



# AUSTIN PETS ALIVE!

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## Dog Foster (DF) Handbook

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## **I. MISSION STATEMENTS**

### **APA!'s Mission:**

To promote and provide the resources, education, and programs needed to eliminate the killing of companion animals.

### **Dog Foster Program's Mission:**

To advance APA!'s mission by developing a limitless network of foster parents who provide a temporary home to a dog in need for the purpose of finding that dog's permanent, adoptive home as quickly as possible so that the foster parent may help another dog in need, thereby continuously increasing APA!'s lifesaving capacity.

**By volunteering to be an APA! Foster Parent, you are agreeing to align your personal reasons for fostering with these mission statements.**

## **II. INTRODUCTION TO THE APA! DOG FOSTER PROGRAM**

### **A. What is a Dog Foster Home?**

A dog foster home is an extension of an animal shelter's lifesaving capacity made possible through partnerships with the public. Through fostering, members of the public provide temporary shelter, food, care, and love for dogs in need. These dogs may be dogs already in custody who need some extra TLC, dogs who are at risk of being killed at other shelters, or dogs who have nowhere else to go, and ultimately, foster homes serve as the temporary bridge between these at-risk situations and a forever home.

Foster homes increase a shelter's ability to save lives by preserving kennel space for other dogs in need and by sometimes serving as the only viable rescue option for certain dogs. But a foster home doesn't just improve a shelter's lifesaving statistics, it improves the quality of life for each individual dog it saves. Time and time again, foster homes have proven to transform dogs for the better, significantly improving their mental and physical well being. Put simply, a foster home saves lives AND makes those lives better.

### **B. Why Foster?**

Fostering dogs saves lives! Shelters surrounding Austin and in greater Texas still kill perfectly healthy animals because they run out of kennel space. Finding a foster home for them may be the only way for them to go from a shelter, where they may be at risk of death, to their forever home. The number of animals we save depends entirely on the number of foster homes we have open to them. Foster homes truly help us save many more animals than we could with just our shelters.

But being an APA! Foster Parent has rewards beyond saving a life. It can be a chance to have an animal companion without a lifetime commitment—puppies are wonderful, but do you really want a year of puppyhood?! A foster dog can be a great temporary companion for an existing pet. In many cases, you can experience the special feeling of helping a dog recover from an illness or injury or simply rest after the stressful shelter environment has taken its toll (and along the way you will be fully supported by our medical and behavior teams). It's incredibly fulfilling to give extra TLC to these four-legged friends that need our help. But above all, you get the satisfaction and joy of knowing that you have saved a life!

### **C. What Types of Dogs Need Foster Care?**

Foster homes are needed for all dogs! We have the young, fluffy cuties, but we have the most foster need for pregnant dogs, moms with newborns, orphaned puppies, parvo survivors, senior dogs, dogs needing medical care, dogs needing a break from the shelter, and dogs at risk in other shelters for which we have no kennel space. Basically, foster care is for all our dogs, especially those that need a little extra TLC!

## **D. What are the Responsibilities of a Dog Foster Home?**

Beyond providing plenty of love, foster homes are generally responsible for providing a safe, clean, and caring environment; shelter, food, water, and toys/enrichment; and exercise and socialization as appropriate. In addition to providing these basics, foster parents may also be asked to monitor any medical and/or behavioral issues and work with our medical and behavior teams, as needed, to provide the best care possible for the dog. Foster parents are responsible for picking up their foster dog (typically from one of our shelters) and transporting them to and from our Clinic for medical appointments (see below for Clinic information), and in some cases to and from adoption opportunities such as adoption sites and events.

We expect our foster parents to align their personal reason for fostering with our mission statements (see page 3), to understand that they serve as the temporary bridge to getting their foster dog into their forever home as soon as possible, and to act accordingly. We also expect our fosters to actively market their foster dog for adoption, screen and meet with potential adopters, be responsive and courteous towards potential adopters, and otherwise follow our adoption protocols. Finally, we expect our fosters to carefully read all documents & carefully follow all instructions that APA! provides.

## **III. CONTACTS AND LOCATIONS**

### **A. Dog Foster Team**

As an APA! Dog Foster Parent, you have an entire team of people to support you. The following is an overview of the individual DF Teams/Personnel. We want you to have a positive experience fostering for APA!, so please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate team/personnel below if you are experiencing any difficulty or have any questions or concerns.

Please be aware, however, that we have a limited number of dedicated DF Team employees and almost everyone on the DF Team is a volunteer who does this in addition to their responsibilities with work and family, so please understand that we work primarily by email and please be patient with our response time.

#### **DF Placement (DFP) Team:** [dog-foster-pleas@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-pleas@austinpetsalive.org)

This is the team who posts the pleas and makes arrangements for you to pick up your foster dog. This is also the team that will help if you need to move your foster dog or if you need a sitter.

#### **DF Care (DFC) Team:** [dog-foster-care@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-care@austinpetsalive.org)

While you are fostering a dog this is your primary contact for any questions or concerns, or if you are not sure who to contact for help. The DFC Team will assist you with scheduling spay/neuter surgery, vaccinations, and other preventive care or medical treatment for your foster dog. The DFC Team can also assist you with

most medical questions, but for emergencies, please contact the Medical Team below.

**DF Adoption (DFA) Team:** [dog-foster-adopt@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-adopt@austinpetsalive.org)

This team will assist you with all activities related to the adoption of your foster dog. This includes information on pre-adoption, meet and greets, and making arrangements to finalize an adoption. All foster dog adoptions must be coordinated through this team. They will also arrange for foster dogs to attend an adoption site and assist with the "surrender" of your foster dog to the shelter at the end of their foster placement.

**DF Events (DFE) Team:** [dog-foster-events@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-events@austinpetsalive.org)

This team will assist you with getting your foster dog out to events. This extra visibility can help get your foster dog adopted more quickly.

**DF Advocate (DFAD):** [dog-foster-advocate@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-advocate@austinpetsalive.org)

The DFAD advocates for the Dog Foster Program, the placement of dogs into foster care, and for foster dog adoptions. The DFAD targets long stay dogs and other high-priority dogs and increases foster and adoption advocacy efforts for these dogs.

