

CIGR PREPARATION OF FOSTER DOGS FOR PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

The following is what we consider to be basic preparations for foster dogs prior to placement. These guidelines will help to make for a smoother transition in the dog's new home.

We will only place the dog with someone who is willing continue, and is capable of, working towards these goals.

The following guidelines will help to insure that the future home is a final home, that the dog will lead a more emotionally stable & richer life and is insurance for maintaining the best future health of the dog.

1. Train dog to accept daily teeth brushing. When placing the dog, show new owner how to brush and make sure they can demonstrate the ability to do so.
2. Train dog to accept nail clipping and filing or grinding. When placing dog, show new owner how and make sure they can demonstrate the ability to do so.
3. Train dog to accept *individual* crate (or ex-pen) confinement quietly. Feeding all meals in the crate helps to speed the process. Discuss the importance of the judicious use of a crate (to help to give the dog a sense of security and as an aid to house training) with the new owner. This is also the safest way for it to travel in a car.

Let the dog earn its freedom in his/her new home! If the dog starts to be granted a lot of free time and/or is allowed to sleep in bed with you, you are only going to make it more difficult for the dog to transition smoothly into it's new home. By maintaining a certain degree emotional distance you will be helping the rescue dogs in a more meaningful way. In the long run, this will make you a better foster home that can help many dogs. It's okay to give snuggles in bed to the foster but the dog must learn to spend the night in it's crate or ex-pen quietly.

Dogs that are constantly in the company of another dog and not given daily individual, one-on-one human attention can lead to a dog that is more focused on the dog pack dynamic rather than the dog/human pack dynamic. Many dogs that have been allowed to over-bond to another dog have been know to pine away and die if they should lose their life long dog companion.

4. Train dog to potty on lead. This will help the adopter to train the dog to potty wherever THEY chose (i.e.: papers, yard, curbside) and makes for a more flexible placement and eases the transition for the dog.
5. Train dog to walk nicely on lead.
6. Fearful/unsocialized dogs require gentle, but firm, handling. Facing these issues head-on will not only make for a more flexible placement, but is in the dog's best interest. (It must be quite unpleasant to spend its life in this state) If the dog is behaving fearfully it is best to either ignore the behavior or speak to the dog in a mocking tone, i.e.: "don't be silly!" or "knock it off!"

It is important to not subject the fearful dog to treatment that would inadvertently give positive reinforcement for the fearful behavior.

- a. Never speak to the dog in a consoling or soothing tone, i.e.: "poor-baby" or "it's okay" when the dog is behaving fearfully.
- b. Never bribe the dog with treats when he/she is behaving fearfully.
- c. Never try to "talk" the dog into coming to you.
- d. Do not stroke the dog when he/she is behaving fearfully.

When not confined, the dog should be on lead to avoid having to chase the dog down. Try to avoid premature "testing" of the dog. S/he must earn freedom very gradually. Try to do the following on a daily basis:

- a. Hold or place the dog in helper's lap. (If the dog is afraid of men, find a man who can follow your instructions to help with this) Be sure to use a firm grip so dog can't bolt. Massage the dog firmly without speaking to the dog. It is quite helpful to be chatting normally with someone while doing this to remove all obvious focus from the dog. Once the dog relaxes then s/he should be praised with a "good dog", treats, and pets.
- b. Spend some time lying on the floor with the dog on lead.

Obedience lessons can help the dog immensely in gaining self-confidence in the real world by give him/her something to concentrate on besides his/her (usually irrational) fears. Highly recommend them to the adopter.

7. Try to get the dog in proper weight before placement. Very skinny dogs are frequently so pitied by the new owner that the dog gets overfed and allowed to become obese (killing the dog with kindness). Counsel the new home on how to judge and maintain proper weight/condition. Ribs and hipbones (on the rump) should not be visibly jutting, but the ribs should be detectable with light pressure with flat hands. Having to dig with the fingers to find ribs would be a clear indication of excess weight. A few vertebrae showing on the back is acceptable. Many vets will not point out over weight in an IG unless it is grossly obese.

Please familiarize yourself with the Care & Training articles on our web site. This will aid you in counseling new owners.

http://www.CIGRescue.org/care_training.html