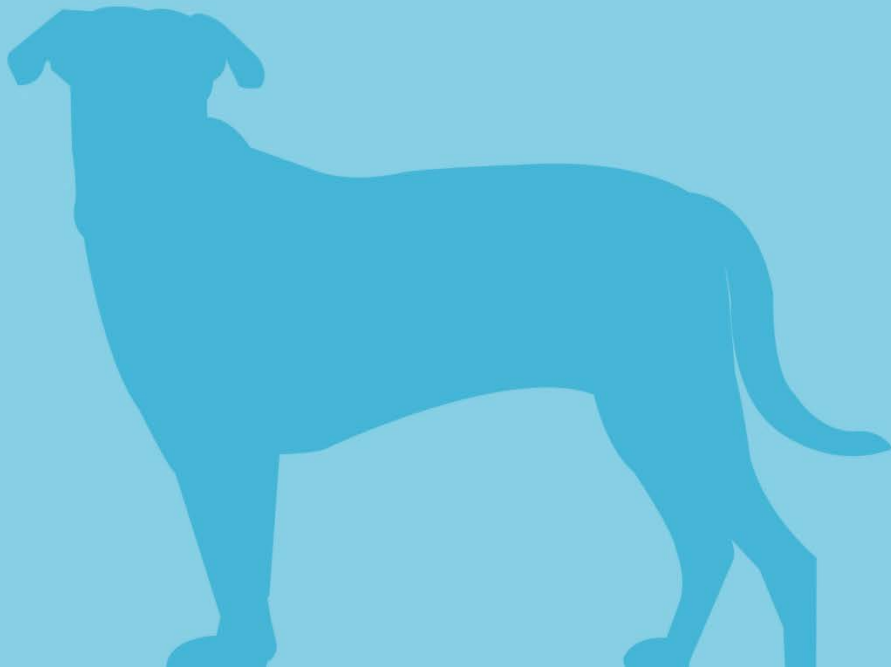


SIoux FALLS AREA HUMANE SOCIETY

DOG AND PUPPY FOSTER MANUAL





Taking care of a foster dog requires a commitment from you to make sure the dog is happy and healthy.
Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home
to these dogs who desperately need your help.

Welcome to Foster Care!

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Tips for Being a Successful Foster

1. Give your foster animals lots of attention and affection.

The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. Your foster may have had a difficult life before coming to us. Your love and attention will help to heal physical and emotional wounds.

2. Learn as much as you can about pet care.

Learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.

3. Make your home pet-friendly.

Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure that you “pet-proof” your home. See the examples in the following pages.

4. Keep foster animals away from your own pets.

Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution.

5. Recognize your limits.

Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy, both emotional and physical. Don't over-extend yourself by fostering animals too frequently or you risk burning yourself out.

6. Return the animal to the shelter on time.

The shelter depends on you to make this program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time.

7. Understand that some foster animals will not survive.

Many animals that arrive at the shelter come from unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts, the animal you foster may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated. Do the best you can to help the animal, but know that you cannot save them all. Especially with newborn puppies, sometimes mother nature has a different plan than we do, no matter how hard we try.

8. Enjoy being a foster parent!

Although fostering takes a great deal of time and commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home environment and helping that animal become more suitable for adoption into a responsible, lifelong home.

Supplies Needed

The Sioux Falls Area Humane Society will provide you with everything you need. Depending on what size of dog you foster, we will provide you with:

- Blankets and towels
- Food
- Dishes
- Collar and Leash
- Treats
- Toys
- Kennel or Crate

You do not have to wash any soiled blankets or towels if you do not wish to. Please place any soiled blankets or towels in a garbage bag and bring back to the shelter for us to wash. When you bring these back, please either place in a laundry bin outside the laundry room or give to the front staff and tell them it is soiled foster blankets or towels. We will then provide you with new towels or blankets. You may do this as often as needed.

Prepping for Your Foster Dog

When you take your foster dog home, he or she may be frightened or unsure about what's happening, so it's important not to overwhelm him or her. Prepare a special area for the foster dog to help ease the adjustment into a new home environment. Sometimes it is better to confine the foster dog to a small room or area at first, to let them adjust before giving the dog free rein in your home. This area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and should allow the dog access to his food and water dishes and toys.

