



# Foster Handbook



**One Love Animal Rescue, Inc. of Savannah, GA is a licensed non-profit 501(c)(3) rescue organization; all donations are tax-deductible and directly benefit the animals entrusted in our care.**

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**My Foster Co-Ordinator is:** .....

**Email:**..... **Phone:** .....

# You're the Bestest!

Thank you for being a Foster Home for [One Love Animal Rescue](#). Foster Homes like yours allow us to rescue more animals and we appreciate your generosity in opening your home to a rescued animal.

By fostering, you give an abandoned or neglected animal a safe place to heal. Fosters provide care, socialization, and basic training to help pets prepare for their forever homes. One Love rescues animals from local shelters, the streets of Savannah, and nationwide partners. Every dog is temperament tested, and our directors prioritize pets most at risk—often those in their final hours before euthanasia.

## Need to Know

**1** Before fostering, you'll need to complete the online Foster Home Agreement and a quick home inspection.

**2** Foster Homes provide safe, loving care and a temporary place to stay until their foster cat or dog finds a forever family.

**3** One Love covers vetting and supplies whenever possible. You're never alone in this—our team is here to help.

**4** Foster pets should attend adoption events regularly, at least twice a month. You'll also be asked to bring your foster to meet potential adopters with reasonable notice. Please remember: never invite adopters to your home.

**5** All medical needs must go through an approved veterinarian. If your foster needs any vet care—even over-the-counter meds—please contact your Foster Coordinator.

**6** Keep the Foster Coordinator updated on your foster pet's progress, personality, and any concerns. Sharing details helps us find the best match.

**7** Sometimes fostering doesn't work out, and that's okay. If you're struggling, reach out to the Foster Coordinator right away. We'll find another placement as quickly as possible—your patience means a lot as we work through it together.

**8** We do not foster-to-adopt. All potential adopters must complete the full application process.

**9** If someone close to you wants to adopt your foster, they'll go through the same process as all applicants (application, interview, and home visit).

**10** Please keep your resident pets up to date on vaccinations. For dogs, we recommend Bordetella to help prevent kennel cough, which is common among shelter pups.

**11** One Love cannot cover veterinary expenses for your own pets. Any illness or injury resulting from contact with a foster pet (such as scratches, bites, or kennel cough) is the responsibility of the Foster Home.

**12** If you're planning a trip, let us know as early as possible (at least two weeks' notice). Approval is required if you'd like to take your foster with you—even for a weekend getaway. If there's adoption interest while you're gone, we may arrange a local stay for your foster so they don't miss their chance at a forever home.

**13** Foster pets should not be left with anyone else without One Love's prior approval. If approved, we'll need a signed release of liability before the hand-off.

**14** No foster animal should be left alone outside and definitely not overnight. All pets should sleep indoors.

**15** When walking your Foster never be off-leash. Please use a harness and leash provided to you by the rescue or similar.

**16** Don't change the animal's name. Nicknames are fine, but the official name listed on the website must be used so the public and adoption team can clearly identify who an application or inquiry is about.

## Getting Ready

Fostering is a commitment that affects your whole household—family, pets, home, and yard. Keep these tips and questions in mind to ensure a positive experience:

**\* Talk it over first**

Discuss fostering with everyone in the household and get their input so the decision works for all.

**\* Think about the right fit**

What kind of pet makes sense for your family—small or large, young or older, high-energy or laid-back?

**\* Consider your current pets**

Would your active dog love a playful buddy, or would your senior dog prefer a calmer companion?

**\* Be realistic about your schedule**

How long are you gone during the day, and how much time do you have to devote to a foster?

# Introducing Your Foster to Your Home & Pets

**Bringing a new pet home is exciting—but it's also a big adjustment.**

**Here are some simple tips to make the transition smoother for everyone.**

**Everyone Needs Their Space**

Keep foster and resident dogs separate for the first couple of days. This eases stress, helps your foster adjust, and protects your own pets from shelter illnesses that may not appear right away. Each pet should have its own bed, crate, or safe spot. Never leave a foster dog unsupervised in the backyard—they may dig, escape, bark, or even be stolen. Use a crate or enclosed room instead.