**Dog Foster Manager (DFM) and Dog Foster Assistant Manager (DFAM):**

Email the DFM or DFAM at [dog-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org) if you are not able to reach another DF Team Member or if you have a question or concern.

**B. Other APA! Teams**

**APA! Medical Team:** [medicalreception@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:medicalreception@austinpetsalive.org)

The DFC Team can assist you with most medical questions; however, if you cannot reach them, please email the Medical Team. If you have an emergency (such as seizures, bloody diarrhea, excessive vomiting), please call 512-466-0720 (during Clinic hours 9:00AM-7:00PM) or 888-733-8840 (after hours/on call); follow up with an email to the Medical Team and copy the DFC Team. Always copy the DFC Team on any correspondence with the Medical Team so that they can track your foster dog's medical care and assist if needed. *The Medical Team provides all medical care for our foster dogs. APA! will not reimburse foster parents for the cost of ANY medical care outside of APA!*

**APA! Dog Behavior Team:** [dogbehaviorfollowup@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dogbehaviorfollowup@austinpetsalive.org)

Email the Dog Behavior Team if you have any behavior-related question or concern or if you would like assistance with training. Some of our dogs have behavior quirks that may require special handling or care. If this applies to your foster dog, he/she will be noted as a "BC", and you will get a behavior consult when you first pick up your foster dog.

**APA! Dog Marketing Team:** [dog.marketing@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog.marketing@austinpetsalive.org)

Email the Dog Marketing Team for help getting your foster dog's bio, photos, and video on APA!'s website. Once your foster dog is available for adoption and at least

7 weeks old, we'll feature them on our APA! Website and start marketing your dog to potential adopters.

### **C. APA! Locations**

#### **Town Lake Animal Center (TLAC) - Shelter Headquarters and Clinic**

1156 West Cesar Chavez

Austin, TX 78703

Hours: 11:30AM until 7:00PM Daily

#### **Tarrytown Dog Adoption Center (TT)**

3118 Windsor Road

Austin, TX 78703

Hours: 12:00PM until 7:00PM Daily

### **IV. BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT**

#### **A. Responsibilities and Considerations**

Fostering is a tremendously rewarding experience, but it takes a lot of time and effort. The basic responsibilities are:

- Provide a safe, clean, and caring environment
- Provide food, water, toys/enrichment, and shelter
- Provide exercise and socialization, as appropriate
- Monitor any medical and/or behavioral problems
- Transport to/from any Clinic appointments
- Transport to/from adoption sites and events
- Respond to email inquiries regarding your foster dog and communicate with potential adopters
- Arrange a date, time, and place for potential adopters to meet your foster dog and provide meet and greet feedback to our Dog Foster Adoption Team
- Take pictures and video of your foster dog and create a bio for your foster dog (or assist us with that process)
- Arrange hand off to your foster dog's adopter

In addition to the basics, please consider the following before deciding if fostering a dog is right for you:

- Are you permitted to have dogs in your residence (e.g., if you rent, does your landlord allow dogs)? Are there any restrictions on the type of dog that is permitted (e.g., breed, size, etc.)? If there is a required pet deposit, are you willing to pay it prior to taking a foster dog? If you live in a community with shared walls (e.g., apartment, condominium, townhome), will a dog's barking or whining present a noise issue?
- If you do not live alone, is everyone in your residence ok with you fostering a dog? Fostering is a household affair. Even if you do all the work, everyone will be affected by having this addition to your household. This is especially

important if you have roommates. Everyone in the household needs to consent to your fostering a dog and understand and follow the Dog Foster Program's protocols for the health and safety of you, the other residents, and your foster dog.

- If you have other animals:
  - How will they react to a new dog in the home?
  - Are they spayed or neutered? Most of our foster dogs will not yet have had spay or neuter surgery, so we want to ensure that they don't have contact with any "intact" dogs.
  - Do any of them have any health issues that might make them more susceptible to disease or other medical concerns?
  - Have they been fully vaccinated for DAPP, Rabies, and Bordetella? The latter is for kennel cough and not a routine vaccine. However, if you board your dog it was probably required. Please check your vet records to see if this specific vaccine has been done. If your dog(s) are not up to date on vaccines, you should wait a minimum of 5 days after your dog's vaccinations have been administered before taking in a foster dog. We also recommend that you follow your vet's recommendations regarding the addition of a foster dog to your home.
  - Do you have the ability to separate your foster dog from your resident animals? We recommend that you keep them separate for at least the first week. There are two reasons for this. First, we want to protect your resident animals from any undiagnosed medical conditions. Second, from a behavior perspective, it is usually best to slowly introduce a new dog to the "pack."
- Do you have the time to devote to caring for a foster dog? Young puppies may need to be fed as often as every few hours. Adult dogs need the stimulation and exercise of a daily leashed walks. As a foster, you are expected to provide transportation, put forth marketing efforts, and administer the adoption process for your foster dog.
- If you are interested in fostering puppies, please review this [What to Expect When You're Expecting \(to Foster Puppies\)](#) document.
- **PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TAKE YOUR FOSTER DOG TO ANY DOG PARK OR OTHER OFF-LEASH AREA.**

## **B. Application Process**

If you are reading this, you are likely already approved to foster dogs. But if not, and you are interested in becoming an APA! Foster Parent, you first need to submit our dog foster application found here: [Dog Foster Application](#). We will review your application and contact you if we have any questions.

Once you have been approved to foster dogs, you will receive a welcome email, other important documents, and an invitation to join our APA! Dog Foster Homes Google Group. We use this google group to alert you to dogs that need foster and other Dog Foster Program news or information.

If you use Facebook, please ask to join our [APA! Dog Foster Facebook Page](#), which is open only to APA! Dog fosters. Please also “like” our [Foster Dog Adoptions Facebook Page](#) and use this page to market your foster dog.

## **V. GETTING STARTED**

This section describes the steps you need to take before bringing home a foster dog. Your advance preparation will help ensure that your foster experience is a good one for you, your foster dog, and any other animals or people living in your home. These guidelines are designed to answer the most common questions and ease the transition for all concerned. You also have the entire DF Team for backup.

