement Is No Longer Suitable

Contact Promising Paws as soon as possible if you are struggling or believe the placement is not safe or suitable. Early communication may allow Promising Paws to provide support, arrange management or identify a safer alternative.

- Do not sell, give away, privately rehome or transfer the dog.
- Do not surrender the dog to another shelter, pound, rescue or individual without approval.
- Continue to safely care for and contain the dog until an agreed arrangement is made, unless there is an immediate safety emergency.
- Explain the reason for the request, including behaviour, health, household or animal-compatibility concerns.
- Provide all relevant information, medication, records and equipment when the dog is returned.

18. Please Contact Us Early

Please contact Promising Paws promptly if you have concerns about:

- Settling or anxiety
- Separation distress
- Behaviour or training
- Resource guarding
- Reactivity
- Escape attempts
- Compatibility with people or animals
- Health or medication
- The dog's adoption suitability
- Your ability to continue fostering

Promising Paws would much rather help before a situation reaches crisis point. Asking for help is part of responsible fostering.

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19. Acknowledgement and Agreement
By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the Promising Paws Inc. Foster Carer Guide and agree to comply with the expectations and policies outlined in this document, my signed Foster Agreement and any instructions provided by Promising Paws.

I acknowledge that:
- I am caring for a foster dog owned or managed by Promising Paws Inc.
- I will provide safe, appropriate care and supervision.
- I will follow Promising Paws' directions regarding the dog.
- I will not sell, give away, privately rehome, transfer or surrender the dog without approval.
- I will not change the dog's name unless Promising Paws has approved the change.
- I will return the dog immediately if requested by Promising Paws.
- I will report health, behavioural, safety and compatibility concerns promptly.
- I will obtain approval before making purchases or arranging non-emergency veterinary care.
- I understand that Promising Paws Inc. is not responsible for damage to property, belongings or premises caused by a foster dog, to the extent permitted by the applicable agreement and law.
- I understand that the signed Foster Agreement and applicable Promising Paws policies take precedence where there is any inconsistency.

Foster Carer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Coordinator Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____