**Dog-to-Dog Introductions**

Meet on neutral ground, with both dogs leashed. Allow a quick sniff or walk-by, then separate and try again later. Reward calm behavior and don't force interaction. Some correction or growling is normal, but constant conflict means more space is needed. Feed separately and never leave them alone together; crate or separate when you leave.

**Getting Along**

Dogs usually establish a "pack order." As long as corrections are met with passivity, this is normal. If they continually fight for dominance,

separate them. Always supervise until they've settled into a routine, and feed in different spaces to reduce food-related stress.

**Cat-to-Cat Introductions**

Start with closed-door sniffing and scent swapping. When meeting face-to-face, reassure your resident cat they're still "top cat" and give each cat separate sleeping and eating areas. Foster cats must stay indoors.

**Cat-to-Dog Introductions**

Give cats a sanctuary room with food, litter, and no dog access. Begin with sniffing under the door, then try leashed introductions. Watch body language—curiosity is fine, but lunging, staring, or fear means slow down. Never leave them unsupervised. Provide cats with safe spots to climb or hide, stop rough play or staring, and let cats correct dogs with hissing or swatting if needed.

**Tips for Success**

Let pets set the pace. Some will bond, others will simply coexist—both are normal.

## OneLoveAnimalRescue.com Website Links

**Check out these links for additional information about OneLove**

**Foster Parents Help**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/fosterparentshelp](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/fosterparentshelp)

**Dog Training Class Schedule**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/trainingclasses](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/trainingclasses)

**Become a Volunteer**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/volunteer](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/volunteer)

**Apply to Adopt**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/applytoadopt](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/applytoadopt)

**Learning Library**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/learninglibrary](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/learninglibrary)

**Lost & Found Pets**

**VISIT** [onloveanimalrescue.com/lostandfoundpets](https://onloveanimalrescue.com/lostandfoundpets)



# Foster Supplies

**We provide all supplies needed for your foster animal. This includes:**

✔ **Food & Water Bowls** Provide separate bowls for your foster pet and resident pets, and feed them in different areas. This helps everyone eat calmly without stress while adjusting to each other.

✔ **Food & Treats** One Love provides food and treats when donations allow, or we'll recommend the

best options for your foster pet's needs.

✔ **Bedding** Washable items like cotton blankets, old comforters, or large towels make great bedding for both dogs and cats. They're comfortable and easy to clean.

✔ **Dog Crate** A crate is highly recommended for foster dogs—it

creates a safe space and helps with training. If you don't have one, we can supply a crate and share helpful crate-training tips.

✔ **Toys** Kong toys are excellent for dogs, especially when stuffed with treats. Balls or soft toys are also great, depending on temperament. Cats can be entertained

with simple toys—like a ball of foil—for hours. One Love may provide toys when available through donations.

✔ **Collar & Leash** We'll provide a collar, leash, and One Love ID tag for dogs. Please keep on at all times. Cats should remain indoors, but we recommend a collar and tag for them as well.

✔ **Flea & Heartworm Prevention** All fosters must stay on flea and heartworm prevention. We'll work with you to choose the best option.

✔ **Litter Box** Every foster cat needs a litter box, litter, and cleaning supplies. A clean, consistent potty area is essential for their comfort.

## Basic Training for Fosters

**While with you, your foster dog benefits from basic training and love. A formal program isn't needed, but focusing on these skills helps make them more adoptable.**

\* **Socialization** Help your dog get used to new people, dogs, cats, and children. Shy dogs need slow, patient exposure, while outgoing dogs may need guidance to avoid overwhelming others.