### **A. Preparing for Your Foster Dog**

The following is a checklist of items you will need before bringing home a foster dog:

- Food and water bowls.
- Handling equipment: In most cases, we will be able to provide you with a collar, a leash, a drag leash, and other handling equipment specific to your foster dog, but it would be a good idea to have these items on hand. Do not use a retractable leash. Retractable leashes are dangerous and can severely injure you, a bystander, your dog, or other dogs. We recommend using a martingale collar (a type of dog collar that provides more control over a dog without the choking effect of other collars and offers less opportunity for slipping out of their collar).
- Food and treats. We feed the dogs in our program Castor & Pollux. However, any good quality food is okay. Puppies and nursing or pregnant moms should get puppy food or gruel (depending on their age). It’s a good idea to have both dry and canned food available.
- Chew toys and other enrichment items, appropriate to the size and age of your foster dog. If you provide rawhides, watch your foster dog the first time to ensure there is no problem, such as trying to swallow too large of a piece.
- Travel carrier or crate (for transporting your foster dog, keeping your foster dog safe and out of trouble while you’re away, and help with house-training). If you don’t have a crate, we can usually loan you one.
- Dog bed or blankets to provide your foster dog with a comfortable place to sleep.
- If you are fostering puppies, puppy formula and puppy pads, newspaper, or old sheets.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Bleach.

**\*\*For any equipment that we loan to you (collar, leash, crate, etc.), please make sure to return it to APA! at the end of your foster experience.**

Once your home is ready, make sure that you understand all of the information that the DF Team has provided you and asked questions that you have in advance. Our correspondence contains critical information that you will need to know before beginning, and throughout, your foster experience. **It is very important that you thoroughly read all of the emails we send you, including any attachments, to ensure the safety and well being of you and your foster dog.**

## **B. Selecting Your Foster Dog**

Everyday APA! is identifying dogs that need a foster home. For all dogs needing foster, our DF Placement Team posts a "plea" for that dog to the APA! Dog Foster Homes Google Group and, in most cases, our APA! Dog Foster Program Plea Board. We rely on you to contact the DF Placement Team (by replying to the plea emails or emailing [dog-foster-pleas@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-pleas@austinpetsalive.org) about a dog you see on the plea board) if you are interested in fostering a featured dog.

Please click [here to view our APA! Dog Foster Program Plea Board](#). Please click [here to watch our instructional video on how to use this plea board](#).

Because we are often dealing with dogs at risk for euthanasia, our foster pleas are very time sensitive, and our ability to save a dog often relies solely on our ability to find a foster within a very short timeframe. Because of this, it is imperative that you frequently check your email and our plea board and notify the DF Placement Team if you are interested in a particular foster dog. Your quick response to a foster plea can literally mean the difference between life and death for these dogs.

When corresponding with our DF Placement Team, it is important to let them know about any special considerations you might have:

- Do you have dogs that haven't been spayed or neutered?
- Are your dogs current on all vaccinations?
- Do you have young children?
- Do you have a high-traffic home?
- Can you keep the foster dog separate from your resident animal(s)?
- Do you have any other fosters already in your home?

Please note that APA! does not allow more than 2 "sets" of fosters at one time. A "set" consists of one litter of puppies and mom, 2-3 puppy siblings, or 1 adult animal. In limited cases, a "bonded" pair may be placed together in APA!'s discretion.

The DF Placement Team will work with you to determine if a foster is a good match for you. Upon finding a match, you will be sent a foster match email and a foster pick up email that details important information about fostering for APA! Please be sure to read these emails **before** picking up your foster dog.

## **C. Picking Up Your Foster Dog**

After the DF Placement Team has confirmed a match for you and you have read the foster match email, foster pick up email, and everything else we have emailed you, you are ready to pick up your foster dog. Usually, this will be from TLAC, but could also be from TT or another foster's home.

We recommend that you bring the following:

- Travel Carrier/Crate (one can be borrowed, if needed)
- Blankets/Covers to protect your car from scratches or accidents
- Paper towels/wipes for car cleanup, if necessary

If you don't have a travel carrier/crate, check with the DF team to see if it is needed for your foster dog. We will fit your adult foster dog with an appropriate collar. Puppies don't need a collar, but should be transported in a travel carrier/crate.

Before taking your foster dog to your car, please make sure they are secured on a leash or in a travel carrier/crate before taking them to your car. Do not use a retractable leash. Retractable leashes are dangerous and can severely injure you, a bystander, your dog, or other dogs. If you are fostering a puppy that is: (a) younger than 16 weeks of age OR (b) 16 weeks of age or older but has not had at least one DAPP vaccine that was given at 16 weeks of age or older, **do not allow the puppy to touch the ground in any public area; this includes at APA! Put them in a travel carrier/crate or carry them!** If your foster dog can touch the ground and is on a leash, give them an opportunity to relieve themselves before placing them in your car.

Rescue dogs can be scared and disoriented by the changing environment and are often excellent escape artists. If the DF Placement Team has told you that your dog is a flight risk, please follow these extra precautions:

- The dog must wear a Martingale collar AT ALL TIMES.
- The dog must wear a drag leash AT ALL TIMES including inside the house.
- Do not use a retractable leash. Retractable leashes are dangerous and can severely injure you, a bystander, your dog, or other dogs.
- The dog must always be on a HELD leash when the dog is outside, including within an enclosed area like a yard or patio; the dog must never be off leash.
- The dog must be transported in a travel carrier/crate and not removed from the travel carrier/crate until the dog is safely indoors.
- All household members must understand and follow these rules.

#### **D. At Home With Your Foster Dog**

When you get home, make sure your foster dog has a chance to relieve himself before going inside. Neither of you want to start out with any accidents! Begin by showing your foster dog his sleeping area, either the crate (strongly recommended) or a place with his own bedding. If you have other animals, please keep them separated from any resident animal for at least the first week. If you want to introduce your foster dog to your resident dog(s) after the first week, we can provide more information on the "best practice" for introducing dogs upon request.

Otherwise, please do not introduce your foster dog to any other animal except your resident animal(s) and any potential adopter's animal(s) (unless the Behavior Team advises against any such introduction). This generally means maintaining a 10-foot bubble between your foster dog and any other dog at all times.

