



LOOK BACK Border Collie Rescue, Inc.

www.LookBackRescue.org
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Look Back

*...the command given to search
for more lost sheep requiring
deep trust and teamwork.*

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Fostering Guidelines and Procedures

Primary Fosters

In-Take

Primary fosters will receive all new arrivals. Quarantine requirements will be evaluated by the primary foster home and his/her vet. Such assessment will consider the age and health of all other dogs in the foster home. Primary foster home understands that LBR cannot be financially responsible for veterinary care of non-LBR dogs (personal dogs) even when the LBR dog is the source of the contagion.

IN-TAKE form should be completed as soon as possible for database update.

Temperment Testing/Behavior Assessment

The primary foster will complete an initial assessment and in-take documents. Once quarantine is lifted, additional assessment will include the following:

- Food possessiveness
- Aggression – people and various dogs
- Basic obedience commands
- Prey drive
- Toy and activity preferences
- Energy level

Spay/Neuter Issues

Generally, primary fosters will supervise spay/neuter surgeries. If the primary foster has an intact male, the foster will be scheduled to be spayed within 1 week of release from quarantine. If the primary foster has an intact female, then every effort will be made to transfer the foster upon release from quarantine to a different home for surgery where he will not be around any unsprayed female for at least 30 days.

Documentation (to be scanned/mailed/uploaded to administration for archiving as soon as possible)

In-Take form includes:

- Medical history from shelter/prior owner
- Owner turn-in form
- Shelter bail forms
- Flag and highlight due dates for vaccinations
- LBR verification of weight
- LBR verification of chip ID or implantation
- LBR check up (ears, eyes, teeth, joints, abdomen, etc. for possible problems)

Daily record during quarantine: food, water, alertness, poop

Weekly record during first month of weight gain/loss compared to goals, if an issue

Temperment testing results/assessment

Medical records during foster care including flea/tick and/or heartworm preventative treatments

Transition to Supporting Foster

When the dog is transferred to a supporting foster home, copies of all documents will be provided to that home either digitally prior to transfer or they will be sent with the dog.

Expense reimbursement

For primary fosters, expense reimbursement may include food, kennel license, refuse, mileage, etc. due to the number of dogs and extensive time commitment. Such expenses will be defined in their foster agreement.

Primary foster must approve the appropriateness of potential supporting foster home with respect to the specific dog and circumstances. Each dog will require a different skill set and foster environment, which is best assessed by the primary foster with the most experience with the particular dog. The primary foster should re-read the foster application each time in considering the appropriateness of the foster home AND inquire whether there have been any changes to that environment.

The primary foster should be very honest about everything known about the dog with the supporting foster home to make sure that they feel up to the task. Special needs, concerns, or expectations for training should be documented in writing and agreed by the supporting foster.

Supporting Foster Homes

LBR will make every effort to place a relatively easy dog in a new foster home to create a positive first experience. The primary foster family as well as other supporting fosters are available and happy to share their experiences and suggestions.

Also, fosters will generally be rotated to a new foster home if not adopted within 4-6 weeks. This helps the foster family think of the foster as “an exchange student” and not get too attached. It also helps the foster dog from becoming too settled in. Rescue is a temporary refuge providing care, training and socialization to help the foster be ready for his/her forever home. Rotation also helps the existing personal dogs understand that the dog being fostered is only a temporary guest. The personal dogs need to feel special and getting some time off every 4-6 weeks helps them know that they are permanent.

Overtime, the duration may be extended if the foster home is comfortable with longer periods. Also, more challenging dogs may be considered for the home, if the foster family is prepared for the challenge.

Reading materials from SPCA are available to help new foster families understand how new guests might react to new surroundings, why, and how to best help them. Also, the primary foster will follow-up and be available to help with suggestions as well as other LBR fosters. Every dog is unique and not every technique works with every dog, the key is to keep trying and keep expanding your “bag of tricks”.

BEFORE THE ARRIVAL

Information about the dog - Get as much information as possible from the primary foster and remind the primary foster about any limitations of your home. For example, you may have an area where the fence is only 4 feet high or you may have small grand children that come over to play. Maybe a neighbor's dog fence guards. Share freely any concerns or hesitations when determining whether to take a particular foster.

