



METRO NASHVILLE  
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

# **METRO ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL FOSTER CARE GUIDE**

**Medical/Neonate**

**Bow-Wow Breakout**

**Adoption Ambassador**



**Dear Foster Parent,**

**Thank you for opening your heart and home to help us save lives and make “happy tails!” Simply put, fostering saves lives. Whether it be caring for puppies and kittens until they are old enough for adoption, getting a sick pet healthy enough to be adopted, giving a dog a break from the shelter by taking them out for a few days and getting to know them better, or taking an otherwise overlooked dog and personally finding them their forever home, your efforts save lives.**

**As a Foster Parent, you are preparing a homeless pet for adoption. Fostering pets in order to best place them is the future of animal sheltering. We have three different types of foster programs, including Medical/Neonate, Bow-Wow Breakout (“BWB”), and Adoption Ambassador. Read on to learn more about these programs, and grab your cape because you’re now our Super Hero!**

**Thank you!**



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## GETTING STARTED

### Medical/Neonate Fostering

- Complete and submit the online application found on our website at [macc.nashville.gov](http://macc.nashville.gov) under the Foster Program tab
- Once your application has been approved, watch for emails from [foster.macc@nashville.gov](mailto:foster.macc@nashville.gov) for animals in need of foster care
- Arrange a pick-up time and take your foster animal(s) home
- Bring them to MACC for regularly-scheduled boosters and exams as needed
- Once healthy and/or old enough for adoption, return your foster animal(s) to MACC to be spayed/neutered
- You can opt to adopt your foster animal(s) or leave them with us to find their forever home! Or you may have a friend, neighbor, or family member that falls in love and decides to adopt your foster pet – this is a wonderful outcome for your foster pet!

### Bow-Wow Breakout

- Come to the shelter during open hours and look at the dogs available for adoption
- To be eligible for a BWB, the dog must be the property of MACC, at least 5 months of age, spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated against rabies
- Complete a BWB application for approval and speak to a staff member about the dog(s) you are interested in
- Take your foster dog home for up to 48 hours and get to know him or her
- At the end of the breakout, either bring the dog back to MACC along with a short bio that we can share with potential adopters, or if you've decided to adopt, leave Fido home and come to the shelter to finalize the adoption paperwork
- BWBs can be extended on a case-by-case basis if more time is needed to make the decision to adopt or not

### Adoption Ambassador

- Complete and submit the online application found on our website at [macc.nashville.gov](http://macc.nashville.gov) under the Foster Program tab
- Once your application has been approved, come to the shelter during open hours and look at the dogs available for adoption
- To be eligible for the Adoption Ambassador program, the dog must be the property of MACC, at least 5 months of age, spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated against rabies
- Take your foster dog home and market away!
- Submit weekly bios/photos/videos to [foster.macc@nashville.gov](mailto:foster.macc@nashville.gov) until a forever home is found
- Bring the dog to MACC for, or you can pick up, monthly preventives (heartworm and flea/tick prevention)

### Adopt Me Vests & Collars

MACC has a supply of wearable "Adopt Me" vests available for dogs for fosters to use with their current charges. All vests and collars will need to be returned for reuse.

## **FOSTER BASICS**

### **Understand the Requirements to Become a Foster Parent**

- Have the support of all individuals living in your home
- Have consent of your landlord if you are renting
- Complete Foster Parent application
- Have your own pet(s) current on all vaccinations and altered
- Understand that MACC is not responsible for any property damage done by a foster pet(s) in your care.
- Understand that all pets remain the property of MACC until adopted by using a MACC adoption contract.
- Understand that foster dogs are not allowed to be taken to dog parks. In addition, we advocate the use of positive reinforcement-based training, so we ask that you not use prong, shock, or choke chain collars or physical reprimand.

### **Meeting Your Foster Animal**

You may meet eligible animals prior to fostering under the Adoption Ambassador and Bow-Wow Breakout programs. We encourage you to bring your own household dog for a dog-to-dog introduction. You may also bring your family/children down for a family introduction.

Once you've selected a pet to welcome into your home, MACC will provide you with a foster packet, kennel card, and medical and behavior history (along with any medications the pet is currently taking).

When an animal is placed into foster, the MACC team will ensure that vaccines are up-to-date and will update the electronic record to reflect that the animal has been placed in your care. If the animal is available for adoption, they will remain visible on our PetHarbor website and bio information can be added to their profile page.

### **Make Your Home Pet-Safe**

Before you bring home your foster(s), make sure that you have a suitable place for them to stay. A bathroom or spare bedroom often works well. The room should adhere to the following guidelines:

- A space where temperature can be controlled.
- The space has been cleaned thoroughly in between foster animals (a mild bleach solution of 1 part bleach to 32 parts water works well).
- Separate from other household pets.
- Can withstand messes (i.e. spilled water or food, vomit, urine, feces, etc.)
- No breakable items.
- Electrical outlets and wires are blocked.
- No small items.
- Secured windows (closed or with a secure screen).
- Secured appliances and toilet lids closed.
- Also, we recommend toys that can be sanitized and the use of metal bowls; plastic bowls are porous and not as easy to clean

Here are some further tips on how to properly set up your new fosters' environment.

### **Cats and Kittens**

- Indoors only (do not let your foster cat/kitten outdoors).

- Keep isolated from any other animals in the home
- Eliminate access to strings and other small objects they could swallow

### **Dogs**

- Dogs should be kept indoors in a crate when unattended or in a separate room/office.
- Dogs should be on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in a private secure fenced-in area. Recommended fence height is six feet.
- Foster dogs (and puppies) are not permitted to go to dog parks.
  - Dog parks can be extremely dangerous environments; there are no lifeguards or professionals at a dog park when conflicts arise
  - Not every dog is safe
  - While dogs are social animals, they are individuals and do not like every dog they meet
  - Dogs have a variety of play styles and these play styles can be conflicting and instigate fights

### **Puppies**

- Puppies should be kept in one room for the duration of the foster period (kitchen or bathroom works best for easy clean-up).
- Puppies should be around humans for socialization purposes and should not be isolated.
- Puppies should be kept in a crate at all times when not under supervision.
- Puppies can only go outdoors if supervised by an adult.
- Puppies should not be exposed to other dogs or places frequented by other dogs because they are not fully vaccinated and are at high risk of diseases such as parvovirus.

### **Keep Your Own Pets Up-To-Date On Their Vaccinations and Parasite Control**

All pets should be current on vaccinations that will protect them from diseases. Before you bring home a foster pet, consult your veterinarian to make sure that your own pets have received the preventative treatment to best protect their health.

### **Be Prepared To Make Some Financial Commitments**

While MACC can provide you with the supplies needed to foster animals, foster caregivers are encouraged to provide supplies of their own in order to maximize the number of animals fostered each year. Also, sometimes our supplies run low so you may be asked to buy your own. MACC also provides all veterinary care, and emergency care is available after-hours at two participating veterinary emergency clinics. If you do not receive prior approval to take your foster animal to the emergency clinic or opt to take to your own veterinarian for treatment, it will be at your own expense.

### **Recognize Your Limits**

Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy both emotionally and physically. Don't over-extend yourself by fostering too many animals too frequently or you may burn yourself out.

### **Fostering can break your heart**

Having a dog or cat in your home as a foster parent can be one of the most rewarding things you can do for you, your family and your foster pet. It can be a happy learning experience for everyone involved, but there comes a time when the dog or cat will find its permanent home, or, for whatever reason, declines medically or behaviorally.

Many pets who arrive at MACC come with unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts the pet you are fostering may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated or may fail to thrive. Please know that you have given this wonderful being love, health, confidence and acceptance. The hardest part of fostering is saying good-bye. You nurture and love an animal in your home for days or weeks. Watching a foster pet leave your home is rewarding, but you'll likely watch him or her leave with a tear in your eye. Try to remember that you are saving lives; celebrate successful adoptions and don't feel guilty; animals are resilient and adaptable, and they will stay in your heart forever.

### **Enjoy Being a Foster Parent**

Fostering is work, but remember that it's fun and rewarding, too!

## **FOSTER PROGRAM SPECIFICS**

### **Medical/Neonate Fosters**

Once an injured or nursing dog or cat, or young puppy or kitten enters our care, we know that helping those animals find a quiet outlet for healing or growing is critical. Medical/neonate foster animals require a dedicated person who understands that healing takes time. In addition, many animals who come into the shelter suffer from minor behavioral issues from trauma or lack of socialization. Behavior modifications at the shelter can help animals but the best outlet to make them adoptable is a temporary stay with a Foster Family.

We pair foster animals with the right foster home so everyone is given the best chance of success. Some examples of animals eligible for medical foster include:

- Broken bones
- Soft tissue injury
- Nursing
- Orphaned babies
- Underweight
- Treatable disease
- Recovering from surgery

Please note that Foster Parents who would like to help animals with medical issues may require extra training (i.e. giving medications, feeding bottle babies) or a financial commitment if MACC supplies run low. Please keep in mind that many medical foster animals have regular medical appointments at the shelter (or possibly one of our partner veterinary hospitals) and you will be responsible for keeping those appointments.

### **Bow-Wow Breakout (BWB)**

The purpose of the BWB program is two-fold. The BWB program allows potential adopters the opportunity to take a dog home to make sure it's a good fit with the family before finalizing the adoption. Dogs are allowed to be taken home for up to 48 hours, and extensions can be made on a case-by-case basis. The adopter can then either finalize the adoption without having to bring the dog back to the shelter, or return the dog along with a short bio that can be shared with other potential adopters.

The BWB program also serves as a means to give dogs a break from the shelter environment and allows the foster to learn more about him or her. Many animals who come into the shelter have minor behavioral issues from trauma or lack of socialization. Many of these dogs simply need time away from the shelter environment and do well once they return from a day trip or an

overnight stay. Fostering a pet can help the animals develop good manners, reduce stress, and provide additional information about the animal to make them more adoptable. We ask that a short bio be written about the dog's personality, likes/dislikes, etc. so that this information can be passed on to potential adopters. Dogs are allowed to be taken home for up to 48 hours, after which the dog is returned to the shelter and placed back up for adoption, unless the dog is adopted by the foster family or a friend/neighbor that meets the dog during the BWB.

Note: To be eligible for the BWB program, the dog must be available for adoption, at least 5 months of age, spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated against rabies.

### **Adoption Ambassador (Foster Until Adopted)**

Every dog deserves a chance for a happy home, but some dogs are simply overlooked. That's why the shelter is asking the community to help find great dogs great homes. The shelter's newest addition to the foster program, Adoption Ambassador, aims to empower residents to take a dog into their homes and find the best match for the dog.

The goal is to get dogs into permanent homes and out of the shelter. Foster families keep their foster dogs until they are adopted. Within this manual you will find resources on how to write bios, take photos and videos, and market your foster dog. To help support your efforts, we can also post bios, photos, and videos to the MACC Facebook page and Instagram. As such, we ask that you submit something at least once weekly that we can post on your behalf. If someone inquires about a dog, we will send their contact information to you so that you can arrange a time for them to meet your foster dog. If all goes well, the adopter can come to the shelter to complete the adoption paperwork. Arrangements can then be made to pick up the dog directly from you so that the dog doesn't need to come back to the shelter.

Please be aware that the purpose of the Adoption Ambassador program is to find a forever home for the dog you are fostering, and marketing is the most important component of this (see Appendix A). As such, if you do not provide at least 3 marketing-related submissions over a 6-week period, you must return the dog to the shelter so he has a chance to find a permanent home. Otherwise you will be deemed to have adopted the dog and adoption paperwork will be sent to you to finalize the adoption.

Note: To be eligible for the Adoption Ambassador program, the dog must be available for adoption, at least 5 months of age, spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated against rabies.

### **MEDICAL CARE**

MACC will provide medical care for all MACC foster animals, while you will be responsible for any expenses incurred for your own pets. Puppies and kittens too young to be adopted receive booster vaccines and dewormer every 2 weeks, and appointments can be scheduled Tuesday through Saturday between the hours of 10:00 and 3:30. Adult animals are given monthly parasite preventives, and these can either be given at the shelter or picked up and given by the foster parent. Reminders will be sent to foster parents via email, and we ask that you reply to the email with your desired appointment time. For any other medical concerns (see below), appointments can be scheduled Monday through Friday between the hours of 10:00 and 3:30. Please wait to receive confirmation before visiting the facility at 5125 Harding Place.



If you notice any of the following during the foster period, please inform the Foster Program by email ([foster.macc@nashville.gov](mailto:foster.macc@nashville.gov)) or phone (615-862-7930). **Email is the preferred method to contact the foster team.**

- Not eating or drinking
- Lack of energy
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Limping
- Hard time breathing or congested
- Sneezing or coughing
- Discharge from eyes or nose
- Itching/scratching, hair loss, or skin/ear lesions

**For emergency situations (shortness of breath or choking, vomiting more than 3 times in an 8 hour period, excessive bleeding, dramatic drop in energy, notable seizures, trauma with severe injury such as non-weight bearing lameness, or pregnant animal in labor without producing offspring), please contact the Foster Coordinator at 615-587-1474. Call the Backup Line (615-708-0316) if you do not hear from the 24-Hour Line in 15 minutes and the situation is life or death. Please do not call our after-hour animal control complaint line as they cannot offer foster medical assistance.**

The foster animal may be seen at the shelter, or you may be directed to one of our partner emergency animal hospitals. You must have authorization before visiting one of the below emergency hospitals in order for MACC to pay the bill. Please do not go to any animal hospital unless directed by a MACC representative. You will not be reimbursed for the expenses if we do not authorize your visit.

