

# PUPPY FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES



## FEEDING

- We recommend feeding your foster puppy four times a day.
- We feed our puppies dry food with several tablespoons of wet food mixed together, unless otherwise instructed.
- While in our care, puppies are fed appropriate food for their age, size and health.
- Pets may be on a special diet, which we will provide for fosters.

## CLEANING

- If your foster puppy becomes dirty, you are welcome to bathe him or her.
- Wash him or her with warm water and puppy formula shampoo.
- Make sure to dry the puppy completely, as puppies become cold quite easily. Afterwards, give them access to a heating pad or snuggle safe to warm them up.
- Some dogs need to trust their handlers before jumping in the tub, so if your foster puppy freezes, gives you a “whale eye,” growls at any time or displays other behavior that makes you uncomfortable, please stop what you are doing and give the puppy a break from the situation.
- You may spot clean your foster puppy with a warm washcloth or contact the foster care coordinator if the puppy doesn’t want a bath but requires more thorough washing.
- **Do not wash puppies in flea shampoo. If you observe fleas on your puppy, please contact the foster care coordinator.**

## PLAY AND PET INTRODUCTIONS

- Foster puppies are required to be kept separate from your own animals.
- Most puppies in foster care have not received a full series of vaccination boosters due to their young ages.
- Puppies should have access to toys, including teething toys, which we will provide.
- Please monitor playtime with stuffies to ensure they do not ingest the stuffing.
- If your foster puppy has swallowed a toy, please contact the foster team immediately.
- Avoid using your hands to play with your foster pet—always use toys to promote positive play habits.

## MEDICAL CARE

- Your foster pet may require medication or a specific treatment plan while in your care. It is essential that all medications are administered as directed and treatment instructions are followed.
- If you encounter any difficulty giving medication to your foster pet, please notify the foster team as soon as possible so we can provide guidance or alternative solutions.
- If your foster pet shows signs of illness while in your care, **do not** take them to your personal veterinarian. All medical care must be coordinated through the Richmond SPCA.
- During your foster pet’s pick-up appointment, the foster team will review how to distinguish between general sickness and emergencies, as well as the appropriate steps to take in each situation.

## **HOUSING**

- Foster puppies should be limited to one room in your home but may have supervised time to free roam (without access to resident pets).
- When unsupervised or overnight or if your own dogs are in the same space and the puppy cannot interact with them, then please keep your foster puppy in a size-appropriate crate (which we are happy to provide).
- A kitchen, bathroom, spare room, laundry room, or office can be used to house puppies.
- Keep your foster pet in a room that can be easily cleaned, sanitized and/or disinfected after the foster period is over, in case of any illness or parasites.
- Clean and comfortable bedding should be kept where the puppy is sleeping.
- Inappropriate housing includes: outside kennel runs, outdoor dog house, shed, non-climate controlled garage, a screened-in porch, or a non-child proofed room.

## **SIGNS OF ILLNESS**

- Loss of appetite
- Lack of energy
- Blood in stool
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sneezing
- Nasal or eye discharge
- Limping or favoring a limb
- Pale gums
- Fever

This handout provides recommended care guidelines for foster puppies. These guidelines are subject to change based upon specific information regarding the individual animal you are fostering. If you have any questions concerning your foster pet, contact the foster care team at 804-521-1313 or [fostercare@richmondspca.org](mailto:fostercare@richmondspca.org). Thank you for your love of animals and for helping us save lives! You're a hero.