We request that all foster dogs be housed indoors only. A garage, backyard or outdoor run is not a suitable accommodation for a foster dog.

During the first couple of weeks, minimize the people introductions to your foster dog, so that he or she is only meeting immediate family. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster dog a space of their own where he or she can stay while getting used to all the new sounds and smells. Don't leave your foster dog unattended in your home with your personal pets.

Dog-Proofing Your Home

Foster dogs come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. So, before bringing home a new foster dog, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep your foster dog. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on, and latch securely any cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the foster dog cannot access.

Never underestimate your foster dog's abilities. Here are some additional tips for dog-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some dogs like to play with them and may knock them over.
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster dog.
- Remove medications, lotions or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down.

Children Introductions

Since we don't always know a foster dog's history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster dog. Key things to remind your children:

- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.
- Do not tease the foster dog.
- Don't chase the foster dog around the house or run quickly around the foster dog; it may scare him.
- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to the kids.
- Do not allow young children to walk the foster dog because they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to handle encounters with other dogs or cats who cross their path.

Daily Care

Feeding

All foster dogs should be fed a diet of dry dog food, unless otherwise specified by the foster coordinator. We use Hills Science Diet and ask that you only use the food provided. Feed your foster dog once or twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster dog. Make sure the dog always has access to fresh, clean water.

Constantly switching food, adding wet food, toppings or treats will cause upset digestive tracks and loose stool.

You can give your foster dog treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies, of course); giving treats helps you and your foster dog to bond with each other. We suggest limiting treats so not to upset your foster dog's stomach.

Grooming

A clean and well-groomed dog has a better chance of getting adopted. You may brush your foster. Contact the foster coordinator if you feel that your foster dog needs to see our volunteer groomer at the shelter. We ask that you do not trim your foster's nails. Please let the foster coordinator know if this needs to be done and we can have it done at the shelter. Cutting nails too short by doing it yourself, can cause pain and bleeding if you trim the nails too short.

Mental Stimulation and Exercise

Depending on your foster dog's age and energy level, he or she should get at least two 30-minute play sessions or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys (balls, durable toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster dog prefers. Remember to discourage the dog from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters.

Safety Requirements

Foster dogs must live indoors, not outside. Please do not leave your foster dog outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard. We ask that you supervise your foster dog when outside at all times to ensure that he or she doesn't escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in.

When walking with your foster dog, please keep on leash at all times. This means that your foster dog is not allowed to go to off-leash dog parks or other off-leash dog areas. We do not know how your foster dog will act in these situations, or how other dogs will react, and we need to ensure that all animals are safe at all times. In addition, we don't know if the other dogs they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster dog does not meet any unknown dogs. Having recently come from a shelter setting, foster dogs can be vulnerable health-wise.

Also, your foster dog cannot ride in the bed of an open pickup truck. When you're transporting foster dogs, please keep them inside the vehicle. 7

Potty Training

- **Establish a Routine.**

Housetraining a puppy/dog requires time and commitment from you. The more consistent you are, the quicker the dog will learn acceptable behavior. Dogs do best on a regular schedule. If possible, put your foster on a regular feeding schedule. Feeding your dog at consistent time each day will make it more likely that it will need to relieve itself at consistent time periods as well. This makes housetraining much easier.

- **Reward Good Behavior.**

Take your foster outside frequently at first; at least every two hours if possible. Your dog should be taken outside 15-20 minutes after he/she eats, naps, or after play. Establish one phrase and use it EVERY time, such as "Got to go potty?" or "Go outside?", consistency is your best asset. Go out with your dog, but don't give any attention except to repeat your bathroom phrase. When he/she urinates or defecates, praise your foster enthusiastically or give a reward. The importance of rewarding good behavior rather than punishing unacceptable behavior cannot be over-emphasized.

