

DOG FOSTER MATCHMAKING GUIDELINES

- I. LEARN ABOUT THE FOSTER--THE FIVE QUESTIONS: Ask these 5 questions to get a good handle on what type of home the dog will be living in and the foster's lifestyle.**
- A.** "Do you have any **pets** in your home or do you have **pets** that visit your home? If yes, follow up as follows:
- Are you willing to keep your foster dog separated from other pets for a minimum of seven (7) days? How would you do this?
 - Are any resident or visiting pets not spayed/neutered or not current on vaccines? If so, do you have the ability to keep the foster dog separate from these pets at all times?
 - What is the **size, age, and energy level** of your other dog(s)? Our dogs are tested with dogs their size. A medium/large dog may get along great with other medium/large dogs, but see a small dog as a toy.
 - How important is it to you that your foster dog gets along with other dogs? Remind the foster that we do not permit our foster dogs to go to any off-leash area or let their foster dog off leash.
 - If people bring pets to the home, remind them that we don't want our foster dogs meeting any dog other than resident dogs for safety and health reasons. No dog likes ALL other dogs and we cannot know that the public's dogs are fully vaccinated against what our dogs may carry (URI, Distemper, etc.).
 - **Note** that if they have another organization's foster dog, they are not permitted to foster an APA! foster dog. Check with the DFP Team Lead if you think an exception is appropriate.
- B.** "Are there any **children** in your home or any **children** that visit?" If yes, follow up as follows:
- What are the ages of the children? Some dogs will be good with "older" children (10+), or older teens (16+), but not with younger children. Certain dogs should not be placed in homes with young children.
 - We **never** place dogs with contagious skin issues like ringworm or sarcoptic mange in a home with children under the age of 13. The same precaution applies if there is someone living in the home that is elderly or has a compromised immune system.
- C.** "Are there **other adults** in your home or frequent **guests**?" If yes, follow up as follows:
- How many?
 - What is your relationship to them? (spouse, roommate, parent).
 - Is every adult in the home in agreement with you fostering?

- Are the other members of the household willing to come and meet the dog and discuss what their responsibilities could be regarding caring for the dog?
 - If they have a lot of guests, they need a dog who is comfortable with meeting a lot of people.
- D. "Tell me a little about your **home set up.**"
- If apartment/condominium:
 - When you open your front door, are you outside or in a hallway?
 - Do you have to use an elevator or closed stairwell to get to your home?
 - What floor do you live on?
 - Are there any breed/weight restrictions?
 - Are there a lot of other dogs in you complex/neighborhood? Do you ever see dogs off leash?
 - Some of our dogs should not be placed in a home where they may come in close contact with strangers or other dogs. Also, some may not be able to handle stairs. Puppies or dogs with separation anxiety might also be a problem as they may cry or bark a lot.
 - If they have a yard:
 - Is your yard fenced in and private (i.e., not a community dog park)?
 - How high is the fence? Is the fence solid or can you see through it? What is the fence made of? If your fence is shared with a neighbor, do they have dogs, cats, or children on their side of the fence?
 - "How many **hours (on average) will the dog be left alone** during the day?"
 - Lower than 4 hours: Try matching a separation anxiety dog, a geriatric dog, or a dog that needs frequent feeding or medical care.
 - 8+ hours: Try matching a dog with good crate training notes and recommend crate training. Avoid matching a separation anxiety dog, a geriatric dog, or a dog that needs frequent feeding or medical care.

II. LEARN ABOUT THE DOGS: If we have notes on the dog, these are the available resources to gain more information on the dog's personality, needs, and behaviors:

A. **Scores:** Cat, Child, Dog, Home

- Not every dog will have a score for each category
- Some dogs will have no scores
- Sometimes the dog will have never experienced a certain stimuli (such as cats) and thus the score will be 0 or U. Or, sometimes due to the dog's past behavior, we may lower their score for a certain stimuli even if they have never experienced it. For example: a dog with a significant bite history due to being uncomfortable with new people is going to have a low child score, even if the dog has never actually met a child.

- See [Dog Scores Explained](#).
 - See "Attributes" column of the [Dog Foster Tracking Sheet](#) for scores.
- B. **ShelterLuv:** See the "Memos" section of a dog's record. These memos can give you more specific, in depth information about a dog's behaviors, including any incidents.

