



Humane Educational Society

Foster Team

DOG 1001— Dog Fostering

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Course Description: This is a self-guided course to ensure all dog fosters, both new and seasoned, are familiar with the fostering process and the resources that we provide to support them. The active foster page is a wealth of information and this course serves as a navigation map. There aren't formal tests or essays to hand in, but you can apply these lessons to your foster! The goal is to help the foster caregivers help their foster pets.

The course is broken up into modules, which follow a generalized foster journey from preparation of the foster home to handing the animal off to their forever home. We hope the fosters will refer to this syllabus as needed throughout their foster journey. The primary section will provide you with the bulk of information needed, whereas the supplemental section will include more in-depth additional resources or printable handouts that support the primary section.

The HES Foster Team wants to thank you again for opening your home up to our animals!

Module 1: Preparation for fostering

Module description: This module covers the preparation needed before bringing your foster home. It includes an overview of our policies, poison control info, a body language refresher, and a short free course with best practices for bringing a new dog home.

Primary:

- [Scheduling Appointments Handout](#): This handout explains how to navigate the Active Foster scheduling system and breaks down what kind of appointment is necessary in a given situation.
- [Foster Program FAQ](#): This handout covers many of the common questions we receive about the program.
- [Levels of Urgency Handout](#): This handout covers our Red/Yellow/Green system for foster emergencies and gives instructions for the appropriate contact means.

- [Poison Control](#): This website gives the contact info for poison control and also lists many everyday plants, foods, and household items that are hazardous to animals.
- [Bringing a New Dog Home](#): This is a free course through Maddie's Fund, which includes the best practices for bringing a new foster home. Includes information on introducing your foster to strangers, monitoring how children interact with your foster, and gives tips on housetraining.
- [Dog Body Language 101](#): This short video is part of the Fear Free Dog course. It gives you an overview on body language and indicates how dogs show fear, anxiety, or stress.
- Petcademy: This is a behavior support service that provides services for HES fosters and adopters. They have trainers ready to help you tackle a lot of common behavioral issues. Text **woof** to 423-888-0461 to get started.

Supplemental:

- [Poison Control Chart](#): A printable version is available on this site.
- [Foster 101 Webinar](#): This is a longer webinar which includes information on how stress impacts behavior, an overview of some basic training, and common behavior issues.
- [Spectrum of Fear, Anxiety, and Stress](#): This is a printable version of the material covered in the Fear Free video.
- [Cleaning and Disinfection in Foster Homes](#): This is another course through Maddie's Fund that goes in-depth into cleaning and disinfecting the foster home. It's highly recommended that you clean and disinfect your foster space in between fosters or before any new animal is brought in.

Module 2: Bringing your foster into the home

Module description: You have your dog and all the supplies in your car, now what? This module covers the things you need to know during your first few days in the home, including how to help them adjust to being in the home, how to start introducing the foster to other members of your family, and how to start some basic training.

Primary:

- [The 3-3-3 Rule](#): This explains a concept in rescue known as The 3-3-3 Rule, but it's more of a guideline to explain the speed at which most dogs adjust to being in a new environment.
- [Feeding Chart](#): This is the feeding chart that we use at the shelter and goes with the dry kibble that the foster team provides.
- [Helping a New Dog Adjust](#): This is another short course from Maddie's Fund that covers best practices for dealing with boredom/destructive behaviors, another body language review, and dealing with jumping/mouthiness.
- [Housetraining Handout](#): This Maddie's Fund hand-out has tips and tricks to house train your foster dog. Even in cases where we are pretty sure the dog is already house trained, it's best to still use some house training methods (i.e. establishing a routine, taking your foster for regular walks) until the dog adjusts to being in your home.
- [Crate Training](#): While it's not a requirement for you to crate train your dog, it is oftentimes highly beneficial for your foster dog (can aid in house training, prevent some destructive

behaviors, help mitigate fearfulness by giving your foster a safe place to decompress, makes your foster dog more appealing to adopters, etc). Remember, HES will provide you with a crate!