- Goodlettsville Pet ER 910 Meadowlark Lane 615-859-3778
- Pet ER 2000 12th Ave South 615-383-2600

All decisions about medical care will be made by MACC, and please note that euthanasia may be a foster animal's only option if the illness or injury is too severe or the animal's quality of life is poor.

## **RUNAWAY FOSTER**

- **If your foster escapes or runs away, contact the Foster Coordinator immediately. You may also contact animal control for your area (if outside Davidson County).**
- **If your foster dog gets loose while on a walk, don't chase, just stand there or turn the other way and calmly call their name.**
- **If your foster cat escapes the home, place a blanket that smells like the cat/home and his used litter box outside of the home. This acts as a scent beacon to keep him close and encourage him to come back inside.**

## APPENDIX A: MARKETING YOUR ADOPTION AMBASSADOR FOSTER

### The Building Blocks

There are an infinite number of ways to market your foster pet. Biographies are important, but think outside the box when you create your other marketing tools. Other things you might consider featuring are the cute quirks the pet has, stories about things they did, the pet's behavior in the home or skills they have learned. Think about the ways your foster pet reveals who they really are. And those things they do that you find absolutely adorable? Chances are, potential adopters will, too!

In this section, we'll list and explain how you can create the many things that go into marketing a shelter pet.

These are:

1. Your foster email account
2. A gripping first sentence
3. A great title
4. A good biography
5. Photographs
6. Video
7. The flyer
8. Memes
9. Other types of graphics

### Your Foster Email Account

Since you'll be doing a lot of marketing yourself, a smart way to be available to potential adopters without giving away personal information is to create a dedicated foster email account. Instead of using your name in the address, you could name the account something foster-related. You can use this account for all adoption inquiries, put it on flyers and in social media posts, etc. If you create the email on Gmail, you can also use its Google drive to save all of your marketing creations!

### A Gripping First Sentence

Similar to a title, the first sentence of your text is crucial. This is what the reader will use to determine whether to keep reading. What you're looking for is text that will make an emotional connection with the supporters and make them want to find out more about your foster pet.

#### DON'T

- Meet Roscoe!
- Cleo is our pet of the day.
- We don't know why Coco hasn't been adopted yet

#### DO

- Who's the squishiest, cutest dog on the block? Roscoe!
- In a foster home full of brothers, what's a girl to do? Take the lead, of course!
- Balloon-bouncing, swing-pushing, life-loving Coco is our longest-term doggie resident.

### A Great Title

Posts on certain sites (Craigslist, Imgur, etc.) may require a title. A title that is exciting and different will set your post apart and increase your chances of further investigation by potential adopters.

**DON'T** – Go the generic route. Most titles will look like this and most will get passed by:

- My Foster Needs a Home
- Adopt Cowboy
- Pit Bull Available for Adoption

**DO** - Use a title as an opportunity to snapshot your dog's personality or dabble in the dramatic:

- Couch Dogtato Seeking Netflix Buddy
- Meet Sir Harley the Gentleman
- Save Cowboy the Forgotten Senior Dog

### **A Good Biography**

Most shelters list their adoptable pets online, and for this every pet needs a biography (bio). As the foster, you are the person who likely knows the pet the best, and are uniquely suited to writing or updating their biography. Photos in a home and an updated biography paired with contact information are a recipe for success. Write a short and sweet summary that includes some information on your foster pet's behavior, likes and dislikes, and the best things about them – kind of like an author's biography at the end of a book. Leave out negative details (*Stop Signs*) such as “no other pets,” “needs training,” etc., as these can deter even the perfect potential adopters and are best discussed one-on-one during adoption counseling. As in all adoption marketing, our most basic aim is to create a positive emotional connection with the reader.

A good story can be an invaluable tool for emotional connection. Stories can bring aspects of a pet's personality or their history into vivid detail. Qualities that potential adopters might be looking for, such as great social skills with other dogs, intelligence, or having an easygoing personality, are often illustrated in any number of small actions that a pet performs every day. When your foster pet does something positive that affects you emotionally, think about how you can write about what happened to illustrate that aspect of their personality. Consider this story from a foster caregiver:

*“Violet, a young dog that we fostered, loved to be around my two older dogs. Much like the stereotypical little sister who idolizes her older siblings, she seemed happiest when she had their attention, while being polite when they needed their space. Nothing gave me a better picture of her dog-friendliness than this morning, when I gave them all a treat that they all normally love. Roxy swallowed hers immediately, but for some reason, Violet didn't want to swallow hers. I realized that Roxy was looking at Violet's treat with longing, basically begging- and that Violet had picked up on it. I put the treat in Violet's mouth and thought she had swallowed it. Then Violet slowly leaned over and deposited the treat in between Roxy's front feet.”*

### **Photographs**

*A good photo is...Bright. Clear. Happy.*

Photographs can be the key to your foster dog's adoption. Getting photos that are well-lit, in focus, and that give the viewer a window into a pet's personality can be tricky, but we have some ideas that can make this much easier for you.

*Always Have Your Camera Handy*

Without a camera handy, you may not be able to capture those intimate moments that will help your pet make an emotional connection, like when your foster cat is finally comfortable enough

to rest their head in your lap, or when your own dog and your foster dog curl up together on the couch. Here are some examples:

#### *Take Multiple Photos*

One foster explains, “I am an awful photographer. This is easily combated by taking one million rapid fire photos at once. Odds are you’ll snap something to work with.” Whether you’re an ace photographer or not, taking multiple photos increases the chances of coming up with something good!

#### *Take Photos with People and/or Other Animals*

Photographs taken with people and/or other animals are great because they not only feature the pet, they give information as well. A photo of two dogs together looking happy tells potential adopters, “This dog is good with (at least some) other dogs.” A photo of a cat and a small child implies that the cat is comfortable with children. Keep this in mind when creating marketing material for your foster pet.

#### *Take Photos of Dogs Outdoors*

Studies have shown that photographs of dogs taken outside can help dogs get adopted more quickly. Outside, the options for nice-looking backgrounds are unlimited, and dogs’ stress levels may be lower, enabling you to get better photos.

#### *Make Sure the Pet Is Looking Into the Camera*

The eyes are the window to the soul, so it follows that eye contact is helpful in establishing an emotional connection, even if it’s just from a photograph.

#### *Use Photos to Showcase Personality*

We want potential adopters to get a feel for our foster pets’ personalities, so use photos in a way that does just that. Take photos that capture an aspect of a pet’s personality. When viewed together, one gets a more accurate picture of who they are.

### **Videos**

Great videos can give the best picture of who your foster is. They can offer legitimate proof that you have a very good boy on your hands and cast a spell on potential adopters. Videos have the power to clinch the connection before an official meet-and-greet happens. The following are a few tips for making great videos.

#### *Hold the Camera Horizontally (unless you’re doing Facebook live)*

Holding the camera vertically creates wide black lines on either side of the video.

#### *Make Your Video 60 Seconds or Less*

Attention spans are short, so make sure your video is fast-paced and succinct.

### **Create a Flyer**

You can use Word or any program you’d like to create the flyer. The design does not need be intricate – simple is often best. Use one or two awesome photos, plus your short and sweet bio or story. Include contact information. These flyers can be hung at your office, your school, the local coffee shop, or anywhere that will let you hang a flyer! Print it yourself, or try making it into a poster at <http://bit.ly/2uliyS4>

## Memes

When you're creating a meme to advocate for an animal's adoption, there are several different areas you can focus on. An animal's appearance and personality are the two most basic areas of focus. There are also some successful strategies for promoting the adoption of animals that are victims of breed discrimination and those who have special needs. As you'll see in the following examples, these four strategies can be combined in various ways as well.

### *The Animal's Appearance*

One of the simplest ways to create a meme is by focusing on an animal's appearance. Your meme can highlight one or more of the animal's features, her facial expression, the position of her body, or a combination of these. Things to think about: Does the animal have any prominent features? How can this be spun in a positive way? Does the animal's appearance remind you of anything, and if so, what can you do with that? Does the animal's facial expression look particularly "human?" If the animal could speak, what might he be saying? More importantly, what could the animal be saying that would help him connect with a potential adopter?

### *The Animal's Personality*

Getting to know an animal will give you more opportunity to come up with a good meme. You can use aspects of the animal's personality and behavior to create a positive meme that will help potential adopters "get to know" and connect with the animal. Things to think about: What kind of energy does the animal give off? What are their personality quirks? Does he or she have any behaviors that are sweet, amusing, funny, etc.? What is the animal's energy level? What funny things might they do that are similar to other animals of the same type and age?

You might also consider these questions, especially for animals who have been in the shelter for a while: What are the factors that might be preventing this animal from being adopted? Is he or she barrier-reactive? Is he or she more comfortable with people of one particular sex? What positive behaviors does this animal have trouble displaying in the shelter environment? What positive behaviors does this animal display when they're not feeling stressed, or after they've become comfortable with someone?

### *Meme Photographs*

Many of the things that make a successful animal photograph also make for a successful meme: the image is in focus, the lighting is good and the subject is looking into the lens. In a good animal photograph, the animal is generally happy and relaxed. Some things that work in memes are counterintuitive: For memes, almost any facial expression or body position can work if you have the right text and design to go with it. Above all, make sure that the photo quality is good and the expression on the animal in your photo relates to the meme's text.

#### – **Background**

It's important to stay up-to-date with the image sizes required by the social media you are using. Square memes are usually scaled correctly on Facebook pages and will also fit Instagram.

Careful consideration must be given to the background of an image due to design issues and the requirements for different types of social media. It's fastest and easiest to create memes with photographs that show the entire animal and have a backdrop that is a single color. If the background is not a single color, keep in mind the text you'll be adding, as it is easy for the background to overwhelm the text.

– **Subject**

Photos that would otherwise be considered “outtakes” in traditional animal photography often work perfectly in a meme: strange facial expressions, dogs with their eyes closed, animals in mid-step, you name it! When you can “spin” your text in a positive way and the animal’s expression corresponds to it, just about any quality photo can be used.

## Anatomy of a Meme



### Other Types of Graphics

Photo collages, “dressing up” pets using graphic design, and other graphics tools can help set your foster or favorite shelter pet apart when marketing them for adoption. Try the apps Canva, Over, Skitch, PicCollage, etc. for a wide range of capabilities. You can even make your work into a poster at <http://bit.ly/2uliyS4>.

### Steps to Marketing Your Foster Pet

Now that you have all of the building blocks, it’s time to get marketing. Here are some steps you should take in order to get maximum exposure for your foster pet.

**Step 1: Gather Your Team** - You can surely do this alone, but why not tap some of your friends and acquaintances to market with you? That new shelter volunteer who likes taking photos might be more than willing to meet up in a park and get some great outdoor shots of your foster pet. The friend who’s always making you laugh could write a hilarious and touching biography.

**Step 2: Market, Market, Market!** - In order to create content that connects your foster with potential adopters, you need to make marketing as much as part of your experience as feeding your foster pet. Aim to create new marketing material (a photo, video, story, etc.) a minimum of every 7-10 days. Make sure your camera is always on hand for those great photo-op moments. When your foster does something memorable or touching, write it down so you can craft a post.

Step 3: Diversify Your Platforms - The shelter's social pages may be where you get the biggest return on investment for your marketing material, but don't stop there. Market to potential adopters using different avenues, such as your own personal social media pages or ones you and others create specifically for the purpose of marketing pets, as well. Post on Craigslist. Post on Instagram. Ask the guy who runs that page that markets local shelter pets, too – or create one yourself!

### **Social Media Sites to Try:**

#### *Craigslist.com*

Don't be afraid of Craigslist. Many shelters have found several wonderful adopters via this website. This doesn't mean don't take precautions, but definitely do not write off posting here. The section that will allow you to post an ad for your foster is **Pets & For Sale – By Owner**. You can also post shelter events in their Events section. Don't forget to "renew" your post every 48 hours to cycle it to the top of its listing page.

#### *Instagram*

Instagram is an excellent place to showcase for your foster pics and video. This is not only a great way to find potential adopters, but it's also useful as a place to direct interested parties to proof that the foster they are asking about is the best animal in the whole world. You can use your own Instagram account or create one specifically for marketing your fosters, favorite shelter pets or local adoptables.

#### *Twitter*

Post photos of your foster pet and introduce them to your followers. Twitter's limit of 280 characters or less may make it tough to tell stories, but you can post links to them from your account.

#### *Nextdoor.com*

Nextdoor is like social media for your neighborhood. You'll need to verify your address in order to register. Several fosters have found wonderful adopters via Nextdoor.

