



Centre County PAWS Canine Fundamentals

Congratulations on deciding to add a new member to your family! Owning a pet can be one of the most gratifying experiences life has to offer. In order to allow your new canine friend to acclimate to his/her new environment as efficiently and as comfortably as possible, it is important that you complete the appropriate steps before you begin this process.

Getting Ready

Whether this is a solo endeavor or the decision of an entire family, organizing your home and your schedule is key. First, decide on the basics:

- When can you take your companion to the vet for his/her vaccinations and overall check-up? Also, refer to your PAWS dog health record regarding what vaccinations or treatments (i.e. deworming, heartworm preventatives, etc.) we've given your dog in order to keep their health record as accurate as possible.
- Create a list of what to buy for your new dog (i.e. a crate your dog can grow into, water and food dishes, toys, collar and leash, bedding, etc.) and decide on where to put these items.
- Give your new dog his/her own space to feel more at home.
- Create a schedule! Decide whether it is better for you to allocate the duties of pet ownership across the family and if certain duties should be switched periodically (i.e. taking your dog for a walk, being in charge of feeding, training, etc.). Setting tone is very important.
- Specifically regarding feeding a puppy, remember you are dealing with a growing puppy, so make sure to feed him/her three to four times a day (the amount recommended on the brand of puppy food you choose). When they reach adulthood feed him/her only twice a day (morning and evening).
- See the "Preparing For Your New Dog" section below for a list of suggested preparations to get ready for your new dog's homecoming.

Safety

Once the basics are covered, it's time to make sure your home is safe for its new arrival (that your home is "puppy-proofed"). Make sure that anything that is hazardous to the health of your new dog is either secured away (i.e. cleaning products placed out of reach) or removed from the home completely (i.e. plants that your dog could consume).

More recommendations:

- If a cabinet, drawer, etc. is reachable by your dog then look into it and determine whether there are any items that are potentially dangerous if your dog gets ahold of them, and then move these items so your dog cannot gain access to them.
- Your dog could be teething or could enjoy chewing, so it may be of use to look into chew-proof tubing for your electrical cords.

- If your dog should never go into a certain room of the house (i.e. a bathroom) then simply close that room off before you leave for the day. If there is a section of the house you do not want your dog to explore then look into pet gates.

Dangers! Don't let your dog have:

Anything harder than your dog's teeth, including cow bones, some nylon bones, and real bones. These can break a puppy's or elderly dog's teeth. Talk to your vet about appropriate toys.

House plants
Alcohol
Chocolate
Coffee
Grapes and raisins
Moldy or spoiled food
Onions, garlic, or chives
Poultry bones
Salty foods or salt
Tomato leaves or stems
Unripe fruit
Yeast dough
Nuts

Medicines—never give your dog medicine unless it's recommended by a vet.

Poisons—keep all poisons, like rat poison, away from your pet. If you think your pet has been poisoned, call your vet immediately.

Supplies

- Premium quality dog food and treats for the right breed and size. Dogs are generally fed Fromm's Gold at PAWS and you'll be given a supply to help you transition or last until you can purchase more.
- Food and water bowls—ceramic and metal bowls clean up better than plastic and can help prevent allergies and chin acne.
- Safe toys appropriate to your dog's size—make sure there are no breakable parts
 - Consider purchasing puzzle toys or treat dispensing toys to provide your dog when home alone or having some rest time
- Dog grooming supplies - brush, comb, nail clippers, dog shampoo, toothbrush, and dog toothpaste
- Pooper scooper and biodegradable poop bags
- Collar with license and ID tag. PAWS prefers martingale style collars
- Leash - PAWS strongly recommends fixed length rather than flexi (extending) style leashes
- Carrier or crate
- Dog bed

What to feed your puppy or dog

- Adult dogs should eat premium-quality dry food. PAWS feeds Fromm Gold unless a dog is on a special diet. If necessary to encourage eating, you can mix dry food with water, low-salt broth, fat-free yogurt, or canned food. It is not uncommon for dogs in a new environment to refuse food for several meals.
- Dogs can eat some fruits and vegetables. See below for a list of foods that shouldn't be given to dogs.
- Puppies need a high-quality puppy food. PAWS feeds Fromm Puppy Gold.
- Avoid "people food" for all dogs and puppies. The high fat content is hard for them to process and can cause digestive upset or pancreatitis.
- Dogs and puppies need clean, fresh water available at all times.
- **Digestive upset:** The stress of a new environment can sometimes cause a dog to show signs of digestive upset. Be prepared to feed your dog an easily digested diet like white rice, boiled hamburger (fat rinsed off), plain chicken, fat-free plain yogurt, fat-free cottage cheese, or baby food that is only meat and vegetables (no onion or garlic).

