



Dog Foster Guide

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Thank you for expressing interest in SPCA Westchester's foster program. Every year, the SPCA places hundreds of dogs and puppies into foster homes. We rely greatly on foster families to assist with the growth and socialization of homeless puppies as well as providing temporary homes to stressed, timid, and injured dogs that are not thriving in a rescue environment. Not every dog and puppy admitted to SPCA Westchester is in need of a foster home. Healthy puppies and dogs of age are placed up for adoption once fully examined by our veterinarian and behaviorally evaluated by one of our trainers. Below is a list of dogs and puppies that require foster care, along with a small description of what each foster entails.

- **Pregnant and Nursing Dog Mothers: (Rare)**
A rescue center is a stressful environment for mother dogs. Mother dogs should be housed in a non-stressful, quiet room. Initially, momma dogs normally provide all care for puppies. As soon as they begin walking (2-3 weeks), puppies will mess often. Their area will require frequent cleaning. Puppies can be handled at a young age for socialization. Newborn puppies are delicate and must be handled with care. Puppies can be separated from mom once they start eating on their own (approximately 5-6 weeks of age). Puppies are either kept in a separate room from mom or dispersed to other homes until 8 weeks of age. The commitment time can be up to 8 weeks. **Prior to pick up, you will meet with either a foster coordinator or medical staff to discuss the care involved.**
- **Bottle and Syringe Fed Babies: (Rare)**
These babies do not eat or eliminate on their own and will need your help doing so. Depending on their age, they will need to be fed every 2-5 hours. Nighttime feedings are a must. Stimulation to defecate and urinate will be required before each meal. Young puppies are delicate and should be handled with care. Bottle babies will learn to eat on their own at about 5 weeks of age. Puppies are to be returned at 8 weeks of age. The commitment time can be up to 8 weeks. **Before bringing a bottle baby home, you will meet with either a foster coordinator or medical staff to discuss all necessary steps.**

- **Halfway and Transport Puppies: (Needed Most)**
These puppies are old enough to eat and eliminate on their own. Their ages range between 1-4 months. You will begin basic training and potty training. Halfway puppies relieve themselves frequently and should not be left alone for more than 3-4 hours at one time. Puppies of this age can be playful and curious. It is important to puppy proof the house. Usual commitment time is several days to one week. However, this is subject to change based upon recommendations from our veterinary clinic.
- **Timid Dogs and Puppies:**
Timid and frightened dogs require socialization they cannot receive in a shelter environment. Most timid dogs do best when fostered with a well-adjusted dog. Typically, we ask that you do not mix foster pets and household pets, however, timid dogs are an exception. The commitment time will range case by case. **You will meet with a trainer to discuss proper handling techniques and care prior to pick up. At the time of pick up, please bring all household dogs for a proper meet and greet.**
- **Recovering Dogs and Puppies:**
Dogs and puppies recovering from a procedure do not recover as quickly in the shelter as they would in a home. Medication or therapy may be required a few times a day. **All medical fosters will require an appointment to meet with medical staff to discuss medical conditions, medicines, and special requirements if any.**
- **Senior Dogs/Permanent Foster:**
Senior dogs can become sickly in a stressful shelter environment. As a permanent foster parent, you will provide an end-of-life home for the foster pet while the SPCA covers most, but not all medical expenses. **Please ask to read a permanent foster contract for a list of responsibilities both parties are accountable for.**

Supplies: SPCA Westchester is a non-for-profit organization with limited resources. Any donations of supplies are appreciated. The SPCA will supply all necessities if you cannot. The following is a list of supplies you will need to foster:

- Food and water dishes
 - Leash and collar
 - Kibble
 - Crate
 - Bedding
 - Absorbable potty pads (highly suggested, but not mandatory)
 - Chew toys (highly suggested, but not mandatory)
 - Baby gates (suggested for isolation, but not mandatory)
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Housing: Your house should be prepared prior to picking up your foster pet(s) to ensure safety. Keep puppies in an area that can be easily disinfected. Below are suggestions to puppy proof your home.

- Block off small areas and hiding spaces
 - Keep doors and windows closed
 - Wires should be out of reach
 - Keep lids on trash cans or place them out of reach
 - All small material that can cause choking should be out of reach
 - All cleaning supplies should be out of reach
 - Keep all plants out of reach (some plants are poisonous to animals)
 - Keep all medications and supplements out of reach
 - If you have a cat, keep litter boxes out of reach
 - Do not leave small children and household pets with foster pets unsupervised in order to prevent accidental injuries
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Medical: Foster parents must be available, to transport foster pet(s) for appointments at the SPCA at Cody's Clinic Monday-Friday between 9 a.m. and 3:30 pm. The clinic is closed on the weekends. Appointments will be scheduled as needed, according to the SPCA vet, and type of foster. If the foster pet is sick, frequent appointments may be necessary.

- The first appointment must be scheduled during or prior to foster pick up.
 - All foster animals should be kept separate from all household pets; animals can harbor contagious diseases without showing any symptoms prior to being placed in foster.
 - Introducing household pets to foster pets will be done at your own risk. The SPCA will not be medically or financially responsible for illnesses transferred from foster to owned pets.
 - All medications must be given as directed. Please do not self-medicate.
 - Please do not make any medical decisions based on outside advice. (e.g. internet, non SPCA vet, friends, etc.).
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Please note: All foster animals are the property of SPCA Westchester including any puppies or kittens that may be born while in a foster home. Foster animals including any puppies/kittens born while the mother is in foster care may not be offered for any reason to anyone. Potential adopters must go through the adoption process at the SPCA.

All foster parents are required to foster at least once a year to remain in the foster program.

All medical care must be carried out here at Cody's Clinic, located at SPCA Westchester. The SPCA will NOT be financially responsible for any outside veterinary services performed without prior permission. SPCA Westchester will not be responsible for injuries acquired at the foster's home not relating to pre-existing conditions.

****In case of medical emergencies, SPCA Westchester is available Monday through Sunday between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm at (914) 941-2896 ext: 111. After hours, please contact our Veterinary Technician or Veterinarian at (914) 261-6881.****