If your foster was sent home with special handling equipment and/or a drag leash, please leave those items on at all times. We place this equipment on your foster dog for their protection and to reduce the likelihood of an escape. If you feel your foster dog no longer needs the harness or drag leash, please contact the Behavior Team. Do not remove the harness and/or drag leash until you have received approval from the Behavior Team.

**Do not leave your foster dog unattended in a fenced yard.** If you have a doggy door, please keep it closed unless you are present to monitor the dog(s) at all times in the fenced yard. Although your yard may seem "escape proof," too often our foster dogs have managed to find a way out. This is also their time to begin bonding with people again, and being left alone outside could cause them increased anxiety. Fully vaccinated dogs can be taken on walks but always on a leash; however, **never allow your foster dog to be off leash in public.** This means **no dog parks or other off-leash areas.** At this point, we don't know enough about the foster dog, or the other dogs at the park, to know how they will react.

Please do not feed your foster dog "people food." In limited cases, you may be asked to give your foster dog "people food" (e.g., yogurt or pumpkin to help with diarrhea), but in general it's best to stick to dog food. Puppies and nursing or pregnant moms should get puppy food or gruel (depending on their age) for the additional nutrition. If you want to bathe your foster dog, you can use a mild shampoo or detergent. Do not, however, bathe your foster dog for 24 hours after treated with a topical flea medication as the shampoo could negate that treatment.

Special precautions need to be taken with puppies. Puppies should be housed in a private, confined area. We recommend a bathroom or any room where they will not have full access to the residence. Very young, small puppies can be confined to a crate initially. Confining puppies not only helps protect your possessions, it also keeps them out of harm's way. Puppies have an uncanny knack for being able to get themselves into precarious situations! Again, do not allow your puppy(ies) to touch the ground in any public area; this includes at APA!. **Do not take your puppy(ies) to a public place**, even if it's just to go to the bathroom! This includes parks, pet stores, veterinary clinics or hospitals, boarding kennels, play yards, running trails, etc. It's very important that they are not exposed to the "germs" out in the world. If puppies need to be taken out in public—for example to the Clinic or an adoption event for which they are approved—they should be transported in a crate and only placed in a pen that has been sanitized. You should always have hand sanitizer handy and ask everyone (friends, family, neighbors, etc.) to use the sanitizer before touching your puppies. If your residence does not have a private outside area where unknown/unvaccinated dogs cannot go, you will need to use puppy pee pads as puppies cannot go outside on the ground.

If you need to have your foster dog moved, even temporarily, please contact the DF Placement Team as soon as possible so they can find another foster home. We ask that you keep your foster dog until a new placement is found, if possible. **Foster dogs can never be placed in the care of a neighbor, friend, petsitter, roommate, or even a potential adopter without APA's express advance permission. Foster dogs are NOT allowed to travel outside of the Austin area.** Because all foster dog medical care is provided at the Clinic, it is important that foster dogs stay close enough to receive care in an emergency. If you plan to travel, please contact the DF Placement Team to make arrangements for the care of your foster dog while you are gone.

**IF YOUR FOSTER DOG GETS LOOSE OR IS LOST, IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE DF MANAGER.**

## **VI. BEHAVIOR ISSUES & TRAINING YOUR FOSTER DOG**

It is common for a dog to experience some behavioral problems and need a period of adjustment when placed into a new environment. Foster parents are in a unique position to help increase the "adoptability" of their foster dogs by providing some basic training. This also gives you the opportunity to strengthen the bond with your foster dog and get him/her to trust people again. If you need help addressing behavior issues with your foster dog, please contact the Behavior Team at [dogbehaviorfollowup@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dogbehaviorfollowup@austinpetsalive.org) and copy the Dog Foster Manager at [dog-foster-manager@austinitnpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-manager@austinitnpetsalive.org). You should receive an email response within 72 hours. If it is time sensitive, please note that in the subject line of your email, and contact the Dog Foster Manager if you don't receive a timely response. The Behavior Team can provide email and phone consultations as well as in-person training sessions and playgroup assessments to see how your foster dog does with other dogs.

Follow this [Dog Foster Bite Protocol](#) if your foster dog bites you, a member of your household, or anyone else. Note: Dog to dog bites and any injuries caused to another animal should also be reported to the Dog Foster Manager and the Behavior Team.

The following is a list of common behavioral problems as well as suggestions for behavior modification.

### **A. Lack of House-Training**

Chances are your foster dog may need at least a refresher course in house-training. Many rescued dogs have spent most of their lives outside and never learned the rules of living indoors. Other dogs may have once been house-trained, but may still have an accident or two when transitioning into a new home. Here are some key points to keep in mind during the process that are almost universally applicable:

1. **Holding It:** Every dog has their time limit. Puppies under six months are typically unable to hold it in for more than a few hours. Prepare for this! A

healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for 8-10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions.

2. **Frequent Outings:** To avoid accidents, you will want to make sure your foster dog has plenty of opportunities to go outside (if they are fully vaccinated). You also want to give them ample time. Walk them for at least 15 minutes to encourage them and give them plenty of time to go potty. When they do go outside, you want to capture this wanted behavior (just like when teaching a dog a new command). By capture, we mean giving lots of praise and treats for doing what we want.
3. **Reward Only!:** It's vital to successful housetraining that we NEVER scold a dog for going potty inside, even—especially—when we catch them in the act. More often than not, the dog won't understand that you are scolding them for going inside. They are more likely to think you are scolding them for going at all, and as a result they will want to hide from you to do their business. (This means sneaking off to quiet, isolated corners of the home or behind furniture, and no one wants to play "Find the Smell!"). Instead our focus should be on praising and treating every time the pup goes outside. If your pup is learning for the first time or is struggling with learning outside from in, you can amp up the reward by "jackpotting" even a little outdoor tinkle with a BUNCH of treats and praise (or toys, or whatever your pup thinks is a great reward).
4. **Prevention & Redirection:** If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you have eyes on your pup at all times. Keep a lightweight leash attached to their collar always (what we call a "drag leash" or "drag line") so that, the second they start to go, you can quickly pick up the end of the leash and walk them outside. Remain neutral until they're outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there you can reward! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please.

