



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

## Foster Care Provider Manual

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## **A SPECIAL THANKS...**

We wish to take this opportunity to extend a special note of thanks to you for your kindness in the care you provide for our dogs. Your commitment to the dogs is so important to both the organization and to the dogs themselves. The love that you provide to them, whether it is temporary or ongoing supportive care for our dogs, is incredibly valuable and we recognize your generous contribution.

Thank you from all of us at GDB!



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# Chapter One: Introduction

## Welcome!

It takes a special person to be a Foster Care Provider for Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB), and you must be that kind of person! The willingness to volunteer your home, time, care, and love to one of our dogs is truly admirable; and we recognize it is not always easy.

You can feel tremendous pride in the volunteer service you are providing. As foster care providers, you are helping to ensure success for a dog in training, you're helping to ease the transition for an older retired guide, provide a loving home environment to an active guide, or give individual attention to a dog recovering from illness or surgery. You are a key component to our mission.

The purpose of this manual is to provide you with information regarding your foster dog and about the management of all our program dogs. While each foster dog is an individual and will have management criteria prescribed specifically for him or her, this manual is your comprehensive resource and is general in nature.

In this manual you will also find our mission, values, expectations, and requirements. This manual is yours to keep. It is a condition of volunteering that you comply with all our rules and requirements. You will receive an updated manual as changes to the requirements are made.

You can always direct any questions or concerns to the Foster Care Team:

- James Dress, Dog Placement and Foster Care Manager – 415-488-2314, [jdress@guidedogs.com](mailto:jdress@guidedogs.com)
- Rebecca Hornick, Foster Care Coordinator, CA campus – 415-499-4056 [rhornick@guidedogs.com](mailto:rhornick@guidedogs.com)
- Delphine Medeiros, Foster Care Coordinator, CA campus – 415-499-4472 [dmedeiros@guidedogs.com](mailto:dmedeiros@guidedogs.com)
- Nancy Denier, Dog Placement and Foster Care Coordinator, OR campus – 503-668-1514 [ndenier@guidedogs.com](mailto:ndenier@guidedogs.com)

You can also reach the department as a group at either [CAFosterCare@guidedogs.com](mailto:CAFosterCare@guidedogs.com) or [ORFosterCare@guidedogs.com](mailto:ORFosterCare@guidedogs.com).

Your commitment to foster care, and to Guide Dogs for the Blind, is deeply appreciated. We are proud to have you as members of the GDB family.

Sincerely,  
The Foster Care Department

## History

Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. was founded in 1942 by Lois Merrihew and Don Donaldson with a small group of volunteers who wanted to provide guide dogs to blinded veterans of World War II. Our first training center was in Los Gatos, California. Our training center was relocated to the present site in San Rafael in 1947. In 1995, we completed a second training center in Boring, Oregon, outside of Portland.

Our instructors train Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Golden/Labrador crossbred dogs and occasionally other breeds to be guide dogs, and they instruct blind and visually impaired students during in-residence classes how to use those dogs. There are multiple bi-weekly classes each year at each campus.

Guide dog puppies are born in our kennels, but they are raised in the homes of puppy raisers throughout 10 Western states. This home raising makes for a more well-rounded dog. Our program owes a great deal to the volunteers who raise puppies for us. Our students come from all over the United States and Canada. They live in our residence hall and are trained at various locations near our campuses and in the neighboring cities of San Francisco and Portland. Puppy raisers are invited to present the dogs they have raised to the new graduates on graduation day.

There is absolutely no charge to our students for our services. We are a non-profit organization receiving our support from private donors. Many of our donors enjoy visiting our campuses, especially seeing the dogs and puppies in our kennels. Graduation days are very popular days for visitors.

You are an important part of the Guide Dogs team, and we hope you will feel welcome to join us for a graduation ceremony. It is a day for all of us to share our pride in being part of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

## Mission and Values Statements

### ***Mission Statement***

Guide Dogs for the Blind empowers lives by creating exceptional partnerships between people, dogs, and communities.

### ***Vision Statement***

Guide Dogs for the Blind envisions a world with greater inclusion, opportunity, and independence by optimizing the unique capabilities of people and dogs.

### ***Values and Behaviors***

Guide Dogs for the Blind is one organization, with one set of values, operating in multiple locations. We are aligned around a common vision and mission and hold ourselves and each other responsible for operating by the following values and behaviors:

### ***Mission First***

- Ensure that every action or decision is aligned with GDB's commitment to the mission
- Provide superior service across all aspects of the organization

### ***Integrity***

- Demonstrate accountability, transparency (except when confidentiality applies), and honesty with all actions and decisions
- Act with and assume positive intent

### ***Diversity And Inclusion***

- Value individuality and foster a dynamic, diverse, and inclusive culture
- Create a community where everybody feels included, respected, and safe to be their authentic self

### ***Kindness And Respect***

- Treat every being with dignity and sensitivity
- Balance professionalism with humor

### ***Teamwork And Collaboration***

- Encourage open communication
- Practice proactive, thoughtful, and inclusive interactions

### ***Empowerment***

- Promote personal development and self-reliance
- Support learning and innovation through risk-taking

### **Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment**

Guide Dogs for the Blind is committed to providing a work environment that is free of prohibited harassment. As a result, the Company maintains a strict policy prohibiting sexual harassment and harassment against applicants, employees and volunteers based on any legally-recognized status, including, but not limited to: race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy (including lactation, childbirth or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, age (40 and over), national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed servicemember status or any other status protected by federal, state or local law.

### ***Sexual Harassment Defined***

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of volunteering; or
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as a basis for volunteering decisions affecting the individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a volunteer's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.



Sexual harassment includes various forms of offensive behavior based on sex. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the types of conduct prohibited by this policy:

- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions (including repeated and unwelcome requests for dates);
- Offers of volunteering benefits in exchange for sexual favors;
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- Visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, websites, emails or text messages;
- Verbal conduct: making or using sexually derogatory comments, innuendos, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes, or comments about an individual's body or dress, whistling or making suggestive or insulting sounds;
- Verbal and/or written abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal and/or written sexually degrading commentary about an individual's body or dress, sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, invitations, emails, text messages, tweets or other social media postings;
- Physical conduct: touching, assault or impeding or blocking normal movements;
- Retaliation for making reports or threatening to report sexual harassment.

### ***Other Types of Harassment***

Harassment on the basis of any legally protected status is prohibited, including harassment based on: race (inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles [e.g. braids, dreadlocks and twists]), color, religion (including dress and grooming practices), sex, pregnancy (including lactation, childbirth or related medical conditions), gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), national origin or ancestry, citizenship, marital status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information (including testing and characteristics), veteran status, uniformed service member status or any other status protected by federal, state or local law. Prohibited harassment may include behavior similar to the illustrations above pertaining to sexual harassment. It also includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct including taunting, jokes, threats, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs based on an individual's protected status;
- Visual and/or written conduct including derogatory posters, photographs, calendars, cartoons, drawings, websites, emails, text messages or gestures based on an individual's protected status; and
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching or blocking normal movement because of an individual's protected status.

### ***Complaint Procedure***

Any volunteer who believes they have been subjected to prohibited harassment by an employee, supervisor, manager, volunteer, client, visitor, vendor, constituent or temporary or seasonal worker of Guide Dogs for the Blind, or who believes another individual has been subject to such conduct, should report it immediately.

Complaints can be made verbally, or in writing, to the highest-ranking on-site supervisor or manager or to the Dog Placement and Foster Care Manager, or any member of Human Resources.

After a report is received, a thorough and objective investigation will be undertaken. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practical and permitted by law. Investigations will be conducted as confidentially as possible and related information will only be shared with others on a need-to-know basis. The investigation will be completed, and a determination made and communicated to the volunteer as soon as practical.

If a complaint of prohibited harassment is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of volunteerism or employment, will be taken.

### **Confidential Company Information**

The Company's confidential and proprietary information is vital to its current operations and future success. Each volunteer should use all reasonable care to protect or otherwise prevent the unauthorized disclosure of such information.

In no event should volunteers disclose or reveal confidential information within or outside the Company without proper authorization or purpose.

"Confidential Information" refers to a piece of information, or a compilation of information, in any form (on paper, in an electronic file, or otherwise), related to the Company's business that the Company has not made public or authorized to be made public, and that is not generally known to the public through proper means.

By way of example, confidential or proprietary information includes, but is not limited to, nonpublic information regarding the Company's business methods and plans, databases, systems, technology, intellectual property, know-how, marketing plans, business development, products, services, research, development, inventions, financial statements, financial projections, financing methods, pricing strategies, constituent sources, volunteer health/medical records, system designs, constituent lists and methods of competing. Additionally, volunteers who by virtue of their performance of their job responsibilities have the following information, should not disclose such information for any reason, except as required to complete job duties, without the permission of the volunteer at issue: social security numbers, driver's license or resident identification numbers, financial account, credit or debit card numbers, security and access codes or passwords that would permit access to medical, financial or other legally protected information.

### **Contact with the Media**

To ensure that the Company communicates with the media in a consistent, timely and professional manner about matters related to the Company, you should notify Marketing & Communications Department that you have been contacted by the media whenever you are asked to speak on behalf of the Company so that the Company knows that a media inquiry has been made. Do not respond to media inquiries on the Company's behalf without authorization. This rule does not prevent you from speaking with the media, but you should not attempt to speak on behalf of the Company unless you have specifically been authorized to do so by an officer of the Company.

## **Dress and Appearance Requirements**

In service of Guide Dogs for the Blind's mission, we strive to create an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment for all. As such, volunteers are asked to dress in a manner that allows for self-expression while also promoting safety, job and situation-specific appropriateness, and the protection and enhancement of our brand.

Our standard of dress is casual, but professional. Please note that the following items are considered inappropriate for wearing while representing GDB:

- Clothing that is ripped, stained, or in poor condition.
- Tank top style clothing, not including sleeveless blouses and collared shirts, though including 'spaghetti strap' and thin strapped clothing that are more typically worn under another item of clothing.
- Athletic attire such as sweatpants, leggings, workout gear, yoga pants, or cycling gear.
- Items that feature slogans or messages for products or organizations other than Guide Dogs for the Blind. Small logos identifying a company/organization are acceptable.
- Flip-flop style sandals.

Those who primarily work outdoors may choose to wear shorts (minimum 6" inseam) instead of long pants when it's more comfortable to do so.

Safety is important to all of us at GDB. As such, managers/supervisors may require certain specific clothing for department-specific activities, such as closed-toe, non-slip shoes for kennel-related work or removal of dangling jewelry if it presents a pulling hazard.

Volunteers may be required to modify or cover up facial piercings, tattoos, or hair styles that, in a professional work environment, would commonly be considered extreme in nature or contrary to GDB's brand. Please note that these guidelines are not all-inclusive and may be revisited by GDB management, as needed.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent volunteers from wearing a hair or facial hair style that is consistent with their cultural, ethnic, or racial heritage or identity. This policy will be interpreted to comply with applicable local, state, or federal law.

## **Workplace Violence & Bullying**

The safety and security of employees and volunteers is of vital importance to Guide Dogs for the Blind. Therefore, the Company has adopted a zero-tolerance policy concerning workplace violence. Threats or acts of violence—including intimidation, bullying, physical or mental abuse and/or coercion—that involve or affect company employees and volunteers or that occur on the Company's premises, will not be tolerated.

Workplace violence is any intentional conduct that is sufficiently severe, abusive or intimidating to cause an individual to reasonably fear for their own personal safety or the

safety of their family, friends and/or property such that employment or volunteer conditions are altered, or a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment is created for one or several employees or volunteers.

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Threats or acts of violence occurring on Company premises, regardless of the relationship between the parties involved in the incident;
- Threats or acts of violence occurring off Company premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of the Company;
- Threats or acts of violence occurring off Company premises involving a volunteer if the threats or acts affect the business interests of the Company;
- All threats or acts of violence occurring off Company premises, of which a volunteer is a victim, if we determine that the incident may lead to an incident of violence on Company premises; and
- Threats or acts of violence resulting in the conviction of a volunteer or agent of the Company, or an individual performing services for the Company on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to violence or threats of violence when that act or the conviction adversely affect the legitimate business interests of the Company.

Examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Threatening physical conduct directed toward another individual;
- Threatening an individual or the individual's family, friends, associates or property with harm;
- The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of Guide Dogs for the Blind or another's property;
- Menacing or threatening phone calls;
- Stalking;
- Veiled threats of physical harm or similar intimidation; and/or
- Communicating an endorsement of the inappropriate use of firearms or weapons.

Workplace violence does not refer to workplace arguments or debates that are zealous or impassioned, provided there is no resort to any form of coercion. Discussions about sporting activities, popular entertainment or current events are not considered workplace violence when there is no threat of violence being directed to the workplace or any individual connected with it. Rather, workplace violence refers to behavior that demonstrates an intention to engage in violence, condones violence in our workplace, or targets any individual with acts or threats of violence.

The prohibition against threats and acts of violence or bullying applies to all persons involved in the operation of the Company, including, but not limited to, Company employees and other personnel, contract and temporary workers, consultants, contractors, constituents, clients, volunteers, vendors, visitors, and anyone else on the Company's premises.

### **Reporting and Response**

Volunteers who are subject to, or witness, workplace violence or bullying are encouraged to notify the Volunteer Engagement Manager, supervisor, manager and or Human Resources immediately. The Company will promptly investigate the complaint. The Company will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible, consistent with its commitment to investigating the complaint promptly and thoroughly.

If the complaint is verified, the Company will take appropriate remedial and disciplinary action, which may include, but is not limited to, verbal or written warnings, suspension, termination of employment or of volunteer assignment, counseling, and other actions. The Company will also report to law enforcement, if appropriate. The complaining party will be advised of the results of the investigation.

### **Anti-Retaliation**

The Company strictly prohibits retaliation against a volunteer for making a good-faith report of violence or bullying or for participating in good faith in an investigation thereof.

### **Volunteer-Related Injuries**

A volunteer who injures themselves while performing their volunteer assignment should report their injury immediately to their direct supervisor, any available supervisor, or the Foster Care Staff. A report regarding the nature of the injury and the conditions under which it happened will be taken and shared with appropriate staff.

### **Cameras and Video Surveillance**

For the purposes of workplace safety and security and to prevent theft and other misconduct the Company has installed video surveillance cameras at various locations including work areas.

If there is any reported incident of theft, trespass, workplace violence, employee or volunteer misconduct or any type of safety violation (hereafter collectively referred to as "security incidents"), the Company will utilize its surveillance equipment as an investigatory tool. The Company will also make use of its surveillance equipment to deter any future security incidents.

The Company also reserves the right to actively monitor, through its surveillance cameras, any areas for safety reasons (to protect against equipment failure, breakage, or accident) or confidentiality reasons (to protect documents or other proprietary information).

Although the video surveillance described in this policy is intended to monitor for security incidents and other safety reasons at the Company, it is possible that such surveillance may monitor activities not related to the Company's business.

The Company respects the privacy of its employees and volunteers. Accordingly, no video cameras will be installed in the Company's restrooms or in any lactation or changing areas.

The surveillance video cameras and any video footage from the surveillance are to be used solely for the purposes of this video surveillance policy. Any unauthorized use of these video cameras and/or videotapes is strictly forbidden and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Visitors**

Volunteers are not permitted to bring guests or visitors to campus. Those wishing to see a campus should do so by way of our tour and visitors' programs. Tours may be booked through our website.

### **Dogs on Campus**

Per GDB policy, non-program (pet) dogs are not allowed on campus at any time. This includes career change dogs who were previously adopted from GDB. Exceptions are made if a Foster Care Provider is specifically asked to bring their pet dog to campus for a supervised introduction to a potential foster dog. All dogs on campus must be fully vaccinated and current on these vaccinations in accordance with GDB's vaccine policies.

### **Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

Except as provided below, GDB will not tolerate or condone the use, possession, sale or solicitation of illegal drugs or controlled substances during working hours, nor will GDB tolerate volunteers who report to work under the influence of illegal drugs or controlled substances.

The offering or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on company property or at company sponsored events, including those with volunteers, with the exception of donor events sponsored by the Development and Marketing departments and the Board of Directors at their discretion.

### **Applications to Adopt Career Change Dogs**

A dog-related benefit we can provide to volunteers is to consider their application for adoption of a career changed dog before those of the general public. Dogs available to the general public are those not to be considered for K9 Buddy, strategic or community placements. However, our first concern in placing a dog of any status (i.e., breeder, career-change, retired guide, etc.) is to provide them with a quality environment and appropriate care and attention to their needs, which are often unique and/or extensive.

Subject to the approval of the Foster Care Coordinator, and with six months' continuous service, a volunteer may request consideration ahead of applicants from the general public when applying for a dog. Obtaining a dog for persons other than the applicant is not allowed. Placement guarantees are not possible as applications are always evaluated individually to assure a placement which is suitable for both the dog and the individual.

## **Communications Within the Foster Care Program**

Good communication is essential to any program. The purpose of this segment is to provide you with the necessary tools should you have concerns or issues.

### **Communication in an emergency**

If an emergency occurs while you are caring for a GDB foster dog, follow the protocol in *Chapter 2, "Policies and Procedures."* If the emergency contact system is malfunctioning, use your good judgment in acquiring any emergency care at your discretion. Please contact the Foster Care Coordinator as soon as possible. Be sure to document the time, date and any other pertinent details so that the system can be remedied. We rely on your assistance to ensure all resources are useful and accurate.