#### *Imgur*

A big dog foster shared the following tips with us: "Imgur, in particular, is a social media site to check out. While on Facebook, the majority of users are women, 70% of Imgur's users are men, opening your marketing up to a whole new demographic. Additionally, posts are seen by more people based 100% on the popularity of the post, not on "likes" or "follows" that your account has gained over time. This makes it easier for newbies to see their marketing material go viral. Posts are written much like articles, with a title, as many photos as you'd like, and text in between. Your title and first photo are crucial for making an impression. My first experience on Imgur was awesome. I decided to try it out by posting four dogs I had fostered. Overnight, two of the posts went viral, racking up over 100,000 views each! Incredibly, there was a message in my inbox from a writer for iheartdogs.com, who asked if she could do a story on one of them. She interviewed me about him, and the article came out shortly afterward. Some amazing women from a rescue in Washington State read the article, hopped in their van and drove to California to adopt him!"

#### *Reddit.com*

Reddit is a worldwide community made up of a bazillion "subreddits." There is pretty much a "subreddit" for everything. Try posting to relevant ones like reddit.com/r/fosterdogs, reddit.com/r/dogs, reddit.com/r/\*yourcity\*, etc.

### *Rescueme.org*

Rescueme.org is a nonprofit organization that aims to help all breeds of dogs, cats and other animals find good homes, anywhere in the world. You can post pets on the site, and they will send the pet's information out to hundreds of potential adopters in your area within two hours.

### *Adoptapet.com*

Adoptapet now has a "rehome your pet" option that you can use to list your fosters.

### *Pinterest*

Post your foster's photo or flier and add details and contact information below.

Step 4: Connect With the Community - Introduce your foster to friends and family. Put an "adopt me" vest or leash on your foster dog and venture out into the community. Make sure you have something you can write on, or even a card with information on how to adopt your foster in case you're asked. Even if those who meet your foster dog aren't in the market for a new pet, they will often become his or her advocate. When the shelter does a post on your foster pet, the more people who like, share and leave positive comments, the farther the post will go. You can even ask them to post the pet to their social media to give them more exposure.

### *Field Trips*

If your foster is comfortable in public, take them out! Not only are these A+ photo opportunities, but it gives your foster a chance to meet people organically and have it up in their "Adopt Me" apparel. Try to think outside the obvious animal enthusiast locations. You know who loves pets? Athletes. Construction workers. Single adults. The possibilities are endless!

With dogs who like riding in cars and meeting people, taking them out when you're running errands, picking up the kids or getting coffee is a great way to give them exposure. If they're comfortable being around crowds and other dogs, head to an outdoor mall or visit dog-friendly stores. Make some business cards with the dog's name and your contact information written on them and hand them out to anyone who stops to say hi.

### *Attend Adoption Events*

Anytime the shelter has organized an adoption event, bring your foster dog and join the fun! Some events are offsite, and shelter dogs are transported and get adopted from there. Those events have lots of promotion and draw in people looking to adopt, so show up and show your pet off and meet potential adopters. If your dog is extremely fearful or dog reactive, events like these might not be a great place for exposure, since they won't be on their best behavior.

### *Word of Mouth*

Simply telling your friends, neighbors, hairdresser, mailman, waiter, etc. about your amazing foster pet can create potential adopters. Make sure people know how to get a hold of you (your friends have your phone number or can contact you on Facebook, but strangers might want to get in touch later, so those business cards and your foster email will come in handy). You can create a team of adoption advocates this way!

Step 5: Try ALL the things! - There are infinite ways to market your foster pet; more great ways are being discovered every day. Got a great new idea you want to try out? As long as it's safe for you and your pet, and could lead them to their forever home, try it!



## Marketing vs. Adoption Counseling

*Marketing is Not Adoption Counseling: Keep 'em Separate, Save More Lives*

Shy dog Derek had been at Austin Animal Center, waiting for a family for several months, but was timid and scared in his kennel and didn't seek out attention. There were no sparks with potential adopters. As I sometimes do with dogs who need some extra attention, I brought him into my office and got to know him over the course of a few days. I saw him around other dogs, kids, and cats. I learned that he was very well behaved, but seemed unsure of the world, and sometimes became nervous. I observed his back legs seemed to bow out and he walked a little funny.

With this new information, it was time to do some marketing. I wrote a silly little description of my experience with Derek and stuck it on his kennel. I brought him in my office and got to know him over a couple of days. I made a silly flyer and put it on his kennel. After just two days with the new sign, a woman wanted to meet him in the play yard. Once they got to meet, she saw there was a spark between them and said, "I want to take him home." At that point, after that initial magic connection had been made, we began the adoption counseling. I described everything I had observed, including that he seemed to like the children he met, but also seemed unsure of them. I also told her that he needed his back legs checked out and that he might have some issues because of his conformation. I was honest and disclosed everything we had assessed and observed about Derek. The adopter asked a lot of good questions. She considered if he was the right fit for her. At the end of the counseling process, she was still convinced Derek was for her. She adopted him that day and when we followed up, she told us she is 'completely in love' and he's the perfect dog for her.

Dogs like Derek are typically marketed to the public with information like:

"Shy, needs home with adults only" or "Probably a backyard dog and not well-socialized."

These statements, used during the marketing phase, act as STOP signs which prevent potential adopters from asking to meet dogs (even ones that would be a great fit for them!). To help send more pets home, shelters need to separate the marketing from the adoption counseling. Too often we mistake social media marketing as the place for adoption counseling. Can you spot the 'stop signs' in these posts?

*"Elsa is a gorgeous, two-year-old pit bull who loves people and loves to snuggle and go on walks. She must be the only dog in the house. She'd do best in house with no kids. Elsa has been waiting more than two years to find a new family to love her. Could she be the one for you?"*

*"Sam is fun-loving dog with tons of energy who is looking for an active home. He is really good with most people, but he prefers women over men. He is reactive and has mild separation anxiety, but with the right person, he's going to make an awesome pet!"*

I know what you're thinking: "We have a *responsibility* to our adopters/fosters/rescuers/public to tell them everything we know about that animal! Are you saying we should intentionally hide the truth?" No. As animal welfare professionals and volunteers, we owe it to our community and our adopters to disclose everything we know about one of our animals. However, we share all of that information during the adoption counseling portion of the process...not in the marketing. Marketing is meant to grab attention and open a door. Adoption counseling is for full disclosure. Marketing is what GETS people to the adoption counseling process by piquing their interest in meeting the animals. But you can't do the complicated business of adoption counseling if NO ONE is there for you to talk to. Marketing: it's what makes the full conversation happen!

Here are some simple tips for keeping your marketing separate from your adopting counseling process. If you do this, you'll increase your adoptions, make better matches, and get more pets out of your shelter or rescue and into permanent homes.

DON'T include every single detail about an animal's entire life or try to explain every possible flaw or challenge this pet may have in one post. Imagine writing a job resume where you list every mistake you've ever made, all the projects that didn't go well, and all the things your coworkers find most annoying about you. You're probably never going to get the call to come in for that job interview, even if you are a great prospect!

While this is an extreme example, it makes an important point. Every person (and dog) has a variety of personality traits and behaviors. We all have a history of highs and lows that makes us who we are. If we put it ALL on the table, before a prospective employer gets to meet us and form a connection with us, we're not going to get the call to even come in for the interview. For dogs, they're probably not going to get the opportunity to meet the person who could change the course of their lives!

Think about it like this: Your resume is a way to land the interview where you have a chance to discuss your strengths and weaknesses. The social media post or bio is the way to get adopters to meet your dogs and have a discussion with you about all of their needs. DO tell a story!

Dalton, pictured on the following page, was a wild child in the shelter. He barked and whined while kenneled and had tons of energy. His behavior in the shelter sent adopters running. Dalton was passed over many times. In the past, we might have posted that Dalton was a 'high energy' dog looking for an 'active' family who would take him running and hiking. But we've learned potential adopters *read through the lines*, even when we try to be subtle about potentially negative traits. Instead we sent Dalton to a foster home for a few days, so we could learn more about him. His foster mom shared a quick story about something he did while at their house. That story, posted on Facebook, brought in dozens of interested adopters. Marketing him this way allowed us to find a family from this group who was perfect for this young, exuberant pooch. Everyone else that was interested adopted other dogs. Win-win!



**Fairfax County Animal Shelter** added 2 new photos.

February 27 at 2:27pm · 🌐

Here's what Dalton's foster mom had to say about her amazingly intelligent foster dog:

"We've been learning a lot about Dalton during his stay here, and I'm now positive that one major reason he had such a hard time in the shelter is his intelligence. Dalton is not merely smart; he is knock-your-socks-off, almost-human intelligent. The evidence: He knows the commands sit, stay, down, and paw, and he actually rolled over for Annie the other day. He lets us know when he doesn't have enough water left by lifting the bowl and bringing it to us (his carrying technique could be improved, as the remaining bit gets all over the floor, but still).

The other day I was cleaning, so my son was hanging out with the dogs in another room. The door had a normal round knob and opened inward (so it needed to be pulled, not pushed). He opened the door twice. His most amazing feat yet was on Wednesday, when I was getting ready to walk the dogs. I started putting on my boots. He instantly got excited and started whining a little, like he wanted me to hurry up. Then he inexplicably ran from the room. I heard noises down the hall, so I went to investigate. Dalton was standing there, holding my coat in his mouth! Then he looked at me and shook the coat. I still can't believe that he was able to go into the closet, select my coat from the 15 or so that are in there, and get it out."

Dalton is available for adoption. E-mail us at [animalshelter@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:animalshelter@fairfaxcounty.gov) to learn more!



15,456 people reached

[Boost Post](#)

Like · Comment · Share · 👍 529 💬 61 ➦ 82

For more information on writing descriptions that create connection and draw in adopters, check out Animal Farm Foundation's [E-Book](#) about marketing and advertising.

DON'T focus on restrictions. Restrictions are articulated either as a directive statement, as in "no kids" or as a passive statement such as, "would do best in a home with no kids." A restriction like this means different things to different people. It leaves a lot of room for people to imagine why you've included it in your marketing.

For most adopters, a statement like this will act as a stop sign because they don't know why you're using it and it may sound scary. Even for potential adopters who don't have kids, they may think, "Well, my neighborhood has kids and so I guess this dog won't work for me," or alternately, "I don't have kids, but who wants a dog that doesn't like kids?" or even, "I wonder if this dog has hurt kids?" By placing restrictions in your marketing, you may have turned off some really great adopters who are the right match.

Even if you are firm about the restriction and will not adopt the dog to a home with kids or cats, you can save that conversation for the in-person adoption counseling process. This is when you will explain the dog's full history and why you are going to use the restriction. Your adopters will appreciate your transparency and information and trust in your adoption process.

To read more about restrictions, check out Animal Farm Foundation's [E-book](https://animalfarmfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Marketing-eBook-WEB.pdf) about adoption best practices. (<https://animalfarmfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Marketing-eBook-WEB.pdf> )

DO stick to positive marketing that inspire adoptions and will create the opportunity for adopters to meet the dog, before beginning the counseling process.

DON'T feel bad if the marketing doesn't lead to the right match. If someone comes to meet a pet because of your positive marketing and they can't adopt that particular pet, because of a medical or behavioral issue that you discuss with them, that's ok...

DO see this as opportunity to make the right match. All of our staff makes an effort to always know some information about the animals in our shelter. That way, if the pet the adopter saw on social media wasn't the perfect fit, we have several other potential matches already in mind!

DON'T use industry language, or 'shelter-speak' in your marketing efforts. Terms like 'barrier reactive' and 'resource guarding' might be everyday lingo for you, but to adopters that are both frightening and confusing.

Even terms like, 'jumpy/mouthy' mean something different to you than what they might mean to a person who is unfamiliar with animal welfare jargon. They may scare off adopters.

DO use everyday language in your marketing, as well as your adoption counseling, that regular people understand. And if you do use a term like 'zoomies,' make sure you explain what you mean!

Want to keep it simple? Remember that marketing gets people in the door who are excited to adopt and creates the opportunity for honest, open adoption counseling to happen at the shelter, where the best possible matches can be made.

#### *Removing Stop Signs: Fine-Tuning Your Marketing*

When we talk about removing stop signs from marketing, the first question we're usually asked is, "Doesn't that mean you'll bring in a whole bunch of interested people who aren't the right match for the dog?" The short answer is yes. However, having more people contact your organization, even if it's initially about a dog that may not be ideal for them, is a great way to open the door to introducing other pets that are a good fit. We've also found that there's a lot you can do to fine-tune your adoption marketing in order to find the right adoption candidate.

#### *Removing Stop Signs: Adoption Counseling*

Another thing we're often asked is, if we don't do adoption counseling in our marketing, when will it be done? Are we lying to people? Absolutely not. This strategy is just for marketing; complete transparency about pets' history and behavior with fosters and adopters is critical.

The great thing about marketing shelter pets from foster care is that there are now two possible levels of adoption counseling: the foster and the shelter's actual adoption counselor. If fosters have access to a dog's history and in-shelter notes, they can do the counseling themselves without sending the dog back to the shelter. If not, the foster can show and tell the adopter everything they know about the dog, and the adoption counselor will go over the dog's complete history and notes at the shelter.

## APPENDIX B: SHELTER PET MARKETING CHECKLIST

Here is a simple checklist. Cross off each step to help your pet get closer to finding their adopter. For explanations and examples, read below!