## **B. Chewing**

Destructive chewing is a phase that all puppies go through. It usually starts around three months and can last until the dog is one year old. During this time, the dog's adult teeth are coming in and chewing helps relieve the pain. Adult dogs may also have problems with chewing, but for different reasons. Adult dogs usually chew on inappropriate things because they are anxious or bored, or because they have never been taught what is appropriate to chew on. The best solution for destructive chewing is providing your foster dog with something that is acceptable to chew on. Alternate chew toys daily and do not leave all toys out all the time. Dogs generally get bored of toys and find alternative things to chew. If you catch your dog chewing on something inappropriate, interrupt them with a neutral (non-praise, but also non-punishment) noise that gets their attention. A mild "eh eh" or "no" or a light clap of your hands are a couple ideas. Offer them an appropriate toy or chew instead as a means of redirecting the chewing behavior.

If the destructive chewing occurs when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. A crate will help keep both the dog and your home safe. It is also important to make sure that your foster dog is getting plenty of exercise. There is an adage that "a tired dog is a good dog". Sometimes a dog chews for no other reason than they are bored (as one might chew on the cap of a pen in a dull meeting). It's important to make sure your dog has not only plenty of physical stimulation, but mental stimulation as well. Mental stimulation can include training games, puzzle toys, even a kong stuffed with tasties. A dog can run around the yard for an hour and still have stores of energy (or at least enough for chewing!), but put that same dog in front of a puzzle toy that takes them fifteen minutes and suddenly you have one pooped pup!

### **C. Separation Anxiety**

It is common for foster dogs to experience some separation anxiety when left alone. The severity of the anxiety can range from pacing and whining to much more destructive behavior. A dog may experience separation anxiety simply because he has a very dependent personality, or because she is reacting to a history of abuse or abandonment. Whatever the reason, separation anxiety can be difficult to deal with because you are not around when it happens. The most common sign that a dog may be suffering from separation anxiety is destructive behavior when left alone. A dog may scratch frantically at the door or make other attempts to get out of the house, or the dog may chew on things or engage in other destructive behaviors. If you have reason to suspect that your foster dog is suffering from separation anxiety when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. If used appropriately, the crate will help the dog feel safe and secure and hopefully relieve some of the anxiety. And, until the separation anxiety itself can be examined and dealt with, a crate will help keep both your home and your foster dog safe.

If you do have the time to work with your foster dog, there are several things you can try to help alleviate separation anxiety. Start out by leaving the dog in your home for very short intervals. Tell the dog to wait and then walk outside for a few minutes before returning. When you return to the house, praise the dog for waiting. Begin to gradually leave the dog for longer and longer periods of time. It is important that, when you leave, you remain calm and not make a big deal out of leaving. It is also important that you not be too excited when you return. You want to praise the dog, but calmly. You don't want your return to be such an exciting event that the dog anxiously anticipates the moment of your return. Perhaps the most effective treatment for separation anxiety is time. Be patient. As your foster dog spends more time with you, he will begin to feel more secure in knowing that when you leave, you always come back. Some destructive behavior that appears to be related to separation anxiety may, in fact, be the product of boredom, so make sure your foster dog gets plenty of physical and mental stimulation per the "Chewing" Section above.

### **D. Crate Training**

APA! strongly recommends using a crate for your foster dog. A crate is a great way to keep both your foster dog and your home safe. If you decide to use a crate, make sure that the crate is always a positive place for your foster dog. Never use a crate for punishment. When introducing a dog to a crate, use a happy tone of voice and tell the dog to "kennel up." When the dog enters the crate, give her lots of praise and perhaps a treat reward. If you have a difficult time getting the dog to enter the crate or if the dog seems afraid, try leaving the crate door open and placing the dog's food and water bowls just inside the door. Any time your foster dog shows any sign of curiosity in the crate, praise and reward him. You will notice the dog going to the crate and looking at you for assurance and praise. Allow the dog to wander into the crate and eat at his leisure. Once the dog seems more comfortable with the crate, you can try confining the dog to the crate for short intervals.

Never confine a puppy to a crate for longer than 3-4 hours at a time or an adult dog for longer than 8-10 hours at a time. Remember, the dog will not want to soil his crate, so forcing the dog to stay in the crate longer than he can comfortably "hold it" is inappropriate.

## **VII. MEDICAL CARE**

**Because most foster dogs are rescued from shelter environments, APA! can not ensure that they will be healthy when they are placed in your care.** A dog that appears healthy at the time of placement can sometimes show signs of illness several days later. For this reason, it is very important that foster dogs are kept separate from your own animal(s), at least for that first seven days, and that you keep your own dogs up-to-date on vaccinations, including Bordetella. **Please notify our Dog Foster Care Team (DFC Team) immediately if your foster dog is showing any sign of illness or injury.**

**The APA! Medical Team provides all medical care for our foster dogs. APA! will not reimburse foster parents for the cost of ANY medical care outside of APA!**

### **A. Routine Medical Care**

The DFC Team assists with scheduling all routine and preventive medical care. However, if you have not been contacted by the team and you know that a vaccine or monthly preventative is due or other medical care is needed, please contact them at [dog-foster-care@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:dog-foster-care@austinpetsalive.org).

Our Clinic is located in Building C at TLAC. Please DO NOT go directly to the Clinic without an appointment; you will be turned away. Please refer to the section immediately below for emergency medical care.

APA! vaccinates for DAPP (Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, and Parvo Virus), Bordetella (vaccinates against the most common form of Kennel Cough), and

Rabies. In addition, all dogs receive flea/tick and heartworm (HW) prevention. Dogs and puppies are dewormed.

Please reference the following table for scheduling your foster dog's routine medical care:

	2 Wks.	4 Wks.	6 Wks.	8 Wks.	10 Wks.	12 Wks.	14 Wks.	16 Wks.	18 Wks.	20 Wks.	6 Mos.
Strongid (Dewormer)	X	X	X								
Flea/Tick Preventative			X		X		X				
HW Preventative			X		X		X		X		
Bordetella			X								
DAPP			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rabies						X					
HW Test											X
Spay/Neuter				X							

Note: Adult dogs receive the following upon intake (unless we have documentation that they have already received these): Strongid (dewormer); DAPP, Bordetella, and Rabies vaccinations; HW test (if 6 months or older); and HW preventative and flea/tick preventative, and they must receive their second DAPP within four weeks of receiving their first DAPP. In some cases, the HW test and microchip are taken care of at the time of their spay/neuter surgery. If there are certain health concerns, the schedule may deviate from the above.