- [Introducing your Foster Dog to Strangers](#): A brief video showing how to introduce your fosters to strangers.
- [Introducing a Foster Dog to New Dogs](#): While we do meet and greet for resident dogs, this class is a helpful way to learn how to introduce your foster to other dogs on walks and gives you a helpful overview of play behaviors and I'm Done Playing behaviors.
- [Canine Enrichment](#): These are small ways to provide mental stimulation to your foster, which can help them stay calmer during the day. In some cases, good enrichment can provide the same mental stimulation as a daily walk. We provide some type of enrichment to our dogs in the shelter everyday.
- [Training as Enrichment: Turn Daily Activities Into Learning Disguised as Fun](#): This is a short video that shows how to incorporate training into enrichment time.
- [Preventing Separation Anxiety](#): Sometimes, dogs start showing signs of separation anxiety as they adjust to being in your home. These tips can help you prevent separation anxiety from developing. *Note: some dogs just have separation anxiety, just like how humans can have regular anxiety. If you notice your foster is showing signs of separation anxiety and it's getting noticeably worse, consult with the foster team and Petcademy for further assistance.*
- **Only required for homes with cats* [How to Introduce a Dog to a Cat](#): This document provides three strategies to introduce your foster dog to a cat. Successfully teaching a foster dog to co-exist with a cat can open the door to many potential forever homes. But, if the introduction process is not working, let the foster team know.

Supplemental:

- [Helping Your Foster's Dog be Comfortable Home Alone](#): Separation anxiety can be very hard for dogs to deal with. This short video provides some tips and routines that may prevent separation anxiety from developing. This video was included in the Bringing A New Dog Home class in Module 1.
- [House Training Your New Foster Dog](#): A short video explaining how to best house train your new foster dog. Even if we think the dog might already be housebroken, establishing a house training routine can be very beneficial while they're adjusting to their new surroundings and a bit stressed out. This video was included in the Bringing A New Dog Home class in Module 1.
- [Keeping Interactions Between Foster Dogs and Children Safe](#): A short video that gives tips to introduce your foster dog to children. This video was included in the Bringing A New Dog Home class from Module 1.
- [Introducing your Foster Dog to Strangers](#): A brief video showing how to introduce your fosters to strangers. This video was included in the Bringing A New Dog Home class from Module 1.
- [What You Need to Know About Crates and Your Dog](#): this is a more in-depth video from Fear Free that explains the benefits of crate training, how to pick the best crate location, and how to crate train.

Module 3: Training

Module description: It's no secret that adopters tend to prefer the easier, better trained dogs. Something as seemingly simple as knowing "Sit" and having good walking manners can set them apart from the rest. Furthermore, doing some basic training with your foster can help strengthen their bond with you. The following are some general training guidelines for basic obedience and curbing common unwanted behaviors like chewing, counter surfing, and jumping.

Primary:

- [Five Essential Dog Commands](#): A short article that outlines how to teach "Sit," "Come," "Down," "Stay," and "Leave it."
- [Fun with Heeling](#): A short article that outlines how to teach a dog to walk beside you, which can lead to better leash manners.
- ["My Dog Pulls On The Leash."](#) A short article that deals with teaching your dog not to pull on the leash.
- [Leash Pulling and Reactivity](#): A handout from Fear Free that includes Quick Fixes for issues occurring on walks.
- [Tips to Prevent and Stop Your Dog's Destructive Chewing](#): A short Fear Free video with tips to help you effectively curb destructive chewing.
- [A Fear Free Approach to Canine Counter Surfing](#): A short Fear Free video with tips to prevent and stop counter surfing.
- [Getting the 'Jump' on Your Dog's Unwanted Jumping](#): A short Fear Free video with tips to prevent and stop jumping on people.

Supplemental

- [How to Handle Leash Walking](#): A short video from Maddie's Fund showing you how to train leash manners. This video was included in the Bringing A New Dog Home class in Module 1
- [How To Use Redirection](#): Several training videos reference using "redirection" to help stop unwanted behaviors and this video goes more in-depth on how to properly redirect.