- **Supervise Your Foster.**

A puppy or dog must be supervised constantly, especially in a new environment. Puppies or dogs who are allowed to wander off into rooms by themselves or who are left alone free in the house will most likely get into trouble. Encourage your foster to stay in the same room with you or another family member. When your foster must be left alone for a relatively long period of time, he/she should be confined in a small area or crate. With young puppies especially, they cannot always control their bladder and bowels for long periods of time. Try not to leave your foster confined for an entire work day with no place to go potty. A dog or puppy can be crated at night, preferably in the same room as a family member, if you are willing to get up and go outside with him/her when necessary.

- **Never Punish For Accidents**

Virtually every puppy will have a few accidents in the house; expect this. This is part of being a foster and having a puppy or new dog in the household as they adjust to your schedule or learn potty training for the first time. If – and only if – you catch your dog or puppy in the act of soiling, do something that startles him/her and immediately take your foster outside to finish. Follow up with praise if they finish outside.

- DO NOT rub the dog's nose in the mess and NEVER hit your foster. This will teach your foster to be afraid of you and afraid to go potty in your presence, and you do want him/her to go to the bathroom in the yard when you are there.
- If you find a soiled area, but do not catch your puppy soiling, do nothing but clean it up. Animals do not understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds. Punishment should punish the behavior, not the animal.

Health and Medical Protocols

When you pick up your foster, you will receive a sheet that specifies the dates that vaccines are due and any known medical conditions to treat. You are responsible for making sure you are bringing your foster back at the appropriate times for these treatments or vaccines.

If you are fostering a dog or animal who is on medications, please make sure that he/she gets all the prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If your foster has not responded to prescribed medications after five days, or in the time instructed by the veterinarian, please contact the foster coordinator.

Veterinary Care

SFAHS provides all medical care for our foster animals. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster's well-being, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster animals. If you take your foster animal to a veterinary clinic without approval, you may be held responsible to pay for those visits in full.

Signs of Illness and What To Do Next

It is important that you keep a close eye on your foster dog and puppies and monitor them for any signs of health problems. Things to watch out for include, but not limited to:

- Sneezing and or coughing
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Gagging/Wheezing
- Tiring Easily
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Straining to Urinate or Defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Loss or Decrease of Appetite
- Change in Attitude or Behavior
- Lethargic or Depressed
- Breathing heavily
- Frequent ear scratching
- Swollen, irritated ears
- Hair loss

Common Illnesses/Medical Conditions

Kennel Cough

This is a highly contagious respiratory infection in dogs. It is like when a human catches a cold. It spreads easily from dog to dog. Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, watery nasal discharge, lethargy, loss of appetite and vomiting.

Diarrhea

Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool to the shelter so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run.

Worms

If you suspect or see that your foster(s) has worms in their feces, contact the shelter to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti. All dogs are dewormed with Pyrantel upon entering the shelter, however, Pyrantel does not treat tapeworms.

Ringworm

Please contact the foster coordinator if you notice any hair loss on your foster. It can be normal for dogs to have thinner fur around lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair, following by scabbing may be early signs of Ringworm. Ringworm is contagious to people and pets and is easily transmitted.

Criteria for Emergencies

What constitutes a medical emergency for your foster? A good rule of thumb is any situation in which you would call 911 for a person. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Symptoms of parvovirus: bloody diarrhea, vomiting, weakness
- Signs of extreme dehydrations: dry mucous membranes, white gums, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours.

If your foster is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help.

If you feel that your foster pet(s) has a medical issue, please contact the shelter to talk to a member of medical staff. If it is during shelter hours, you can call 605-338-4441.

If it is an after-hours emergency, you can call our On-Call phone at 605-254-4058 and they will be able to assist you.

Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns you may have.

Pregnant Mom and Puppy Care

Prep

- You should disinfect the foster puppy area before new puppies are introduced. The best way to disinfect the area is to use a mild bleach solution (1-part bleach to 32 parts water) on all surfaces, bowls, toys, etc.
- We recommend also keeping puppies in a room with hardwood floors or tile, instead of carpet as it will be easier to clean or disinfect if needed.
- You will need to keep the room where the puppies will be warm. Their bodies cannot regulate temperature as well as yours may be able to, so keep it between 75 – 85 degrees is optimal.