When to feed

- Puppies 8-12 weeks old: 3 meals a day
- Puppies 3-12 months old: 2 meals a day
- Dogs 1 year or older: 2 meals a day
- Large dogs: may need 3 meals a day
- Refer to your food instructions for the correct amount and speak with your vet about what is a healthy weight to maintain for your dog.

Finding the Right Vet

- You agree to bring your new dog to your vet to establish a relationship within the first month of adoption. We recommend dogs who are not in need of vaccination boosters not be taken to the vet before a 1-2 week decompression period in your home. Trips to the vet are very stressful and go better when the dog is comfortable with the person bringing them.
- A complete list of local vets is available at PAWS.
- Your dog should see a vet at least once a year and when you think it might be sick. There are times when your dog may look and act like he's very sick, and not be. The opposite may also be true. Like humans, some dogs endure not feeling well more stoically than others.

How to tell if your dog is sick

You know your dog best. If your dog seems to be acting strange, call your vet right away! Note that behavioral problems are often a result of an underlying medical issue. PAWS uses the following guidelines for their own dogs, considering the following observations signs of an emergency:

- Vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than 48 hours
- Straining to urinate - **inability to urinate at all is a serious emergency**
- Drinking or urinating excessively

- Noticeable weight loss or gain over a month's time
- Lethargy, dull, glassy eyes, signs of fever
- Respiratory difficulties (shortness of breath, pale gums, persistent coughing)
- Refusal to eat for more than 48 hours

Get a license and ID

- Follow your municipality's licensing laws
- Attach the license to your dog's collar
- Keep a collar and ID on your dog at all times
- Keep your microchip information up-to-date any time you move or update a phone number.

Coming Home

Now that you have chosen your new family member it's not only time to implement what you have learned, but also to make sure you allow this transition for your dog to be as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. Your dog will need time to adjust - to you, and to his/her new surroundings. The length of the adjustment period varies from dog to dog, from nearly instantaneous with some puppies to a few days or even a few weeks with an adult. It is vitally important for you to allow your new dog time to get comfortable with his new surroundings. It is tempting to want to show off your new family member by having friends over, taking him to the park or on an exciting hike, or head to the pet store or groomer. However, that can be far too overwhelming for a dog who is already going through a lot of changes. So, consider at least the first week in your home a decompression period when you will set your routine.

Digestive upset: The stress of a new environment can sometimes cause a dog to show signs of digestive upset. Be sure your foster is eating well, drinking, and urinating/defecating regularly. This is not unusual, so be prepared to feed your foster dog an easily digested diet like white rice, boiled hamburger (fat rinsed off), plain chicken, fat-free plain yogurt, fat-free cottage cheese, or baby food that is only meat and vegetables (no onion or garlic). We also have ready-made intestinal diets available for pickup at PAWS.

First days at home:

- When you first bring your dog home, take him for a good length walk (20-40 minutes depending on their age) to burn some energy. Try to avoid particularly busy or heavy traffic areas. You want this to be a nice, calm walk as much as possible.
- Keep your dog leashed in the home. This will not only help with housebreaking, but will help establish that things in the home are calm and he does not need to be overwhelmed.
- Crate your dog or putting your dog in his safe room with some water and a Kong and let him settle in. You do not want to spend every moment with your dog the first days he is home, because this is not what reality will be as soon as you go to school or work. Set crate training and/or getting used to a safe room as a high priority.
- Take your dog for another potty break and short walk.

- When back inside, repeat this process again and again while the dog settles in.
- Only do activities that are not overstimulating or potentially overwhelming for the dog. This means absolutely no rough play, no wrestling, no face to face kissing, large dogs should not be allowed to climb all over you and your lap, no sleeping in your bed, etc. Calm walks, calm petting, crate time with a Kong, meal times,
- Continue to avoid highly stimulating activities and focus on teaching your dog he is in a safe environment and you are a source of comfort and leadership.
- Give your dog plenty of time outs in his crate or safe room and **set a routine**. Dogs thrive in environments where they know what's coming next.