### **If you have questions**

Concerns and questions should first be directed to the Foster Care Coordinator. Guide Dogs has a protocol that requires a staff person to inquire with their immediate supervisor regarding any concerns or issues. Volunteers are included in these requirements. If the foster care coordinator does not know the answer, she will find out for you, or direct you to the appropriate staff member who can assist you. Please do not contact other GDB employees unless instructed to do so, otherwise, just as paid staff, you will be directed back to your primary manager. The following of this protocol by all insures productive and consistent communications.

### **Suggestions**

Foster care providers are encouraged to make suggestions for improving the program. Suggestions are constructive ideas that may help solve a problem, improve procedures, or increase efficiency or otherwise make Guide Dogs a better organization. Your suggestions may be brought to the Foster Care Coordinator. Complaints about staff or single incidents should be addressed as soon as possible in the manner described below for a timely and efficient resolution.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Foster care providers are encouraged to utilize the Guide Dogs protocol when a concern or complaint is expressed. Please contact the Foster Care Coordinator to address any complaints or disputes. If a foster care provider feels that the Foster Care Coordinator is not the appropriate person with whom to raise the concern, the foster care provider should bring the matter to the attention of the Dog Placement Manager.

# Chapter Two: Foster Care Program Overview

## Program Overview

Foster care is a wonderful way for our dogs to receive loving care in your home. Often, a dog that you may be asked to care for is older, or physically compromised either from surgery or age. Others are young, active, and healthy, but may need a temporary break from life in the kennel, or to live in foster care throughout most if not all their training. We ask that when opening your home to a dog, you be open and flexible to a variety of types of dogs and conditions. Our highest priority placements can be those dogs that need the most detailed comprehensive care. Foster care is a program where we focus on what is best for the dog. You may be released from the program if you consistently decline to take dogs for a period longer than one year (unless previous arrangements have been made).

This omission from the foster care roster would in no way reflect your ability to volunteer for GDB in other capacities, and an open dialogue with the foster care coordinator would occur prior to any status change.

- Foster care providers care for a variety of our dogs: puppies, career change dogs, dogs-in-training, active guides, retired guides, and breeder dogs.
- Foster care is open to approved individuals or families who live within 50 miles of campus.
- Program dogs can be placed in foster care to give them a defined period in a home situation. Some foster dogs require medical attention, while others simply need time to recover from surgery. Some foster dogs eat better in a home environment, and others are older dogs that do not readily adjust to change. Some of the dogs are waiting to be adopted; these career change dogs benefit from a home environment to assist with a seamless transition into an adoptive home.
- Even with training, all dogs have potential negative behaviors that *may* manifest in the home environment if given the opportunity. Every foster dog needs to be appropriately managed.
- Foster care providers must be willing to follow handling and home management guidelines.
- Foster care can last a few days or several months, so one dog may need several homes to cover an extended time of care.
- Foster dogs vary in the degree of training they have received and the amount of exercise and veterinary care they require. Each dog is an individual and is treated as such.
- Foster care providers must be willing to travel, at their own expense, between their homes and the Guide Dog campus as needed. Occasionally, a foster dog may need regular vet appointments, or to be shown to a potential adopter.



## **Program Guidelines**

### **Objectives**

#### **Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) relies on its foster care providers to:**

- Nurture and love a foster care dog or puppy.
- Provide the foster dog with a safe home environment.
- Keep the foster dog healthy and safe.
- Perform basic health checks, and teeth and ear care.
- If prescribed, conscientiously treat the dog with medications and procedures.
- Keep the foster dog under control using approved techniques.
- When requested, return the foster dog (within 24 hours) to GDB for appointment, permanent placement (adoption) or to reunite with primary custodian (we will provide ample notice for return date, whenever possible).

### **Expectations of Foster Care Providers**

#### **Application Process and Basic Qualifiers**

- Be approved for foster care through a process of FC application, interview, home visit and Dog Management Class training. After all information is reviewed, the Foster Care Coordinator will either approve or disqualify the applicant. Every applicant who undergoes the application process is not guaranteed approval.
- Be a positive representative of GDB.
- Live within a 50-mile radius of a GDB campus.
- Notify GDB if you want to take the dog outside the 50-mile radius of campus (for vacation, for instance). GDB will need to approve if dog can travel and if so, have you sign a travel consent form. The travel form states you agree to cover any emergency medical care if needed for the foster dog while they are away from our veterinary facilities.
- Regularly attend foster care training meetings presented each year for ongoing education purposes.
- Be able to receive incoming requests (phone or email) to pick up/drop off dogs within 24 hours notice.
- Demonstrate reliability by returning phone calls in the same day or within 24 hours and picking up or dropping off a foster dog when requested.

#### **Dog and Home Environment Management**

- Use GDB-approved training and management techniques when working with or caring for GDB dogs.
- Provide an environment free of dogs with behaviors that could hamper the welfare or behavioral development of the foster care dog.
- Provide direct supervision when the foster care dog is with other dogs or young children.

- Keep the foster dog inside as a house dog, and do not allow the foster dog on furniture.
- Provide a safe and reasonable home environment free of harmful debris, toxic chemicals, or other potential hazards.
- Keep all pet companion animals current on their vaccinations and flea control. Providers are given flea control for the foster dog.
- Keep the foster dog **on a leash; tie down, dragline, or in an exercise pen (all require supervision) or in a crate (should always be used when dog is left unsupervised)**. *CRATES ARE MANDATORY IF A DOG IS LEFT ALONE*. If the foster care dog has extenuating health circumstances, these confinement restrictions may not apply. These circumstances will be discussed on a case-by-case basis by the Foster Care Coordinator.
- Put the foster dog on regular relieving schedule: Provide a method to care for and relieve the dog at least every four to five hours during the daytime (more often if medically required).
- Feed and medicate the dog per GDB instructions. Never alter the medications unless instructed by clinic.
- Be able to walk and control potentially large, active dogs on leash and head collar.
- Keep foster dogs on leash in any unfenced (even remote) areas. Dog parks are considered potentially hazardous venues and are **NOT ALLOWED** for foster care dogs.
- Provide a safe and securely fenced (five foot minimum) yard and/or a safe and secure confinement area for relieving the dog. A non-fenced yard is allowable if volunteer agrees to keep dog safely on leash at all times.
- Leave the dog in a safe, harm-free environment. When in the foster care provider's backyard to relieve or play, the dog should be accompanied by the foster care provider to monitor the dog's behavior and relieving habits. Dogs should not be left unsupervised in fenced yards. Foster dogs may be left alone in approved dog runs, unless the dog is vocal, or fence is partially wood since dogs can chew and ingest this. If the dog is vocal, it will be necessary to create the dog inside the home when unsupervised.
- Securely fence swimming pools, spas, and other bodies of water to prevent unsupervised access by the dog. Do not leave a foster dog unattended in the area because even dogs who like to swim can drown. If the pool has a secure cover that an animal cannot get, the pool is considered safe for a foster dog to be around.
- Provide **only** GDB approved toys (see current toy policy in Chapter 7). Do **NOT** allow the foster dog to have access to rawhides, tennis balls, stuffed animals, or squeaky toys – these toys can cause gastrointestinal obstruction and can develop obsession in a working dog.

## Problems and Emergencies

- Notify the Foster Care Coordinator if any behavior problems arise.
- Notify GDB immediately in case of **EMERGENCY OR ILLNESS**. After-hours **emergency vet care** will be paid by GDB but **pre-authorization is required when possible**. If departure from home is immediate, the provider should call

GDB from the emergency clinic for the on-call GDB vet to consult with the emergency clinic vet **Life-saving measures do not need authorization prior to treatment.** The dog should be brought to campus for emergency treatment if the emergency occurs during business hours. If not within a reasonable distance from GDB, the foster care provider should go to the nearest emergency clinic.

- All non-emergency medical treatment will be done at GDB.

## Insurance

- Foster Care Providers agree not to hold GDB liable for any damages to property that a foster care dog may cause.
- GDB requires that people who participate in our programs provide reasonable care and supervision of dogs in their care.
- If a third party has been injured, the foster care provider may receive a claim for damages. Conversations with GDB's insurance company have indicated that claimants in a personal injury claim would most likely involve the dog handler, GDB, and the facility at which the incident occurred. GDB maintains insurance to help cover our program participants; however, this coverage does not cover third party suits. To minimize the potential for their own personal liability, foster care providers are advised to maintain insurance coverage to protect themselves from claims arising from third parties for the action of the dogs they are handling. If an injury claim occurs, the provider should **promptly** notify **all** of the below:
  - A physician or veterinarian to take necessary actions to assist the injured party.
  - The foster care provider's own insurance company for primary coverage and handling of this claim.
  - GDB

## Individuals with Multiple Dogs

- The total number of dogs allowed in any GDB foster care home will vary with each individual's home situation. An appropriate dog may be placed in a home with other dogs.
- Approval for more than one foster dog in a given household must be given by the FC Coordinator or other qualified GDB staff person associated with the foster care program.

## Pickup and Return Procedures

### When you pick up a foster dog

- The Foster Care Coordinator will arrange or a pick-up day and time, please do not come to campus for pick-up until you have a date and time arranged with staff.
- **Please be sure to bring along your foster care leash and head collar.**
- **In California, when you arrive on campus** park in the designated space and call the Canine Welfare and Training Technician (CWTT) cell phone number you were given (also listed on the sandwich boards in front of the designated parking spaces.)

Introduce yourself as a FC provider, and inform the staff person the name of the dog you are there to pick up.

- **When you arrive on the Oregon campus**, please come to the kennel kitchen and let the staff greeting you know what dog you are here to pick up. You can call the phone number to the left of the door to reach a staff member that can assist you.
- Food, and any necessary medications are in the foster care locker (CA) or in the physical room (OR). Meds may be in the kennel, so they will be handed out with dog.
- Foster Care Request (FCR) sheet will have been emailed to you in advance to ensure the dog is a good fit for your home. Printed versions on the FCR are available upon request.
- Be certain that all medications match those on the Foster Care Request sheet. If they are missing or do not correlate with the sheet, let the staff person know so they can check the kennel or vet clinic to retrieve the necessary items.
- Transport the foster care dog home following the above safety guidelines. Contact the Foster Care Coordinator should you encounter any difficulty or have any questions.

### **When you return a foster dog**

- Confirm return date with Foster Care Coordinator. (Return dates can change.)
- Unless prior arrangements have been made to return the foster dog to the vet clinic or breeder drop off parking, all foster dogs are returned at the kennel drop off parking spots (CA) or kennel kitchen (OR).
- Return unused food, medications along with the dog.
- Please inform staff if there were any changes made to medications or food (type or amount) while dog was in your care.
- If you intend to continue fostering, please let Foster Care Coordinators know of your next available dates.

## **Equipment and Supplies**

All new foster care providers will receive a leash, head collar, 2 food bowls, dragline, scarf, alternate leash/headcollar combo, 2 tie downs, fleece pad, grooming tools, Nylabone, Kong, ear cleaner, teeth cleaning kit, and crate, if they don't already have one. If a provider takes a significant leave of absence from volunteering or ends their relationship as a foster care provider, all items must be returned to the Foster Care Coordinator. Please keep the provided supplies if you plan to continue to be available as an active FCP.

All prescribed medications and preventatives are dispensed from our veterinary clinic. Medications and supplies such as monthly flea control, monthly heartworm preventative, and food will be available as needed with each dog's foster care supplies. Each foster dog's Foster Care Request provides direction for usage. If more dog food is needed, it can be found in the food room in the kennel kitchen in OR and in the foster care cabinet in CA. If your foster dog is on a special diet (other than Eukanuba Large Breed or Natural Balance Lamb & Rice,) please contact the Foster Care Coordinator to arrange pickup.

The following equipment is available if a particular foster dog requires it: extra-large, folding recovery crate, vehicle ramp, body harness, head collar, and exercise pen. These items will be checked out and returned with the foster dog.

## **Bath Appointment Procedure**

Dogs are generally bathed prior to entering foster care. Daily brushing is key to maintaining a clean dog and home environment. Occasional baths can be needed to maintain a clean coat or as medically prescribed by GDB's veterinary department. Please call ahead of time to schedule a bath for a foster dog. It will be necessary to drop the dog off and return later the same day after the dog has been bathed and had time to dry. Please contact your Foster Care Program Coordinator to arrange a bath.

## **Veterinary Appointments and Emergency Procedures**

### **Health consultation**

Foster care providers taking new dogs with chronic or acute health-related problems should attend a brief health consultation at the GDB veterinary clinic before taking the dog home. The Foster Care Coordinator will notify foster care providers in advance of such appointments, or a foster care provider may request a health consultation with the veterinary clinic.

### **Pre-authorized appointments**

The foster care request indicates whether a dog requires a visit to the GDB clinic while in foster care. An appointment may already be set, as is often the case for surgeries. For more routine care or rechecks, the foster care provider will often be asked to make an appointment on or near a prescribed date, which best fits each provider's schedule.

### **Required Monthly Vet Checks and Non-Emergency Appointments**

Dogs in Foster Care are required to receive a monthly vet check at the GDB Veterinary Clinic to ensure the dog is remaining in good health while in foster care. These visits are generally brief (unless there is a concern) and can be scheduled at the provider's convenience by calling the GDB Vet Clinic. If a health-related problem develops during a dog's stay in foster care that is not an emergency, providers should first contact the GDB veterinary clinic during business hours to schedule new appointments. Examples of problems that require non-emergency care include: ear infections, chipped teeth, new body lumps, lameness, etc. Concerns regarding vomiting or diarrhea should be discussed with the GDB Veterinary Clinic and can often be remedied from home with Veterinary input and instruction.

## **Emergency Care**

### **During GDB Business Hours:**

If a health-related emergency occurs during GDB business hours (including weekends), please bring the foster dog to the GDB veterinary clinic. If GDB is not within a reasonable driving distance, go to the nearest outside veterinarian. In either case, call

the GDB veterinary clinic before or once at the local emergency clinic. Please be prepared with the foster dog's name and ID number (commonly found on dog's collar.) GDB business hours are between 8 AM and 5 PM Monday-Friday.

### **During Non-Business Hours:**

For emergencies during non-business hours, be prepared to go to the nearest emergency veterinary clinic. If time permits, call GDB's main number at **(800) 295-4050** or **(415) 499-4000**. Follow the instructions to speak to or leave a message for the after-hours kennel staff, who will contact the on-call GDB veterinarian. The on-call GDB veterinarian can provide consultation and additional instructions. If veterinary care is needed immediately, do not wait, and proceed to your nearest emergency clinic. In the event of an emergency, Guide Dogs authorizes you to provide stabilizing treatment for the foster care dog. Please contact appropriate GDB staff prior to further care. Your foster care dog is not to be spayed, altered, or euthanized without approval of Guide Dogs for the Blind, unless a prior health agreement exists.

## Chapter 3: Home Preparation

### “Dog-Proofing” Your Home

#### Preparing your home

When caring for a dog, it is best to strive for a home environment that is free of knickknacks or clutter within reach of dogs. Some dogs are creative about finding things they like to eat or destroy by getting on counters and tabletops or in trash containers or non-secure spaces. Many dogs seek out specific items such as garbage, cat food, cat feces (litter boxes), clothing (socks and shoes), and paper products. Even if a dog is generally non-destructive, a wagging tail or a curious nose can damage knickknacks or other valuable personal items. Consider relocating cherished or forbidden items to higher shelves or behind kitchen cupboards, which may prevent damage and/or ingestion by a foster dog later. Cat litter boxes should be kept in a room that is only accessible to the cat. Litter box hoods are helpful deterrents, but do not prevent all dogs from gaining access. A crate, tie-down, baby gate, or exercise pen are safe, humane ways to limit a dog’s movement and investigative tendencies either temporarily (first two weeks in foster care) or long term (some dogs need confinement the entire time in foster care).

#### Common home hazards

- **Anti-freeze** on the garage floor or driveway is especially toxic (a lick or two can be *fatal* to the dog – get to a vet immediately if ingested!)
- **Balloons** (inflated or not)
- **Batteries**
- **Bone meal** in quantity
- **Chocolate** (the darker the chocolate, the more toxic)
- **Citronella candles**
- **Coins**
- **Dental floss** in wastebaskets
- **Electric cords**
- **Holiday ornaments**
- **Nails**
- **Plants** in the home, garden and yard (*see list on following pages*)
- **Pool chemicals**
- **Rings**
- **Safety Pins**
- **Tennis balls** (if ingested, dogs have been known to die due to obstruction)
- **Tiki torches**
- **Trash** (secure or remove waste baskets)

## Preparing your yard

A foster care provider must have an approved fence that is a minimum of five feet high to allow SUPERVISED off leash play. Otherwise, the foster dog must remain on leash in outdoor spaces. A long line leash can be provided to allow the dog more length to run around on. Rotted boards, weak gate hinges or gaps in the fence will need to be repaired prior to housing a foster dog, and its integrity must be maintained. Do not assume that the foster dog will not try to escape; try to ensure that the dog cannot get out, even if it tries quite vigorously.

Remove any toxic plants or mushrooms (see list below), chemicals, foxtails, dangerous debris, etc. available to the dog. Dogs do not know what is good for them. Assume that the foster dog will “taste test” everything in its environment.