\* **Food and Resource Manners** Food aggression toward people is not acceptable. If your dog growls over food:

- 1 Pretend to "eat" some of the food to assert leadership.
- 2 Hand-feed the dog so they learn food comes from you.
- 3 Remove and return bowls during meals, rewarding polite behavior.
- 4 The same principles apply to toys and chews. Always feed dogs separately if multiple pets are in the home. A crate can provide a safe space for food, treats, and chews.

### \* House & Crate Training

Crate training helps with potty training and house manners, preventing chewing, counter-surfing, or garbage diving. Take your dog outside regularly, and supervise closely indoors, especially for dogs new to house training.

\* **Basic Commands** Teaching "sit" is simple and very useful—for food, walks, and attention. Lure the dog with a treat and reward only when the rear touches the ground; add the verbal command after the action is learned.

\* **Jumping** Dogs often jump with excitement. Teach them to sit and ignore them until all paws are on the ground. Avoid pushing them down, as attention reinforces the behavior.

\* **Leash Walking** Many rescue dogs haven't learned leash manners. Work toward "easy" walking, where the dog isn't dragging you but doesn't need perfect heeling. Nervous dogs

may resist; patience and positive reinforcement are essential.

\* **Corrections** If verbal cues fail, a quick stream of water from a squirt bottle with a verbal command like "no" or "off" can redirect your dog's attention safely. Avoid aiming for the eyes; this method startles but does not harm.

## Training Classes

One Love offers foster dog training classes twice a week at two locations. All foster dogs over 12 weeks should attend at least two classes per month, since training helps prevent returns. Weekly emails will include RSVP details, and full instructions, supplies, times, and locations are posted at [oneloveanimalrescue.com/trainingclasses](http://oneloveanimalrescue.com/trainingclasses)

## Taking Care of Your Own Pets

Make sure that your own pets are protected. We expect that resident pets are all spayed/neutered, and have all their vaccinations including DHPP and recommend that your dogs are immunized for Bordetella (kennel cough) since it is a common ailment among shelter dogs. We also expect that your resident pets are being treated for fleas. The Foster Coordinator will keep track of your foster dog's/cat's immunization records and medical treatment. We ask that you ensure that your foster dog or foster cat is treated for fleas, takes heartworm preventative and is brushed and bathed regularly.

## Dogs & Kids

***Dogs and children can be wonderful companions, but proper supervision, boundaries, and education are essential to ensure safety and positive interactions.***

### 1 Supervise interactions

Children must understand that dogs are living beings, not toys. They should not tease, chase, or corner a dog, as this can cause fear or defensive behavior.

### 2 Teach respect for belongings

Children should understand dogs may chew toys or shoes. Correct only when caught, never punish, and keep toys in a designated area or crate.

### 3 Age-appropriate participation

Children can assist with small tasks like brushing or filling water bowls, but adults handle feeding, bathing, and cleaning. Initial enthusiasm may fade, so set realistic expectations.

**4 Handling and play** Children should never be left alone with foster dogs. Teach proper puppy handling (supporting the body, not limbs) and limit play. Young children should not walk foster dogs, as they may not handle unexpected encounters safely.

### 5 Mouthing and discipline

Children must learn that puppy mouthing is not biting. They should use gentle corrections (“no” or “off”) and never use hands to push the dog down. Squirt bottles should only be used by adults. Hitting or rough punishment is strictly unacceptable.

**6 Foster cats** The same rules apply—supervise interactions, teach proper handling, and assign age-appropriate care tasks. Never leave children unsupervised with a foster cat.

By teaching children respect, safe handling, and boundaries, your foster experience can be positive and rewarding for the whole family.