Multiple-Dog Homes

PAWS will do a Meet and Greet between your owned dogs and your adoptive dog before sending you home. However, you do need to be aware of how they interact together once home. When bringing a new dog into a home with other dogs, here are some tips:

- Always leave leashes on
- Dogs may guard resources from other dogs, including spaces, people, toys, or food. Do not leave them alone with toys or food until you know how they handle sharing.
- Give the dogs timeouts from each other by having areas set aside to separate them when they need breaks from each other
- Keep the excitement level in the home low while getting to know each other
- Set a consistent schedule to keep the dogs happy
- Be prepared to break up undesirable interactions including dog fights. It is helpful to have tools at the ready that can stop interactions without having to touch the dogs, such as: citronella dog fight spray, barriers to stick between dogs, a can filled with pennies to shake when enforcing a verbal cue, etc. (Dog fight spray is also an excellent safety tool to carry while walking in case an unleashed dog approaches your dog.)
- When unattended, don't leave the dogs together. Separate them in different rooms or crates
- As the dogs' interactions become more predictable, you can begin to use your discretion regarding leaving out toys, leaving them alone together, feeding them in the same areas, etc. Just do not expect too much, too soon. Dogs typically take time to get used to one another.

Introducing to Cats/Other Pets

Go slowly here too, with this introduction coming after other dogs have been introduced, or if you have no other dogs, let the cat and dog each stay in their own "safe rooms" with no contact with each other for a few days. The first time they meet, the dog should be crated or on a leash. Let the cat approach the dog on his own terms. All introductions should be supervised and during quiet times of the day.

If the initial meeting goes well, repeat the encounter in the same way several times before letting the animals roam freely in the house or leaving them together unsupervised. If your new cat is a small kitten, take special precautions whenever the cat and dog are together. A

large dog may not intend to harm a kitten, he simply may not know his own strength when it comes to a fragile kitten.

Be sensitive to the fact that some dog breeds are naturally not good at living with cats. You will need to evaluate your pet's personality and determine if he is an exception to the general rule for his breed. Take extra time and care when introducing the two animals -- and be aware that your dog may behave better when you are present, so allow ample time for supervised interactions before leaving them alone together.

Behavior and Training

PAWS has told you all the information we know about the dog you have adopted. However, there are always unknowns. If problems pop up, nip them in the bud through consultation with a veterinarian, dog behaviorist, or dog trainer. A trained dog is a happy dog and a happy dog makes for a happy family. A complete list of local trainers is available through PAWS and is included in your adoption folder. Note "alpha dog" or dominance training often leads to unintended behavioral issues and is therefore not a method of behavioral intervention recommended by PAWS and its use is not advised.

Remember, the first weeks with a dog in your home set the precedent for your life together. Get on a routine. This will make your dog feel more comfortable in general and will help prevent housebreaking accidents. **Be patient. Some things take time. Your dog is worth it.**

Housebreaking

Consistency is key! Get your foster on a schedule from the moment they arrive and stick with it. Puppies need more trips outside than adults, but adults who are not housebroken can typically be housebroken very easily using the same methods we do with puppies.

- Take outside often. Bring your dog outside immediately after waking up for the day or from a nap and shortly after meals.
- Reward your dog when they pee or poop outside. This doesn't have to be a treat. It can be praise ("Good dog! Good Pee!") or more play/walk time outside. Sometimes dog owners report they can walk and walk and walk their dog with no success and they pee or poop as soon as they get inside. Pay attention to how quickly you bring your dog indoors after they pee or poop; chances are, they just want a little more time outside and associate peeing or pooping with immediately returning to the house.
- Attach your dog to you by leash or keep in your sight. Dogs tend to sneak off to do their business in the house. If you keep him with you all the time until housebroken, you can watch for signs he needs to go out (circling, sniffing, pacing).
- You can use a "Belly Band" or Ace bandage for dogs who are persistent markers until you've trained your foster dog.

Crate Training

It is not only important for your dog to be socialized, but also for your dog to have time away from you and the family. This is to prepare your dog for the time when you will not be there to play, go for walks, etc. To make your dog more comfortable with alone time, practice the tip below for a few weeks.