Ground level pools should be fenced off. Dogs have been known to drown in pools because they do not know where the stairs are located, or they have gotten caught under the cover.

If your landscaping is valuable or important to you, it is best to fence a separate area for the dog. It is always better to actively protect the landscaping than hope that the dog will not dig or shred-- ANY dog MAY dig or chew occasionally.

If you do fence a separate area for the foster dog, remember that grass wears down quickly, dirt turns to mud when wet, and a muddy dog will be uncomfortable and unwelcome in the house. Wood chips are not advisable as a surface, as they may leave slivers in the dog's pads, or the dog may try to ingest them. Concrete or pea gravel can make good dog run surfaces.

Foster dogs should be accompanied/supervised when free in a fenced yard. A foster dog may be left unsupervised in an approved dog run only. If your foster dog is vocal when left alone in a dog run, it is best to crate the dog indoors.

### Common household poisons

Acids  
Ammonia  
Antifreeze  
Antiseptics  
Ant stakes  
Aspirin  
Automotive products  
Bleach  
Boric acid  
Bubble bath  
Camphophenique  
Cologne  
Copper-brass cleaner  
Corn & wart remover  
Cuticle conditioner  
Dishwasher soap  
Disinfectants  
Drain cleaner

Drugs  
Epoxy glue  
Eye make-up  
Fertilizers  
Furniture polish  
Garden sprays  
Gasoline  
Gun cleaners  
Hair dyes  
Hair sprays  
Ibuprofen  
Insecticides  
Kerosene  
Mace  
Medicines (all)  
Model cement  
Nail polish  
Nail polish remover



Narcotics  
Oven cleaner  
Pain killers  
Paint  
Paint thinner  
Perfume  
Pest killers  
Pesticides  
Pine oil  
Plant food  
Rodent killers  
Rubbing alcohol  
Shaving lotion  
Silver polish  
Strychnine  
Snail bait  
Systemic rose food  
Toilet bowl cleaner  
Turpentine  
Vitamins  
Window cleaner

### **Houseplants**

Castor bean  
Christmas rose  
Chrysanthemum (stems)  
Dieffenbachia  
Elephant ear  
Holly (berries)  
Ivy (leaves)  
Mistletoe  
Philodendron  
Rosary pea

### **Vegetables**

Eggplant (foliage/sprouts)  
Onions (raw)  
Potato  
Rhubarb (leaves)  
Tomato (plant/leaves)

### **Ornamental plants**

Boxwood  
Daffodil (bulb)  
English ivy (berries/leaves)  
Golden chain (seeds/pods/flower)  
Mountain laurel  
Oleander  
Wisteria (pods/seeds)

### **Outdoor flowers/plants**

Autumn crocus  
Azalea  
Bleeding heart  
Buttercup  
Daphne  
Delphinium  
Foxglove (leaves/seeds)  
Hyacinth (bulb)  
Hydrangea  
Iris (leaves/roots)  
Jessamine (flowers/berries)  
Larkspur  
Laurel  
Lily of the valley  
Monkshood  
Narcissus (bulb)  
Peony (roots)  
Tulip (bulb)

### **Trees**

Apple (seeds – large amounts)  
Apricot (pits)  
Avocado (leaves/stems)  
Black locust  
Cherry (pits)  
English holly  
Horse chestnut  
Oak (leaves/acorns)  
Peach (pits)  
Walnuts (nuts/shells)  
Yew

## **Other Animals**

Dogs have natural instincts both as predators and as pack “rivals.” Even well-socialized dogs have the potential to either inadvertently (playfully) or purposely (prey drive with potential mouthy tendencies or aggression) pursue another animal. In either instance, the pursued animal has the potential to get hurt. Some foster dogs may become friends with family dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, birds, turtles, etc., but it is not realistic to take it for granted that all will automatically go well between a new foster dog and the established animals in the home.

If the foster care provider follows the first two-week confinement guidelines with each new foster dog, established pet animals will not be as threatened by the new house guest. Nevertheless, for the welfare of other animals, it is best to make sure ahead of time that all poultry, rabbits, birds and other small, caged pets are out of reach or in dog-proof cages. It can help a cat adjust to a new dog in its home if the cat has “safe havens” to use: open, high shelves or counters to perch from or beds and furniture to hide under, where the cat can observe the dog from afar. Generally, most cats maintain their stature in the home on their own accord. However, due to the potential for harm to the cat or the dog, and the risk of loss or damage to the dog’s eye (due to infected scratch), the foster care provider should not allow the foster dog so close to a cat that the cat feels threatened and swats.

## **Storing Foods and Medications**

Both food and medications should be stored in a dry, cool area that is inaccessible to foster dog or young children.

Plastic storage bins with lids are generally advised for food storage as they are easy to clean. The best container for food storage is a plastic bin (easy to clean) with a lid. Pop off or screw-on lids are suitable.

Keep all medications in their original packaging until administered. If a foster dog is on multiple medications, the foster care provider may choose to place the pills in a weekly container organizer. All remaining pills, however, should be kept in the original medicine container.

## **Importance of the Water Bowl**

Most foster dogs will have free access to water throughout the day. As a new foster care provider, you are furnished with a stainless-steel food dish. While you can certainly offer water from this dish, its lightweight nature can lead to spillage. For a freestanding water bowl, a ceramic OR heavy plastic bowl (heavy bottom and thick sides) can help prevent tipping and spillage. There are many varieties available in pet supply stores, from standard, generic types to more expensive, artistic bowls in various colors and designs. Since these bowls tend to be “fixtures” in a home, the provider may choose a bowl that best reflects their tastes and home décor.

While metal pails and bowls or heavy rubber buckets are other potential water bowl options, they may not be the best all-around option for a home with a high turnover of dogs (like a foster home). Some dogs may refuse to drink if their metal tags cling against the sides of a stainless-steel bowl. Other dogs may find heavy rubber buckets or pails tasty, and chew on the sides. Ceramic or heavy plastic bowls remain water bowl favorites for most dogs.

As water on the floor is a potential safety hazard for humans, some providers opt for a placemat to put under the water bowl. Placemats can be repellent or absorbent in nature. Either way, they should help contain the occasional slosh or drip from a wet nose and tongue.

## **Stain and Odor Solutions**

Even with the best preparation, a foster care provider may need to clean up after a foster dog (vomit, bile, diarrhea, etc.). The following commercial products available on the market are generally effective at removing both stains and odors:

**Simple Solution™** - safe for carpets

**Mother's Little Miracle®** - non-toxic, safe for use around children & pets

**Nature's Miracle®** - safe for carpets

# Chapter 4: Home Management

## The First Two Weeks

While GDB does not expect all foster care providers to be skilled dog trainers, much can be done to either maintain or improve a foster dog's house behavior. Dogs, like humans, are creatures of habit. If a foster care provider strives to maintain a routine, this type of predictability creates the least amount of stress during a dog's stay in a new home. If a dog's particular routines are unknown or undocumented (which is often), a dog will best thrive in a home environment where a routine is established immediately upon arrival and consistently maintained for the duration of its stay. Some of the kindest actions a foster care provider can take are to provide structure and set limits for a foster dog.

### The first two weeks

It is imperative that **all foster dogs have limited freedom for the first two weeks in a new home**. This means that the foster dog should be restricted by using the following confinement tools:

- Leash or dragline/longline
- Tie-down
- Crate or exercise pen (inside the home)
- Approved dog run

### There are three main reasons for this requirement:

- Provides structure and predictability to the foster dog in a time of change
- Maintains a house-clean dog and prevents soiling inside the home (most foster dogs have been in a kennel setting that allows them to relieve at anytime and anywhere inside the kennel)
- Promotes and patterns good behaviors in the new foster dog (rather than trying to correct inappropriate behaviors)

For context, GDB blind and vision-impaired clients keep their guide dogs on leash or tie-down for weeks in class and then several more weeks when they return home after graduation. Again, this is to provide the dog with structure, predictability, and patterning to good behavior in the home as they first adjust to a new setting.

These requirements are necessary during transition and most foster dogs are already well acquainted with being on tie-down, in a crate, etc. and actually find security in the use of these items. If introduced and received properly, most GDB dogs consider crates as a safe haven or "den." Even after a dog is allowed more freedom in the home, it will often seek a crate with an open door to retreat (Like people, dogs need time to themselves periodically).

If a dog is allowed too much freedom too soon, it may be detrimental to your home's welfare, jeopardize the dog's safety, or undermine the dog's training. Many people think that dogs thrive on freedom and a lot of it. In reality, most dogs are like children in that they may like to test limits, but actually thrive with structure. Excess freedom can actually be stressful to the dog that is accustomed to having a focused activity (guidework, obedience, interactive playtime) with a handler.

Dogs intended to be guides are raised to be confident dogs yet are taught to look for guidance from their human counterpart. This pertains to most dogs in the GDB program, whether they are active in the program. If the foster care provider does not tell them where they fit in the household structure, foster dogs will gladly assume responsibility for how they see themselves in the household, which may not be best for the dog or your home.

We are counting on you to enforce good manners in your foster dog. Please call the Foster Care Coordinator immediately if you are having difficulty and need support.

In addition to the above home management guidelines, here are two easy ways to teach a dog to look to you for guidance:

- Require the dog to sit and wait prior to feeding (dog looks at you first, then “OK” to release)
- Require the dog to sit and wait at doors with the human going through first (“Let’s Go” to continue)

After two weeks, a relationship begins to form between foster dog and provider and most dogs will be more settled in your home. The reason the foster dog is more settled is that you have provided a couple weeks of a consistent schedule and supervised behaviors. You may notice the foster dog lie down on his fleece pad before you even get a chance to take off the leash or attach the tie-down. This is a sign that the dog knows its place in your home. These signs are what you want to see consistently before allowing the foster dog freedom in your home.

Once a dog begins to demonstrate responsible behavior, limited freedom can be given gradually. If a dog behaves on a loose leash (does not try to get up on furniture or counters, or bolt through doors, etc.) without restraint, then the dog may be allowed some freedom in a room with direct supervision. It is best to offer off-leash freedom in the evening during a low energy activity (watching TV, reading books, etc.) when most dogs are quiet after the day’s activities and exercise. A dragline can be used to respond quickly and resume physical control over the dog should it misbehave.

**A possible exception to the two-week confinement requirement** is a foster dog that has been in your home previously for an extended period (two weeks or more) **and** the dog has been transferred from another foster home (did not come from the kennel where it can relieve indiscriminately). Once it is evident that the dog remembers your home routine and behaves appropriately, restrictions may be lifted prior to the two-week re-introduction into your home.

## The first nights

Foster care can be a confusing time for the dog with such a change in its routine. Some dogs may be very active, and some may whine. During the first few nights with the foster dog, it is important to avoid creating bad habits that can be bothersome in the future.

It is common for a foster dog to wake up in the middle of the night and try to get attention. If the foster dog barks or whines, give **one** firm command of “Quiet” and then

ignore the dog. If the dog is whining excessively and seems uneasy, it may need to relieve. If you feel that the dog truly needs to relieve, go straight out to the yard. The dog should relieve within minutes (if not immediately). Do **not** play with the dog or give it undo attention, or it might decide that waking up in the middle of the night is fun.

When first getting up in the morning, insist the dog be quiet until **you** are ready to bring it out of the crate or off tie-down. It is desirable to have a dog that lies quietly and patiently until taken out. This will develop a good pattern for many mornings to come.

## Older dogs

It is natural to want to give older dogs, especially retired guides, an unstructured lifestyle in their “golden years.” It is, however, even more important to provide the older foster dog with familiar handling and structure. Older dogs typically do not transfer to a new home as easily as young dogs and often show more signs of stress. “Retirement” can be especially stressful on former guides that have lived very structured lives. The sooner an older dog learns an established routine within a new home, the less stress it will experience.

## Good House Behavior

All dogs in the GDB program are taught to have proper house etiquette. Please help give the dog in your care a consistent lifestyle by following the following guidelines:

- Do not allow the dog on your furniture.
- No jumping on people.
- No uncontrolled indoor play.
- During mealtimes, have the dog lie down nearby or put the dog in a crate or on tie-down—do not allow the dog to sit and watch or to beg.
- When feeding, the dog should sit or be under control prior to placing the bowl on the floor (no jumping up).
- Do not feed by hand or give “people food.”

House behaviors to encourage and praise include:

- Lying quietly in a crate or on tie-down.
- Lying quietly at your feet during meals (no begging!).
- The dog remains quiet when outside noises are heard or the doorbell rings.
- When the foster dog is doing NOTHING. Many dogs (pet or service) do ‘nothing’ for great lengths of time each day. Please praise for absence of inappropriate behavior.
- The dog begins to chew on an approved toy. This is an excellent outlet for dogs as most have a need to chew. If a dog is reinforced for choosing a toy to chew, it will be less likely to chew on your furniture or itself.
- When the dog stays off the furniture. Even if you personally do not care if the foster dog gets on your furniture, the dog’s primary custodian or future adopter may not like having a dog on their furniture

## Backyard Privileges

Monitored off-leash privileges in your **enclosed** backyard may begin after you have shown the dog where to relieve (patterning a dog to a particular area in a yard may take up to two weeks). If you do not care where the dog relieves, you may allow the dog off-

leash immediately. However, keep in mind that because you do not have a relationship with the dog, it may not respond to commands. If it is an active program dog, you should expect a responsive recall after one command of "Come." Do not repeat the command. This simply teaches the dog that the first command is optional. You *may* say the dog's name more than once, but not the command. If the dog is not 100% responsive, keep the dog on retractable or long line in order to reinforce your first command.

If you have a foster dog that plays "keep away" (making a game of retrieving an item and keeping it from you by not coming when called or running away when approached) or eats undesirables (feces, leafy matter, rocks, etc.) the dog should be kept on a leash or long line. Even if a dog has been career changed, foster care providers should avoid inadvertently promoting habits which may adversely affect a dog's transition into a new home.

Dogs are social animals that seek companionship. If you leave a foster dog alone in a backyard for hours, it may cause separation anxiety in the dog, creating a need to escape. It is required that you leave a foster dog inside in a crate inside your home or an approved dog run in your enclosed backyard with secure gates (for non-vocal dogs only). Please discuss with Foster Care Coordinator if you have an appropriate outdoor dog run space. NEVER leave a dog unattended on a tie-down.

### **Other outside areas**

Dog parks, schoolyards, parks, beaches (even remote), etc. are not safe venues for foster dogs. The use of dog parks by foster dogs is prohibited because of the unpredictable behavior of other dogs as well as potential disease exposure since other dogs' vaccination status is unknown. Areas that are not entirely fenced are also not allowed, since GDB dogs are not trained to be reliable off leash. While dogs are tested in training for off-leash obedience, these tests are used more to determine a dog's temperament and willingness to work with a person.

Additionally, while GDB trains dogs to work around traffic, guide dogs are "regular" dogs when out of harness and are extremely vulnerable in traffic. Please do not risk the life of someone else's dog. Please always keep the foster care dog on leash away from the home.

### **Established Pets**

Many foster care providers have other pets (and occasionally another foster dog) in their home. A pet in the house can be a good thing, as many foster dogs in good health enjoy the companionship of another compatible dog. Other types of animals, such as cats, birds or other caged pets cannot be playmates to the foster dog. These pets are vulnerable around predatory animals such as dogs. Do not assume that all will go well between a new foster dog and the established animals in the home. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure the established animals have a safe haven away from the foster dog. This is best accomplished by restricting the movement of the foster dog inside the home for the first two weeks, or longer if needed. This will help teach the foster dog its place in the home, and that any obsessive or rambunctious interest in the established pets is not acceptable.

## **Dog-to-dog interactions**

When possible, it is best to have dogs meet on neutral territory (a nearby yard or park). When a foster dog enters the home of another, enclose the pet dog in a separate room. Allow the dogs to sniff each other under the door. Avoid letting your foster dog play excessively with the established pets. Rough or prolonged play with another dog has the potential to escalate into a fight or interfere with an active program dog's potential guide work.

If a pet or the foster dog in your home is aggressive or causing behavior problems, you will need to take actions to prevent problems. It is rare that initial problems between the pet and foster dogs cannot be worked out, but it is possible that they may not be compatible. A poorly behaved pet animal can make it hard or even impossible for the foster dog to be well behaved in your home. Prevent pets from either harassing or having a negative influence on the foster dog, especially a puppy, dog in training, or active guide dog. Please consult with the Foster Care Team if you have concerns regarding dog-to-dog interactions in your home.

## **Relieving Schedule**

GDB dogs are taught to relieve on leash and on all sorts of surfaces. Dogs that are active in the program are accustomed to relieving on leash and on command, instead of indiscriminately in a yard or while walking, will need to be leash relieved only. If the foster dog is not active in the program and will relieve off leash, it is recommended that you stay with the dog until it relieves. This allows for the monitoring of relieving patterns and any problems, such as diarrhea.

If you need to relieve the foster dog on leash, take the dog to the appropriate area and lengthen the leash. As the dog goes out to the end of the leash encourage it to sniff and move in either a circle around you or back and forth in front of you. Use the command "Do Your Business" to prompt the dog, and praise when it complies. Give the dog ample time to relieve, as much as 10 minutes if necessary.