1. Good quality, recent photo
2. Good quality video
3. Write-up a summary
4. Make a flyer
5. Post on Facebook and Instagram
6. Post on Craigslist and Nextdoor.com
7. Main MACC Facebook page and Instagram
8. Friends of MACC Facebook and Instagram
9. Out-of-the-Box social media
10. Go out into the world/Field Trips
11. Attend adoption events
12. Word of Mouth
13. Be Creative

### THE BASICS

- *Good quality, recent photo*

This photo will be uploaded to our database and will show on the animal's kennel card and online profile. Headshots are usually best, but full body can work too. Photos should be taken in landscape and be cropped to 3x4 ratio for best website display.

- *Good quality videos*

Videos should always be shot in landscape (wide) so hold your phone sideways when taking video. Any number of videos can be uploaded and embedded into an animal's website profile, but video links are also great for other methods of sharing. Try to make your video 1 minute or less, unless the content is *really* engaging.

- *Write-up a summary*

Write a short and sweet summary that includes your animal's behavior, likes and dislikes, and the best things about them, like an author's biography at the end of a book. This summary can be the text for a social media post but it can also be added to the website profile. Leave out negative details (*Stop Signs*) such as "no other pets," "needs training," etc., as these can deter even the perfect potential adopters and are best discussed 1-on-1 during adoption counseling. Aim to create a positive emotional connection with the reader.

- *Make a flyer*

You can use Word or any editor you want to create a flyer for your animal. Simple is best! One or two awesome photos plus your short and sweet summary from above. If the animal is in foster with you, include your contact info. If the animal is at the shelter, you don't have to include their kennel number because those can often change. These flyers can be hung at your office, your school, the local café, Starbucks, YMCA, library, community college, and anywhere that will let you hang a flyer!

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Just a few notes on social media:

- When describing an animal on social media, make sure to leave out *Stop Signs* like, "working on leash skills" or "can't live with children". While these may be facts or real safety concerns, they're not the thing you want to market with and they can be a turn-off for potential adopters, despite glowing notes in the rest of the post. Adoption counseling can be done later during a 1-on-1 conversation.

- The best way to get shelter pets, especially long-stays, into forever homes is to market them vigorously (at least every 7-10 days).
  - Post on each animal regularly - Think outside the 'pet bio box', and highlight a specific pet's adorable quirk, a scene or story from their day, an interaction with other dogs or people, etc.
  - Regular posting creates an emotional connection between the foster dog and your supporters. Together, the posts tell a story, and the happy ending is the adoption!
    - Post on Facebook
 

You can create posts from your own FB page, regularly share your animal on internal shelter groups (so they stay at the forefront of everyone's mind), or you can create a public celebrity page for your animal. Post regularly with new photos, videos, and stories. You can boost FB posts with money so they are seen by a wider audience than just your friends. If you want to do a BIG post, ask for donations to help create a big boost. Include how to find the animal or how to ask more questions.
    - Post on Craigslist and Nextdoor
 

These sites are a GREAT tool to reach your neighbors. You might think Craigslist is only for scammers, but in fact many people are looking at CL to add new pets to their family! You can post lots of photos, links to videos, and more thorough write-ups. Follow the positive marketing guidelines and change your posts so that they're not the same from week to week.
    - Main MACC FB page
 

The shelter's Facebook page has a ton of followers, so send a great story /write-up plus photos and/or videos to the foster coordinator who can help get your pet featured on the main page.
    - Out of the box social media: Instagram, Imgur, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter, Reddit, etc.

## COMMUNITY MARKETING

### • *Go out into the world/Field Trips*

With dogs who like riding in cars and meeting people, taking them out when you're running errands, picking up the kids, or getting coffee is a great way to give them exposure. Make sure they're wearing an Adopt-Me vest or leash. Make some business cards with the dog's name and your info written on them and hand them out to anyone who stops to say hi. If they can handle being around crowds and other dogs, head to a farmer's market or a mall. Or visit dog-friendly stores.

### • *Attend adoption events*

Anytime the shelter has organized an adoption event, bring your foster dog and join the fun! Some events are offsite, and shelter dogs are transported and get adopted from there. Those events have lots of promotion and draw in people looking to adopt, so show up and show your pet off and meet potential adopters. If your dog is extremely fearful or dog reactive, events like these might not be a great place for exposure, since they won't be on their best behavior.

### • *Word of Mouth*

Simply telling your friends, neighbors, hairdresser, mailman, waiter, etc. about your amazing foster pet can create potential adopters. Make sure people know how to get a hold of you (your friends have your phone number or can contact you on Facebook, but strangers might want to get in touch later, so those business cards will come in handy). You can create a team of adoption advocates this way!

- *Be Creative!*

There are probably plenty other ways of marketing and getting exposure that we haven't listed here. As long as it's safe for you, your pet, and could lead them to their forever home, try out other ideas! And if your ideas are successful, share them with us so we can add them to this list!



## APPENDIX C: MARKETING RESOURCES

Following are some useful links, but feel free to use whatever resources you find that work best!

### MACC Social Media Links

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MetroAnimalCare/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nashanimalcare>
- Instagram Main Page: <https://www.instagram.com/nashanimalcare/>

### Marketing Shelter Pets

Marketing to Increase Adoptions

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/awesome>

Using Social Media to Maximize Your Lifesaving Potential

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/using-social-media-to-maximize-your-lifesaving-potential.htm>

Marketing Best Practices from Animal Farm Foundation

<https://animalfarmfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Marketing-eBook-WEB.pdf>

Don't Be Boring and Other Secrets to Finding Dogs Homes

<https://animalfarmfoundationblog/2017/05/04/dont-be-boring-and-other-secrets-to-findingdogs-homes/>

2 Weeks to Adoption Tips

<http://aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcapro-2WeekstoAdoption.pdf>

### Photography, Videography and Writing

Better Photos and Profiles for Long-Stay Shelter Dogs

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2016/04/long-stay/>

How to Take Great Pet Adoption Photos with a Smartphone

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2015/03/how-to-take-greatpet-adoption-photos-with-smartphone/>

Writing and Photography for Great Cat Adoption Profiles

<http://chewonthis.maddiesfund.org/2016/05/cat-marketing-apa/>

Using Memes to Market Pets

<https://www.animalsheltering.org/magazine/articles/i-can-hazadopter>

Animal Farm Foundation Tips

<https://animalfarmfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Marketing-eBook-WEB.pdf>

**Flyers, posters and design tips:**

<https://www.canva.com>

## **APPENDIX D: INTRODUCING ANIMALS**

Note: foster kittens and puppies must be kept separate from your resident pets at all times as their immune systems are not 100% developed, making them susceptible to illness, and they may be harboring an illness (but not yet showing signs) that could affect your own pets. Introductions between foster animals and owned pets need to be planned carefully. Each pet's previous experiences with animals will affect the introduction. For example, dogs that have been around bully cats may not be too excited about adding another cat to the household, or a cat that is used to living with a dog that chases the cat may decide to live his or her life perched in high places to avoid the dog. First impressions between pets are just as important as they are between people. The following tips and precautionary steps can help make a smooth transition for your pets and fosters.

### **The Introduction**

Before the introduction, keep the foster pet in a separate room for several days, with food, water, comfortable bedding, a litter box for a cat, and all of the necessities to keep them happy and healthy. The current pets should be free to roam the house while the new pet is getting acclimated to his or her room. If you wish to let the new pet out to explore for short periods of time, make sure the current pet is kept separate from the foster pet.

During the separation period, allow the animals to sniff under the door and to vocalize. Accepting the presence of a new animal or other species is a change for them too. It is important that the door cannot be pushed open, allowing access to the other animal. Once the growling or hissing has lessened, let the animals see one another by slightly opening the door. This allows each animal to work out their defensiveness without being able to harm one another. Repeat this several times until you feel comfortable enough to introduce them face-to-face.

When your home is quiet, allow the new pet out of the room (dogs should be leashed) and let him or her explore. Unless you are certain the pet is used to other pets, make sure you have a way to control them (i.e. a leash or towel for wrapping). Do not force the pets together; instead, casually let them encounter one another on their own. Have tasty treats on hand to distract the pet if a problem does occur. It's entirely normal for pets to hiss and growl at one another. This behavior may go on for several days or weeks. Your pets and fosters shouldn't be expected to be friends right away; however, tolerance, and possibly a great friendship, can develop over time.

Never leave foster pets unattended until you feel entirely comfortable that they will not hurt one another. Signs of a problem include litter box lapses, severe fighting, lethargy, diarrhea, hiding, lack of appetite, and general depression. If your foster animal or owned pet shows any of these signs, do not hesitate to call the Foster Coordinator for advice.

### **Tips for Introducing Cats**

Start your foster cat out in their own room while giving your resident cat free reign of your home. Gauge each cat's comfort level over the next 48 hours. Some hissing is normal. Provide toys on both sides of the door to encourage play. As the days go on, and the curiosity of each cat piques, provide opportunities for the cats to see each other in a controlled space. Some hissing is normal here too, however, watch both cat's bodies for signals of aggression or extreme discomfort. Repeat these "sight only" visits several days in a row until both cats are comfortable in each other's presence. Feeding the cats treats and wet food during this step is also helpful. Then, as each cat feels comfortable, allow for physical proximity. Remember to watch each

cat's body language throughout each step of the introduction. To ensure a positive integration ensure each cat has their own litter box, food bowl, and water bowl.

## **APPENDIX E: ALL ABOUT CATS**

Each cat you foster will have a unique personality and a different set of needs. Foster providers should adjust their approach with each individual who comes in. This section will cover some basic general care practices that may help get you started.

### **Creating a Cat-Friendly Space**

Start your foster cat off in a quiet portion of your home. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot so if the cat feels the need to burrow they're doing so in a safe space. Carriers and shoeboxes make for great hiding nooks. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a cat can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The cat-friendly space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, a litterbox, and toys. Feline pheromone sprays or diffusers are an added bonus.

### **Cat Grooming**

Cats clean themselves, so bathing is rarely, if ever, required. Small kittens may not quite understand the concept of cleaning and preening themselves so a bath using a small amount of Dawn or baby shampoo is all that is needed. Be careful not to get a sick or high-risk kitten wet as their body may not be able to regulate their temperature safely. Nail clipping is fine, especially for kittens with razor sharp nails. Be careful when doing so, and only clip off the curved end. Avoid the pink area where the veins and nerve are located. Frequent brushing will help alleviate the chance of a cat developing hairballs and this will also keep their coat clean and shiny.

### **Litterbox Usage**

Most cats have an innate instinct to relieve themselves in a designated spot. For domesticated cats, this is most often a litterbox. To set your foster cat up for success, make sure that the litterbox is set-up prior to bringing the cat home. After removing the cat from their carrier, place them in their designated litterbox. This way they can use their box as a point of reference to other items in your home. For more details on how to address litterbox lapses, read the Behavior section below.

### **Facial Marking**

Once you bring your foster cat home you may see the cat rubbing his or her face on the corner of your coffee table or up against your leg. This behavior is known as facial marking. Cats have scent glands on the sides of their faces and other areas on their bodies. Rubbing on objects or on your legs lets other cats know your cat has claimed that territory or has laid claim to you. If you have cats of your own at home and have your foster cat segregated from them, gently rubbing a towel on each of their cheeks and then allowing the opposite cat to smell the towel is a great way to help the cats become introduced to one another's smell and pheromones.

### **Play**

Cats love to play and stalk make-believe prey. They enjoy chasing toys and balls. If cats aren't stimulated with play, they may try to get your attention by excessively meowing or acting out in other ways. It's very important to play with your foster cats and keep them stimulated. The best cat toys are those that dance, jump, or move to look like they are alive. Cats can act out their predator role by pouncing on toys. Avoid using your fingers as toys, as this type of play may cause biting and scratching behaviors. For more details on how you can prevent play-biting, refer to the behavior section below.

## Shy Cats

Many cats in shelters who appear to be shy are actually stressed by their environment and prove to be outgoing, social cats once settled into a foster home. Others are truly shy and need controlled, prolonged exposure to warm up to any new person or situation. Regardless of which category your foster cat falls in, she is going to need time and assistance to feel comfortable in your home. The following are tips on how to acclimate a shy cat and draw them out of their shell.

- **A Safe Space:** Scared cats tend to prefer small spaces; large spaces are overwhelming. Set up your cat in a quiet room, such as a spare bedroom or a bathroom. She should have access to water and a litterbox at all times. She should also have a cozy place to hide. It should be someplace the cat – and you – can easily access, but where the cat can be mostly out of view.
- **Feeding:** It is a good idea to measure the dry food you provide. This will allow you to monitor your cat's appetite and let you know how much she is eating. Not eating for more than 2 days can be dangerous for a cat so you do need to see right away what her food consumption is. Initially it might be necessary to spoon feed (which provides distance) the cat while she is in her hiding spot. As she becomes more comfortable, you can move a little closer and hand feed her, then transition to giving the food on a plate and luring her out of hiding to eat.
- **Play:** You might be surprised how many shut down, fearful cats spring to life when invited to play. Interactive toys are a great way to bond with your new cat and help her feel more comfortable. Wand toys are a great choice!
- **Slow Blinking:** Slow blinking, commonly called "kitty kisses," does help to soothe some cats, and you might even get your cat blinking back at you.