Tip: Place treats in your dog's crate with them, and close the door. Practice again later by giving them treats in the crate, closing the door, and walking away. Gradually add on steps like opening the front door, walking outside, etc. until you have left the house altogether to comfortably shift your dog into being alone. If your dog isn't ready to go to the next step then go back to what they successfully accomplished and praise him/her with treats and love. Training should be fun; if you are frustrated then your dog will likely be frustrated as well.

Separation Anxiety

It is not uncommon for our rescued dogs to take time to be comfortable alone in a new home and/or become highly attached to their adoptive parent in short order. We encourage you to work on crate training or safe space training immediately so your dog can be safe and relaxed when alone in the home.

Easy things you can do to help relieve anxiety when alone:

- Practice leaving your dog alone. While it might be appealing to spend every moment with your new dog, the reality is that eventually the dog will likely need to be alone some of the time. Start immediately but start slow and build the time up.
- Provide Peanut Butter Kongs or other high value treats or puzzle toys that will keep your dog occupied and interested while you're gone.
- Leaving gentle music playing.
- Experiment with crates and crate placement. Your foster may prefer a metal crate versus a plastic one. Perhaps your foster prefers to be in a dark cave-like crate (put a blanket over his crate) rather than right next to a window.
- Thunder Shirts are a compression calming coat that some dogs respond well to. These are available in various sizes.
- Desensitize your dog to you leaving. If the sound of car keys sets your dog into a frenzy because they think you're leaving, make sure they hear the keys at positive times too, like when they're going for a walk or getting a snack.
- Use pheromone diffusers in your dog's safe space or near his crate.

There are many resources available online to help when the simple intervention methods suggested here don't seem to be enough. Go to the PAWS website, "Get Help from PAWS," and find "Dog Behavioral Issues." You can also request a comprehensive document on anxiety (prepared by Kris' Pet Priorities, LLC) available at PAWS.

Exercise

Behavioral problems are sometimes a result of lack of exercise, especially nipping behavior in herding dogs and destructive behavior in any dog but especially puppies when left alone. Different dogs need different amounts of exercise. Some dogs need a lot. Some dogs get hurt if they exercise too much. Ask your veterinarian what is best for your pet, and talk with your PAWS Adoption Counselor about the dog's current exercise habits. When walking your pet, be careful of ice or snow, de-icer salt, or hot pavement. Breeds with flat faces should exercise with caution due to their tendency to overheat or have trouble breathing (i.e. pugs, bulldogs, etc.)

Leash training

We encourage you to work on leash training with your dog. The ability to walk and exercise can help tremendously with tiring your your dog and solidifying your bond with one another. [Gentle Leaders](#), [Easy Walk Harnesses](#), traditional harnesses, and Martingales (and training on how to use them) are excellent tools to assist in walking. We strongly recommend you keep your adopted dog on fixed-length leash at all times when in an unfenced area.

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering

Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brow Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



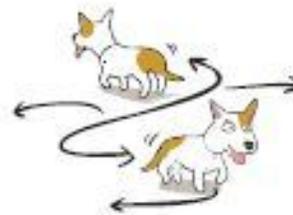
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



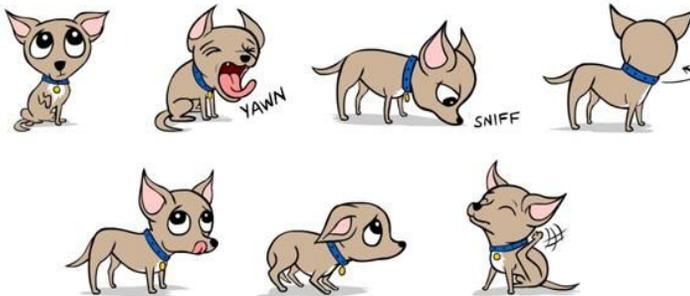
Pacing

TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and offer signs of appeasement and peace: See the Doggy Dos and Don'ts poster



If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clearer that they are uncomfortable: raised hackles are a sign of fear:



TAIL POSITIONS

tucked



in line with spine



high and rigid

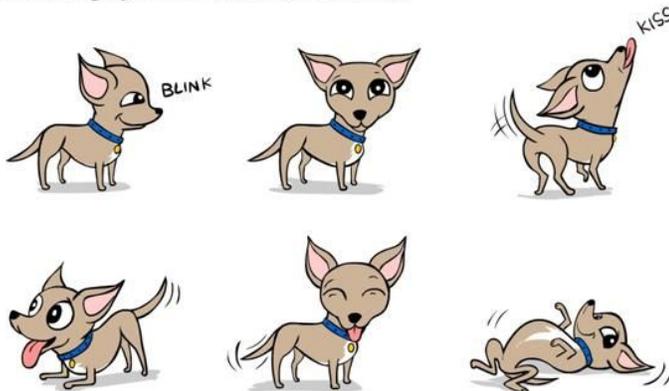


low and wagging slowly



CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.