Most dogs will need to relieve upon waking, after eating, after physical stimulation (play, walking), after confinement, or after four to five hours of inactivity during the day (on tie-down at an office desk). Be certain to offer relief five to six times each day. Unless a puppy or adult dog has issues such as incontinence or diarrhea, most adult dogs can go a full night (eight to nine hours, sometimes longer) without a need to relieve. It is best to pick up the water bowl in the early evening to prevent late night drinking and ensure that the dog's bladder is empty at bedtime. Always allow a dog one last relieving opportunity before bedtime.

## **Use of Confinement**

### **The crate**

A crate is not a cage or a form of punishment. Most foster dogs have been taught to regard the crate as a den where there is security and will seek it when they are stressed or tired. It should be large enough for a dog to stand up, lie down and turn around in it. Approved toys may be placed inside with the dog. Since dogs may have destructive tendencies, soft bedding or a fleece pad in the crate is not permitted without approval from foster care or training dept. staff.



### **If the foster dog does not immediately accept the crate:**

- Move the physical location of the crate to an area that the foster dog can still hear/see/smell people while in the crate (kitchen, living room, bedroom, etc. --- not the basement, garage or attic).
- Give the foster dog all meals in the crate and an approved toy. A stuffed Kong® (filled with dog kibble that has been soaked in water and usually frozen) can be used for dogs that are vocal or stressed while crated.
- Make sure that the foster dog is crated both when people present and while unsupervised so the crate isn't always associated with being alone.
- Leave the TV or radio on when people are gone.
- Make sure that people do not return to the dog while in the crate to "comfort" or correct.
- You may use a verbal "quiet," ignore the dog, or leave the area. Avoid eye contact, which is a form of attention. Return to area or stay close to the crate if the dog is quiet. If a dog is fussing, do not let it out of the crate—this only reinforces the behavior. If calm and quiet, return periodically to praise.
- Take the foster dog for car rides in the crate--assuming that the dog likes car rides.
- Make sure to put the foster dog into the crate with a cheerful demeanor but avoid coddling or "saying goodbye." If you have reservations about using the crate, the foster dog will pick up on your anxiety. You can give the dog a few kibbles each time they go in the crate to make it a positive experience.
- Work up to crating the foster dog for several hours at a time during the daytime, starting with short periods of time if possible. It is recommended that dogs new to a home be crated during the night to establish a pattern of good behavior and to determine any destructive tendencies or incontinence issues.
- Tire the foster dog out before putting it in the crate.
- Provide a relieving opportunity prior to crating, and upon release from the crate.

### **The tie-down**

Tie downs are short, durable cables (encased with a plastic sheath) with clips on each end--one for the foster dog's collar and one to anchor the dog. Tie-downs are commonly attached to a ring in the wall (via a stud in the wall near or on a base board). Tie-downs may also be wrapped around a **solid piece of furniture** (if you don't want to drill a hole in your wall). Alternatively, an old dog collar can be fastened around the leg, and then the tie-down attached to it to prevent the tie-down from rubbing the leg of the furniture. Remember that dogs can be strong, so make sure that you find something steadier than a chair, as it may fall over if pulled. Good places to fasten a tie-down are beds, couches, or heavy tables. Be certain that the dog can be observed when on tie-down.

#### **Tie-downs should:**

- not exceed two feet in length or be shorter than 18" in length
- be long enough to permit movement. The foster dog should be able to comfortably stand and turn around.
- be short enough to prevent excessive tangling. Also, since dogs are normally clean (of themselves and their immediate area), the tie down should be short enough to prevent the dog from moving away to relieve itself.
- not be substituted by use of a leash or dragline. Use the foster care issued tie-down, as a dog can chew through a leash or other material in seconds if given the opportunity.

- never be used without supervision.

The tie-down is used to teach dogs to calmly accept their place in your home, car, office, etc. By not providing unlimited freedom, you are patterning good house behavior by preventing problem behavior and providing structure. Most foster dogs have been exposed to tie-downs and should accept them well. Tie-downs are lightweight and portable, which enables you to use one when and where needed. The downside to the tie-down is that the foster dog still can chew anything in its reach and may get tangled. Check to make sure there are no inviting items within reach and **never leave a dog unsupervised on tie-down.**

**Use of a tie down can be helpful in the first two weeks of foster care--or longer--especially during in the following situations:**

- Meal preparation time
- Quiet time
- When guests visit
- At night when sleeping (next to your bed)
- When you are distracted by other activities in the home, and you are not able to directly monitor the foster dog
- If children or others go in and out of the house frequently and there is a chance a dog may escape

### **How to put a dog on the tie down**

Once you have the tie-down secured, quietly bring your foster dog to the area. Remain positive and calm as you attach the tie-down. Before you leave the foster dog, make certain that it realizes it is on a line:

- Tiedown should be placed on the dead-ring of the collar, or on a flat collar.
- Lightly hold the tie down and slowly move away from the as you release your hold.
- Do not rush away from the dog, since it will likely want to follow and may jolt against the tie-down.
- Once you move away, the foster dog will realize that it cannot join you.

### **If the foster dog does not immediately accept the tie-down**

Remain calm if the foster dog begins to struggle or becomes vocal. The foster dog is not hurt; it may not be used to being restrained. Ignore the dog until the struggling or whining/barking stops. Do not talk to the dog and avoid eye contact, which are forms of attention and may make the dog more anxious. Simply ignore the behavior until the dog is quiet and relaxed, unless the dog becomes tangled or is in danger of hurting itself (paw caught, etc.). Return to and/or praise the dog as soon as it is quiet. Most foster dogs will “complain” at first on tie-down to test you, but quickly relax.

### **Things to remember for both tie-downs and crates:**

- They should never be used as forms of punishment.
- They should not be used to keep the foster dog confined for long periods of time.
- Leave the foster dog in the crate or on tie-down initially only for short periods.
- Ignore the foster dog if it cries out of loneliness or frustration.

- Learn to know the times the foster dog needs to “do its business” so that you can relieve prior to confining.
- If the foster dog is released from the crate or tie-down while struggling or vocalizing, a dog will learn that this behavior equals release. The next time the dog is on tie-down or in a crate, it will struggle harder and vocalize louder because that is what worked last time.

### **The exercise pen or “ex-pen” (at least 36” high)**

These circular, wire enclosures work best for dogs that have been taught how to remain in them. These can be hazardous for some dogs, so do not leave a dog unattended in an ex-pen. Dogs may easily escape an ex-pen by pushing it over or doing a standing leap, which can easily cause injury to the dog. Ex-pens are used to allow dogs a bit more movement compared to a crate or tie-down and may be recommended for older, arthritic dogs or dogs recovering from injury/surgery.

### **The baby gate**

Baby gates are wonderful tools for limiting a dog’s movement through the house. If you wish to cordon off a specific room for the foster dog, a baby gates may work well. Like exercise pens, baby gates are not very high and some dogs may try to escape. Keep in mind that confining a dog to a room will not prevent house soiling or destructiveness. Baby gates are not recommended for the first two weeks of foster care.

### **The dragline**

Draglines are lightweight, cotton webbed or nylon pieces of rope 5 to 15 feet in length-- with a snap at one end that attaches to the dog’s collar. A dragline can be used on the foster dog as you “test” and monitor a dog’s house behavior, while introducing more freedom in the home. The dragline may also be used when the dog is “loose” in the backyard. The dragline allows you to redirect the foster dog from a distance if it demonstrates inappropriate behavior. For some older or less active foster dogs, this tool may not be needed.

### **How to use:**

- Only use a dragline when you can monitor the foster dog every second. It is easy for the dragline to get caught on furniture, etc.
- At first, do not drop the dragline, but rather hold the end and quietly follow the dog through the house as it explores. Remember to keep the line loose! We want the foster dog to think it is actually loose.
- If the foster dog displays any inappropriate behaviors, quietly and quickly step on the end of the dragline. You can then pick up the leash and reel in the dog to you to remove them from the situation.
- Praise the foster dog as soon as it stops the inappropriate behavior.
- When the foster dog starts to demonstrate the basic rules of the home, drop the dragline and let it drag it around while still under supervision.

## Leaving a Foster Dog Alone

Before leaving the foster dog alone for several hours in their crate, it is best to acclimate the dog to your absence while you are still in the home. Many new foster dogs may still be adjusting to your home and routine. If you leave the dog alone suddenly for a long period of time, it may become anxious.

A dog needs to trust that you will return without needing to bark, pace, etc., but by remaining calm. You can build a dog's trust and confidence by practicing "low-key" departures and returns. When you are preparing to leave or return to the dog it is important to remain rather blasé. Most dogs are keen observers of human behavior, and if you are dramatic or emotional with hugs and kisses when you leave and always have a "loud" re-entry into the home, the dog will pick up on this behavior and become stressed when you leave and anticipate your exciting return. This anticipation can manifest itself in nervous tendencies such as: self-mutilation--licking sores, pulling out hair, etc.; barking; pacing; or destruction of property.

Some dogs develop separation anxiety if they are not accustomed to being alone away from their primary custodian. They may transfer this anxiety to the foster home. Patience, understanding, and matter-of-fact handling are the best tools to cope with this anxiety. Crates are especially useful security tools for these types of dogs as they can comfort the dog and prevent nervous pacing and possible destructive tendencies.

### How to practice

Put the dog in a crate and leave the room to do something else in another part of the house. If the dog vocalizes, return and tell the dog "quiet" in a firm (not loud) tone and then leave. If the dog repeats the barking soon after you leave, shorten the length of time you are gone so that you can return to praise the dog for silence. If the dog barks as you are walking away, consider giving the dog an approved toy to distract him from your departure. Use these chew toys as a chance to return to the dog to praise the dog for being quiet and content.

- Gradually build up the amount of time that the dog is "alone."
- Reinforce silence with praise and calm behavior.
- Do yard work while the dog is in the house.
- Practice "leaving" the dog in the house with an exit and re-entry (e.g. leave in the car for a quick ride around the block).
- Turn on the radio or TV to provide background noise that will mask sounds from outside that might cause the foster dog to bark or get anxious.
- Once the dog appears confident and relaxed during practice sessions, you are ready to leave the dog to run an errand.
- A tired dog is often a well-behaved dog. Provide the foster dog with an exercise, play, or relieving session prior to your departure.

### Where to leave the dog:

- **Crates:** Due to their den-like qualities, these kennels offer the most security to dogs left alone. While it is okay to crate a dog overnight, a dog should not be crated for more than four or so hours during the day (both for relief reasons and the dog's need to move around).

- **Exercise pens (at least 36" high):** These enclosures should only be used for dogs that have been taught how to calmly remain in them or for dogs that cannot be crated due to injury or health reasons. Talk to your Coordinator regarding the use of an exercise pen before leaving a dog alone.
- **Outdoor kennels:** A dog run must be approved by the coordinator and should stand six feet high and be contained within a fenced yard. The flooring should be cement or a surface that cannot be dug out. The kennel should offer protection from the elements. If a foster dog barks when left alone, do not keep the dog in an outdoor kennel.
- Do not leave a foster dog on tie-down unmonitored. While this is a wonderful tool when supervised, when alone a dog's limbs may tangle in it and cause injury. Dogs normally do well on tie down in your bedroom overnight, as they are asleep most of the time.

## Chapter 5: Preventing Loss and Injury

### Leash, Collar, and ID Requirements

Foster dogs must be on leash when away from the home. This simple practice will keep the dog safe from many environmental hazards (e.g., cars, ingestion of poisons, getting lost).

While some GDB program dogs have done a small amount of off-leash training with licensed instructors, they are not reliable off-leash. The purpose of off-leash training with dogs in advanced stages of guide dog training is to view the dog's temperament. **All GDB program dogs, even active Guide Dogs, are not trained to be reliable off-leash.**

Prevention truly is the best course of action. It is easy to make the hopeful decision rather than the probable one. Please do not risk the health and safety of someone else's dog! Always keep the foster dog on leash when away from home.

### Identification tag

While all GDB dogs have been microchipped, they must also wear a second form of ID that the general public can easily understand and use to identify the dog. A GDB ID tag is attached to the collar the dog wears at all times. Notify GDB if you receive dog with no ID tag on its collar.

### Training collar

Most active program dogs wear a martingale collar that has an ID tag attached to it. When handling and walking a dog in training, it is advised that a head collar be used in conjunction with the martingale collar. A head collar allows for easier handling of a dog regardless of how much (or how little) training it has had. Consult with the Foster Care Coordinator or a training staff member for proper application.

### Head collars

The head collar (Gentle Leader® or EZ head collar) is a wonderful management tool to use, it is also required for foster dogs. When using a head collar, use it in conjunction with the martingale collar. Attach the leash snap to both the head collar and martingale collar as a safeguard. Please ask for assistance to ensure proper application.

Head collars work as they do on horses and other livestock by giving the handler full control of the animal's head, which allows for "directional steering." A head collar also allows the handler to control a dog's movements using pressure. When pressure is applied, the straps around the dog's muzzle and head tighten. This pressure ceases when the collar is released. Head collars are effective for safely controlling strong, easily distracted, or untrained dogs.

Use the head collar whenever the dog is actively being managed by a handler. Remove it when at home and the dog is off leash in an enclosed area, on tie down, or in a crate or ex pen. Since the head collar is often used by clients to help prevent scent

distraction in their dogs, it is requested to remove the head collar during relieving time, if reasonable for the foster care provider.

While head collars are more commonplace today among pet dog owners, they may still generate questions from the public about whether they are a muzzle. Be prepared to explain that these tools are not muzzles. Dogs may drink, eat, pant, and lick when wearing them. Head collars are gentle and positive tools and are gaining in popularity among pet owners.

## **Traveling in Automobiles**

### **Entering and exiting**

The foster dog should wait to gain approval from the handler before getting in or out of a vehicle: use the **“wait”** command to help them pause and then use the **“okay”** command to signal when dog should enter or exit. This helps reinforce behavior that lessens the danger to both the dog and the handler. If a foster dog is compromised due to age or an orthopedic issue, you may need to assist them, or use portable steps or ramp after the dog is trained to use them.

### **Riding in the vehicle and safety**

Make sure the dog area is free of items/debris which they may nibble/ingest. The safest possible options are either riding in a secured/anchored crate, or using a seatbelt attached to harness. Since those options aren't always possible, the safest place for a dog is in the middle of the car, on the floor behind the front seats. This is often the lowest point of entry as well, which is ideal because jumping in and out of high-profile vehicles can cause undue stress on joints. The front seat area often has air bags which can be lethal to dogs/children unless turned completely off. The dog can have a leash remain on or you may use a tie-down to reduce risk of the dog jumping out when the car stops and doors open. Make sure dogs cannot get their heads out of the window since their eyes can be injured by flying debris outside of the car. Please be mindful to drive in a manner that doesn't cause dogs to become nervous/anxious if they must make extra effort to balance on sharp turns or hard/fast stops.

### **NEVER**

Never leave dogs in car unattended.

Never leave dogs in warm/hot car.

Never place dog in the open bed of a truck, even if crated or on tether.

Never allow them to stick their head out of the window.

### **Notify GDB**

Our dogs are generally great passengers and have a lot of transport experience. If you happen to note a lot of panting, pacing, vomiting, or reluctance to get in or out of the car, please let GDB staff know immediately so we can assist.

## Heat exhaustion danger

**NEVER LEAVE A FOSTER DOG ALONE IN A PARKED VEHICLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES! 10 MINUTES OR LESS IN THE HOT SUN CAN RESULT IN DEATH.**

On a warm day, the temperature in a parked car can reach 160 degrees in a matter of minutes, even with the windows partially open. Heat exhaustion and/or death can occur.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion/stroke include:

- Sluggish responses in general
- Unsteady on feet
- Extremely heavy panting
- Possible reluctance to take water
- Full Heat exhaustion (104 to 106 degrees) = Acute collapse, vomiting, tremors, abnormally rapid breathing
- Heat stroke (> 108 degrees) = Life threatening

\*\*If heat exhaustion occurs, go immediately to the nearest veterinary clinic, or emergency clinic if it is on a weekend or after hours.



## Chapter 6: Feeding

### Basic Feeding Guidelines

Overall, dogs love to eat, and people love to offer food. Since food is a strong motivator for most dogs, care needs to be taken in how a foster care provider presents food to the dog.

For all foster dogs, but especially for active program puppies and dogs, it is essential that the dog is under control when the bowl of food is presented. If a Guide Dog jumps up when its blind handler is trying to feed it, the dog may cause injury to the handler. The dog should keep four paws on the floor when the food bowl is presented. Require the dog to “sit” before placing the bowl on the ground and give the “ok” command to release the dog so it may eat.

### When and how much to feed

Many of the commercially prepared dog foods available furnish a well-balanced diet for a working dog. GDB presently uses several varieties (including prescription diets) of the following brands:

- Natural Balance
- Eukanuba
- Hill's Science Diet
- Purina Pro Plan
- Royal Canin

Food will be provided along with each new foster dog you receive. Although most dogs will be on one of the above brands, some dogs may be fed another type of food by their primary custodian or local vet. As dogs mature and grow older (7-14 years), vets often recommend a food formulated for the changing needs of senior dogs.

Dogs, unlike us, do not need variety in their diet to be happy and healthy. Frequent or abrupt changes in the diet can cause digestive upset in the dog. If you need to transition a foster dog to a new diet (**only if the foster care request indicates it or the vet clinic asks you to start a new food**), change food gradually over a period of a week or so by adding small amounts of the new with the old. Gradually increase the amount of the new and reduce the amount of the old. If the dog starts having problems (loose stools, weight gain or loss, etc.) consult your Foster Care Coordinator.