Extra Supplies

- **Whelping Pool** - You will be provided with a swimming pool, play pen or large kennel to use a whelping pool. This will be where the puppies will stay while they are with their mother. It is important to have a structure big enough for the dog to move around with walls that will keep the puppies in.
- **Newspaper** – Keep several layers in the bottom of the box, and they will come in handy when puppies start to roam. Newspaper will need to be changed daily, if not several times a day. Some fosters prefer to use sheets or fleece blankets which can be quickly laundered and re-used.

Caring for a Pregnant Foster

Feeding recommendations for the pregnant and nursing dog:

- Last 3-4 weeks of gestation – the nutritional needs increase towards the end of pregnancy, and will continue to increase when the puppies are nursing. Feed 10-20% more than regular maintenance diet if using regular adult dog food, or switch gradually to dry puppy food and feed the same amount as usual, until the puppies are born.
- During the nursing period the nutritional needs are markedly increased. Nursing moms may need 2-4 times the normal maintenance diet to maintain milk production and avoid weight loss. The easiest way to ensure these needs are met is by free feeding dry puppy food, until the puppies are weaned.

Delivery

Most dogs give birth without assistance or outside help, it is quite possible that you will miss the birth entirely. It is still important that you know what to expect, and when you should call for assistance.

- Just before delivery, the mother will often show signs such as restlessness and nesting. If you are suspecting that the birth of the puppies is impending, gently guide the mother to the designated nursing area. If she refuses to stay there, or if she has had her puppies outside of the pre-assigned area, wait till she is completely done with the delivery, and then move them all into the designated area.
- Some dogs will look to you for company and comfort during birth, and will try to follow you if you leave. If this is the case, stay with her and talk to her in a calm, soothing manner. The need for your presence will often subside with the birth of the first couple of puppies, as she will be very busy and not so dependent on your presence. It is however still a good idea to stay nearby so that you can monitor the progression of the delivery, and make sure all the puppies are alive and healthy. On the other hand; some dogs will crave privacy, and may try to get away from you and hide. If this is the case: give her the space and time she needs, but keep checking in on her regularly.

Stages of Labor

- During the first stage, uterine contractions begin. The mother will appear very restless. Dogs may pace, dig, shiver, pant, whine or even vomit. This is all normal so just keep an eye on her, make sure she is undisturbed, and that she has water available should she want it. The first stage may last 12 - 24 hours, and is often longer in case of first time pregnancies.
- The second stage is the hard labor stage in which the puppy is expelled. In this stage, the water breaks and straw-colored fluid is passed, a puppy will be delivered a few minutes later. Puppies are born covered in membranes that must be cleaned away to open their airways, or the pup will suffocate, the mother will usually bite and lick these membranes away. Allow her a minute or two after birth to do this; the mother should lick her offspring clean and bite through the umbilical cord

This is an important process for the bonding between mother and offspring, and allows the mother to learn to recognize the puppies as her own. Do not disturb her. The treatment she gives her offspring may seem rough, but in reality, this serves to stimulate breathing and blood circulation. If the mother shows no interest in her offspring, even after resting for a few minutes you must clean the puppy for her and make sure it is breathing and alive. Simply remove the slippery covering and rub the puppy with a clean towel, then place it back with the mother. Puppies should begin nursing between subsequent births.

- Puppies are born anywhere from minutes to hours apart, so you can expect most deliveries to take a significant amount of time depending on the size of the litter. Expect a new puppy every 30 to 60 minutes; the mother will usually strain for 10 to 30 minutes before each newborn. It is normal that the mother takes a rest partway through delivery, and for some dogs you may have up to 4 hours without any signs of straining between pups. If a puppy is not born within 2-4 hours, if the mother appears to be continually straining for more than 1 hour, or if she shows signs of distress, you should consult the emergency contact immediately. This may be an indication that she needs a Caesarean section or drugs to stimulate contractions. If the mother is content and happy, she is probably finished, or taking a rest. It is always better to call if in doubt.
- The third and final stage refers to the expulsion of the placenta and afterbirth. Usually the placenta follows a few minutes after delivery of each puppy, but not always; the mother may pass two pups and then two placentas. This is normal. The mother will probably eat some or all of the placentas - this is also normal.