## Cat Behavior Issues

### Scratching

Scratching is a normal behavior for all cats, even declawed cats. They scratch for a variety of reasons, including exercise, play, agility, stretching, and most importantly, to remove the outer nail sheath that sheds routinely. By trimming your foster cat's nails every 2 to 3 weeks, nails will stay blunt and less likely to harm your skin or furniture. Provide your foster cat with a sturdy scratching post that allows him or her to stretch out completely when scratching. Try sprinkling catnip on the base or side of the post to entice the kitty. An occasional treat reward may be used as well. Scratching on inappropriate surfaces (such as furniture) can also be lessened by the use of double-sided tape, like Sticky Paws, available at most pet stores.

### Litter Box Use

Most cats have a specific preference about where they want to eliminate. All indoor cats need a litter box. Your foster cat's litter box should be placed in a quiet, accessible location where your foster can feel comfortable eliminating. A bathroom or utility room is often a good place. Avoid high-traffic areas or noisy areas, such as next to a washing machine or dryer, that can startle the cat. One litter box is recommended per floor in a multi-level home. Cats are sensitive creatures, so try to avoid moving the litter box unless it's absolutely necessary. Keep the litter box clean. Cats won't use a messy, smelly litter box. Spot clean daily and completely clean and refill as needed. Don't use ammonia, deodorants, or scents, especially lemon, when cleaning the litter box.

Inappropriate litter box use may arise from physical or behavioral problems. Always rule out medical conditions first by contacting the Foster Coordinator. A kitten may have "accidents" because its living area is too large and is unable to make it to the box in time. Keep kittens confined to one room with their box when you are unable to closely supervise them.

### **Over-Grooming**

A cat that is grooming herself so much that she is creating bald spots or her skin is raw could be reacting to stress. However, there are a number of medical causes that should be explored first. The most common causes of this behavior are allergies and parasites. Parasites, such as fleas, are easy to diagnose. Allergies are not so simple to pinpoint. A cat that is biting and continually licking her belly may have feline lower urinary tract disease. Pain from conditions such as arthritis, cancer, and hyperesthesia can also lead to excessive grooming.

Even if you believe that your foster cat is healthy, please contact the Foster Coordinator if your foster is engaging in any over-grooming. Delaying treatment of a behavior problem is not going to harm your foster cat; delaying medical care can lead to a sicker cat and more costly treatment.

### **Counter Surfing**

The domestic cat's ancestors used to climb and perch in trees in order to hunt and to survey their territory. Nearly 75% of the world's wild cats live in forested areas. Is it any wonder that pet cats jump onto the kitchen counter? However, many people do object to this natural behavior. Fortunately, there are steps that you can take to prevent or break this habit in your foster cat. First, understanding that the need to perch is instinctual in cats, you must provide an acceptable elevated place for your foster cat. Cat trees are available in a myriad of sizes and designs. It isn't necessary to spend a lot of money to satisfy your foster cat. Clearing off an upper shelf of a bookcase can accommodate your foster cat just as well as a tree. Some cats don't need to be very high up and are happy with a windowsill or window perch. Keep in mind that in a larger home, more than one option will likely be required.

Encourage your foster cat to choose the location you have picked for her by placing treats or catnip there or giving her a spoon of canned food there. Praise and pet her when she rests on her perch. A shelf can be made more attractive by outfitting it with a bed or towel. Some cats will use their perches more often if doing so gives them the chance to watch birds and squirrels outside.

Counters and other off-limits areas need to be made unattractive to your cat. Be sure that no food is left unattended on counters or tables. "Booby trap" the counter by placing any of the following on the surface:

- Sticky Paws brand (or similar) double-sided tape
- Upside-down carpet runner or X-Mat Pet Mat

None of these will harm your foster cat but they should be annoying enough that your cat chooses to avoid them. Yelling at, hitting, or spraying your cat with water will not solve this problem.

### **Biting During Play**

Many cats enjoy being stroked— they purr, knead their paws, and lean into your hand. Sometimes it seems they quickly change their minds and bite out of the blue. Other cats only briefly tolerate petting and show no indication of actually liking it. Why do otherwise friendly cats bite when pet? The answer – we aren't sure. Repeated stroking might stimulate the nerves to a point that it becomes uncomfortable for the cat. Some cats may have been handled roughly as kittens and formed a negative association with petting. Regardless, there are steps you can take to increase the amount of petting your cat will accept.

Almost all cats who have petting-related aggression give a warning before they bite, though the warning may be subtle or quick. Common signs include tensing the body, becoming still, swishing the tail, rippling the muscles, and flattening the ears. A more exaggerated sign is quickly turning the head toward the area that is being touched. You need to know how long it takes to get to this point or if there are certain places on the cat's body that will elicit these reactions, as this is where training will start.

Let's say that your foster cat is content when you pet her five times but on the sixth her tail swishes and she will bite after eight or nine strokes. Pet your foster cat five times and then give her a treat. Wait a few minutes and then repeat. Gradually increase the number of times you pet her before you give a treat.

Make sure that all handling is gentle. Do not pat your foster cat or stroke her in the opposite direction of fur growth. Never hit or yell at your foster cat for biting. This will only reinforce in her mind that hands cause pain and she will become even less tolerant of handling. She could also become afraid of you. If your foster cat does bite, simply stop touching her and ignore her for 5 or 10 minutes. If she is on your lap and remains agitated, don't try to pick her up. Stand up and she will jump to the floor.

## **APPENDIX F: ALL ABOUT KITTENS**

Kittens are by far the most common foster candidates available at MACC. Kitten season will usually begin in late March and can stretch out as late as October/November. As with all under-age fosters, we recommend taking kittens in pairs as often as possible. From time to time we may also have litters available with mothers who may require foster care. The information below will assist you in rearing and caring for your underage felines.

### **Underweight & Underage Kittens**

Kittens who go out to foster due to being too young or underweight may require extra feedings every day and assistance with appetite stimulation. Fosters who bring home kittens from this category should be taking daily weights to ensure that their kitten is gaining, and not losing, weight. Kittens in this category are also more prone to upper respiratory infections (URIs), which is why getting them out of the shelter as soon as possible can be life-saving. Ensuring the kittens are receiving proper socialization, have normal energy levels, and are eating heartily are the keys to a successful underweight/underage foster.

### **Neonatal kittens**

Any kitten under 1 pound is considered to be a neonatal kitten. Neonatal kittens are especially vulnerable as orphans and often times need to be bottle fed every 2-4 hours depending on their age. Neonate animals are in desperate need of the personalized attention and frequent care that we just do not have the means to provide here at the shelter. These young kittens will need a warm room free of drafts, and lots of observation and care.

Fostering neonates requires additional training, and we are always in need of extra support. If you are interested in helping neonatal kittens, please reach out to the Foster Coordinator for one-on-one training.

### **Housing Set-Up**

Create a safe space for kittens by choosing a quiet room that you can close off from your resident pets, if applicable. It is very important to make sure it is temperature controlled and there are no drafts as kitten body temperatures can drop very quickly. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot so if the cat feels the need to burrow they're doing so in a safe space. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a cat can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The cat-friendly space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, a litter box and toys. It is not unusual for some mothers to be territorial about their newborns. If your foster mom is displaying offensive body language it is best to give them their space for a few days.

At around 3 weeks of age you can introduce a shallow litter box to your neonates. The litter should be fragrance free, non-clumping litter. Place kittens in the litter box frequently so that they remember to use it. You can also stimulate them over the litter pan to make the association. Make sure the litter box is easy to access and clean.

### **Warming Kittens**

Orphaned kittens less than 4 weeks of age may need a heat source to help keep warm. You can wrap a hot water bottle or sock filled with dry rice in a towel and place it next to the kitten. Make sure the bottle or rice filled sock is warm but not too hot to hold against your own skin for 20 seconds comfortably. You can also place a heating pad (on lowest setting) down one side of a cardboard box and half way underneath the box. Place a towel at the bottom of the box. Make



sure the kitten has room to move away from the heating pad if necessary but not enough room to lose its way back to the warmth. You can also use a Snuggle Safe heating disc that stays warm for 6-8 hours after microwaving.

### Neonatal Feeding

Bottle-feeding neonatal kittens requires an around-the-clock commitment. Fosters should only utilize a feline formula. Never use cow's milk with your kittens. When determining quantity of formula use your best judgement; if a kitten is eating less than recommended per feeding, you may need to increase the frequency of the feedings. If you're working with these small orphaned kittens - thank you in advance for offering your time and attention to these fragile babies.

Age	Weight	Amount Per Feeding	Schedule
0-1 week	50-150g	2-6 ml	Every 2 hours
1-2 weeks	150-250g	6-10 ml	Every 2-3 hours
2-3 weeks	250-350g	10-14 ml	Every 3-4 hours
3-4 weeks	350-450g	14-18 ml	Every 4-5 hours
4-5 weeks	450-550g	18-22 ml	Every 5-6 hours
5-8 weeks	550-850g	Weaning; offer wet food	Every 6 hours

### Bottle Feeding Kittens

If you are fostering a neonatal kitten, please follow these steps for feeding them. Note that depending on their age kittens need to be fed every 2-3 hours.

1. **Prep formula:** If using canned KMR, there's no need to mix. If using powdered KMR, mix 2 parts water with 1 part formula. Mix the powder and water until all clumps are gone. Note that mixed formula only lasts for 24 hours, so only make a day's worth at a time. Put the formula in a bottle and place in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. Before feeding always test the temperature of the formula by placing a few drops on your inner wrist to be sure it is not too hot. It should be slightly warmer than your body temperature.
2. **Kitten Temp Check:** Make sure that your foster kitten is warm before offering them food. Do not attempt to feed a kitten who has a low body temp as it can have serious health consequences.
3. **Prep Kitten:** Wrap the kitten in a towel or blanket and position him so that his belly is toward the floor. Kittens should not be fed on their backs or in an upright position.
4. **Feed:** Turn the bottle upside down and allow a drop of formula to come out. Place the nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently wiggle it, holding the bottle at a 45-degree angle to keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach. This movement should encourage the kitten to start eating. If at first you don't succeed, wait a few seconds and try again. Usually the kitten will latch on and begin to suckle. Some kittens may not like a bottle, so the formula could also be drawn up in a syringe and gently and slowly pushed into the kitten's mouth.

### Weaning kittens

Once your kittens are about four weeks old, it is time to start the weaning process. Your goal is to have the kittens eating on their own consistently by the time they're adopted. So, beginning at four weeks, start offering warm gruel (two parts wet food, one part formula) at all times, along with dry kitten food and water. Every four to six hours, discard any uneaten gruel and provide a fresh batch.

You will still be supplementing the kittens with a bottle every eight hours to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients they need, but encourage them to eat gruel before you offer a bottle. To get a kitten interested in trying the gruel, you may have to offer the gruel with a spoon or use your finger to place a small amount on the kitten's tongue. Ideally, by the end of five weeks,

your foster kittens will be happily eating dry and wet food on their own without any milk replacer formula. Kitten milk replacer can frequently cause diarrhea, which we treat symptomatically. The goal is to transition to commercial kitten food when possible to alleviate intestinal upset caused by milk replacer.

### **FOSTER TIP**

*To make gruel mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 mixed formula per kitten. You can add a little water if the kittens seem to like a looser consistency. It's OK to make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it; just remember to warm it up slightly before offering it to the kittens. Kittens who are learning to eat gruel tend to be very messy and may require baths to remove gruel from their faces and feet. It is important to keep them clean and dry for their health – crusted gruel on their skin can be irritating and lead to hair loss if the kittens are not kept clean.*

It is important to continue weighing your foster kittens every day, after each feeding, to ensure that they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the kittens to the litter box because they should be able to eliminate on their own by about four weeks of age.

### **Caring for independent eaters**

By six to seven weeks old, your kittens should be independent eaters. Dry food should be their primary source of food, but offer wet food frequently as well to encourage eating and maximize growth. Replace the water in their water dish twice a day and wipe out the dish if needed.

### **Dehydration**

Kittens can become dehydrated very quickly from not eating/drinking. When a kitten has diarrhea, it is a good idea to mix the kitten's bottle with Pedia-lyte in place of water. This will help prevent dehydration. If the diarrhea is severe (lasting over 24 hours) or contains blood, please contact the Foster Coordinator to schedule a time to bring the kitten in to be seen by a clinic staff member.

Severe dehydration in kittens requires immediate intervention. The most effective way to test for dehydration is to "tent" the skin on the kitten's back. This is done by picking up a fold of skin and watching what happens when you release the skin- it should spring back into shape. If the skin remains in a ridge, the kitten is dehydrated.

If you believe your foster kitten is dehydrated, contact the Foster Coordinator to schedule a time to bring the kitten in to be seen by a veterinarian. Please keep track of what and when the kitten ate last.

### **Kitten Stimulation**

After each meal, kittens under 3 weeks of age must be stimulated to urinate and defecate. When kittens are with their mom she takes care of this by licking the kittens in order to stimulate their bowels. For motherless kittens, use a baby wipe or cloth dampened with warm water to massage the area around the kitten's rectum and genitalia. This process is necessary after each meal until the kitten can eliminate on her own. At this time you can start putting the kitten in a litter box to encourage it to go on its own.

### **Litterbox Training**

When kittens are about four weeks old, they will begin to play in, dig through, and explore loose, soft materials such as dirt or litter. As a result of this investigative digging, kittens begin to

relieve themselves in these materials. So, kittens do not have to be taught by either their mothers or humans to relieve themselves in soft, loose materials, or to dig and bury their waste. Kittens are simply born knowing how to do it.