The basic ration for your foster dog should consist of dry kibble and a small amount of water. Most dogs from GDB are fed twice a day. **Please follow FCRs feeding guidelines for your foster dog and refrain from feeding the dog any other food (kibble, treats, human food, dietary supplements, etc.) without consultation or prior approval from GDB.**

The foster care request will indicate how many cups per meal the dog eats. When measuring the cups of kibble, please use an actual measuring cup (coffee cups and mugs vary in actual size and can give you a very inaccurate measurement). Additionally, the food should be level with the top of the cup, not rounded over. Use of inaccurate measuring tools or rounding up can add enough additional food to a dog's meal to cause weight gain.

## **Adding water**

We advise you to add warm water to the food because:

- the kibble is allowed to expand to its fullest before the dog eats it.
- it makes digestion of the kibble easier.

## **Supplements**

The quality dog kibble that foster dogs receive is nutritious and does not require the use of any additives. Do not add anything to the foster dog's diet unless indicated on the foster care request sheet. Foster care providers must obtain approval from either the Foster Care Coordinator or a GDB veterinarian to alter a foster dog's diet.

## **Animal bones**

We never recommend animal bones of any kind for your dog. Bones can easily splinter and cause major medical problems in dogs. Even large beef bones can splinter or break into smaller pieces.

## **Treats**

Treats are not necessary unless specifically used for training purposes, which will be directed by staff. Feeding dogs a lot of treats will result in begging and obesity.

## **Access to water**

Foster dogs should have free access to fresh drinking water at all times. Occasionally GDB Veterinarians may prescribe a special water schedule for a foster dog because of the specific needs of that animal. Specific, written guidelines will be provided if the foster dog you are caring for requires a specialized water schedule.

## **Weight and Body Conditioning**

When you run your hands along a foster dog's sides from the shoulders to the hips, you should feel and see an indentation or "tuck" from the last rib to the hips. This is the first area a dog will put on weight, and this indentation should remain. The girth area and a dog's neck are the last areas for weight gain or loss to show. Some dogs go into foster care overweight. If a foster care provider diligently follows the amount of food prescribed and maintains the recommended exercise schedule, an overweight dog will lose weight quickly (depending on his length of stay in your home).

Overweight dogs often have an overall lower life expectancy due to the strain on the heart, joints, and other vital organs.

Please help us prevent dogs in foster care from becoming overweight. It is much easier to maintain a dog's weight as opposed to trying to take 25 pounds off a hungry dog.

## Chapter 7: Exercise

### Play and Exercise

Just as humans have individual ideas about what they consider “fun” (think roller coasters or ice fishing), so do dogs vary in their preferences about desirable activities. One dog might love a rowdy game of “tug” while another dog would much prefer quieter interactions. Foster dogs have varying responses when it comes to play opportunities.

All dogs need physical stimulation. Young dogs generally need more intense and frequent outlets, while most senior dogs benefit and enjoy playtime that is appropriate for them. Unless otherwise directed by the Foster Care Coordinator or veterinary staff, most foster dogs need play and/or exercise every day. This means an activity that allows the dog to expend excess energy and just have fun.

A play or exercise session should last from 10-15 minutes, enough time for the dog to feel a true release of any pent-up energy. Of course, the time frame will vary from dog-to-dog. Some dogs need considerably more time, while others may relax after 10 minutes. And yet other dogs may be restricted to minimal or no activity due to illness, injury, or age. Consult with the Foster Care Coordinator or GDB veterinarian regarding any exercise limitations or restrictions.

### ACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES & EQUIPMENT:

- Leashes are generally preferred for walks for ease of handling. EZ leashes or leash and head collar combinations are also very effective tools for managing untrained, young dogs. However, depending on the status of the dog, age and level of training, retractable leads or long-lines can be used for long walks or playtime. Retractable leads can be tricky; exercise caution when using one.
- “Free run” (dog off leash) a dog *only* in a safe, enclosed backyard.
- Interactive play such as tug-of-war is acceptable for most program dogs. Some dogs may not be suitable from either a temperament or physical standpoint. FCPs will be notified if this activity is contraindicated for a particular dog.
- A walk with the dog on leash (for those dogs physically able).
- The person decides when play time begins and ends. Use the “OK” verbal cue to encourage movement into play activities. To end play or calm an increasingly excited dog, say “that’s enough” and / or ask the dog to sit. The dog should relax and release the toy (if one is involved).
- FCPs can refer to guidelines for interactive play with active program dogs.

### ACTIVITIES & PLACES TO AVOID

- Wrestling, roughhousing, chase games, or racing indoors
- Taking the leash off in an unfenced area, even if remote
- Taking a foster dog to a dog park, fenced or not
- Playing retrieving games with active program dogs (this might be acceptable with some individual Career Change dogs).

- Any play activity that causes the foster dog to become overly excited or creates behavioral problems (nipping, playing “keep away”, jumping up, etc.). See above section for guidance on how to calm an over-excited dog.

## PRECAUTIONS

### Ensure a Safe Play Surface

- Shiny or slippery surfaces can lead to slips or falls that can injure a dog or cause a dog to fear polished floors.
- Excessively running a dog on pavement can cause bruised or sore pads.
- Inspect the area for any sharp or potentially injurious objects such as broken glass, protruding sprinkler heads, etc.).

### Other Dogs

Do not exercise the foster dog with unfamiliar dogs. Only allow play with dogs with whom they share established and positive relationships. If the foster dog is allowed to wrestle and romp with another compatible dog in a secure area, ensure the collars have a quick release feature. If a tooth or jaw gets caught in a collar during interactive play, the collar can be removed before the situation becomes unsafe.

Not only is playing good for a dog’s mental, emotional and physical health, it is great bonding time for the person and dog. Having an able dog as a play companion is one of the “perks” of taking care of a foster dog.

So have fun!

## Acceptable Toys

With hundreds of toys on the market, it would be impossible to discuss each of them individually. Common sense and monitoring playtime and chewing are helpful in keeping the foster dog safe.

Many dogs love to chew. A sturdy chew toy can provide oral satisfaction and mental relaxation for your dog. **GDB recommends Nylabones™ and Kongs™ as quality products that hold up well to a dog’s strong jaws.** A hollow Kong stuffed with moistened kibble and then frozen can be a pleasant diversion for some dogs. Be sure to compensate for these extra calories when feeding the foster dog her regular meal. Be aware that some strong chewing dogs may destroy Kongs®. Rubber rings are interactive-only tug toys that can be quickly destroyed if left with the dog. All toys need to be checked after each use for any splintering or sharp edges. Discard any toy with significant damage.

Please inquire with the Foster Care Coordinator for the Puppy Raising program’s policy on approved toys for active program puppies. This list gives ideas for additional toys for different aged puppies and mature dogs and how to use them.

There are numerous accounts of dogs injuring themselves by overzealous gnawing and ingestion of all sizes and shapes of toys meant for entertainment. Often it results in emergency surgery to remove the object, lacerated gums or dental surgery to repair or remove broken teeth. A ball or toy lodged in the throat can asphyxiate a dog and foreign objects blocking the intestines can have dire consequences as well. Toys should be chosen carefully and introduced only when there is someone present to supervise.

The following is a list of **toys that GDB does NOT allow**:

- Latex squeaky toys
- Cow or horse hooves
- Pig ears
- Rawhide bones
- Real bones
- Frisbees™ or flying discs
- Fabric or stuffed toys - anything a dog could dismember, shred or swallow
- Tennis balls, golf balls, any medium or small size ball.
- Rope toys (easily ingestible)

**GDB especially cautions against playing with balls.** The movement of balls can quickly lead to obsessive behavior in a dog. Dogs can also be injured or killed by choking on or ingesting smaller balls (such as tennis or racquet balls) or other “toys”.

## **“Limited” VS “Normal” Exercise**

### **Limited exercise:**

Some foster dogs have medical or age-related reasons that limit their ability to exercise. In general, limited exercise could mean that the dog needs to remain very quiet and calm (in a crate or ex-pen) and brought out only to relieve on leash (this is generally what is recommended for dogs recovering from knee or hip surgery). For others, limited exercise may mean 10-minute walks twice a day with no hills (possibly for geriatric dogs). Please follow the guidelines on the Foster Care Request (FCR). If the “limited exercise” section is checked, be certain to read additional information about the type of activity recommended. If it is not written on the foster care request, contact the Foster Care Coordinator of GDB DVM for clear directions.

### **Normal exercise:**

Each dog is an individual. In general, if “normal” is checked on the foster care request, it means normal activity for that dog. Some dogs are low energy types and others have high energy levels. Others may not be either extreme but will still benefit from physical exertion to prevent high energy in the home. For some dogs, going on a run is out of the question, but a brisk, 30-minute walk twice a day is more suitable. For dogs that are not overweight but simply out of condition, their stamina will increase over time with a slow introduction to exercise. Like people, if a dog’s new exercise regimen is too much too soon, soreness and possible injury can occur. It is important to start slow and build up to longer distances and time. If a foster dog has difficulty rising or limps after an initial exercise regimen, the dog did too much. Please contact the Foster Care Coordinator or GDB DVM with any questions or concerns regarding the foster dog’s exercise tolerance.

## Chapter 8: Dog Behavior

### Canine Body Language

The intention of this chapter is to give you a basic understanding of various behaviors that a foster dog might exhibit while in your care. “Reading” dogs (understanding what is going on in the dog’s mind based on the behavior that is being exhibited) is more an art than a science. It takes time and hands-on experience to develop these skills.

Additionally, a dog’s behaviors may blend from one to another in a seamless manner. Like humans, if not carefully observed and/or “heard” in its context, canine language has nuances that can be missed. For instance, a dog can wag its tail because it is friendly or because it is aroused. A dog can exhibit dominance over another dog by putting its head across the neck of the other dog. Yet at another time, that same dog may do a similar gesture during rest, out of comfort reasons. A dog may put its paw on your foot because it is insecure, affectionate, assertive, or simply as a way for the dog to keep tabs on you without watching you. Since this one behavior can mean many different things, it is important to “read” more than the obvious and observe the dog in the overall context in which the behavior occurs.

Like people, dogs are social creatures. That is why they are so compatible. Whether or not you realize it, you communicate with your dog every day. Shared learning is one of the great satisfactions of working with dogs. It is what makes dog training possible. It is what makes GDB possible.

How do we communicate with a dog? Dogs communicate easily with one another as they speak the same language. Just as when you are trying to communicate with someone from another country, you need to concentrate on what you are saying to the dog and what the dog is telling you. The tools we use to communicate with our dogs are: voice, leash and collar, body positions and movements, and praise (both verbal and physical).

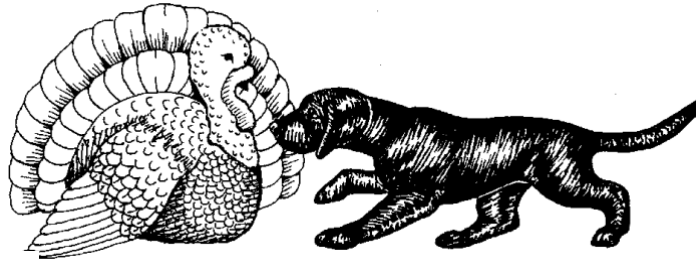
Dogs need clear communication. They need to know when they are correct or incorrect. Dogs do not understand “sometimes.” For instance, allowing a foster dog to jump on you in old clothes means to the dog that it is always acceptable to jump on you... even in your best clothes.

Before we look at the language of dogs, take a minute to consider the language of people. How do we get a message across to another person? The obvious answer is through language. However, several studies have shown that language is only one way we communicate; we also use tone of voice, expression, gesture, and posture. Some obvious examples are that smiles communicate pleasantness, frowns distress. Trembling is a sign of fear. Waving implies greeting, while a raised fist suggests defensiveness.

Dogs vocalize by barking, growling, and howling, but they also have a rich repertoire of various body languages to use. The following pictures should give you an idea of the range of body motions the dog utilizes to get its message across to its canine counterpart or human. Using their bodies, dogs tell each other whether they are friendly, fearful, playful, or protective, and whether their temperaments are strong and assertive or quiet and submissive. People who work with dogs learn not only how to read this body language, but also how to use it.

### Trepidation around a novel, strange object

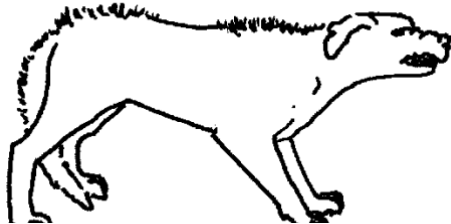
- Lowered body and tail
- Slow, tentative steps



### Insecure Aggression

- Hackles up along back and croup
- Corner of mouth forward
- Stands tall and forward
- Tail up and stiff
- Teeth exposed
- Nose wrinkled
- Potentially very dangerous and aggressive, ready to attack, may be growling

**NOTE:** A confident aggressive dog would look similar to the dog above, but the **ears would be up** and the confident dog **may or may not have hackles**. This confident aggression is perhaps more dangerous than insecure aggression as the dog may not show as many signs of its intentions or may be more overtly challenging.



### Fear/Defensive Aggression

- Lowered body with backward stance
- Tail tucked
- Ears back
- Hackles along back and croup
- May want to flee but may not have that option available



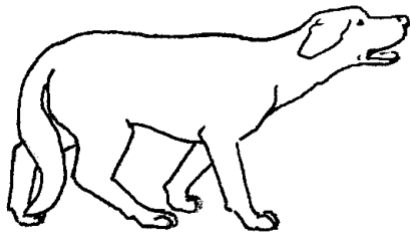
### Active Submission

- Licking lips
- Lowered body, head and ears
- Tail down with tip wagging
- Groveling movements



### Passive Submission

- Licks own lips and/or nose
- Tail tuck
- Aversion of eyes

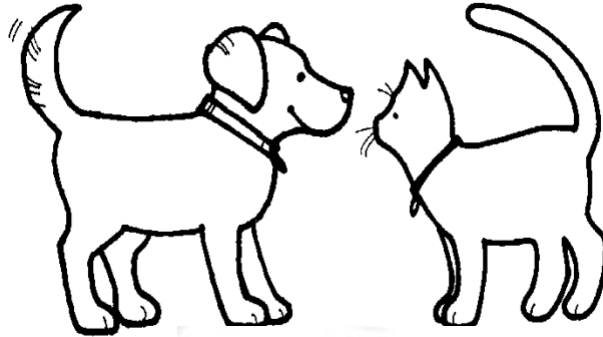


### Submission to a Human

- Looking up to person with gentle expression
- Body language subdued/lowered

### Play Gesture to Another Dog/Animal

- Relaxed yet attentive expression
- Loose mouth
- Tail up to accentuate bow
- Ears up
- Tail wags
- May bark and run in small circles



### Play Bow to Humans

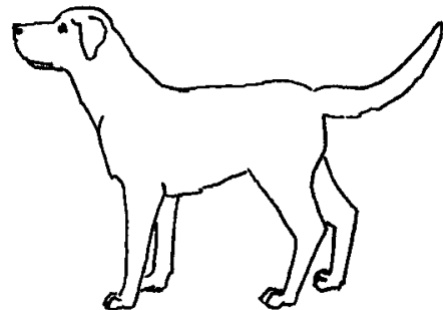
- Invitation to play
- Rear end up
- Tail up
- Often an alert expression



**NOTE:** Look on face denotes potential for “keep away” (running away when approached or given the command to “come”) tendencies, a game for the dog’s amusement, not the human’s.

### Attentive, Alert Dog

- Neutral, yet somewhat confident body language
- Mouth closed
- Stands tall and forward
- Tail out
- Ears alert
- A prelude to another behavior
- May be observing something novel in the environment and deciding how to respond to it



### Confident

- Ears and tail up
- Tight wagging



**NOTE:** Although the dog may have good intentions, it appears ready to chase the cat if given the opportunity. Not all dogs that have erect, wagging tails have good intentions. Oftentimes, a dog postures with another animal as a way of standing its ground, not relinquishing it.



**Confident, alert dog**

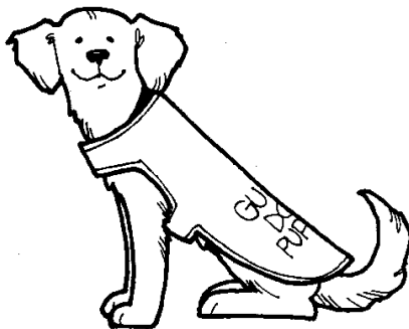
- Forward ears
- Direct stare with eyes

**NOTE:** Even though this animal is lowered to the ground, it is readying itself to move quickly towards another animal in an assertive manner. This behavior is similar to how a dog might act.



**Friendly dog with good intentions**

- Relaxed ear set
- Although the dog is looking directly at the human, this dog's expression is gentle and its eyes are soft.



**Attentive dog in sit**

- Either this dog is doing obedience, is politely interested in something tasty, or is waiting for an action from its handler.