General Neonatal Care

- In the first 2 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 the nursery area.
- Tracking food intake and weight gain is also important, fosters will be provided with daily health and behavior charts to easily track puppy's growth and to see if there is weight loss, or decline in appetite. If a puppy stops eating, or the mother begins to separate it from the other contact the SFAHS immediately.
- During the first 2-3 weeks of life puppies do not urinate and defecate on their own. In nature, this is stimulated when the mother is cleaning them, but in the absence of a mom you will need to do the job. Fortunately, it's a fairly easy task as it should be done every few hours. Gently rub a warm moist paper towel or a baby tissue on the puppy's anus and genital area; this will stimulate them to urinate and defecate on the paper towel. Doing it just after feeding is an easy way to ensure it gets done regularly.
- As the puppies get older, from 4-5 weeks of age, they can be allowed to roam a larger area of your house, but they should still be closely supervised and kept in a secured area when not confined to their nursing area. Remember these puppies are still very vulnerable to infections, and should be separated from other pets if possible.

Puppies: Week by Week

0-1 Weeks

- Mom with Pups: They should nurse vigorously and compete for nipples. Newborns can nurse up to 45 minutes at a time. Be sure to watch puppies nursing at least once a day, if the mom will permit it.
- Check that everyone is nursing and that there isn't too much jockeying for position. A great deal of activity and crying could indicate a problem with milk flow, quality or availability. When the mom reenters the box, there should be some fussing for only a few minutes before everyone has settled down to serious nursing.
- Environment: The temperature of the nest box should be nice and warm: 75-85 degrees. Chilling is the number one danger to newborn puppies.
- Behavior and training: At one week of age, the puppies should be handled minimally. Puppies will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%.

1-2 Weeks

- Environment: Temperature should be 80 to 85 degrees.
- Behavior and training: Ear canals open between 5 and 8 days. Eyes will open between 8 and 14 days. They open gradually, usually starting to open from the nose outward. All puppies are born with blue eyes, and initially no pupils can be distinguished from the irises - the eyes will appear solid dark blue.
- Healthy puppies will be round and warm, with pink skin. If you pinch them gently, their skin should spring back. When you pick a puppy up, it should wiggle energetically and when you put it down near the mom it should crawl back to her. Healthy puppies seldom cry.

2-3 Weeks

- Environment: The floor temperature of the nest box should be 75 to 80 degrees.
- Behavior and training: Mom will begin to spend larger periods of time out of the nest, though she will not go far from it.
- Locomotion: Puppies begin to crawl around day 18 and can stand by day 21. They will begin to play with each other, biting ears, tails and paws even before their teeth have come in. Their milk teeth are cut during this period. They learn to sit and touch objects with their paws.
- Socialization: Puppies begin their socialization phase - they will be strongly influenced by the behavior of their mother for the next six weeks. To further socialize puppies, increase the amount of handling, and get them accustomed to human contact. It is important not to expose them to anything frightening; children may seem intimidating and should be supervised closely while visiting to ensure gentle handling.

3-4 Weeks

- Environment: Room temperature between 70 to 75 degrees from this point onward.
- Behavior and training: Adult eye color will begin to appear, but may not reach final shade for another 9 to 12 weeks. Puppies begin to see well and their eyes begin to look and function like adult dogs' eyes.
- Puppies will start cleaning themselves, though their mother will continue to do most of the serious cleaning.