Module 4: Medical

Module Description: While we try to ensure that all dogs are healthy before we send them out, or communicate with you if they are recovering from something, adapting to new surroundings can mean that a dog will start showing symptoms of illness. You may also just be curious about what you see on your foster's medical history. Here are a few resources to help you learn some of the more common parasites and viruses that can come up in shelter settings.

Primary:

- [How to Administer Oral and Topical Medications the Fear Free Way](#): We often send home regular preventatives with our fosters, so here is a guide to giving them their meds!

- [Fecal Scoring Chart](#): There may be times where your foster has just an odd looking stool, that can sometimes be a symptom of a medical issue. We use this fecal scoring system to gauge what is and isn't a "good poop."
- [Internal Parasites in Dogs](#): We have dewormer protocols for all of our animals that starts on intake, but sometimes it can take a couple extra doses to get rid of all parasites. This article includes the most common types of internal parasites and what symptoms to look for (Hint: Diarrhea or loose stool is your first clue).
- [Coccidia](#): This is another parasite that commonly causes diarrhea.
- [Kennel Cough](#): This is the common catch-all term for various upper respiratory infections in dogs. Our intake vaccines can help prevent kennel cough, but it's kind of like the flu vaccine, in that it can't protect against all things that can cause a URI. Kennel cough can be very contagious but is often treated with just a simple round of antibiotics.
- [Parvo](#): This disease is most commonly found in young, under-vaccinated puppies. Shelter dogs receive an intake vaccine and booster two weeks later, which significantly minimizes their chances of contracting parvo, however it is still important to know the signs and symptoms just in case.
- [Distemper](#): Like parvo, dogs receive an intake vaccine and booster to protect them from this disease. Thanks to widespread vaccine use, distemper is far less common than it was in decades past. However, knowing the symptoms is important, especially for dogs that came in as strays and have not been in our care very long.
- [Demodectic Mange](#): This is a skin disease that is not contagious to humans, but it can appear in similar ways to [Sarcoptic Mange](#), which is contagious to humans. If you notice your foster is showing fur loss, send a message to the foster team!
- [Ringworm](#): Ringworm is a fungus that can be contagious to people and often presents initially as a circular patch of missing fur.

Supplemental:

- [Levels of Urgency Handout](#): This handout covers our Red/Yellow/Green system for foster emergencies and gives instructions for the appropriate contact means.
- [Poison Control](#): This website gives the contact info for poison control and also lists many everyday plants, foods, and household items that are hazardous to animals.
- [Scheduling Appointments Handout](#): This handout explains how to navigate the Active Foster scheduling system and breaks down what kind of appointment is necessary in a given situation.

Module 5: Grooming

Module Description: Sometimes dogs get dirty and need some sprucing up. HES has a grooming room that you can use if you schedule a time to come in, however many fosters groom their dogs at home. Grooming at home can minimize the stress of the event, since they aren't having to come to the shelter.

Primary:

- [Change Bath Time from Chaotic to Calm for your Pet](#): This is a short video from Fear Free that gives tips and tricks for making bath time a less stressful time.

- [How to Brush Your Dog the Fear Free Way](#): This is a short video from Fear Free that helps you condition your dog to enjoy brushing.

Module 6: Fearful or Timid Dogs

Module Description: Fearful or timid dogs are often at the top of our “Needs a Foster” list. Taking on a scared dog can seem daunting, but we have several resources available to help you and your foster dog. Sometimes, a little time in foster is exactly what a dog needs to come out of his shell and get more comfortable around people.

It is also important to note that all dogs can be fearful or timid while adjusting to new surroundings. Even if you aren’t fostering a specifically fearful or timid dog, it’s crucial to know what behaviors are associated with fear in a dog. The following is a brief overview of body language that can indicate your dog is scared or stressed out. That way, you can start identifying “scary” things and working with your foster to overcome their fears.