**Simple rules for everyone to follow, especially children**

Although most dogs are friendly (especially dogs from the GDB program), they all possess the capacity to bite, and unfortunately, children are most likely to be on the receiving end of these encounters. Children, who themselves are learning about communication, are most likely to have an unpleasant encounter with a dog, because they cannot read the situation. They may possibly frighten the dog or trigger the dog's chase response. While foster dogs are generally known entities to GDB, they are "strange" to you. Additionally, depending on the foster dog's circumstances or history, GDB may or may not have full information on a certain dog and its propensities. For instance, for most dogs from the program, it is fairly safe to assume that you could go right up to the dog and give it a hug. On the other hand, this seemingly affectionate behavior that humans often do with dogs *may* be perceived differently by some dogs and make them uncomfortable. It is best to take certain precautions with a new foster dog to ensure a safe situation for both parties:

- Never run around strange dogs. Dogs will instinctively be stimulated by and, if possible, chase things that run.
- Do not scream or shout at a strange dog. Loud noises frighten many dogs.

- When two dogs are up close, they sniff nose to nose. Curl your fingers into a fist when greeting a dog. Another unassuming posture a person can take to help make a dog more comfortable is to crouch down and turn sideways (to look smaller) to the dog.
- Stroke from below. Dogs defer to one another by assuming a submissive posture. The submissive dog will approach the dominant dog by nuzzling the head dog's chin with the muzzle. Likewise, if you approach a strange dog from below, running your hand up the neck, you are telling the dog that you are not a threat. Some dogs are "head shy." Avoiding the head avoids the risk of frightening the dog.

For more information and illustrations on a wide spectrum of dog behavior, check out:

***Know Your Dog*** by Bruce Fogle, D.V.M.

## Understanding Breed Differences

The following are generalities about the three major breeds we use at GDB. Every dog is an individual, but each dog will tend to show certain propensities due to their genetic make-up that makes them a Golden Retriever, Labrador Retriever, or Labrador/Golden Retriever cross.

In general, **Golden Retrievers** enjoy being with all people. They can be very trusting and solicitous of people. In regard to the environment, Goldens tend to get easily distracted by moving objects, such as blowing leaves, bouncing balls and toys. Most Goldens are easily motivated by food. In play, Goldens tend to be rather immature and enjoy getting in the face of other dogs. Their intentions are solicitous in nature, yet for the dogs on the receiving end of these play gestures, it could be annoying. It is important to recognize when these "needy" behaviors are bothering another dog and limit the Golden in order to prevent a negative response from the annoyed dog. In general, Goldens will readily adapt to a new home and handlers.

**Labrador Retrievers** tend to have more of a range of behaviors: They can be quite solicitous or aloof (or somewhere in between). They can be very people-oriented or very dog-oriented. They can be vocal or silent. Labradors tend to be more scent (constantly sniffing bushes, the ground, etc.) and food distracted. They also tend to have lower body sensitivity and will not demonstrate pain in an overt manner. Labrador Retrievers tend to be quite oral when they play. They will tug and sometimes lick other dogs' coats or ears. They also tend to be rather physical when they play (i.e. they will run into each other, etc.).

**Labrador/Golden Retriever Crosses** tend to have traits representative of each breed. Crosses have a desirable blend of the willingness, trainability and friendly temperament of both breeds, with the softer, more sensitive side of the golden. The incidence of medical issues can be reduced with a cross-bred dog as well.

To reiterate, the above information is based on generalities, and it is important to remember that no one dog will be exactly like another. These differences are what make each dog special.

## Chapter 9: Grooming

### The Importance of Grooming

Grooming is an essential part of the foster dog's overall health care and important to their social needs. Grooming sessions help the handler develop a close relationship with a dog; keep a dog's skin and coat healthy; and provide an opportunity to spot any new or unusual changes in a dog's body. Spending 10-15 minutes daily or every other day keeps the dog well groomed, your home cleaner, and your dog better bonded with you.

Regardless of the breed of foster dog, routine grooming is required. The breeds GDB use have "double coats," which protect them in both cold and hot weather and do not require extensive care. When the undercoat sheds, the outer coat holds in the short hairs. These dead hairs can irritate the skin and cause the foster dog to scratch, which can result in skin problems that require vet care. Scratching irritations can be lessened with regular grooming. Just as humans brush their own hair daily, you need to care for the foster dogs' coat often.

The undercoat serves as insulation, protecting the dog by keeping it warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Clipping a foster dog is not allowed, as it will remove the protective undercoat and may cause sunburn.

### Grooming Tools and Techniques

New foster care providers are given the following grooming equipment:

- Zoom Groom®
- Slicker brush
- Comb (typically used only for dogs with longer hair and could irritate a short-coated labrador)

The Zoom Groom®, slicker brush and comb will become dirty and need to be cleaned occasionally.

The brush and comb should be washed when needed, using warm soap and water, rinsed thoroughly, and then dried before storage. If you use scalding water, you may crack the brush and cause the bristles to fall out.

### Recommended grooming steps

Grooming the dog's entire body every day provides an opportunity to detect any problems, such as ticks; swellings; pain when touched; burrs; cuts or abscesses; flaky skin; red, inflamed, or yellow (jaundiced) eyes; infected ears; cracks in paws or mats between toes; ingrown or excessively long nails; or anything else that may need veterinary attention. Developing a routine will not only provide a thorough health inspection, but a familiar grooming pattern will help the dog become more comfortable being handled. The following steps are recommended:

- Select a suitable place to groom your dog, such as a porch or patio. To keep the house clean, take a wastebasket with you to dispose of excess hair.

- Grooming should be a relaxing time for the dog. Have the dog sit, stand or lay on its side, whatever seems most comfortable. Use a leash or tie-down to control young or active dogs that will not stay in one place.
- Use the Zoom Groom® first to loosen dead hair and stimulate the oil glands. This also brings dirt to the surface and removes shedding hairs. Use the Zoom Groom® in circular motions, going both with and against the natural lay of the hair.
- Use the slicker brush to brush with the lay of the coat, from the foster dog's neck to his tail, including his chest and sides.
- Use the comb behind the head to the hindquarters. Be sure to comb the dog's feathering on legs, chest, behind the ears, and tail.
- As a final step, rub or stroke the dog all over with your hands. This feels good to the dog, and allows for the detection of any changes in the body, abrasions, lumps, etc.
- Some people like to rub a moist cotton towel on the dog's face then down the sides of the dog as a finishing touch. A moist towel picks up loose hairs and any dirt.
- Clean the grooming articles, pick up the excess hair and dispose in the wastebasket. There is no need to wash the grooming tools after every groom session unless there is an oily build-up. It is best to clean grooming tools between foster dogs.

### **Precautions:**

- When using the comb and slicker brush, it is possible to scratch the dog's skin with the metal if too much pressure is applied. Only use as much pressure as seems comfortable for a given dog.
- A dog's tail is very sensitive; use caution when grooming it.
- The comb should not be used on the dog's face or bony parts of the legs.
- If your foster dog has "feathering" (long hair on the tail, backsides of legs, stomach, armpits, and ears), pay special attention to these areas, as they are prone to developing mats.
- If your foster dog displays aggression or fear while being groomed, consult the Foster Care Coordinator immediately.

### **Bathing**

The foster dog should only be bathed when indicated on the foster care request (i.e. prescribed medicated baths) or when the foster care provider believes it is needed, due to odor or obvious soiling. Too frequent bathing can damage a dog's coat and skin. In either case, the provider should contact the foster care coordinator beforehand to make an appointment and confirm that a staff person is available to do the bath in the timeframe requested.

After the foster dog is bathed, be certain to groom the dry dog to remove all loose hair. Some dogs may be slightly itchy (and scratch) after a bath due to the temporary loss of oils in the skin. With the gentle types of shampoo available currently for dogs, this problem is lessened (if you choose to bathe a foster dog at home, do not use human shampoo, as it is pH balanced for people, not dogs).

The foster dog should not be bathed for three days after the application of the topical flea and/or tick control. This wait ensures the product has dried and dispersed onto the dog.

All dogs that have been in the kennel are typically bathed prior to going into a foster home, with the exception of some dogs that are recovering from surgery.

## **Teeth and Gum Care**

Few people are aware of the importance of keeping a dog's teeth and gums clean and in good condition. The foster care provider should check the teeth for tartar and gum soreness on a regular basis. Before brushing, check the dog's mouth and report such things as: missing, chipped or cracked teeth; bad breath; excessive tartar on the teeth; and inflamed gums to the vet clinic. Neglected teeth and gums can be injurious to the general health and well-being of the dog. Frequency of teeth brushing will be noted on the foster care request.

### **How to brush teeth**

Put a small amount of the dog's toothpaste on the brush and gently lift the lips to expose the teeth and gums. The dog's mouth does not need to be open, but it is not unusual for the dog to open and close its mouth once brushing begins in order to swallow saliva and paste/gel. You can gently hold the dog's mouth closed to prevent chewing on the brush. The bristle activity on the teeth and gums is as important as applying the toothpaste or gel. Brush in an up-and-down motion on both the top and bottom teeth. Pay special attention to the back molars, as they are prone to greater tartar build-up.

If using the toothbrush seems awkward, use a piece of gauze wrapped around an index finger instead. Be careful that fingers do not get between the rear molars when the dog opens its mouth, as the molars may close down and pinch them.

Please use the tooth cleaning products that are provided in the take-home foster care packet, and follow the foster care request's guidelines on frequency. If you are unsure of how to brush a foster dog's teeth (or are having difficulty with a particular dog), please contact the Foster Care Coordinator.

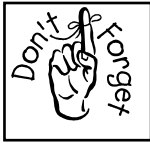
## **Ear Care**

Frequency of ear cleaning for each dog will be listed on the Foster Care Request. Healthy ears normally emit a sweet smell. Ears that emit a foul, rank smell accompanied by redness and/ or discharge may be infected. If the ear produces dark-brown wax, yet does not smell bad or look red, clean the ear and follow up with another cleaning the very next day if needed. If a lot of dark brown wax is wiped out again, an infection may be possible. If a dog begins to shake its head or paw at its ears, this may also indicate an ear problem. If an ear infection is suspected, please contact the Foster Care Manager or a leader to schedule a vet appointment.

Foster care providers will be supplied with a small bottle of an ear cleaning or drying solution. When using ear-cleaning solutions, douse a cotton ball (never apply solution directly into ears) and wrap it around your finger. Place your covered finger down into the ear canal as far as it easily goes. Rotating the finger will help clean the canal. Make certain that the cotton ball is large enough that it stays on your finger and does not accidentally stay in the canal as you bring your finger out. Never use cotton swabs (Q Tips®), as they may push wax further down into a dog's ear.

## Nail Care

If a foster dog's nails are long (the dog noisily "clicks" on the hardwood or linoleum floors when walking), please contact the foster care coordinator for an appointment to have the dog's nails trimmed at GDB. Due to the risk of cutting the "quick," the blood vessel that nourishes the nail bed, it is best if professional staff undertake this duty. One incident of cutting the "quick" can make even the most tolerant dog pull away or resist paw handling.



If you need assistance with any aspect of grooming your foster dog, please call the Foster Care Coordinator.

# Chapter 10: Medical Care

## Preventative Care

### Vaccinations

Guide Dogs revised the practice of annual boosters (DA2PP, Bordetella, Flu, and Lepto) given to adult program dogs. Puppies still get the routine (every four weeks) vaccination series and “adult” boosters at return for training. GDB has embraced recent studies that indicate vaccination efficacy for adult dogs is longer than previously thought. Also, a dog’s immune system may potentially be adversely affected by too frequent vaccinations. Booster shots will be given every three years, along with the rabies vaccine that is required by law every three years.

### Heartworm

Heartgard® is a monthly chewable heartworm preventative that should be given to the foster dog on the first of every month. Heartworm tests are given every three years (rather than annually).

### Flea and tick control

Frontline (topical) or Nexgard (oral) are the most common types of flea prevention used at GDB. Apply flea and tick topicals to the foster dog’s skin on the withers (shoulder area). The dog’s coat should be parted and the liquid dispersed directly on the dog’s skin. It will be absorbed into the skin over 24-48 hours. It is best to avoid petting the dog on the spot until the product is absorbed. Oral medications can be given at mealtime.

## First Aid Kit

### Necessities:

- **Tweezers** to remove ticks or thorns.
- **Eye wash** (saline solution) to flush eyes.
- **Gauze** to stop bleeding.
- **Antiseptic ointment** (Neosporin®) to treat minor wounds or burns.
- **Hydrogen Peroxide** to induce vomiting--**vet approval required**. The average adult dog needs to drink about one cup to induce vomiting.
- **Antihistamine Tablets/Capsules** (Benadryl®) to treat insect bites--**vet should be consulted prior to administration**.
- **Rectal thermometer** (used with petroleum jelly for lubrication) to check dog for overheating or illness. Normal temperature for a dog is 101.5 –102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Moist wipes** to remove dirt or sand from ears.

## **Giving Pills (“Pilling”)**

- Put one hand across the top of the dog’s muzzle.
- Push in on lips to open mouth (put a finger tip on the roof of a dog’s mouth, behind the upper canine tooth to trigger mouth opening).
- Put the pill on the back of the tongue and close the mouth.
- Some dogs may need to have you blow on their nose when you hold the mouth shut to ensure that the dog swallows the pill (blowing makes the dogs lick their lips and swallow).
- Do not put the pill in food unless indicated on the foster care request sheet or by the GDB vet or Foster Care Coordinator.
- Please give the GDB vet clinic 24-hours notification when requesting medication refills. The clinic tries to fill all requests the same day, but advance notification will assure that medications are re-filled before they run out.
- Please call the Foster Care Coordinator with any questions about pilling a dog.

## **Canine Ailments and Injury**

### **Diarrhea**

Diarrhea can occur for many reasons. Common reasons for diarrhea include consumption of rich food (human or garbage), a parasitic, bacterial or viral infection, or an abrupt change in diet.

**The best course of action for diarrhea is to allow the gastrointestinal system time to remedy the problem on its own by fasting the dog for 24 hours.** Water should be provided as long as the dog is not vomiting. If vomiting, see the section on vomiting below. If the diarrhea stops, the dog may return to a normal diet the next day.

If the diarrhea continues past the first day of fasting, consult the Foster Care Coordinator. The foster dog may need a change of diet; dogs may be put on a bland diet (rice, cottage cheese, etc.) or prescription diet when diarrhea or GI upset persists.

If a number of days pass between initial diarrhea and a second bout (a week or more), the second bout should be treated as the first case. If the foster care provider sees a pattern developing in the dog (diarrhea every few days or weeks), consult the Foster Care Coordinator.

**If the diarrhea is accompanied by vomiting (see the vomiting section below), the dog has a temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit or the dog appears lethargic, contact a GDB vet immediately.**

Note: Diarrhea is a liquid stool. A soft stool is not considered diarrhea and should not be treated the same as diarrhea. However, persistent soft stools should be reported to the GDB vet clinic for consult. Occasional mucous on a formed stool is not of great concern.



## **Foxtails**

“Foxtail” is the common name for the plant *Hordeum jubatum*, a plant responsible for many visits to the vet by dogs. The foxtail plant is most common in the Western United States, especially California. The dangerous part of the foxtail is the dried awn, which is the bristly, fibrous part at the top of the plant. The spiky pointed form of the awn allows it to affix itself to clothing and skin and to work its way into body openings.

If a dog has acquired a foxtail, it may exhibit the following behavior:

- shaking head
- scratching ear = lodged in ear canal
- violent sneezing and rubbing nose on ground = inhaled into nose
- squinting, tearing = lodged in eyelid
- limping, licking paw = lodged in between toes

If the dog shows any of the above signs and a foxtail is suspected, contact a GDB vet immediately. Fast attention may save prolonged treatment and therapy. Foxtails can penetrate the mucous membranes in the mouth and lodge in the tonsils, and large abscesses can develop. Foxtails will penetrate between toes, migrating up the leg, leaving continuous draining tracts. They can eventually make their way into internal organs deep in the body, causing severe secondary infections. The same migration and infection cycle occurs when a foxtail enters through a genital opening.

The only cure for a lodged foxtail awn is removal, oftentimes requiring anesthesia and surgery. It is not easy to find a foxtail that has burrowed inside an animal’s body. The best prevention is to avoid this potentially dangerous weed altogether.

To help prevent a dog from getting a foxtail:

- Do not walk the dog where foxtails or similar plants grow. In the West, foxtails are abundant along trails, in fields and on untrimmed parkways and lawns. They are most dangerous when dry and, given our brief periods of rain, they have become very prolific.
- To remove the weed from your own yard, you will need to uproot the entire plant. This is best done while the plant is still green. Another option is to spray herbicide on the grass that produces the foxtail before the plant forms the awns in early spring.
- In addition to avoiding exposure to foxtails, you should check the foster dog’s body thoroughly during your daily grooming routine. Examine the ears and check all body openings. Check between all the toes, in the pad, and comb through the coat.

## **Gastric torsion**

Some larger breeds of dogs are prone to gastric dilatation and torsion, or “bloat.” For unknown reasons, the dog’s stomach torques and prevents gastric emptying. The dog attempts to vomit without success (retches), the belly region is taut and possibly distended and the dog will appear restless. Signs may vary among different dogs.

**Immediate veterinary attention and eventual surgery is required to prevent death.**

## **Heat stress**

Heat stress is commonly caused by:

- Dogs left in cars on warm or hot days.
- Dogs walking or playing excessively in hot weather.
- Infection.

- Prolonged seizures.