III. BEHAVIOR SPEAK CHEAT SHEET:

- For **Defensive Aggression, Handler Guarding, On-Leash Reactivity (OLR), Overarousal (OA) Resource Guarding (RG), Separation Anxiety (SA), Territorial Aggression**, see this official Behavior Team document: [Behavioral Terminology](#).
- **Basic Obedience (BO):** Sits, downs, stays.
- **Bite Quarantine (BQ):** Also sometimes referred to as Rabies Observation or RO (you'll see that more in AAC notes than APA! notes). Texas law mandates that any dog who breaks human skin with their teeth must serve a 10 day quarantine from the day of the bite to observe for rabies, yes, even if they've had their rabies vaccine. Broken skin normally indicates that there was blood. If the dog serves BQ at AAC, they do not have human contact for the 10 days, are not allowed out of their kennel, and supplied with food and water. Some BQ's can be served at a vet's office but costs much more. If the bite occurs in home or while a dog is secure on a leash, the caretaker has the option of an in-home quarantine, which is much less strict and less supervised, but the dog still cannot go outside unless on a muzzle and must not meet any new people or be given much opportunity to bite again.
- **BOO/Scaredy:** This is a dog who is very scared. They need quiet and patience and should not be matched with families with small children as children tend to not respect boundaries.
- **Bubble Dog:** This dog needs to be at least 10 feet from other people and animals while on walks and should generally have slow introductions. Not advised for high rises or other apartments with small enclosed spaces.
- **Canine Good Citizen (CGC):** This dog does not have any bites on record and is also going through an obedience program where they are learning sits, downs, stays, etc.
- **Collar Color:** See [Collar Color Descriptions](#).
- **Drag Leash (DL):** This is a thin, lightweight leash that is clipped to the dog's collar AT ALL TIMES. Yes, this means in the house as well. Our Dog Foster Assistant Manager calls this the "oh crap handle". This allows the foster to move the dog by reaching for the handle of the leash which is much safer than reaching for a collar or physically moving the dog. This is also a great tool when a dog fight breaks out so your hands are not by dogs' mouths. Stepping on this leash is also an effective way to stop a dog from going somewhere.
- **EPG1-2, PG1-PG4, Walk only:** This is the dog's playgroup rating. EPG1= Very fearful, most likely defensive out of fear. EPG2= potentially nervous, softer play style. PG1= very friendly with most dogs. PG2= rough and rowdy, playful. PG3= Awkward, forward, edgy with other dogs. PG3(s)/PG3(s) muzzle= Generally not very social with other dogs. PG4= can be offensive and potentially uninterruptible; not a safe candidate to be around other dogs. Walk only= A lot

of these dogs are “no dogs,” but some can go home with a well-matched dog. Remember the size of the home dog matters.

- **Flight Risk/Escape Artist/Door Darter:** These dogs will try and get away from their handler at every opportunity. These dogs are not recommended for homes with several roommates or a lot of people coming in and out. They will try and bolt out of the door. We also don't recommend these dogs for children because a child might open a door without keeping eyes on the dog. These dogs will always wear a drag leash and never be left unattended outside.
- **Handling Sensitivities:** This dog likes to be pet/handled a certain way or sometimes not at all. Not advised for children or someone who wants a cuddly dog. This dog has set their boundaries and they need to be respected.
- **Leash Climbing:** This is when the dog starts grabbing the leash with its mouth and potentially climbing up toward your hand. It's not trying to get your hand! The leash has now become either something on which to take out their frustration or a toy. This is a behavior we tend to correct as it can lead to accidental bites.
- **Low Traffic/High Traffic:** Are there a lot of people in the home or a lot of people going in and out? Less people, low traffic. More people, high traffic.
- **JAM:** Jumpy and mouthy. This is mostly due to play, high energy, frustration, or over arousal, but the mouthiness can lead to bites. Not recommended for small children or the elderly.
- **Playgroup (PG):** This happens twice daily at TLAC and is basically a time when the dogs get to play together while being supervised by our Behavior Team.
- **Prey Drive:** This is an instinctual behavior that some dogs feel or exhibit more strongly than others. Certain levels of prey drive are not reversible. Training will not stop a dog's drive to go after other animals but it can help in better managing the dog. Training skills such as a "drop it", "leave it", and a really solid and *reliable* recall (come when called) can go a long way in helping to manage a dog with this type of behavior. For example, if you noticed that the dog's attention has peaked and her body language starts to change because maybe she sees something move and you can tell that she is thinking or about to actually go run towards the thing, you could cue a "leave it" and "come" to stop her in her tracks before anything further happened. This training does not take away the dog's innate drive but it does manage it by quickly redirecting her back to us. Do not match a dog noted as having a prey drive to a home that has cats or other small animals like birds or rabbits.
- **Redirection:** This is often a type of bite that happens in a dog fight or when a dog is very “amped” or over aroused. This bite is not intentional. It does not indicate mal intent. It just means that the dog needed to make a choice to get it's frustration out and accidentally grabbed on to you. Not recommended for children.
- **Total Obedience Program (TOP):** This is a CGC-type program, but for dogs with a bite history or dogs who may not be comfortable with a stranger coming up and petting all over them.
- **Vocal:** Dogs bark and growl for a lot of reasons and not all of them are with mal intent. If a dog is “vocal” while playing with a toy, it's something we note to

make sure to tell adopters/fosters so they don't get scared when the dog gets a little grumbly and just wants to play.

IV. HOME SET UP CHEAT SHEET:

- **Children:** No resource guarders for young children; teens may be ok. Any rowdy, jumpy, or super high energy pups may not be suitable for small children. BOO/defensive dogs should also not be put with small children. Be cautious with handling sensitive dogs and small children. The dog should be very tolerable of humans if it is to live with a small child.
- **High Rise Apartments:** No territorial dogs; no OLR towards dogs or humans; dogs with a 2 dog score are fine, but we would advise them to use the stairwell and never the elevator; no bubble dogs; no handler protection dogs. In order to be in a high rise, the dog has to be prepared to act appropriately with most stimulation or be able to politely ignore or retreat from the issue.
- **Open-Air Apartments:** These are free game for most dogs unless they specifically state that they require a house with a yard in their notes.
- **Other Dogs:** You will need to think about several things here. Try to match dogs with the **same energy levels and same size**. If a dog has a 2 dog score, they should have their meet and greet with a member of the APA! staff. Resource guarders with other dogs will have to be fed separately, and toys will have to be managed.
- **Roommates:** Territorial dogs cannot go to roommate situations. They can go to couples, but the couples must share equal responsibility. Families with children are not advised for territorial dogs.
- **High Traffic:** High traffic households should not be considered for territorial dogs as they must be in a crate or on tie down when meeting new people in their home.
- **Yard:** Watch out for flight risk dogs/escape artists. They aren't a no-go but need to be monitored in the yard. Yards are great for dogs that have OLR or have issues with other dogs.