Reminder: You may not be able to turn a super scared dog into a perfectly well adjusted “normal” dog, even with the most steadfast, dedicated training. With scared dogs, progress is a win. If you get them 10% less afraid of people, that’s a win. If you get them to the point where they can safely go for walks, that’s a win. Being scared does not automatically mean they’re totally unadoptable!

Primary:

- [Scared Dog Behavior Handout](#): An overview of the foster team’s expectations for fearful dogs in foster. All of these points are good for helping any foster dog adjust into the home and prevent an escape.
- [Fearful Dogs PowerPoint](#): This PowerPoint goes with the above handout and includes pictures of fearful body language.
- [Preventing and Alleviating Anxieties 101](#): This is a short video from Fear Free regarding anxious pets.
- [Overcoming Your Dog’s Fear of Everyday Objects](#): This is a short video from Fear Free that can help you identify sources of fear and how to managing the fears.

Supplemental:

- [Bringing Home Your Shy or Fearful Foster Dog](#): This is a comprehensive video from Maddie’s Fund regarding having a fearful foster dog, including tips for how your family should interact with the dog and how to prepare your home for a fearful dog. A lot of the information is covered in our HES Scared Dog info above, but there are some helpful nuggets in here.

Module 6: Training Programs for Specific Behaviors

Module Description: Since these are targeting specific behaviors, this module doesn’t necessarily have “required” and “supplemental” sections, but rather has sections based on certain behaviors.

IMPORTANT: Before you embark on a training protocol, let the foster team know. At the very least, we need to make sure the behavior is noted in their file. Furthermore, sometimes our behavior team will make a different suggestion based on their knowledge of the dog's history.

Before you start training, **make sure you are very familiar with general dog body language in addition to your individual dog's body language.** Some dogs can be quirky, knowing the dog's quirks keeps everyone safe. When working with a dog on a behavioral issue, there is an increased chance of an adverse reaction. **Never ever "push" your foster dog,** as this can result in a negative association with the training or result in an injury to either the dog or the trainer. Most of these protocols are designed to be non-confrontational and go at the dog's pace. When working on a behavioral issue, remember that **if you feel a little uncomfortable with the body language or behavior you're seeing, the dog likely feels very uncomfortable** and you should air on the side of caution before going further in the training. Again, keep the foster team in the loop during any training process.

Separation Anxiety:

- [Canine Separation Anxiety \(Part 1\)](#): This is a short video overview of the categories of separation anxiety behaviors and why it can develop.
- [Canine Separation Anxiety \(Part 2\)](#): This is a short video that shows how you can help your foster feel more secure. Note: It reuses some info from the Separation Anxiety video in Module 2, but it's worth reviewing.
- [Canine Separation Anxiety Solutions \(Part 1\)](#): This short video offers some insight into changing the environment and your behavior to help alleviate some separation anxiety.
- [Canine Separation Anxiety Solutions \(Part 2\)](#): This offers some behavior modification and training routines for dogs dealing with separation anxiety.

For Nervous/Fearful Dogs:

- [Relaxation Protocol](#): This protocol gives you several tasks to work on each day to train your dog to be more relaxed in a myriad of situations. This training is designed to be completed across a few 15-20 minute sessions each day, but can be modified into shorter, more frequent training sessions each day if the dog isn't doing well. Go at your foster's pace. By the end of this protocol, you will have your foster laying down while you ring doorbells or clap or run circles around them. Note: Before you start, your dog already needs to know "Sit" and "Down"
- [Confidence Building Exercises](#): These exercises can help you build your foster's trust in you in a low stakes, fun way, while also working on their leash manners and walking obedience. You'll have them stepping into hula hoops or around pool noodles and earning treats as they go! This is also a good form of enrichment time for your foster.
- [Treat/Retreat Game](#): This is a great way to work on your foster's fear of strangers.
- [Engage-Disengage Game](#): This is a great way to work on specific fear triggers with your foster (e.g. fear of cars, fear of men, etc).