Symptoms of heat stress include:

- Sluggish responses in general.
- Unsteady on feet.
- Extremely heavy panting.
- Possible reluctance to take water.
- Very red gums.
- **Hyperthermia = 104 to 106 degrees F.** (Acute collapse, vomiting, tremors, abnormally rapid breathing)
- **Heat stroke = > 108 degrees F** (Life-threatening)

In the case of heat stroke, a high fever must be reduced rapidly to save the dog's life and prevent permanent brain damage. **(Normal canine body temperature = 101.5 to 102.5 degrees F).**

- Gradually immerse the dog in **lukewarm** water.
- Above all, treat the dog promptly and get to a veterinarian as soon as possible. The veterinarian will treat for hyperthermia or heat stroke. **Please refer to *chapter 2, "Veterinary Appointments and Emergency Procedures."***

### **Otitis (ear infections)**

Either bacteria or yeast that have multiplied to high levels in the ear canals most commonly causes infections. Each of these problems requires different treatment, so it is important that a veterinarian properly diagnose the infection before any treatment is started.

Most dogs will let you know when they are experiencing discomfort in the ear. Shaking or tilting of the head, frequent or prolonged scratching of the ear or back of the head, odor or redness of the ear, or rubbing the side of the head along the floor are usually indicative of an ear infection or a foreign object in the ear or ear flap such as a tick or foxtail.

**Many times, ear infections can be prevented with weekly cleaning.** Some dogs require more frequent cleaning for preventive maintenance. Consult with the foster care request for cleaning frequency and refer to *chapter 9, Grooming* for proper ear care.

### **To apply medication into the ear:**

Squeeze the ear medication (oftentimes a greasy, viscous fluid) down the ear canal and massage the base of the ear gently for approximately 10 seconds. Wipe off excess ointment on the earflap with a cotton ball. Sometimes the medication is applied in conjunction with an ear cleaning. Consult the foster care request sheet for each dog's individualized care.

### **Poisoning**

**Contact a vet immediately.** Stay calm. Be prepared to answer questions about type, amount, when consumed, and current condition. Transport to the vet if requested. Bring original container.

## Seizures

While seizures can be very frightening to observe, they are rarely damaging. If the foster dog begins to seizure, do not attempt to interfere with or touch the, especially around the mouth. Stay calm and call a veterinarian for further instructions. Many dogs remain a bit disoriented for up to two to three hours after a seizure. **Transport to a veterinarian is necessary if a seizure does not stop.**

## Ticks

Ticks need to be removed as soon as they are found attached to the dog. Ticks can be transmitters of disease for both dogs and people (Lyme, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, to name a few).

To remove a tick:

- Use a pair of tweezers (never use your fingers).
- Grasp the skin at the point of attachment.
- Pull the tick away from the dog with slow, steady pressure (do not twist or squeeze the tick).
- After removal, clean the wound with antibacterial soap and water.
- Monitor the site for a day or so. If a red ring develops around the bite wound, contact a vet clinic.

## Vomiting

Vomiting may be a sign that the foster dog has swallowed something that is too rich or unacceptable. Dogs have efficient systems in this regard! It is not uncommon for healthy dogs to vomit bile or food on occasion. If the dog has a normal energy and appears comfortable, simply monitor the dog. Withhold food and all oral medications until the dog's system has settled down, normally 12-24 hours. Offer water in small amounts.

When you clean up the vomit, look for foreign material. This may give you a clue as to why the dog vomited, and if any follow-up action is needed. Save the remains of any chewed package material or plants for poison control information.

**Call a vet if any foster dog vomits for more than three hours, vomits blood, or seems lethargic or depressed.**

## Water consumption

If a foster dog has a sudden increase in water consumption unrelated to hot weather, consult a vet.

## Wounds

**Superficial wounds** should be cleaned by gently washing with antiseptic soap and water (or CHX flush solution), rinsing well, removing all debris and dirt, and using an antibiotic ointment if necessary.

**Deep wounds** need more attention. Take the foster dog to a vet. Protect the wound with a clean damp gauze compress during transport.

**Puncture wounds** due to bites from another dog may not be visible for 10 or so minutes after the bite. Take the foster dog to a vet.

<p><b>Use common sense in emergency situations – please go directly to an Emergency Clinic if you feel the situation is urgent.</b></p>
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## Recovery from Surgery

Please follow the guidelines on the Foster Care Request sheet. The GDB vet clinic encourages the foster care provider to ask questions if the guidelines are not clear. Depending on the dog's needs and type of surgery, care will vary. Most dogs will require limited activity, some more restricted than others.

A foster dog recovering from surgery will require vet checks to assess the healing process and ensure proper recovery. Some dogs may require weekly re-checks at the clinic; other cases may simply need to be called in over the phone for progress reports. The dog will likely be on medication as well. Please refer to the foster care request for proper administration.

### Guidelines for post-operative care:

- Dogs must not be allowed to lick or chew sutures. If this occurs, some means of protection must be used such as an e-collar or bandages on the incision.
- Dogs must be kept quiet at home for at least 10-14 days post-operatively to allow sufficient time for healing of soft tissue.
- Incisions and sutures must be kept clean and dry. Do not bathe dogs or allow them to swim or otherwise get the incisions wet.
- Signs of infection include one or all of the following:
  - Redness of the incision
  - Drainage from the incision
  - Odor from the incision
  - Separation of the healing edges
  - Elevation of the body temperature
  - Excessive pain
  - Poor appetite
  - Lethargy
- Medications should be given exactly as directed.
- Keep all bandages clean and dry. Wet, dirty bandages can lead to secondary incision or skin infections. Plastic bags can be temporarily placed over limbs in wet weather.
- After the initial recovery period, some foster dogs may require rehabilitation (range of motion activities, hydrotherapy, etc.). Unless the foster care provider can do them, the foster dog will need to come to GDB for these sessions. Each dog is an individual and will require a specific rehabilitation plan.

## Terminal Hospice Care

Some foster dogs are terminally ill. Rather than place the foster dog in an adoptive home, GDB keeps them close to campus for on-campus care and close monitoring.

Follow the guidelines on the foster care request sheet and health summary. Depending on the dog's illness, symptoms, signs, and care will vary. Consult with the GDB vet clinic or the Foster Care Coordinator when questions arise.

Foster care providers who provide hospice care to GDB dogs are special and unique individuals. GDB thanks these extraordinary volunteers.

## **Medical Emergency Treatment Facilities**

Routine, non-emergency medical treatment should always be done by appointment at a GDB veterinary facility.

If an emergency were to occur in the local area during business hours, the foster dog should be brought to GDB for life-saving treatment. If a foster care provider is not within a reasonable driving distance to campus, emergency care should be given at the nearest veterinary clinic. In either case (brought to GDB or an outside vet clinic), it's best to call the facility ahead of time so that they can be prepared for your arrival. Please be certain to give both the foster dog's name AND identification number. Depending on the dogs' status (retired vs. active), some GDB program dogs may share the same names.

For after-hours emergencies, outside emergency clinics should be utilized for life-saving treatment. Before getting your first foster care dog, please identify the nearest emergency clinics to your home and make note of their hours, address, and phone number. Keep their phone number in a place where it is easily accessible in the case of emergency. We recommend storing this number in your cell phone as well as posting it near your home phone if you have a landline.

**Please note: GDB should be immediately notified of illness or emergency of a foster dog.** If departure from the home is immediate (as is often the case in emergencies), the foster care provider should **call GDB (1-800-295-4050)** from the emergency clinic for the on-call GDB veterinarian to consult with the Emergency Clinic veterinarian.

**Pre-authorization is required when possible.** Lifesaving and stabilizing measures do NOT need authorization prior to treatment. Tests and x-rays, for example, DO need authorization.

# Chapter 11: Being a Good GDB Representative

## Handling in Public

It is necessary to create a positive public image with a foster dog while managing it in public. With heightened sensitivity to the humane treatment of animals, it is important to be a calm, supportive, and positive handler. The GDB program maximizes the use of positive reinforcement in its program, and foster care providers are encouraged to do the same. Oftentimes, this means planning and finding opportunities to identify and reinforce desired behaviors.

It is important to appropriately manage a foster dog while in public. A well-behaved foster dog results in goodwill toward the foster care provider, the dog and GDB overall. While GDB does not expect all its providers to be skilled dog handlers, management equipment such as head collars help can help maintain and/or improve a foster dog's manners. Most foster dogs have been well-socialized in the GDB puppy raising program. That said, there are some foster dogs who may not benefit from public exposure due to temperamental or behavioral issues that interfered with their candidacy in the program.

Consistency is important. A well-behaved foster dog in public is often one that has a structured home life with clear expectations. If you follow the home confinement and management guidelines and transport the dog in a manner that encourages calm, quiet behavior, this patterning will encourage the same behavior in public.

GDB recommends that all foster care providers walk the foster dog on a head collar (in addition to the dog's collar). Refer to *chapter 5, "Preventing Loss and Injury,"* for instruction on how to apply and use a head collar.

When stopping to greet someone, verbally cue the dog to "sit," and insist the dog remain calm while being greeted. If s/he stays in the sit position, verbally praise the dog. Be reasonable with your request. For instance, certain surfaces (tile, linoleum, etc.) can be slippery for dogs, and make it difficult for a dog to sit for a long time.

Pause at doorways to pattern the foster dog to acknowledge the door (reinforcing the active program training dog of its responsibilities) or to prevent the dog from developing a habit of bolting ahead of its handler. If possible, the handler walks through a doorway ahead of the dog.

Monitor the foster dog at all times. Dogs are very perceptive and may take advantage of inattentive handling. They may pull on the leash, sniff other dogs, inappropriately chew, pick up items off the ground, or even whine, growl, or bark. At the moment your foster dog attempts these negative behaviors, interrupt it and immediately give a verbal "No!", which essentially means 'stop what you are doing!'. Do not yell; instead use a curt, businesslike tone. "No" to the foster dog means, "Stop what you are doing!" If your foster dog does not immediately respond to a verbal reminder, back up the verbal with use of the leash: Pull and release of the leash / head collar away from the area of interest and ask the dog to do alternative behavior, such as 'sit'. When the desired behavior is achieved, give the foster dog verbal.

It is easy to be influenced by members of the public who do not understand the importance of setting limits and reinforcing expectations in a foster dog. Reluctance to effectively manage the foster dog will likely create more distraction or other misbehavior in the foster dog. If you are so inclined and wish to respond to a concerned member of the general public, it may be effective to point out, “dogs love to be on the go with their person. This special dog gets to go everywhere with the person he loves and does not have to stay home”. Every positive encounter that educates the public is an opportunity to help GDB and its constituents.

It is quite normal to feel that a foster dog will “love you more” if you allow the dog to do what it wants. Actually, these people-oriented dogs have been raised with structure and expect to be told what to do and where to be. They will look to you for this structure and expectations. And like a child, they may test the limits, but ultimately, they want to know that the handler (parent) reinforces these limits.

It is possible to achieve a balanced relationship with your foster dog in which you, the handler, are the clear leader, who provides love and praise for desired behaviors and responses.

To read about dog equipment that is available to the foster care provider, please refer to *Chapter 5, “Preventing Loss and Injury.”*

## **Public Access**

**Foster care dogs do not have access rights of guides or dogs in training.** When handled by a guide dog mobility instructor or qualified puppy raiser, active program dogs are allowed in public venues where the average pet dog is not (restaurants, hair salons, grocery stores, etc.) Laws protect guides and dogs in training. Some states have given different degrees of access for puppies, but this access varies from state to state. The foster dog is no different from pet dogs regarding access.

Foster care providers may not take a foster dog into public venues. Foster care scarves do not grant access to public venues. If you have questions about places you can or cannot bring your foster dog, please ask your Foster Care Coordinator.

## **Socializing**

Most foster dogs are driven between your home and campus and walked in your home neighborhood. Foster care providers are under no obligation to socialize a foster dog unless asked to do so by the Foster Care Coordinator or a training supervisor. Rather, the GDB foster care program emphasizes having the dog in a loving home environment. Plan your outings so that the foster dog is not left alone in the car or outside a store. If your employer allows a foster dog in the work environment, this access is at the goodwill of that employer only.

Overall, foster dogs are just like pet dogs in regard to access. Most foster dogs simply need a home and yard with loving guardians.

**While in public with your foster dog, remember that you are an official representative of GDB. You may be asked to explain your handling techniques or the program itself. Thank you for educating the public about our program and being a positive representative for foster care and GDB.**



## Chapter 13: Active Program Dogs

### The Active Program Foster Dog

An “active program dog” is a dog that is either intended to become a Guide Dog (puppy or dog-in-training) or is already an active Guide Dog. While breeder dogs are technically “active” program dogs, the guidelines surrounding their care are more relaxed because they will not ever be *working* as Guide Dogs.

This chapter offers guidelines to FCPs that enable them to give the active program dog the best possible chance of becoming a guide or maintain the necessary behaviors the client relies on for his or her safety. It is imperative that FCPs adhere to these guidelines.

Active training dogs either currently live with or will live with someone who is vision-impaired or blind. Guide dogs need to behave in a controlled manner under distractible circumstances.

Certain normal pet dog behaviors such as sniffing on walks, relieving where and when they want, going up to other dogs, eating items from off the ground, etc. *are not acceptable for a guide dog*. These behaviors distract the guide dog from its work and can subsequently jeopardize the safety of a GDB client. If a foster dog is allowed to pull suddenly on leash, for example, this behavior could potentially pull a vision-impaired or blind person off their feet. Additionally, if a foster dog is allowed to jump up toward people’s faces, this is a behavior that a client may not be able to react to in time to protect him or herself. Eating food or non-food items off the ground can be harmful to the dog’s health, and a visually-impaired handler may not be aware that this has happened. These are just some of many behaviors or situations that need to be considered when caring for active program dogs.

Understanding what the foster dog has been trained to do helps the FCP bond better with the dog. This makes the foster dog’s stay in a home more enjoyable for all.

### Behavior Around Food

Food is a strong motivator for most dogs. If not used properly (given in a timely fashion as a reward, not a lure), food use can create undesirable behaviors in the positioning and overall responsiveness of a guide dog.

In general, do not offer food by hand to any active program dogs. There are two scenarios where feeding a dog by hand is allowed and encouraged. The first is when rewarding the dog when he or she returns to you when called (by using either the dog’s name or the command “Come.”) The other time it is encouraged to use a food reward is after putting the dog in their crate. In each case, the dog should be offered one piece of kibble after completion of the behavior. Avoid holding the kibble in your hand to use as a lure or bribe. There may be other situations where you are directed to use a food reward on a case-by-case basis with a particular dog.

### Feeding

As stated in *Chapter 6, Feeding*, it is important that the foster dog keep all four paws on the ground when the bowl of food is presented. If a dog jumps up toward a person with a

visual impairment, the dog could injure them. In puppy homes or in the training kennels, dogs are often asked to 'sit' prior to putting the food bowl on the floor to ensure the dog does not jump and to instill patience in the dog to wait for its food.

## **During your meal**

The active program dog is expected to be indifferent about human food on the table. Most active program dogs will be able to lie quietly at your feet during meals. Be certain that all family members are consistent and do not offer or drop food for the foster dog.

During family meals, begging, sitting or staring at people in an expectant manner, or worse – putting nose or paws on the table to reach food -- are unacceptable. If the foster dog has these inclinations, put the dog on tie-down away from the table (but still within view). Whenever the dog settles down to sleep or ignores the meal, give calm, low praise to reinforce this indifference.

Guide dogs need to work around food on the ground. If a guide dog becomes accustomed to eating or looking for food on the ground, it will not be able to focus on the work. A guide dog that does not expect food from others, from counters or the ground will be more manageable around food during day-to-day guidework.

Remember: Food is everywhere in a guide dog's normal working day. Active program dogs need to learn to ignore the temptation.

## **Verbal Cues and Communication**

The following is a list of the verbal cues that most active program dogs are familiar with and possibly know (young puppies may not have been introduced to all of them.) Obedience verbal cues help manage a dog's behavior and positioning and may also be used to regain the dog's attention.

Preface with the dog's name to get their attention before the verbal cue.

- **“Sit”** - The dog places its rear haunches on the floor.
- **“Down”** - The dog lies down on the ground.
- **“Let's Go”** - The dog walks on the left side with loose leash (no pulling on collar).
- **“Come”** - The dog approaches you close enough for you to gently and easily grasp the collar followed by praise.
- **“Stay”** - Requires a dog to remain still in a specific spot and position. This cue is not used very often because it requires discipline on the part of the handler, since the dog is not allowed to move at all until given the release cue “OK.”
- **“Wait”** - A “temporary” stay. More commonly used than the ‘stay’ and is preferred for foster care providers to use. The dog knows that it will be moving from the spot momentarily. Requires the dog to wait until given permission to exit or enter: Used with vehicles, gates, doors, etc. The release word for “Wait” is “OK”.

***Do NOT use words that cannot be enforced. For example, if you use the verbal cue, ‘Come’, and do not follow through to ensure the dog’s response, it could be a safety issue for the dog, and may compromise the dog’s training.***

## **Other Useful Verbal Cues**

- **“OK”** - Release cue {Example: “Juno, Wait.” Open the car door. “OK” to release dog and permit it to enter or exit the car.}
- **“No”** - Stop an unacceptable behavior. Used in a calm, curt and firm manner.
- **“Off”** - Get off furniture, people, counters, etc.
- **“Kennel”** - Word to direct the dog into a crate or kennel.
- **“That’s Enough”** To stop play and/or require dog to let go of an interactive toy. It may also be used to stop a dog from being overly active.
- **“Good Girl/Boy”- Verbal praise** for when the dog is doing something acceptable or desirable. Used with pleasant tone and enthusiasm. Some active, immature dogs may require calmer, less enthusiastic praise to assist with good responses. Praise can be a pleasant voice, pleasant physical touch, or both used simultaneously.
- **“Do Your Business”** - Indicates the time for the dog to relieve. This is the one time that sniffing is allowed and encouraged!