## B. Spay/Neuter Surgery

Puppies are spayed or neutered at 8 weeks of age unless they are underweight (less than 2 pounds), malnourished, ill, or are generally just not healthy enough for surgery, and as long as they have had at least 1 DAPP at least three days prior to surgery. Older dogs are spayed or neutered as soon as they are medically ready. Nursing moms can be spayed after their pups have been weaned and the mom's milk has dried up. If the pups are weaned by 6 weeks of age, the moms can often be spayed when their pups have surgery at 8 weeks of age. **Because of the**

**limited number of surgery slots, it is vital that you keep your scheduled appointment.**

Your foster dog needs to be healthy for at least seven days before surgery. Please notify us if prior to his/her surgery date he/she is exhibiting any upper respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, sneezing, coughing, and/or congestion or any other signs of illness; if so, his/her surgery will need to be delayed. You will receive the pre-surgery instructions the weekend prior to their surgery date. Drop off is between 8:00-9:00AM at the Clinic, and pick up is on the same day between 5:00-6:00PM. If you can't make your appointment, please let us know us know immediately. If it is within 12 hours of your appointment, you need to call the Medical Receptionist at 512-466-0720. **We understand that emergencies arise, but our surgery slots are very limited. If you think that you might not be able to make your surgery appointment, please contact us as we may be able to get another dog into that surgery slot.**

### **C. Emergency Medical Care**

The DFC Team can assist you with most medical questions; however, if you have an emergency, please call 512-466-0720 (during Clinic hours 9:00AM-7:00PM) or 1-888-733-8840 (after hours/on call); follow up with an email to the Medical Team ([medicalreception@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:medicalreception@austinpetsalive.org)) and copy the DFC Team. Always copy the DFC Team on any correspondence with the Medical Team so that they can track your foster dog's medical care and assist if needed.

When you contact the Medical Team, please give as much detail as possible and be sure to include the following:

- Your foster dog's name and ID Number
- Your name and phone number
- A detailed description of your concerns
- Is your foster eating and/or drinking? If not, how long has it been without food and/or water?
- Any vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, or sneezing? If so, how long has this been going on?
- Does he/she seem lethargic?
- Any eye or nose discharge? If so, what color is it?

### **Reasons to Contact the Emergency Line:**

- Excessive bleeding that will not stop with pressure
- Trouble breathing (respiratory rate over 60 breaths per minute when resting)
- Lethargic with white gums
- Frequent vomiting (more than 3 times)
- Not eating in a dog less than 5 lbs
- Not eating or drinking for more than 48 hours in any dog
- Seizure lasting more than 1 minute

- Unconsciousness; non-responsiveness even upon stimulation (making noise/petting)
- Severe pain due to trauma (painfully vocalizing non stop for more than 10 minutes)
- Vomit or diarrhea with a large quantity of blood in it (more than just a streak)
- Ataxia (wobbling/stumbling; appears drunk or unstable when walking)
- Ingestion of a foreign body or toxic substance
- Complications during birthing

### **Reasons to NEVER Contact the Emergency Line:**

- General medication requests or questions
- Appointment requests or cancellations
- Questions regarding surgery drop off or pick up

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our Clinic is not a 24/7 emergency clinic. The Clinic's hours are 9:00AM-7:00PM, 7 days a week, and we do not have guaranteed staff in our Clinic overnight. Because of this, please exercise your best discretion when calling our after-hours emergency number. As a rule of thumb, ask yourself if you would take your own pet to an emergency clinic that night for the issue you are experiencing. However, if your foster pup is under 6 months of age, err on the side of caution and call us with your concerns if you think it is an emergency. This is not meant to deter you from calling the emergency number with emergencies, only to help streamline our response efforts and get you both the fastest and most appropriate response in the most efficient manner.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING APA!'S MEDICAL CARE:**

Texas has some of the highest euthanasia rates in the country. As a leader in the national no-kill movement, APA! must necessarily focus on saving as many animals as we safely can each day. Because of this, we must get each foster dog intaked and into their foster home as quickly as possible in order to save shelter space. Each day a foster dog spends at our shelter means another dog that will be euthanized because we had no space in which to house it.

Our medical care reflects this. At intake, each dog receives a physical exam, vaccinations, a broad-spectrum dewormer, and flea and heartworm prevention. We do not routinely test for non-serious illnesses and conditions, such as intestinal parasites and skin parasites. Instead, we treat such illnesses and conditions symptomatically. In addition, intake exams are done by medical technicians, not veterinarians (unless we deem a vet check necessary). Please also note that because of the conditions from which most of our dogs are coming, it's very common for them to have worms, parasites, fleas, and/or upper respiratory infections (URIs). In general, our system of care recognizes that fosters are in the best position to identify non-serious illnesses and conditions, report them to the Clinic, and quickly receive treatment to address them. This system means that each foster dog is receiving appropriate treatment/care in a home environment, and enables APA! to continue pulling as many dogs as possible off of euthanasia lists.

In terms of ongoing care, we aim to provide the same level of care as an animal lover of average means could reasonably provide. This means that if your foster dog falls ill, suffers an injury, or is in discomfort, they can be seen by a tech or vet, as we deem appropriate, within a timeframe commensurate with the issue and can receive medications and routine diagnostics, such as x-rays and blood tests, as we deem necessary. However, just like an animal lover of average means, we are unable to go above and beyond and provide extraordinary medical care. This means we cannot provide expensive diagnostics, like MRIs (which cost thousands of dollars), or a guarantee of expensive prescription medications or foods, although we will always provide this if it is donated.

For more information, please review our protocol for making medical decisions: [How We Make Medical Decisions for Non-Routine Care](#). This protocol helps clarify how APA!'s functions, the goals of our organization, and why we treat symptoms clinically versus pursuing expensive diagnostics.