It's not necessary to take kittens to the litter box and move their paws back and forth in the litter. Doing so may actually be an unpleasant experience for them, causing them to have some negative associations with the litter box. However, litter boxes that don't provide an acceptable place to eliminate (from the cats' point of view) may cause cats to relieve themselves elsewhere. That's why it's important to provide a litter box that meets the kittens' needs. You want the kittens to like the box and use it consistently.

Be sure to choose a box that has walls low enough for the kitten to access it and clean the contents regularly. Praise the kitten when they're using it. Remember to only use non-clumping litter.

## **APPENDIX G: ALL ABOUT DOGS**

Dogs are one of our most popular adoption candidates, yet helping them become “adoption ready” is one of our greatest challenges as an organization. And that’s exactly why dog fosters are critical, especially those willing to take large unruly canines. By sending an adult dog out to foster we are not only gathering additional information about their personalities, fosters are also laying a foundation of training and polite behavior which will make them more successful in their adoptive homes.

### **Training**

A well-behaved dog is a joy and makes them a more desirable adoption candidate. Teaching your foster dog the basics—“sit,” “stay,” “come,” “down,” “off,” “leave it”—will help prepare them with basic life skills that they’ll need once they’re adopted. Utilizing positive reinforcement methods, which reward good behavior and re-direct unwanted actions, will help you to train your foster dog into a model citizen.

Know that behavior is context dependent, meaning that all social animals behave differently in different environments. Understand that every dog, no matter what their age, comes with a need to learn new skills or change some behaviors in their new home. Your foster dog will make mistakes.

Foster parents should not utilize punishment or dominance-based training with foster dogs. If you are in need of training assistance for a particular animal, please contact the Foster Coordinator.

### **Dog Grooming**

Foster parents are welcome to give their foster dogs a bath – though they should wait a period of time to get to know the animal first. If giving a full bath, always use a mild shampoo. Dogs who are being treated for kennel cough, who are underage or underweight can be bathed but should be towel-dried immediately afterward to prevent their body temperature from dropping. Puppies in particular are difficult to keep clean. Frequent sponge baths or baby wipe-downs may be needed to keep their paws free of fecal material. If you are comfortable trimming a dog’s nails – please do – but watch their body language closely as some dogs do not like having their paws handled. Don’t do any kind of grooming that may put you or the dog at risk. Be sure to follow post-operative care instructions and refrain from getting a surgical incision wet for 7-10 days.

### **Housetraining**

Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they’ve been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may “mark” their territory. This action should be redirected immediately with a calm “Oops” – then escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer (like Nature’s Miracle) on the areas where the dog “marked” to insure he will not smell and mark that area again.

You can begin to housetrain a puppy at 6-8 weeks of age. Even if you bring home an adult dog who is housebroken, you will want to follow these guidelines until your foster dog adjusts to his new situation and to your schedule.

Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate. Then take him there every time with a spoken command (such as “go potty”). Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Puppies should go out every 45 minutes until you learn their pattern. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn’t go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!

Supervise the puppy closely while you’re inside. If he starts to sniff the floor, or even squats to go, interrupt with a calm “Oops,” scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot and praise when he finishes. If he eliminates in the house while you’re not paying attention, don’t correct him – it’s not his fault. The puppy will not associate a reprimand with the previous behavior of eliminating in the house. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer to get rid of the smell. Never put the dog’s face in his mess or yell at him; he won’t understand you, and you will only be teaching him fear.

### **Crating**

Crates provide safe havens and dens for dogs. They calm them and can help prevent destructive chewing, barking, and housetraining mistakes. Puppies should not be crated for more hours than they are months old, plus one. For example, a 4-month-old pup should not be crated longer than 5 hours without a bathroom break.

How long an adult dog can be crated will depend on many factors. For example, if your foster dog was left outside, he has never been required to hold his bladder for any period of time. It will take time for this dog to learn to hold it, and you will need to start slowly. Older dogs and dogs with some medical conditions may only be able to successfully hold it for short periods of time. Rigorous exercise should be given before and after any long periods in the crate, and good chew toys should be in the crate at all times. You may want to crate your new foster dog for the first few nights in your bedroom – most of them feel more secure in their crate and it protects your house from accidents.

Crates should never be used as a means of punishment; they’re not to be used for keeping puppies under 6 months out of mischief all day either. Crates should be thought of as dog playrooms, just like child playrooms with games and toys. It should be a place dogs like to be and feel safe and secure. Some dogs prefer to eat in their crate – this leads to positive associations with the crate and lets them feel less threatened by other pets and especially children during mealtimes.

### **Chewing**

Most dogs love to chew, so make sure to give them lots of appropriate outlets for this behavior.

### **Dog Parks**

Foster dogs should not be taken to any off-leash dog parks or beaches. The full behavior history of your foster dog is not known and we want to prevent any incidents in which a foster dog may get into a fight with another canine. In addition, these spaces are often a breeding ground for germs and we don’t want to expose fosters to additional pathogens. Leashed walks through non-dog parks are okay.

## First-Time Dog Foster Tips

The tips below are meant to help fosters with transitioning foster dogs home. Time and patience are the keys to success. Some dogs adjust to new homes quicker than others, so fosters should be prepared for some bumps in the road.

Things you *should* do:

- Remember, even a well-adjusted adult dog can be a bit shell-shocked when you bring them home, and the dog you have on day one might be very different than the dog you have in 3 days or 3 weeks.
- Teach your dog to “say please.” Saying please teaches a dog impulse control and manners. For example, a dog has to earn his dinner by sitting politely. Good things come to those who wait.
- Take the dog outside on leash right away and let them sniff around.
- Keep the dog on a leash even in a fenced yard.
- Let the dog meet one family member at a time. They should try to make a good first impression by being calm, patient, and approachable. Treats are always a good idea!
- Avoid big parties and gatherings with your new foster dog until you know the dog’s personality better. Does he like kids? Does she like being the center of attention, or is she shy?
- Let your new foster dog sleep in the same room as you, if possible, in a crate. Dogs are social animals and sleeping alone in a strange place can be tough for some dogs. If it’s not possible to be in the same room, make sure the sleeping area is dog-proofed, cozy, quiet, and safe. . A crate in the hallway, office, or living room is also a good sleeping arrangement.
- Assume that the foster dog will chew on things left on the floor. If the dog does have something they aren’t supposed to, try to distract them and re-direct them to something appropriate. Be sure there is a toy in every room.
- Dogs are opportunists. Keep food off the counters and low tables, and keep garbage cans closed.
- Keep your face away from the foster dog’s face, don’t hug or grab the dog, and avoid letting young children interact with the dog without carefully watching for signs of discomfort from the dog.

Things you *shouldn’t* do:

- Give your foster dog a bath right away. Unless the dog is matted, filthy, or in dire need of a scrub, wait until they are settled in.
- Kiss or hug the dog until you get to know them more. Some dogs dislike it. Think of it like kids getting pinched on the cheek by their aunt.
- Leave your foster dog loose in the house. Your dog should be in view of you at all times, in a crate, or in a sectioned off area.
- Allow rough housing or chase games of any kind between children and the foster dog.
- Pester the dog while they’re eating. Everyone deserves to eat in peace. Dogs behave differently in different environments, so be cautious in the beginning, especially around food.

## Behavior Issues

Many of the behaviors that we find problematic – such as barking, whining, digging, chewing, scavenging and hunting other animals – are really just normal dog behaviors and can be explained as “dogs being dogs.” The easiest way to coexist with our canine companions is to provide more appropriate outlets for these behaviors.

If your foster dog is exhibiting any behavioral issues, ask yourself the questions below:

- Is my foster dog getting enough exercise?
- Is he being left alone for long periods of time?

- Does he have interesting toys to keep his mind engaged and stimulated?
- Is he getting enough attention and playtime?
- Am I reinforcing bad behavior? Some examples include verbally scolding a dog when he is seeking attention or engaging the dog when he uses bad manners to get you to play.
- Does my foster dog have a safe place that is dog-proofed with appropriate chew toys, or am I leaving my own belongings within reach?
- Am I providing specific outlets based on his natural instincts and drives? We don't expect foster parents to be miracle workers. If your foster dog requires more attention, exercise or training than you can provide, talk to the Foster Coordinator – another foster home might be best for both you and the dog. Regardless of the issue, we don't condone punishment, which will not address the cause of the behavior and in fact it may worsen behavior that's motivated by fear or anxiety. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs who aren't currently fearful. People often believe their dog makes the connection to discipline because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." But dogs display submissive postures like cowering, running away or hiding when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture, or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know what he's done wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but can damage the human-animal bond, cause fear, and may provoke other undesirable behaviors, too.

### **House-Soiling**

House-training can be difficult to achieve during the brevity of a foster period. However, you can get an animal well on its way to an "accident" free life. What is first and foremost is establishing a routine. Once a schedule has been set, be consistent! Dogs and puppies need to eliminate first thing in the morning, after a nap, after exercise or play, and after eating and/or drinking.

Additional tips for house-training include:

- Keep a consistent walking and feeding schedule and remove left-over food between meals.
- Adult dogs should be taken outside first thing in the morning, before going to bed, and before being confined or left alone for periods of time. Fully house-trained adult dogs usually go out to relieve themselves at least 3 times a day.
- Puppies should be taken out more frequently. In addition to first thing in the morning, and before bedtime, they should go out after meals, play, and waking from naps.
- Pace back and forth with your foster dog in an area rather than standing still. The movement will help stimulate the need to eliminate.
- If you see signs that he or she needs to eliminate, such as pacing, whining, circling, sniffing, or leaving the room, take your foster dog outside as quickly as possible to prevent an accident.
- Reward your foster with praise, treats, or play whenever they eliminate in the appropriate area.
- If you catch your foster dog in the act of eliminating inside the house, interrupt the behavior with a verbal cue like "not here" or clap loudly enough to startle but not scare. Immediately, quickly, and gently lead or carry your dog outside. Allow your foster dog to finish eliminating outside and then reward him or her.
- Do not punish or even acknowledge an accident. Your foster dog cannot connect punishment with something that happened even minutes ago. Punishment may make a dog fearful and worsen the house-training problems. Puppies will make mistakes, and it may be that you did not recognize the signs or take them out enough.

### **Poor Impulse Control**

Some dogs who lack previous basic training, and are young in age or have high energy, may have difficulty navigating their natural impulses, which leads to play-biting, leash grabbing, jumping, and other nuisance behaviors. Teaching your foster dog to wait, even when faced with

various stimuli, will help them in gaining impulse control which will lead to easier adoption placement.

Utilize the techniques below to teach your foster impulse control:

- Have the dog wait or “sit” until given permission to take a toy, take a treat from a hand, or eat from a food bowl.
- Ask the dog to “wait” at doors until told “let’s go”
- Waiting for calm behavior before exiting their kennel (if crate training)
- Ask the dog to “look” and make eye contact with you when in the face of stimuli
- Teach the dog to sit before greeting people
- Work on “sit” and “down” by rewarding a dog consistently as he maintains the sit or down position for longer periods of time (with increasing distraction)
- Clicking/rewarding for brief (and eventually, sustained) calm behavior in or out of the kennel
- Desensitizing/rewarding for calm behavior in the presence of triggers like leashes, passing dogs, or manipulating the kennel latch, etc.

If a dog does not respond to your re-direction and becomes overly mouthy or jumpy, it’s time to walk away or give them a time out. By allowing a dog who is “acting out” to continue their inappropriate behavior, we may actually be doing them unintentional harm. By helping a dog learn to consistently control their own impulses (and then holding them accountable for doing so at all times), you can help curb a lot of jumpy, mouthy, hyper, over-reactive behavior which can discourage adopters.

### **Separation Anxiety (or Isolation Distress)**

Separation anxiety affects both dogs and puppies. Separation anxiety leads to destructive behaviors such as chewing, scratching, barking, howling, and “accidents” in the house. Boredom and anxiety are the biggest reason for destructive behavior. Keep your dog occupied with chew toys. Filling a Kong with peanut butter or soft treats will keep a dog busy for a long time. Make sure you give the animal a lot of exercise time and mental stimulation. Don’t “baby” them by lavishing them with too much attention as this can create over-dependence. If your foster dog is showing increasing signs of separation anxiety over the foster period, please contact the Foster Coordinator.

### *Preventing Separation Anxiety in 10 Steps*

The most important ingredient in a successful separation anxiety prevention program is to set your dog up for success. When you bring a new dog or puppy home, implement a program to help him be comfortable with being alone for gradually increasing periods. This will help to assure him that it’s not necessary to panic: you haven’t abandoned him; you always come back. Be sure to exercise him well before you practice; a tired dog is a much better candidate for relaxation than one who’s “full of it.”

Here are the 10 steps of a two-day program to create a dog who is comfortable being left alone. Note that if you are modifying an already existing distress or anxiety condition you will need to work through the steps of the program much more slowly.

1. Bring your dog home at a time when someone can spend a few days with him to ease the stress of the transition.
2. Prepare a quiet, safe space in advance such as a playpen or puppy pen, or a dog-proofed room such as a laundry room.