4-5 Weeks

- Puppies usually can drink and eat from a saucer by 4 weeks. Weaning should be done gradually. Introduce them to solid food by offering puppy food, mixed with a little water to soften, in a shallow saucer. You can begin by placing one puppy by the plate of food gruel, and hoping for the best - if they start eating, great! Littermates will probably copy and do the same. The puppies may walk in it, slide in it, and track it all. Some puppies may prefer to lick the gruel from your fingers, if this is the case; slowly lower your finger to the plate and hold it to the food. This way the puppies will learn to eat with their heads bent down. Be patient, sometimes it takes two or three meals before they catch on. If they do not seem interested enough to even sniff your finger, try gently opening the puppies' mouth and rub a little bit of the food on their teeth. Hopefully this will result in the puppy starting to lick your finger. Mom will usually begin weaning by discouraging her puppies from nursing; however, some dogs (particularly those with small litters) will allow nursing until the puppies are old enough for permanent homes. Some nursing activity is the canine equivalent of thumb-sucking, that is, for comfort only. Even if puppies appear to be nursing, they may not be getting all the nutrition they need from mom. Make sure they are eating food and gaining weight. Be sure that the puppies always have access to fresh water in a low, stable bowl.
- Behavior and training: Begin housebreaking at four weeks of age. This can be done by using a pile of newspapers or training pads in a corner. After each feeding, place the puppy on the papers. Be patient! They may not remember to do this every time, or may forget where to find the papers, but will learn quickly. Be sure to give the puppies lots of praise when they first start using their papers or cry to go out. It is a good idea to confine the puppies to a relatively small space, because the larger the area the puppies have to play in, the more likely they will forget where the papers are. Keep the papers clean and away from their food.

5-6 Weeks

- Feeding: Feed gruel 4 times a day. Thicken the gruel gradually by reducing the amount of water mixed with it. Introduce dry food and water. For reluctant eaters, try mixing some puppy milk replacer into the gruel or tempt the puppy with some meat-flavored human baby food mixed with a bit of water. The familiar formula taste and smell or the meat flavor of baby food is often more appealing to the picky eaters than dog food. Once the puppy accepts the formula based gruel or baby food gradually mix in dry puppy food until the puppy has been weaned like the other puppies.
- Behavior and training: At about five weeks, puppies can start to roam around the room, under supervision. The strongest, most curious puppy will figure out how to get out of the nest. The others will quickly follow.

6-7 Weeks

- Mom comes back to the shelter: By six weeks' mom has done her job, and is likely already weaning the puppies away from her as they have developed teeth and nursing is painful.
- Feeding: By this age the puppies should be eating dry food well. If one puppy appears food-possessive, use a second dish and leave plenty of food out so that everyone can eat at the same time. Although the puppies may not eat much at a single sitting, they usually like to eat at frequent intervals throughout the day.
- Behavior and training: By this time, you have "mini-dogs." They will wash themselves, play games with each other, their toys, and you, and many will come when you call them. Be sure to take them to their papers or outside after meals, during play sessions, and after naps. These are the usual times that puppies need to eliminate.

7-8 Weeks

- Feeding: Offer dry food. Leave down a bowl of water for them to eat and drink at will.
- Begin preparing for the puppies to return to SFAHS. You know the puppies better than anyone, so prepare for their return by writing a short memo about each of them. Adopters will want to know about their personality, how their potty training is going and tricks they have learned. If you have names, make sure you let us know what you have been calling them and which one is which. Names are not required to be provided. The staff will do what we can to keep these names, but they may change if we already have an animal with that name at the shelter.

Contacts

Shelter Hours

Monday-Wednesday: 11am – 6pm

Thursday: Closed for adoptions, Staff available 11-5pm

Friday- Saturday 11 am-6pm

Sunday 11-4 pm

General Questions or Concerns

Foster Coordinator or Kennel Staff Leads- (605)338-4441

Veterinary Team : 605.338.4441 Ext 2022

After-Hours Emergency Contact

Foster Coordinator Cell phone : 605-601-7617

On-Call Humane Officer - (605) 254-4058

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of dogs/puppies will I be fostering? Can I pick and choose?

Yes, you may choose when and what you would like to foster. Animals seeking a foster home will vary on a day-to-day basis. There may not always be a dog or puppies to fit your situation. We do not want you to feel overwhelmed by taking on more than you are prepared for, or taking on a dog that does not fit into your lifestyle. We will make sure that your foster animals are a good fit for you and your family and home.

How long will I need to foster?

Length of foster care stays vary with each animal, depending on their age and circumstances. It can range from 2 weeks to 12 weeks, depending on the animal(s).

How much time does it take on a daily basis?

It can take 2 – 5 hours a day, depending on the animal's circumstance. This could be how much socialization they need, if they are ill or depending on their age.

How much does it cost to foster?