While this protocol may be different than what you have come to expect from your private veterinary care, please know that when you foster a dog with APA!, you are not only saving the life of that dog but of another dog in need.

#### **D. Illness in the Home**

It is important that you thoroughly clean all items and areas that have been in contact with a sick foster dog. You can use a 10% bleach solution to reliably kill most viruses and bacteria. Items and areas that need to be cleaned should be thoroughly wetted with the bleach solution and allowed to stand for several minutes before rinsing. Foster homes that have recently fostered a dog or puppy with Parvo or another extremely contagious disease must wait six months before fostering another unvaccinated dog or puppy. When replying to foster pleas, please let the DF Placement Team know if you have had a sick animal in your home.

### **VIII. GETTING MY FOSTER DOG ADOPTED**

APA! takes full responsibility for finding permanent adoptive homes for our foster dogs; however, it is a collaborative process with the foster parent. Foster parents are their foster dog's #1 advocate for adoption! Foster parents are highly encouraged to share the word that their foster dog is available for adoption, but any person interested in adopting a foster dog needs to go through the Dog Foster Adoption (DFA) Team and follow the Dog Foster Program's adoption procedures.

As soon as you take your foster dog home, we want to begin the process of getting him or her to their forever home. But if you have foster puppies that are newborns or under 6 weeks, your focus should be on getting, and keeping, them healthy and happy. Before 7 weeks of age, puppies are not yet available for adoption. Of course it never hurts to start getting the word out to family, friends, and neighbors, about the fabulous puppies you are raising! At 7 weeks of age, which is when a dog

becomes available for adoption and posted to our website, the adoption process begins, but please note that all foster dogs must have had their intake exam, including at least 1 DAPP vaccination, before becoming available for adoption.

If your foster dog did not come to you with a name, the first step is naming your foster dog. With older dogs, we like to get a name immediately. With very young pups, it may take a little longer to pick a name, but we need to have a name by the time they turn two weeks old. If your foster dog already has a name, we will continue to use that name to avoid confusion since they are already being tracked in our system by that name. Please note that your foster dog's name can not be the same or closely similar to a dog's name that is active in our system.

APA!'s standard adoption fee is \$160. This can vary depending on your foster dog's assessed breed, age, and length of stay with us, among other things. In addition, all post parvo dogs (dogs that have successfully been treated for the parvo virus) are always \$250 to cover the cost of parvo treatment, and all heartworm positive dogs are always \$160 to cover the cost of heartworm treatment (with treatment typically delayed until it can be done in the adopter's home). Each dog's adoption fee is listed on their online profile.

## **A. Marketing**

We are very fortunate to have an APA! Dog Marketing Team devoted exclusively to marketing our dogs. Their trained team of writers will craft a bio designed to highlight your foster dog's awesome characteristics. As soon as possible, please complete this questionnaire: [Dog Bio Questionnaire](#). Please be as descriptive as possible. Our Dog Marketing Team will use this information to write a smashing bio for your foster dog. If you prefer, you can email them a bio that you have written for your foster dog.

Please also send the Dog Marketing Team photos and videos of your foster dog. Please send the best pictures you can get of your foster dog. Ideally, we prefer to have at least one good picture of his/her face (looking right into the camera makes a huge difference), a full picture of your foster dog to give people an idea of overall size, and a picture that shows personality. Pictures taken outside avoid the green eye syndrome of a flash. Dogs with videos get more adoption inquiries because people love to see the dog in action. Making a video is especially helpful for an adult dog as it does a better job of conveying personality. The video doesn't have to be long or fancy; you can send raw video footage, and the Dog Marketing Team will edit it to make a fabulous video.

Your foster dog's profile will be posted to our website once they are available for adoption. Please check the APA! website at <http://www.austinpetsalive.org/adopt/dogs/> to ensure that your foster dog is posted as an available dog. We may also post it to any other adoption networks available to us like Petfinder or our [Foster Dog Adoptions Facebook Page](#). Please feel free to use this Facebook page to market your foster pup!

Please make sure that you complete the bio questionnaire and email photos and a video as soon as possible if your foster dog is older than 6 weeks or by 6 weeks of age. The sooner we can get you foster dog posted with a complete profile, the sooner they have a chance of getting into a forever home.

## **B. When Can My Foster Dog Be Adopted?**

Unless a specific medical or behavioral condition affects their availability, puppies are available for adoption at 7 weeks of age (as long as they have had an intake exam, including at least 1 DAPP vaccination) and older dogs are available immediately after their intake exam. Adoptions can't be finalized until your foster dog has been spayed or neutered (puppies are spayed or neutered after 10 weeks of age), so for dogs that have not yet been spayed or neutered, we do a "pre-adoption." For pre-adoptions, the adopter goes through the entire adoption process, including going to the interview, signing the contract, and paying the adoption fee, but they must also pay a fully-refundable surgery deposit (which is refunded once the dog is spayed or neutered), and after that the adopter is allowed to pick up their dog from your home. This does not apply to out of state adopters. since they will not have an option to pay a surgery deposit as unaltered dogs cannot leave the state, and the foster dog must stay with you until he/she is altered.

## **C. What Are My Responsibilities in the Adoption Process?**

### **Adoption Sites & Events**

APA! markets our dogs at regular adoption sites and at periodic adoption or exposure events. If your foster dog can go to APA!'s adoption sites or events, you will receive a weekly email, asking you to reserve a spot for your foster dog. If you do NOT receive one of our weekly adoption site emails and you want to bring your foster pup, please email the DFA Team. We ask that you actively market your foster pup by taking him/her to either one of our regular adoption sites and/or one of our many events at least once a month until they find their forever home (so long as your foster pup's medical and behavior needs are appropriate for an adoption site or event). Please also market your foster pup on our [Foster Dog Adoptions Facebook Page](#).

Not all foster dogs, however, are good candidates for adoption sites or events. It may be that they are fearful or reactive to other dogs or they simply don't do well in that setting. If your foster dog cannot go to an adoption site or event, we will work with you to get them adopted directly out of your home.