3. When you bring your dog home, give him a chance to relieve himself outdoors, and spend 10 to 15 minutes with him in the house under close supervision. Then put him in his pen and stay in the room with him.

4. Stay close at first. Read a book. If he fusses, ignore him. When he's quiet, greet him calmly, take one step away, and then return before he has a chance to get upset. Speak to him calmly, then go back to reading. You're teaching him that if you leave, you will return. Other family members should make themselves scarce during this time: your dog needs to learn to be alone.

5. Continue to occasionally step away, gradually increasing the distance and varying the length of time that you stay away, so that eventually you can wander around the room without upsetting your dog. Each time you return, greet him calmly. Every once in a while say "Yes!" in a calm but cheerful voice before you return to him, then walk back to the pen and feed him a treat.

6. After an hour or so, give him a break. Take him outside to potty and play. Hang out for a while. Then go back inside and resume his pen exercises.

7. Begin again, staying near the pen until he settles. More quickly this time, move along steps 4 and 5 until you can wander around the room without generating alarm. Now step into another room very briefly, and return before your dog has time to get upset. Gradually increase the length of time you stay out of the room, interspersing it with wandering around the room, sitting near him reading a book, and sitting across the room reading a book. If he starts to fuss, wait until he stops fussing to move back toward him. Teach him that calm behavior makes you return, fussing keeps you away.

8. Occasionally, step outside of the house. Your goal for the first day is to get your dog comfortable with you being away from him for 15 to 20 minutes; it's usually the first 20 minutes of separation that are most difficult. Vary the times so he doesn't start anticipating your return. Remember to give him plenty of potty and play breaks: every hour for a young pup, every one to two hours for an older dog.

9. On the second day, quickly repeat the warm-up steps, until you can step outside for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, interspersed with shorter separations. On one of your outdoor excursions, hop into your car and drive around the block. Return in 5 to 10 minutes, and calmly re-enter the house just as you have been during the rest of the exercises. Hang out for a while, then go outside and drive away again, for a half-hour this time.

10. Now it's time for Sunday brunch. Be sure your dog gets a thorough potty break and playtime, then give him 15 minutes to relax after the stimulation of play. Put a Kong stuffed with delightful treats into his pen, round up the family, and calmly exit the house for an outing of a couple of hours' duration. When you arrive home to a calm and happy dog, drink an orange juice toast to your graduation from separation anxiety prevention school.

## **APPENDIX H: ALL ABOUT PUPPIES**

Fostering puppies is both a delight and an adventure. Besides neonate kittens they are the most time-consuming foster group as they require so much attention, supervision, and clean-up. Providing shelter pups with foster care is, by far, the best way we can get them ready for their forever homes. In addition to following all of the training and care protocols above, here are additional guidelines for fostering puppies.

### **Housing Set-Up**

Create a safe space for puppies by choosing a quiet room that you can close off from your resident pets, if applicable. It is very important to make sure it is temperature controlled and there are no drafts as puppies' body temperatures can drop very quickly. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot, like a crate, in case the puppy wants to rest in a more private space. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a puppy can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The puppy-proofed space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, puppy-safe toys, and a designated potty spot.

### **Puppy Development**

In the first two weeks of life, puppies are helpless and vulnerable. They are still developing basic reflexes, their hearing and vision is still not fully developed, and they are unable to properly control their body temperatures. They should therefore be confined to a nursery area. Puppies should not be allowed to mingle with your own pets.

During the first 1-3 weeks of life puppies do not urinate or defecate on their own and require stimulation for elimination. Gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the puppy's genital area and anus. This should be done before or after feeding.

Keeping the puppies clean from food and feces is vital for his or her health. If you notice your puppy has food, urine, or feces on him or her gently wipe the puppy down with a warm damp cloth or baby wipe. Be sure to dry the puppy well afterwards so they do not become chilled.

Puppies who are less than three to four weeks old are fed a combination of liquid or powder formula. The powder formula must be mixed for feedings. It is important to closely follow mixing directions. Once the puppies are about four weeks of age, you can start transitioning them from formula to puppy food. Mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 can of formula (or water) per puppy. It's ok to make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it, but you'll need to warm it up (just a bit!) before serving. You can then introduce them to solid food by offering warmed can food, mixed with a small amount of water into gruel, in a shallow dish. Begin by placing the puppy to the side of the plate. He or she should start to eat, but it may take a few tries for puppies to understand. You may need to put a small amount of the gruel in the puppy's mouth so he understands that it is food. If they are not interested, wait a few hours and then try again. After they have accepted the gruel, gradually thicken it by adding less water. Begin to also offer dry food on a free feeding basis.

It's important to continue weighing your foster puppies every day until they are past the high-risk age of 6 weeks old to ensure they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the puppies to potty pads as they are able to eliminate on their own at 4 weeks of age. Newspaper makes for a great potty pad substitute.

By six to seven weeks old, your puppies should be independent eaters. Dry food should be their primary source of food, but offer wet food frequently as well to encourage eating and maximize growth. Replace the water in their water dish twice a day and wipe out the dish if needed.

Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding. Feed puppies until they are full but not bloated. Overfeeding can lead to messy diarrhea.

**TIPS: Bathe your foster with Dawn® Dish Detergent Original Formula. Be sure to dry your puppy after their bath using a towel (using a blow dryer can cause a puppy to overheat, which can be dangerous to them).**

**Puppies are chewers! Be sure to remove all electrical cords and small objects.**

### **Feeding Etiquette**

- Only use clean nipples and bottles!
- Feed puppies one at a time. Place them on a countertop and allow them to feed with four paws on the counter and with a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom.
- Do not feed a puppy while she is on her back (like a human baby). This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in the lungs.
- Gently open the puppy's mouth with your finger and place the nipple on the tongue.
- Stroking puppy can help them to eat.
- Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the puppy from inhaling too much air.
- Do not squeeze the bottle to force formula into the puppy's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- After feeding, burp your puppy by gently massaging her back.
- Be sure to stimulate the puppy to urinate/defecate after feeding. Stimulate them with a warm damp cloth or tissue if necessary.
- Fill out the Daily Weight and Feeding Record.

**TIP: To warm nursing bottles, fill a coffee mug half way with hot water and place the bottle of formula into a mug. After a minute or two, test the formula by sprinkling a few drops on the back of your hand. Formula should be warm to the touch, but not hot.**

### **Cleaning Equipment**

Keeping the puppies' nursing bottles and supplies clean is vital as this will prevent diarrhea, vomiting, or infection. Cleaning the bottles and nursing nipples is quite easy. Using hot, soapy water clean the bottle with a bottle brush. If you do not have a bottle brush you may wash the bottle and nursing nipple in the dishwasher. You may place them in the silverware rack or in a dishwasher basket.

### **Additional Feeding Considerations**

The digestive systems of puppies are fragile. Do not offer puppies treats. Only feed them the food provided by the Foster Coordinator.

If puppies are fighting over food, start to feed them separately. Contact the Foster Coordinator for support.

Never take food away from a puppy that is growling. Simply remove the other puppies and wait for the food bowl to be unattended.

**In some cases, moms are fostered together with her litter (this is often the healthiest option for puppies if the mom is available). There are a few things to keep in mind for this type of foster situation. Moms require a calm setting that has privacy and minimal activity. Stress can cause moms to stop taking care of their puppies.**

### **Bringing Mom Home**

You will need a separate space for a mom with her litter. When you first bring them home, leave them alone in their new space. The separate area may be referred to as a whelping box or nesting area. Mom will need some time, up to a few days, to adjust to her new space. Be sure to offer mom fresh food, water, and a clean nesting area that other pets and children cannot access.

It is not unusual for some mothers to be territorial about their newborns. If your foster mom is displaying offensive body language, it is best to give them their space for a few days. Contact the Foster Coordinator for support.

### **Socialization**

Even adult dogs need socialization; however, proceed slowly with any adult dog that you do not know. Create situations for socialization but let her come to you. Stop the session if you notice any negative signs, such as swishing tail, ears laid back, head jerk towards you, tensing up, moving away, or growling. It is always best to move slowly and use caution when reaching into the nesting area.

### **Mom and Her Puppies**

For the first few weeks, mom will do everything necessary to take care of her puppies. Puppies start nursing very soon after birth. Mom will also groom her puppies. It's best to leave the mom alone for the first two weeks except to feed and to go outside for potty breaks.

If the mother is present she will usually begin weaning the puppies by discouraging them from nursing; however, some dogs will allow the nursing until the puppies are old enough for spay/neuter surgery. Some nursing activity is the canine equivalent of thumbsucking, that is, for comfort only. Even if the puppies appear to be nursing, they may not be getting all of the nutrition they need from mom. Make sure the puppies are eating food and gaining weight.

### **Possible Issues with Mom Dogs**

**Maternal neglect** – In some cases, about 8% of the time, puppies die from poor maternal care. There are a few causes of this. Some dogs lack maternal instincts and, in other cases, it is nature's way of handling sick or weak puppies. Environmental stress is an important factor, which is why it is important to create a calm environment for mom and the litter. Foster parents should watch for signs of maternal neglect. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice the mom avoids feeding and grooming her puppies and ignores their cries.

**Maternal Aggression** – As mom protects her puppies, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your household pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. If aggression becomes severe, call the Foster Coordinator.

## **Mouthing**

- Puppies are born with instincts to bite. One of the most important things they learn, as a puppy, is how to control the strength of their bite.
- Puppies naturally train each other how to bite. When one puppy bites another too hard, the other puppy yelps loudly and stops playing.
- As a foster parent, you can play this role. Any time a puppy mouths with too much force, yelp loudly. If the puppy stops biting, then praise him/her lavishly. If the puppy continues biting, turn your back on the puppy and walk away. After ten seconds or so, resume play happily.
- Remember: Mouthing is important! A puppy who is never allowed to mouth will grow up to have a hard bite.
- Never scold, tap on the nose, or yell no at a puppy who is biting. Bite inhibition is a crucial development for puppies. A puppy who is punished for biting can turn into an adult with unsafe jaws (because they do not know their jaw strength). Simply yell “ouch” when a puppy bites too hard.

## **Housetraining**

We always want to set our puppies up for success, and doing so in the house training process is essential! Puppies should have frequent breaks and be taken outside to the same spot to relieve themselves every 30 – 60 minutes when active (when waking up from a nap, after drinking or eating, and after a play session). A puppy can hold his/her bladder one hour for each month of age (i.e. 2 months = 2 hours, 3 months = 3 hours).

### **Remember these five steps to successful house training:**

1. Prevent accidents
2. Reward going to the bathroom
3. Anticipate bathroom needs
4. Interrupt accidents and avoid punishing
5. Clean up accidents with enzyme cleaner

**Pee Pads:** For puppies five weeks and under, place puppies on pee pads immediately after waking up, after eating, and about once an hour. Praise the puppy enthusiastically every time he/she urinates or defecates on the pad. Change the pads frequently, as puppies tend to chew on pee pads.

## **Crate Training**

House training and crate training go hand in hand. A crate can be a great tool to use for your puppy, but it can also be misused. The crate should be big enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and stretch out.

Your foster puppy/dog should have a short-term confinement area, such as the crate, and a long-term confinement area, such as an x-pen or baby gated section of the house or room.

If you are beginning to crate train, feed your puppy in the crate, provide stuffed chew toys only in the crate, and/or play crate games to build a positive association with the crate. Keep sessions short and fun, and have your puppy in the crate for short periods of time when you are home.

Never use a crate as a form of punishment for your foster puppy or dog.

## **Toys**

Having toys available for your puppy is vital for their mental health and development. A selection of toys is best such as plush squeak toys, rope toys, stuffed Kongs, and teething toys.

## **Socialization**

From 3 weeks to 3 months, puppies are biologically primed to learn that new sights, sounds, smells, objects, environments, and people are fun and safe. This is the most crucial and sensitive period in a puppy's life.

Socialization is not simply exposing a puppy to a variety of people, places, and things, but using positive proactive socialization training. Each new person the puppy meets should be a wonderful experience with treats and toys. Take things slow if your puppy seems fearful of the new person, place, or thing.

## **Training: Positive Reinforcement**

As a foster parent, there will be many situations for you to train your animal. MACC only promotes training using positive reinforcement. Decades of research and scientific study concludes that positive reinforcement training is the most humane and effective method of training.

## **Do not scold or punish bad behavior.**

- When an unwanted behavior is offered/performed re-direct the puppy with a kissy noise or toy. Praise and reward the puppy for stopping the undesired behavior and giving you attention.
- Punishment can instill fear, which can lead to aggressive behavior.
- Praise and reward good behavior.
- When a behavior is immediately followed by a positive outcome, that behavior is strengthened.

## **APPENDIX I: HEALTH CONCERNS**

### **Cats and Kittens**

#### **Upper Respiratory Infection**

Upper respiratory infection (URI) in cats is a contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory passages. Bacteria may become involved secondarily. The incubation period for URI is anywhere from 2 days to 2 weeks, which is why cats may appear healthy upon pick-up, and may still develop the illness.

URI is highly contagious among felines. Note that humans and dogs cannot be affected by the virus. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose or eyes, squinting, lack of appetite, lethargy and fever. If you have a foster cat who begins to show preliminary symptoms, please contact the Foster Coordinator. If the symptoms begin to compound, and the cat is not eating or, if the discharge has become yellow or green in color, medications will likely be prescribed.