TAIL POSITIONS

relaxed



high and wagging quickly



casually at 45 degrees



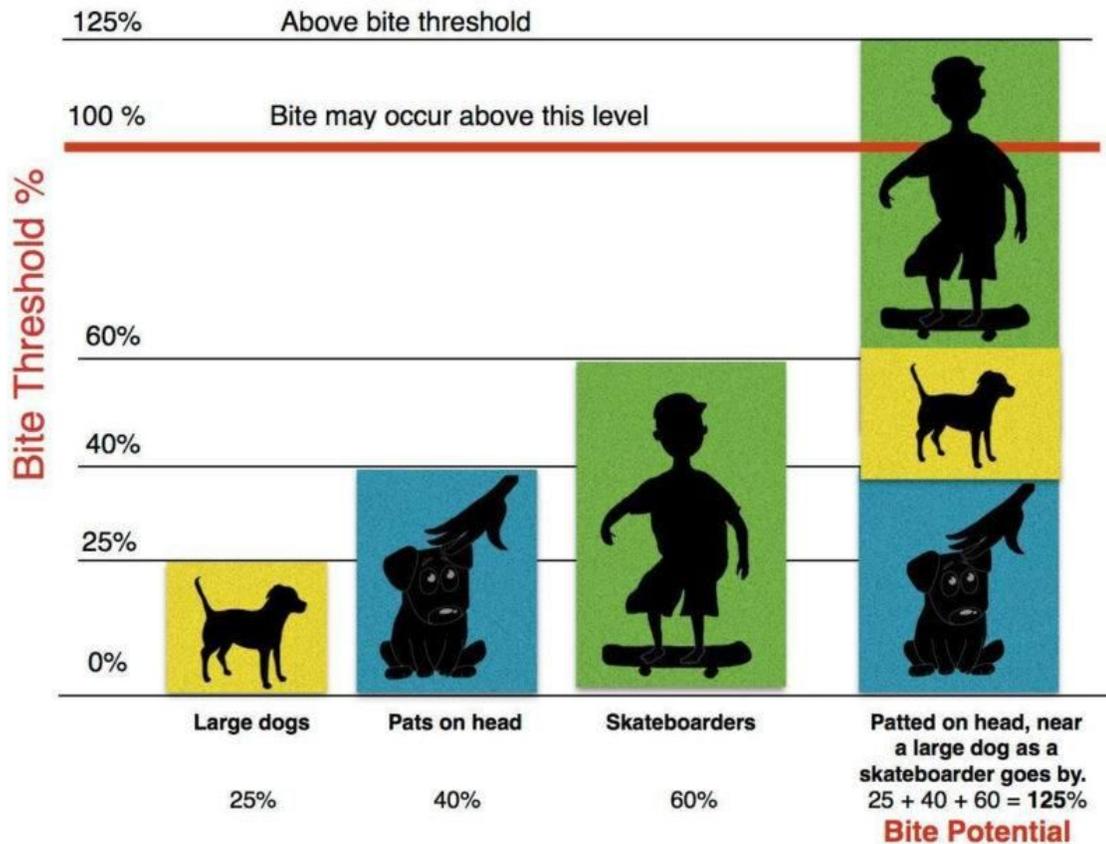
Brought to you by **JezRose** canine behaviour specialist

For further resources and information on dog training and behaviour, see www.JezRose.co.uk

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Trigger Stacking

Multiple stressors occurring at the same time.
This can cause **any** dog to bite (all dogs have a bite threshold).



Triggers (stressors) - things that a dog fears or dislikes.

Eg. Dog is uncomfortable around large dogs, afraid of skateboards and hates to be patted on the head.
One stressor at a time and he can hold it together. When all 3 happen at the same time it is too much.

www.YaletownDogTraining.com