Environment – Please make sure that cleaning products are out of reach. Things that personal dogs have learned to ignore can be very interesting to the new arrival. Re-check your fencing and gate latches to make sure that they are up to a challenge. For the first few days, make sure that you watch the foster closely in the house to minimize risk from destructive behavior.

Safety First

Always on a leash - Even the most seemingly easy foster will be “ungrounded” in a new setting and we will not know what things might spook the dog. For example, a city dog might think nothing of a trash truck, but a rural dog might be totally shocked by the automated dumping of trash. So, it is critical that the dogs be transported preferably in a crate, but if not, they must be on a leash and the leash must be controlled by the human before any car doors are opened. The dog must also be on a leash going to/from the house to the car and on walks. You never know what might spook the dog and cause him/her to run off or run into traffic.

Tight collar – As our personal dogs become reliable, many of us start leaving their collars very loose and don't mind if they pull out of them because they follow our commands. However, if fosters pull out of a collar when frightened or resisting, they will NOT be inclined to run to you. It is critical that collars remain tight enough that they cannot pull out of them.

Tags – The foster dog will have a chip identified to LBR as well as tags with LBR phone numbers, but we really don't want to get those calls.

Use of crate/kennel - Some foster families crate the foster dog at night and when unable to pay close attention to the dog while indoors, until the dog has proven house manners. We have reading materials about crate training. A crate can be very reassuring to some dogs because it becomes their safe zone and they think of it as their den/cave, not as a jail. However, use of a crate should not be for long periods of time and should be offset with plenty of attention and exercise.

Training – enhances foster experience and enhances adoptability

The more skills that the dogs develops, the more potential homes will be appropriate. A well trained, socialized dog that loves everyone and children can go to almost any home. The more unresolved issues with a dog the more limited his/her chances, which means much more time in rescue until the right home comes along. Not only will teaching a few basic skills make the dog more adoptable, but it will make your experience more enjoyable.

Some dogs may have had NO training and others may have had training, but with different commands, gestures, or even languages. So, be alert to signs of what the dog may know. As much as possible, it is good to use commands from basic obedience classes, which we have included in separate materials. Using common commands/gestures makes it easier for the dog to transition to continued training in his/her forever home.

Bathroom Skills are critical both for a pleasant fostering experience and also to enhance adoptability. So, first training obviously includes either dog door training or training the dog to ask to go out. Even if the dog is dog door trained in another home, it is important to start with your foster as if he/she does not know what to do.

“Wait” needs to be part of first training. The dog must wait for food, wait to cross the threshold, wait to get into or out of the car, wait to cross the street on a walk, etc. Wait is a great tool for establishing that you are in charge. Using the wait command helps establish that food and toys are NOT the property of

the dog, but rather controlled by the human, which is very helpful in dealing with food/toy possessiveness. Wait is the building block for boundary training.

Socialization is very important. A dog that kisses the adopter's face gets adopted. A dog that hangs back remains in rescue much longer.

Dog parks are not suggested with your foster until you have had significant time assessing their behaviors. Having a dog that you are uncertain about combined with irresponsible humans and/or unbalanced dogs can lead to disaster.

PetsMart and PetCo are great places to work on both socialization and walking on a leash. Take treats and ask friendly strangers and store employees to give a treat to the foster. These stores all offer obedience training and have their classes walk around the store doing "friendly stranger" exercises. The customers love it and the stores support rescue. It is easy to work on both loose leash walking and socialization. Also, the stores let you play with toys and see what toys get a reaction from the dog. There are often children around and you can watch the dog's reaction to the little people. If the dog knows any other commands, such as sit/stay/come these stores are great places to practice commands with distraction and long leads.

"Adopt Me" scarves are great icebreakers and advertising. Try to have the dog wear it's scarf whenever you are out with the dog. People are more apt to talk to you and that's good for socialization. Also, you never know, they might be looking for a border collie to call their own.

Walking on a leash is another initial skill that helps with adoption. If the adopter can take the dog on a short walk during the first interview, not only will the adopter start to bond with the dog, but it is an excellent tool for you to evaluate the skills of the adopter to assess whether he/she will be able to handle the dog.

Lie down, Sit, Stay, Come, Heal, That'll Do— these commands take more time, but add to the dog's desirability and may be possible to add to the dog's skill set depending on his/her background and how long he/she is with you.