For Dogs With Noise Phobia (such as fear of thunder, fireworks, etc):

- [Canine Noise Phobias \(Part 1\)](#): An introduction to the concept of noise phobias, how and why they can develop, and behaviors indicating a dog may have a noise phobia.

- [Canine Noise Phobias \(Part 2\)](#): This video teaches you how to manage and prevent noise phobias.

For Dogs That Need Help Learning House Rules:

- [Nothing in Life is Free](#): This is a training program we use in the shelter for dogs who need help mitigating compulsive behaviors, separation anxiety, aggression, fearfulness, or just generally rude/hyper behaviors. At its core, the program gives your foster a job (being a very good boy) and gives him a salary (treats). It helps build trust in people and reinforces good behaviors.

For Dogs With Handling Sensitivities:

- [Body Handling Exercises](#): If you notice your foster is a bit sensitive about being touched in a certain area, you can start working with them on these body handling exercises. This can help them build up a tolerance for certain handling and even makes them have a less stressful time at the vet or groomer! If you notice your foster is getting more anxious at any given step, stop the exercises for the day and just slowly incorporate handling into smaller, more innocuous exercises following your foster's pace. Do not push your foster into a handling exercise they are very uncomfortable with, as this can result in an adverse reaction (i.e. snapping or even biting). Follow their cues and go at their pace. Handling sensitivities may never go away 100% but you can work with your foster to overcome the bulk of their discomfort.

For Dogs That Resource Guard:

- [Resource Guarding Desensitization](#): Guarding is a very instinctive behavior and is totally natural in the wild. But, food or resource guarding can make it very difficult for dogs to be placed into families with children or other animals. If you notice some guarding tendencies, let the foster team know. If you feel comfortable working with your dog on these tendencies, you can follow the attached protocol to slowly desensitize your foster to others' presence around his coveted items, thus slowly correcting the guarding behavior. As you'll see in the guide, this takes place over many weeks and is designed to go at the dog's pace. Again, don't push the dog and follow his cues.

Module 7: Getting Your Foster Into Their Furever Home

Module Description: Goodbye is the goal, so let's get your foster out! This module will cover ways to market your foster on social media and how to navigate adoption events.

Primary:

- [Pet Personality Form](#): This is the form you fill out after you've had your foster for some time and have a pretty good understanding of their personality. These forms are used to help us match the foster with potential adopters. They also help us write eye-catching bios for our website and social media pages, so make sure you fill it out and include some great glamour shots!

- [Marketing A Foster Pet](#): This course helps you learn how to effectively market your foster pet, including ways to best tell your foster's story.
- [Using Social Media to Help Shelter Pets Shine](#): This course breaks down the best practices for various social media platforms, including Facebook and Tiktok!
- [How to Properly Navigate Adoption Events](#): HES tries to organize several events each month that are open to our fosters. This short video shows you a way to have your foster put their best paw forward at these events and hopefully, find an adopter!
- [Events Page](#): This is the page where the foster team keeps the events schedule. This is also where you sign up to attend an event!
- [Dog Adoption Application](#): This is the application if a friend, a family member, a stranger at an event, or anyone else wants to adopt your foster (yes, this can also be you, but remember.....)
-[Goodbye is the Goal!](#) – This video from the Kitten Lady encapsulates the spirit of our Goodbye Is The Goal philosophy. Saying goodbye to this foster means you'll get to say hello to another one and save another life.

Supplemental:

- [Adoptions Basics Webinar](#): This is a long form webinar that includes an overview of the HES adoption process and the do's and don'ts for pictures and bios.
- [6 Guidelines for Marketing Your Foster Pet](#): This short article shows six ways to get your foster's story out there effectively and drum up some interest in them.
- [The Foster Caregiver Marketing Guide](#): This is a very in-depth guide on marketing your fosters. It has everything: writing bios, making eye catching social media posts, making memes, taking good pictures, "field trip" ideas, and more!