When caring for a cat with URI in your home your most important goal is to keep the cat eating. When they are congested cats can't smell food and may lose their appetite. Offer smelly, fish-flavored canned food. Warming it up a bit in a microwave may help too. Gently clean the nose and eyes with a washcloth moistened with warm water. If medication is prescribed, make sure to give the animal all doses until completely gone.

#### **Feline Distemper**

Feline distemper, otherwise known as panleukopenia, is a highly communicable virus that is fatal to young kittens. It is spread by direct contact with infected animals or their secretions. Contaminated food dishes, bedding, litter boxes, and the clothes or hands of people who have treated an infected cat are routes of exposure.

Early signs include loss of appetite, liquid diarrhea, severe apathy, and fever. The cat often vomits repeatedly and brings up frothy, yellow-stained bile. The cat may be seen crouching in pain, their head hanging a few inches over the surface of the water bowl. If they are able to drink, they immediately vomit. With pain in the abdomen, the cat cries plaintively. Diarrhea may appear early in the course of the disease, but frequently comes on later. The stools are yellow or blood-streaked. In young kittens (and some older cats), the onset can be so sudden that death occurs before the cat shows any signs. Panleukopenia is the feline version of parvovirus, a deadly disease in puppies and dogs. The virus is very persistent in the environment and can infect future foster animals if the home is not thoroughly disinfected.

If you have a foster cat who is showing signs of feline distemper, please contact the Foster Coordinator immediately. Also take precautionary measures until a diagnosis has been made by limiting the cat's exposure to other felines.

#### **Fading Kitten Syndrome**

Fading Kitten Syndrome, also known as failure to thrive, is when a kitten begins to fade with little or no warning. It is more common and can be fatal in kittens under 1 pound. It is not a well-defined condition and can be spurred by environment, mother's neglect, birth defects, anemia, or simply low birth weight.

Signs of fading kitten syndrome include:

- Low body temperature

- Lethargy
- Not Eating
- Gasping for breath

If you notice these symptoms here's what you need to do immediately:

1. **Keep the kitten warm** by wrapping them in a towel. Once in the towel do not unwrap them; by unwrapping or adjusting the towel you will be releasing heat. Utilize a heating pad if available.
2. **Increase the kitten's blood sugar.** There are a few different ways you can do this.
  - If you have regular sugar put a few tablespoons of sugar in warm water and stir it up; you want the solution to be as strong as possible while still runny.
  - Use a syringe or your finger to give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth
  - You can also rub Karo syrup on the gums, which will absorb quickly for a blood glucose spike.
3. **Provide comfort.** Stay calm so that the kitten is not stressed further. Comfort the kitten.
4. **Contact** the Foster Coordinator for further instructions.

If caught early kittens can *possibly* recover from fading kitten syndrome but considering the fact that 15%-40% of kittens under 12 weeks of age will pass, it is not likely.

### Kitten Mortality

Many factors play a part in kitten mortality, and death is an unfortunate reality when we deal with the most vulnerable populations. Kittens born on the streets are subjected to influences that can significantly reduce their chances of survival and may have congenital or inherited defects that we are unaware of. Despite our best efforts, young kittens do die. The death of a kitten can be an emotionally disturbing experience. It is important to understand and accept that some kittens will not survive. What we can do for these kittens is surround them with warmth, care and love while they are with us. In the event that one of your kittens passes, please notify the Foster Coordinator and wrap the body in preparation for returning it to the shelter.

## Dogs and Puppies

### Kennel Cough

Canine Infectious Respiratory Disease, otherwise known as kennel cough, is an infection of the respiratory passages that is very common among shelter dogs. CIRP is primarily a viral infection that may be accompanied by a secondary bacterial infection. The disease is spread by close contact. In spite of strict sanitary measures, it is sometimes difficult to control the disease in hospitals, kennels, and shelters. Dogs and puppies are vaccinated upon shelter entry at MACC against Bordetella, Adenovirus, and Parainfluenza (3 causes of CIRP). Many causes of CIRP are not preventable with vaccination.

Like URI, kennel cough has a long incubation period, anywhere from 5 to 15 days, so it is not always diagnosed prior to foster placement. If you have your own dogs at home, ensure that they are up-to-date on their kennel cough (Bordetella) vaccine to ensure they are protected against one of the causative agents.

The major symptom of kennel cough is a dry, harsh cough that is worsened with exercise or excitement. Dogs usually do not run a fever. Other symptoms include sneezing, snorting, gagging and a discharge from the nose or eyes. Retching or gagging might follow the cough. Severe cough may occur for 5 days but a mild cough may persist for 10 – 20 days.



Kennel cough is usually self-limiting. Most of the time no treatment is necessary in otherwise healthy adult dogs. If you have a healthy adult foster dog who comes down with symptoms make sure they are comfortable, rested, and drink plenty of fluids. Wipe their nose with a warm, damp cloth to remove any discharge. If the cough is severe, if the dog has a decreased appetite, or if there is any deterioration in condition, contact the Foster Coordinator.

### **Canine Distemper**

Canine distemper is a highly contagious viral disease acquired by dogs. Puppies younger than 4 months old and unvaccinated dogs are at a high risk for becoming infected. The virus attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. Distemper can also infect foxes, wolves, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, and ferrets. It does not infect people or domestic cats. All dogs are vaccinated against distemper immediately upon arrival at the shelter and thanks to this practice, this disease is a rare occurrence in the shelter. If there is ever an outbreak of distemper at the shelter foster parents will be notified.

The virus may be shed in all body secretions. Early distemper symptoms may look similar to those of kennel cough, but progress into neurological and gastrointestinal issues. Transmission usually occurs through inhalation of airborne virus or direct contact between susceptible and infected dogs. It can also be spread through fomites (inanimate objects, such as clothing, bowls, leashes, and toys, that become contaminated) or the environment, but the virus does not remain infectious outside the body for more than a few days in a perfect environment, and for only a few hours under other conditions.

Signs to look for:

- Severe Upper Respiratory Infection or Pneumonia
- Lethargy
- Neurological signs such as seizure activity, convulsions, and partial or complete paralysis.
- Anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea

If you notice any of these signs, immediately contact the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

### **Canine Parvovirus**

Canine parvovirus is a serious and highly contagious disease caused by a parvovirus. It is transmitted by direct dog-to-dog contact or contact with contaminated feces, environments, or people. The disease affects dogs, foxes, wolves, and coyotes but does not infect humans.

Signs of the disease include lethargy, loss of appetite, fever, vomiting, and severe, often bloody, diarrhea. Vomiting and diarrhea can cause rapid dehydration and can quickly lead to death (usually within 48-72 hours after the first clinical signs appear). If your foster puppy or dog is showing any of these signs, contact MACC immediately.

Vaccination and good hygiene are crucial in the prevention of canine parvovirus. All dogs who enter the shelter are immediately vaccinated against the disease though puppies need a series of vaccinations to be adequately protected. For this reason puppy fosters should use caution in exposing their young dogs to other unknown dogs or unknown environments where infected dogs may have defecated until the vaccination series is complete.

If there is a suspicion that the illness has affected any foster animals the foster caretakers will be notified immediately. To keep your own canines safe, please ensure that they are up-to-date on their vaccinations at all times.

### **Canine Influenza Virus**

This is an extremely contagious virus that can live on surfaces and on clothing for up to 24 to 48 hours. Most dogs that are infected will show mild or moderate signs of respiratory illness, including cough, nasal discharge, and a fever of 103 degrees (or more) 1-2 days after exposure. A small percentage of dogs will develop more severe clinical signs and could develop pneumonia. If you suspect your foster dog is showing signs of CIV, please contact the Foster Coordinator immediately. We recommend that your personal pet dogs be vaccinated against canine influenza. Canine influenza is not a seasonal virus (like human flu) and only infects dogs.

### **Diarrhea**

There are three types of stool: normal, soft and diarrhea. Normal stool is firm and has a definite shape. Soft stool is not firm but still has some shape. Diarrhea is liquid, with or without color to it. Diarrhea is common and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, overfeeding, and other issues. To prevent diarrhea, try not to abruptly change your foster pet's diet. Ideally, mix new food with previous food for 5-7 days, gradually increasing the portion of new diet.

Diarrhea must be monitored as it can lead to dehydration. If the foster is active, mild diarrhea that occurs for 24 hours is not a concern. A bland diet such as boiled chicken and rice can be fed for several days until the stool returns to normal. Feed the foster less at a time but more often. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3-4 feedings, and/or contains blood/parasites, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

### **Parasites**

Fosters are dewormed upon intake (assuming they're big enough) and at every recheck. Parasites are commonly found in the stool of puppies and kittens. Tapeworms may look like grains of rice. Roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in the litter box or in vomit. If you notice worms, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck. If your foster pet passes roundworms (spaghetti) within 12-48 hours after a dewormer administration at the shelter, this is normal and expected.

### **Vomiting**

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens continuously or is accompanied with diarrhea. It can lead to dehydration. If vomiting occurs more than 3 times in an 8-hour period, call the Foster Coordinator. If an adult dog has a suddenly swollen belly and is attempting to vomit without bringing anything up (non-productive retching), this could be a medical emergency called bloat, and requires emergency veterinary attention.

### **Eye Discharge**

It is normal for animals to have little pieces of crust in their eyes after waking up. If you see continuous yellow or green discharge, swollen, or closed eyes call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck. You can use a warm, damp towel to wipe the affected eye(s). Kittens with eye discharge need their faces cleaned frequently to keep their eyes open. Gental eye lubricating drops can be applied every 4-8 hours to soothe the eyes.

### **Ear Mites**

Ear mites are parasites that live in the ear canal. You may notice a bald spot behind their ears due to continuous scratching. They may also violently shake their head. The ears may smell bad and you may see brown discharge that resembles coffee grounds. Ear mites are contagious

to other animals and need to be treated. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any of these symptoms.

### **Fleas**

Animals that have fleas will scratch themselves often. Topical flea prevention is given to foster kittens over 6 weeks of age and puppies over 8 weeks of age. Oral flea prevention is given to those younger than this. If you notice signs of fleas, you can wash the puppy in a small amount of Dawn® dish soap. Be sure to thoroughly dry him/her following a bath. Baths should not be given more than once every 1-2 weeks. If you still notice signs of fleas, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck. Fleas lay eggs in the environment that can re-infest the pet. It is important to vacuum frequently and launder pet bedding to remove any flea eggs from the environment.

### **Ringworm**

Ringworm is a contagious fungus that can spread to other animals and humans and can contaminate the environment. Ringworm spores can be found in the soil and are more likely to infect immunocompromised animals, such as puppies and kittens. Ringworm is the most common infectious skin disease in cats. A sign of ringworm is thinning hair or patches of hair loss with crusty skin. The most commonly affected areas are the tail, head, face, ears, and paws/toes. To prevent spread of ringworm throughout your home and infection of humans, maintain strong cleaning protocols and a good hand washing routine and keep foster kittens and puppies confined to easily-disinfectable areas of the home. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any hair loss.

### **Mange**

Mange is caused by parasites that infect the skin of animals. Some forms of mange are contagious to other animals and humans. The symptoms include itching, hair loss and sores. If you notice these symptoms, call the Foster Coordinator for treatment.

### **Fading Puppies**

Occasionally, a puppy that appears healthy will suddenly stop thriving. They will stop growing, socializing, and crawling. They will begin to lose weight and may cry continuously. When this happens, they fade quickly and, even with medical intervention, may not survive 48 hours. There is no understood cause for this condition. Occasionally, puppies die in foster care. If this should occur contact the Foster Coordinator.

## APPENDIX J: CONTACT INFORMATION

### **SHELTER LOCATION:**

Metro Animal Care and Control  
5125 Harding Place  
Nashville, TN 37211

### **WEBSITE:**

For general information about the foster program, as well as a link to this manual for easy reference, please visit our website at [macc.nashville.gov](http://macc.nashville.gov) and click on the Foster Program tab.

### **APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING:**

To schedule appointments and respond to email requests for animals in need of foster placement, please email the Foster Coordinator at [foster.macc@nashville.gov](mailto:foster.macc@nashville.gov). The Foster Coordinator can also be reached at **(615) 862-7930** in the event of medical emergencies during office hours (Tuesday through Saturday from 8am-4pm).

### **AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES:**

For after-hours emergencies, please call (615) 587-1474. *This is an employee's work cell number, so please be sure to leave a message. Calls cannot be returned without one. We will only return your call if it is a life or death emergency. All other calls will be returned during normal business hours.* Please call the back-up line at (615) 708-0316 if you do not hear from the 24-Hour Line in 15 minutes and the situation is life or death. Please do not call our after-hours animal control complaint line as they cannot offer foster medical assistance.

### **EMERGENCY ANIMAL HOSPITALS:**

You must have authorization before visiting one of the below emergency hospitals. Please do not go to any animal hospital unless directed by a MACC representative. You will not be reimbursed for the expenses if MACC does not authorize your visit.

- Blue Pearl Rivergate Pet ER 910 Meadowlark Lane. 615-859-3778
- Blue Pearl Nashville Pet Emergency Clinic 2000 12th Ave South. 615-383-2600