**If you take your dog to an adoption site or event, please understand that if the adoption is approved, the adopter will be able to take your foster dog home immediately.** We understand that it is difficult not knowing whether your foster dog will come home with you at the end of the day. However, we hope you can be happy knowing they found their forever home! If you wish, you can ask the Adoption Counselor to call you if it appears your dog is being adopted. Please

understand that if they are very busy they may not always be able to do this. However, they will call you before pick-up time to let you know that your dog has been adopted. You can also leave a note, with your contact information, for any potential adopter. Due to privacy concerns, we cannot give you an adopter's personal information after the fact.

## **Phone and Email Inquiries**

Most of the inquiries about your foster dog will come through the APA! Adopt Line (adopt@austinpetsalive.org). This team receives all adoption inquiries for APA!, including dogs and cats, and routes them to the appropriate place. This team is different from the DFA Team. The APA! Adopt Line simply forwards the adoption inquiries to you; after that, it is the DFA Team that will work with you on all aspects of the adoption process.

We ask foster parents to respond to each potential adopter as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours after the inquiry, so it's very important that you frequently monitor your emails. Since you know your foster dog best, it's important that each potential adopter hears directly from you. Before scheduling a meet and greet (M&G), please start a dialog with the potential adopter; ask for the characteristics that they are looking for in a dog and share with them some of your pup's unique traits. This is also a good time to let any potential adopters know about any major medical and/or behavioral issues and/or any of your pup's special needs. If your foster dog is designated as a "Behavior Consult," you should have been instructed at your consult as to how to handle these initial inquiries and any M&Gs (certain foster dogs' M&Gs must occur at TLAC under the supervision of our Behavior Team)

If it seems like a good match, please arrange a M&G as soon as possible (no later than 5 days after the inquiry). You should schedule the first inquirer that seems like a good match as the first M&G. **We adhere to the guideline that the first inquirer of which you are notified that submits the first acceptable application will have priority to adopt your foster dog.** Please DO NOT tell any potential adopters that they are the first / second / third ones to meet your foster dog, make any other representation as to their priority / order, or make any guarantee that they will be able to adopt your foster dog. This can lead to confusion and cause hurt feelings, which we want to avoid at all times. **Please DO, however, let potential adopters know that there are or may be other potential adopters.**

## **Meet and Greets**

If a potential adopter wants to meet your foster dog, the first step is to arrange a person-dog M&G. **All M&Gs must be at least 30 minutes long.** They should take place in a safe and familiar environment. If your foster pup is four months or younger, M&Gs must occur in your home (**do not take a puppy to a public place for a M&G**). If your foster pup is older than four months, M&Gs should occur in your home if at all possible. The foster home has proven to be the best place to have M&Gs as the pup is already familiar with this environment and will be at

his/her best. If you are not comfortable having a potential adopter come to your home please contact us for assistance.

During the M&G, continue the dialog with the potential adopter and ask questions that you believe will help you determine if they are a good match for your foster dog. Please pay close attention to the interaction between the potential adopter and your foster dog and make sure that you share with the potential adopter any behavior and/or medical issues. Please use safe hygiene practices at the M&G, especially for puppies. Puppies that have not been fully vaccinated (typically puppies four months or under) are very susceptible to contagious diseases that can be present in public areas. Make sure that everyone uses hand sanitizer before handling your puppy and consider having potential adopters drape a towel over their clothing, as some diseases can be carried on clothing.

For most foster dogs, APA! does not require a dog-dog M&G with any potential adopter's dog(s). APA! may, however, require a dog-dog M&G for a foster dog designated as a "Behavior Consult"; if your foster dog falls into this category, we will let you know. Even if a dog-dog M&G is not required, potential adopters may prefer to introduce their dog(s); please discuss this with the DFA Team in advance. **Never allow a dog-dog M&G if your foster dog is not fully vaccinated.**

#### **D. The Adoption**

After the M&G, please email the DFA Team your thoughts on the M&G and why you believe the potential adopter is (or is not) a good fit for your foster pup. Please let us know immediately if you have any concerns that you would like us to address if the potential adopter applies. If after the M&G the potential adopter wants to pursue the adoption, please refer them to their initial email from the Adopt Line, which includes a link to the online adoption application. Once they have submitted the application, the potential adopter must notify the DFA Team of this submission. Upon receiving an application, we will contact you for your M&G feedback if you have not already submitted it. We will review the adoption application and address any questions and concerns that we might have on our end.

Upon receiving your M&G feedback and our approval of their application, the DFA Team will arrange an appointment for the potential adopter to interview with an APA! Adoption Counselor at one of our adoption sites to finalize the adoption. **APA! Adoption Counselors are trained staff members and are responsible for making the final adoption decision.**

All adoptions must be prearranged by 5:00 p.m. the day before the adoption to allow for preparation of the appropriate records and paperwork. Please do not send a potential adopter out to an adoption site - they will not be able to finalize the adoption until the DFA Team schedules the interview. **You do not need to bring your foster dog to the adoption interview.**

After the adopter attends the adoption interview and pays the requisite adoption fee and surgery deposit (if applicable), the pup is ready to go to his/her forever home

immediately following the adoption interview (unless it is an out of state adoption and your foster dog has not been neutered or spayed).

If your foster dog has not been neutered or spayed, then your foster dog's adoption will be considered a pre-adoption, and the adopter will have been required to pay a fully-refundable surgery deposit (\$100 for in area adoptions and \$200 for out of area adoptions) that is refunded after the dog has been altered. Please also note that out of area adopters (more than 60 miles from TLAC, but in state) must have their vet perform the spay/neuter surgery within 30 days of the adoption. This does not apply to out of state adopters since they will not have an option to pay a surgery deposit as unaltered dogs cannot leave the state, and the foster dog must stay with you until he/she is altered. Out of area and out of state adoptions are subject to our approval on a case by case basis.

The adopter will contact you to make arrangements to pick up your foster dog.

**Before you release your foster dog to the adopter, the adopter must show you a signed adoption contract for verification.**

Because you'll know in advance when your foster pup is going to his/her forever home, you'll have plenty of time to say "goodbye" - not without a tear - but with no regrets because you know there is another pup needing your help. Saying goodbye will likely be difficult, but we hope you also feel tremendous joy in the role that you have played in getting your foster dog to his/her new forever home!

Thank you for reading this Handbook and for helping us save another life!