There is no cost to be a foster. The Sioux Falls Area Humane Society will provide all supplies you will need to foster. This includes dry food, toys, blankets, dishes, a collar and leash and carrier and more if needed. If you would like to provide anything else that isn't provided at your own cost that is fine.

Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or experience

No. If you have questions, you can call the SFAHS at any time. Numbers are provided under the "Contacts" page. We want this to be a fun and rewarding experience for you.

My foster is sick, what do I do?

Please contact the shelter if you feel your foster has any of the signs described on the "Health and Medical Protocols" page. We will then discuss with you the best plan of action, be it medicine or diagnostics. **Do not take your foster(s) to a veterinarian. If you do so without the approval of SFAHS, you may be responsible for the cost of the visit.** If an emergency occurs, contact the emergency numbers provided on the "Contacts" page. The medical staff at the shelter will decide what needs to be done and proceed accordingly. The shelter employs a veterinarian and trained veterinary technicians and assistants that oversee the care of all shelter animals.

Can I let my fosters and my pets interact?

We strongly recommend that you do not let your fosters and animals interact. Many of the dogs come in as strays, and we do not always know if they are carrying a disease that may be harmful to your pet. We are also unsure of how your foster may react to other dogs or cats, as we don't know much about their history. If you have further questions, feel free to ask!

Can my foster go outdoors?

Yes, it is recommended that dogs/puppies be taken outdoors to “go potty” so that appropriate bathroom habits can be established as soon as possible. Also, if you have a fenced yard, it is always helpful for dogs of any age to get a lot of play/exercise but running around with you. If you do not have a fenced yard, walks are beneficial to help with excess energy and training. Sometimes, however, there are circumstances that warrant your foster may be needed to be taken on restrictive walks. If this is the case, the medical staff at the SFAHS will let you know. Please do not take your foster to the dog park.

Can I adopt my foster?

Yes, as long as you are a good long-term match! As foster parents, you have the first chance at adopting your foster. You will still need to fill out an application and be approved by the shelter staff before the adoption would be finalized.

Can I let my friends and family have the first pick of my foster puppies or dog?

We strongly recommend that you do not promise friends or family a foster animal. We cannot do anything for your fosters once they go up for adoption. Please refer your friends to our website or to the shelter and have them fill out an application to be pre-screened for adoption. Once they are up for adoption, they may spend time with the animals at the shelter for the required 20 minutes and if they are a good match, they may adopt then.

Can I return my fosters if I am no longer able to foster?

Yes, you can. We understand situations arise that are unforeseeable, but please consider all options before returning them. It can be very stressful on the dogs or puppies to move around so much before they are ready for adoption. We do ask that if you are looking to accept a foster into your home, you commit to the entire time frame that is needed to care for them.

Will my fosters ever be euthanized?

We understand how much love, time and energy goes into your foster animals. Unfortunately, there are times when illness overtakes a foster pet that cannot be treated, or where the dog or puppy is suffering. No animal is ever euthanized at SFAHS for breed, space or time restriction. We want to save them all, and sometimes mother nature has other plans for us and we understand that this is a highly sensitive topic. We welcome you to ask any questions or have a discussion with us if you need to.

How can I help my foster get adopted?

One of the best ways you can help your foster get adopted is to help us get to know him or her! Keep note of his or her favorite things, tell us about their personality and interactions with people and children. We will provide a personality packet for you to fill out. If you haven't received one, please contact the foster coordinator. Some people write a little biography about their foster dogs, which we encourage, though they may be edited. We also welcome any quality photos that you take of your foster dog in your home; we can use the photos to accompany the online biography and photos our staff will take. These things help us have accurate information about the dog's preferences and quirks!

Can I name my fosters?

Yes, you're more than welcome to name your fosters. Please providing identifying marks on which dog is which. We will try our best to keep their names, but they may change if needed at the shelter.

Will it be hard to say goodbye to my foster when they are ready to go up for adoption?

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering, but keep in mind that more dogs will need wonderful foster homes like yours in the future. You are a crucial role in helping us save homeless pets each and every day. Your foster will be placed with a loving and caring family that is the best match possible.



If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out to the foster coordinator or call the shelter. We are so excited to have you as a foster and thank you for opening your heart and home to these animals who need us all so much.