## The Adoption Procedure

***One Love adoption counselors carefully match pets with families to ensure a happy fit for both.***

All applicants must follow the One Love adoption process. Pets cannot be adopted to friends or family without One Love's approval, and every applicant must be fully screened. It's important to understand our procedures since you may get questions about them. The adoption process generally includes:

**1 Apply Online** The applicant fills out an Pre-Adoption Application at [oneloveanimalrescue.com/applytoadopt](http://oneloveanimalrescue.com/applytoadopt). An Adoption Counselor reviews the application and screens the applicant to see if they are a good fit; asking about where the pet will sleep, how long the pet will be

left alone, what the training plans are, how they will exercise, etc.

**2 Meet and Greet** The adopter and all household members—including resident dogs (and cats, if needed)—must meet the animal, and the adopter must provide vaccination records for their current pets. If someone you know wants to adopt your foster, they must follow the full application, interview, and home-visit process.

**3 In-Home Visit** Assuming everything is complete, a home visit is conducted to check the pet's future living arrangements. All household members must meet the pet.

**4 Sleepover** Some pets are eligible for a “sleepover” visit—an trial in your own home before finalizing the adoption. You'll need to provide up-to-date vaccination records for any current pets.

### 5 Complete Final Paperwork

The adopter fills out an Adoption Agreement and pays the requested donation. (See website for Adoption Agreement and adoption fees.)

### 6 Official Adoption Appointment

Everyone meets for the official hand-off and finalization of Adoption.

# Adoption Events

**Please commit to bringing your foster to at least two events each month—our primary way to get pets adopted!**

Our adoption events are every weekend at varying locations and times. Times and places are posted on our website, and you'll also receive a weekly email from someone on our Event Team. Please let the Team know if you can attend so they can promote your Fosters attendance. If you can't stay but can drop off your foster, we may be able to arrange a handler.

## Top things to remember:

**1 One handler per dog** Puppies or small dogs may share a pen. If you need a break, ask the Coordinator or another volunteer.

**2 Stay attentive** Keep dogs calm with a short, loose leash. The Coordinator will address inattentive handling.

**3 Keep stress low** Pet slowly and speak calmly—relaxed dogs show their personalities best.

**4 Discourage play** Excited dogs can overwhelm potential adopters.

**5 Stay aware** Watch for kids, other dogs, or signs of aggression. Never allow face-to-face child/dog contact.

**6 Controlled introductions** Meet other dogs one-on-one away from the group. Ask for help if needed.

**7 Correct bad behavior** Stop barking or jumping with voice, squirt bottle, or redirection.

**8 Protect kids & adults** Children and frail adults should not walk foster dogs. Kids may pet, but not handle, puppies.

**9 Use treats wisely** Reward good behavior and help shy dogs shine.

**10 Engage the public** Greet visitors and introduce your dog. Even non-adopters may foster, donate, or spread the word.

**11 Requesting a Handler** If you can't bring your foster to an Adoption Event, you may request a Volunteer Handler. If one is available, you'll coordinate drop-off and pick-up with them and supply anything your foster needs—treats, harness/leash, "Adopt Me" bandana, etc.

### Tips for Success

- \* Confirm with your Foster Coordinator that your pet is healthy, vaccinated, and ready before attending.

- \* Shy pets may need a week or two to settle before their first event.

- \* Never promise an adopter they'll "get" the pet—share any feedback with the Adoption Counselor.

- \* Cats at events: Bring them in a wire crate or pen with a water bowl. Only adults should remove cats from crates; kids may pet but not handle.

## Before an Event

- ✓ Bathe, brush, and check your pet for fleas/ticks.
- ✓ Exercise dogs beforehand to help them stay calm.
- ✓ Use your One Love leash (no retractable, nylon, or chain leashes). Bring a crate if possible.
- ✓ Remember: adoption events can be stressful — even happy pets will be tired afterwards.
- ✓ Add an "Adopt Me" Bandana

**IMPORTANT!** Please make every effort to chat with people who stop by even if they are not looking to adopt. Every person is important to us as a potential adopter, volunteer, donor, or for referrals for other adopters.

## MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

For Medical Emergencies, please contact your Dog Co-ordinator immediately!