## Basic Communication

How do we communicate with a dog? It requires focus on what you are saying to the dog and what the dog is telling you. Dogs are very observant of us and quickly learn what they can expect. Our non-verbal cues are sometimes more powerful to a dog than our words. Alternatively, being able to “read” your foster dog’s behavior is helpful to better provide what the dog needs. Though learning this inter-species language may be new to you, you will appreciate the satisfaction of communication that is based on clear and consistent interactions.

### Communication tools:

- **Voice** - both words and tone
- **Body positions and movements**
- **Reinforcement** – praise (verbal, physical), food and toy
- **And lastly, leash use**

Consistency is paramount in communicating clearly with a dog. We at GDB use positive reinforcement through physical and verbal praise as well as food reward to let the dog know when she is correct. We use voice and collar action to let the dog know when she is incorrect.

Dogs do not understand inconsistent rules or demands. After experiencing initial confusion or frustration, dogs can actually become indifferent or anxious towards someone handling them inconsistently. For instance, allowing a dog to jump up on you when you have on old clothes means to the dog that it is always okay to jump up on you.... even when you are in your best clothes. Dogs do not differentiate and cannot understand that a certain behavior is okay only **“some of the time.”** A random reprimand would not be fair to her, and unreliable signals from you may result in the dog *“tuning you out”*. **In order to be an effective dog handler, consistency is a “must”.**

## Motivating a Foster Dog

**Praise** can be a friendly voice, pleasant physical touch or a combination of the two. Guide dogs are raised and professionally trained on a hearty diet of PRAISE, nurturing their desire to please a handler who they respect.

**Food reward** is a powerful motivator too. It is commonly used in formal training, and only advised for individual foster dogs that may need it. Learning is accelerated when desired behaviors are properly reinforced with food.

A good handler conveys real pleasure to a dog through meaningful **praise**, motivating their dog to want to please. This **will to please** is why a guide dog works. Guiding a person who is vision impaired is a big responsibility for a dog. No dog will continue to work without meaningful praise. Touching and stroking a dog are types of *physical* praise. Discover what type of voice and touch pleases the foster dog and then use them liberally. While walking with the dog, you will probably use more verbal than physical praise since it is easier to deliver while on the move.

## Managing a Guide Dog

### Setting Limits

Without fair parameters, a foster dog won't know what to expect - from you, others or the environment. Dogs do not understand being chastised or punished. Scolding and chiding with "*Bad Dog*" or using the name itself in a corrective tone ("Juuuuno!") is not effective in communicating what the dog did wrong; it only tells her that the handler is upset over *something*. On the other hand, ignoring an inappropriate behavior in the hopes that it will go away on its own is a faulty strategy, especially if the negative behavior is reinforcing to the dog (e.g. barking). Dogs thrive on set rules.

A handler that expects and insists upon appropriate behavior can find numerous reasons for reinforcing a well-behaved dog. That same handler will be ready to recognize and address lapses in good conduct as they occur. Some foster care providers are initially reluctant to manage their foster dog because they think it will draw negative attention or cause their dog to like them less. In truth, dogs that are handled consistently and given feedback both for their desired behavior as well as their negative ones develop trust in their handler and a confident attitude.

### Give One Verbal Cue (Avoid Repeating Words)

Give **one** clearly-stated verbal cue to the foster dog. Say the dog's name (only one time) before the verbal cue. Respond appropriately to the dog's action (or inaction). Stay away from unnecessarily repeating verbal cues to the foster dog. Repeating the dog's name and verbal cue over and over will result in the dog ignoring you.

### Timing

Dogs live in the moment. Good timing clearly tells the dog if the action taken was desired or not. As soon as you realize the dog has responded well, praise for that response. If you wait too long, the dog will not associate the praise with the cue you gave previously. The same is true when interrupting a negative behavior. Give the dog time to respond to the verbal. AAs soon as you realize the dog is not responding as she should, follow-through to make sure the dog does the behavior and remember to praise and reward once the dog responds correctly.

Communicating effectively with a foster dog requires that the handler be attentive to the dog and one's own actions. More often than not, dogs *do exactly what we tell them to*

do. We as handlers need to understand the behaviors and how to communicate with the dogs in a successful manner.

Good communication is essential to build trust. And it takes time. Yet, trust between dog and person can quickly form if the foster dog knows what is expected of her and the FCP consistently acknowledges her behavior with fair input.

## **“Purposeful Walks”**

Leash relieve before going on a walk with an active program dog. It may be counterintuitive, since most pet owners takes walks to relieve their dog. Even though the dog is offered relief prior to a walk, be prepared (carry a couple of plastic bags) in case the dog indicates a need to relieve on the walk.

The cue for going for walks is the dog’s name and “Let’s go!” Avoid using the cue ‘Heel’, as this cue indicates a specific, controlled position next to the handler. ‘Let’s go’ allows for a somewhat looser position relative to the handler.

Even without a harness, an active program dog that is allowed to sniff, relieve and/or visit with other dogs on walks may continue to pursue these interests during guide work. Discourage sniffing and visiting with other dogs on walks, and reward the dog that is focused on purposeful walking and ignoring other dogs.

Dogs have other interests as well such as cats, leaves, bouncing balls, or soliciting attention from other people. Notice if the foster dog has these tendencies, and make efforts to re-direct the dog’s attention back on the walk or the handler. It is fine to allow the active program foster dog to say hello to people; have the dog sit for the person to approach the dog, not the opposite (do **not** allow the dog to go out to the end of the leash toward the person).

When walking with an active program dog, do not use guidework verbal cues or attempt to teach guidework responses.

## **Playtime**

For active program dogs, play is a necessary release from the responsibilities of guidework. It is also a great opportunity for the handler and dog to bond.

Please follow the guidelines set forth in *Chapter 7, “Exercise,”* to ensure proper games and provide safe toys for the active program dog.

## **Home Management**

To encourage proper house behavior and avoid relieving accidents, follow the initial two-week restriction in the home as outlined in *Chapter 4, “Home Management”*. For some active program dogs, it may be best to follow these guidelines for the entire time.

Keeping the active program dog on tie-down, in a crate, on a leash, or dragline helps prevent undesirable behaviors and promote the good ones! Patterning good behaviors will go a long way in influencing a dog’s success in the program. It’s just as important to praise the dog when it is doing something we like as well as doing nothing at all! A guide dog spends a lot of time at work, meetings, stores, etc. and needs to practice and be rewarded for doing “nothing”. For example, if an active program foster dog is lying quietly

at your feet during meals or ignores the doorbell when guests arrive, praise for this “non-response.”

### **Barking**

The protective instincts that cause or encourage a dog to bark are the same instincts that lead to growling, territoriality, and aggressiveness. Dogs can also bark for attention. Quickly and firmly discourage barking by saying “Quiet” one time in a calm, firm tone. Do not give the dog attention or let them out from the crate until the dog has been quiet for a short time. Barking is a self-reward behavior for the dog and can become an ingrained habit that is difficult to break. Please notify the Foster Care Coordinator if the foster dog continues to bark, so the coordinator can give advice based on the individual situation.

### **Recalls in the Backyard**

Refer to *Chapter 4, “Home Management”* for full guidelines on running a dog in an enclosed backyard. Prior to unhooking the leash, practice some recalls on a long leash to see how the dog responds. If the dog ignores you or plays “keep away” (a game of running away or rapidly past the handler), it is not ready for off-leash play. For these dogs, a long line or retractable lead is the only acceptable means to “run” in the backyard. This way, the verbal cue ‘Come’ can be enforced.

### **Three Key Points about Recalls:**

**1) Say “Come” only once.** If an active program dog does not respond to the initial “come” cue, crouch down and open your arms and legs. If this inviting gesture does not work, calmly and slowly walk towards the dog. Once at the dog, gently grasp the collar and praise. Say “Come” and walk the dog back to the area from where you originally called the dog. Lavishly praise the dog when you reach the desired spot. FCPs may want to practice some recalls on a long leash before allowing the dog off lead again.

**2) When the dog returns, gently grasp the collar and give immediate praise.**

**3) Do not “cheerlead”.** The dog is only praised upon *completion* of a behavior, not in the middle of it. Most clients may not know that their guide dog is coming to them --- they only know when their dog has successfully arrived. We need to imitate this in training to ensure a solid response. A successful recall is one when the dog reaches you, remains around your legs, and is calm enough for you to grasp the collar and praise it.

**4) Call the dog only when you think it will respond.** Give the dog some time to run and expend energy first before recalling the dog to you. If you call a dog just after it is let off the leash, the likelihood of the dog returning to you is low. Give the dog a chance to explore the environment before calling the dog to you.

## Chapter 14: Career Change Dogs

### Understanding Your Career Change Foster Dog

A large number of dogs in foster care are training dogs that have been recently released from formal training, termed career change dogs.

Although career change dogs are not active program dogs, they deserve the same amount of attention, love and guidance. Some career change foster dogs may return to their raisers after foster care while others may eventually be placed with an appropriate adopter. In either case, it is important that the foster care provider follow the guidelines to maintain (or in some cases improve) good behavior. If home management guidelines are not followed or a career change dog is allowed to misbehave, there may be difficulty placing the dog or possible negative repercussions for their adoptive family.

### Retired Guides

Retired guides may range in age. Some may be over 10 years old, while others may be much younger. Retired guides may appear more restless and sometimes pace the first few days in foster care as compared to other foster dogs. Oftentimes, physical exercise, consistent routines, and mental stimulation will minimize this tendency. There are a few possible explanations for this behavior:

- Adjustment to new home, handlers, and routine – Be certain to implement the first two-week requirements (tie-down, crate, etc.), as use of these tools can provide comfort to a retired guide that is used to a structured routine.
- Unaccustomed to a life without work – Provide the dog with structured outings that include purposeful walks. Similar to people who have a difficult time with retirement, many retired guides find comfort in structured activities and new pursuits.
- Age-related nocturnal behavior – Consult with the Foster Care Coordinator if your sleep is interrupted by the dog's behavior. If the dog is medically clear, it may be behavioral. Put the dog on tie-down at night to minimize movement and encourage sleep.

### Playtime and Exercise

While retrieving games were not encouraged in active program dogs, a healthy career change dog may play fetch on a case-by-case basis. Follow the guidelines for safe play in *Chapter 7, "Exercise."* The guidelines in that chapter also apply to career change dogs.

Some career change dogs may have been released from the program because they tend to become easily overstimulated. For these dogs, tug games may not be encouraged unless managed properly. Proper tugging technique should be back and forth between the dog and handler, rather than shaking the toy side to side by either party (this can create neck injuries in the dog). The handler should initiate play and end it themselves rather than allowing the dog to dictate the end of the game. The term, "That's enough" is the command that is used to stop play and for the dog to release a toy. It is helpful to have the dog on leash or long line when playing tug, either holding it or stepping on the end. If the dog does not release the toy with "That's enough", calmly

take the dog's collar or leash and the handler should cease pulling on the toy (continued pulling from the handler indicates that the game is still "on"). The dog will oftentimes give up the toy if not able to continue the tug game. Tug games can get some dogs very excited and vocal (growling). If you notice that a career change dog gets easily excited or and "worked up" during tug play, either try other games (Kong ® toss), or stop the game as soon as you see this undesirable behavior.

The career change dog thrives on structure and guidance, as do all GDB program dogs. It is in the dog's best interests both immediately and in the future if you provide it with this leadership.



## Chapter 15: Breeder Dogs

### Understanding Your Breeder Foster Dog

Intact dogs (dogs that have not been spayed or neutered) tend to be more aroused, scent distracted, and dog distracted. Intact dogs will have a strong desire to sniff and lift a leg to urinate. Intact dogs can be more persistent in going up to other dogs. Generally, this interest is driven by hormonal motives, not aggressive ones. However, intact dogs (both sexes) can be more dog aggressive, particularly to dogs of the same sex, than altered dogs. It is best for the foster care provider to prevent unaltered or recently altered dogs from going up to unfamiliar dogs. Intact male dogs are prone to wander if given the opportunity, thus close monitoring and secure gates are a must.

Both intact and altered male and female dogs may have a propensity to mount other dogs (and possibly humans). Depending on where she is in her ovulation cycle, female intact dogs may be less tolerant of or more interested in other dogs. In general, intact animals tend to have more fluctuation in their behavior than altered animals.

While some dogs are more hormonally driven than others, some intact dogs may actually behave no differently from altered dogs. These generalities of intact dogs are intended to prepare the foster care provider for possible behavioral variances in the intact animal.

While breeder dogs are active program dogs, the guidelines surrounding care and handling are not as structured as they are for active training dogs. Some breeder dogs may have habits (being allowed on furniture, chasing balls, etc.) that are not in line with the Guide Dog program, but these behaviors are not generally viewed as detrimental to future potential guide dog offspring.

While these intact animals have stronger drives to urinate, sniff, visit other dogs, etc., these behaviors do not have to be tolerated. Foster care providers should set guidelines that are acceptable in their homes.

Female intact dogs (broods) are kenneled during their 21-day season (heat cycle). If an intact female dog in foster care shows the following signs, she must be brought to campus within three days of the first sign of season:

- Licks her vulvar area more often than normal.
- Has a bloody discharge from the vulva, which may be accompanied by swelling.

# Chapter 16: Senior Dogs

## Understanding Your Older Foster Dog

For most large dogs, 7 years of age marks the beginning of the geriatric era of their lives. As a foster dog approaches this age, it is especially important to pay close attention to any changes in the dog's behavior, habits or mannerisms that could be indicators of age-related health or behavioral problems. However, changes may be difficult to detect due to the short length of time a dog may stay in foster care. To help a foster dog adjust to the senior years, please keep the following in mind:

- Dogs are creatures of habit and do best when their routine remains the same. When an older dog is uprooted from its familiar home and routine in order to be returned to GDB for placement or boarding, it is normal for the older foster dog to be unsettled and restless for a while when introduced to a new home and routine. Once established in your home, do not change the foster dog's sleeping spaces, eating-places or times, as this is particularly stressful to an older dog.
- Pay special attention to the foster dog's skin when grooming and petting. Examine the skin and body for any lumps and bumps. Please notify the vet clinic of their location(s).
- When grooming the older dog, be careful when combing along the dog's back. The vertebrae are more prominent in older dogs and thus are more sensitive. Be very gentle when using the slicker brush and/or comb along the older dog's back.
- Gentle massage will help increase blood flow and help relax the dog.
- Be certain the dog's sleeping area is generously soft and away from drafts.
- Because the older dog's activity level is lower, toenails that were worn down with exercise in previous years now grow without interference. It is essential to keep the nails trimmed. An unattended nail can curl under and back into the paw, which will cause preventable pain and lameness.
- Follow the guidelines put forth on the Foster Care Request for daily walks. Some older dogs may only be able to manage a 10-minute walk once or twice a day, while some are able to walk for longer distances. Regular exercise is healthy for older dogs, but be careful not to do more than they are able.
- Do not use raised feeders. It is common to believe that a raised feeder is easier on older dogs when they eat. However, raised feeders have been associated with dogs that have bloated (gastric torsion).

## Common Characteristics

Every dog is an individual. Just like people, dogs age at different rates. Nonetheless, there are general characteristics that many senior dogs share:

- Increased water consumption (possible metabolic problem) \*
- Increased need to urinate \*
- Incontinence \* (not unusual, especially during sleep or upon waking)
- Hearing loss/Deafness
- Sight loss/age-related cataracts (cloudiness of the lens)
- Restlessness at night, especially with a change in routine
- Less tolerant of heat or cold

- Less tolerant of other dogs and children (possibly due to arthritis, vision or hearing loss)
- Difficulty rising and/or stiffness after lying down \*
- Difficulty negotiating stairs due to rear-end weakness and/or sight loss
- Difficulty negotiating hardwood floors or tile
- Barking that may not be related to a stimulus
- Bad breath due to organic changes in the body or gum disease \*
- Less tolerant of exercise, noisy breathing sounds \*
- Increased sleeping habits
- Possible senility, idiosyncratic behavior, disorientation, etc.

\* = Deserves Veterinary Attention

## CONCLUSION

Thank you so much for your participation in our foster care program. Your volunteerism plays a crucial role in the success and well-being of our program dogs. Without your valuable assistance and dedication, achieving our goals would be much more challenging. Volunteers like you are an integral part of our efforts to make a difference in the lives of both dogs and the individuals that they serve.

We want to ensure that you have the resources you need readily available. This manual is designed as a comprehensive guide to assist you in this crucial role. Feel free to refer to it at any time for detailed information and guidance. Additionally, stay connected through our resources page on the GDB website, where you can find updates and easily accessible information to enhance your volunteer experience. We appreciate your dedication and the impact you make, and we want to make sure you have the tools you need to thrive as a foster care provider. Thank you for your commitment, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further assistance. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact on the communities that we serve.