

Foster Handbook and Guidelines



HUMANE SOCIETY
CENTRAL TEXAS



2021

HUMANE SOCIETY OF CENTRAL TEXAS

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About Humane Society of Central Texas

Hello, and welcome to the Fostering program with Humane Society of Central Texas!

Our mission at Humane Society of Central Texas (HSCTX) is to help Waco be a safe, compassionate, and healthy place for people and animals. We work to control the loose animal population, as well as increase the positive outcomes for homeless animals in the city.

HSCTX is the only open admission shelter in the City of Waco. As we expand our life-saving programs, working collaboratively is more crucial than ever, both in the shelter and outside of our front doors.

Our work in the community is guided by these four strategic pillars:

1. Performance Transparency
2. Increasing Positive Outcomes for Animals
3. Community Partnerships
4. Education

Guiding Principles

The staff members at HSCTX truly appreciate a Foster Family's service and dedication to help save the lives of animals in our Waco community. Together, our work is guided by the following values and principles:

Lead with Innovation: develop, promote, and collaborate to create new ideas geared towards better lifesaving techniques and increasing the quality of life for all animals.

Demonstrate Empathy, Compassion, and Kindness: by understanding and respecting each other, we can collectively identify how we can become a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

Provide Success through Support: ensure that every animal and person is set up for success by providing information, training, and assistance with appropriate dialogue.

Safety through Transparency: provide open and honest communication to ensure all humans and animals thrive within a safe environment.

Positive and Forward-Thinking: look towards challenges with an open and positive mind-set, as well as creative solutions.

By working together within these principles, we can impact everything from the animals in HSCTX's facility, to the individuals who take them home.

Fostering Program Description

A foster home is a temporary living arrangement for animals in our Foster Program through placement with individuals, Foster Parents, in the community of Waco. As a Foster Parent with HSCTX, you are a volunteer and part of a massive life-saving mission to help prevent animal homelessness and overpopulation. The animals in our Foster Program need a temporary place to recover from medical procedures, relax away from the stress of the shelter, grow large enough to enter our adoption program, wait their turn to be transported to a shelter in another area, or mature as a pet. We see you as a part of our team and with that we have expectations that must be met to ensure a positive fostering process.

Anti-Harassment Policy

HSCTX's anti-harassment policy expresses our commitment to maintain a workplace that is free of harassment, so our employees and guests can feel safe and happy. HSCTX strives to create and maintain a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency, and respect.

In accordance with all federal, state, and local laws, HSCTX expressly prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, gender, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability or handicap, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, military or veteran's status, or any other protected classification.

HSCTX expressly forbids and will not tolerate any actions (e.g., words, jokes, comments, or gestures) that unreasonably create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. HSCTX will take appropriate and immediate action in response to complaints or knowledge of violations of this policy. For purposes of this policy, harassment is any verbal or physical conduct designed to threaten, intimidate, or coerce an employee, co-worker, client, volunteer, or any person working for or on behalf of HSCTX.

Anyone engaged in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to release from the Foster Program with HSCTX. If a Foster Parent or other any other individual who is associated with the foster parent (i.e., babysitter or other adults in household, etc.) ("Foster Parent Affiliate") believes they are the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment of any kind, immediately notify the HSCTX staff contact with the Foster Team.

HSCTX will not tolerate any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation of any HSCTX employees or volunteer(s) who makes a complaint under this policy or who assists in a complaint investigation. Any retaliation, harassment, or intimidation by a Foster Parent may result in termination of the Foster Parent's Relationship with HSCTX.

Investigation of reports of harassment will be conducted, and these investigations will be kept as confidential as is practical. Following the investigation, the Foster Parent who filed the complaint will be informed of the findings and the action taken. If, because of the investigation, HSCTX determines that an employee of HSCTX, a Foster Parent, an Affiliate, or volunteer has engaged in harassment or illegal discrimination in violation of this policy, HSCTX will take appropriate corrective measures. Such action may range from counseling to immediate termination of employment or release from the Foster Parent's relationship with HSCTX, or possible legal action.

[Working with Humane Society of Central Texas](#)

As a Foster Parent of HSCTX, we expect that you understand and agree to the following:

- You have not been convicted of Animal Cruelty, Neglect, or abandonment, and will notify HSCTX should you be convicted at a later date.

- If you take an animal that is the property of HSCTX into your care, HSCTX reserves the right to check on the welfare of said animal. This may include a home visit or welfare check of your property. HSCTX may also request the animal leave the dwelling at any time and for any reason be returned to the facility.

Procedures

Contacting the Foster Team

We understand that having a new foster pet can raise a lot of questions. We want to be able to assist you with anything that might occur. Please understand that the Foster Department is currently run entirely by one full time employee. Due to this, we ask that you follow the appropriate channels to ensure that your questions are being answered in a timely manner.

The best way to contact the Foster Team is through text at **469-551-3956**

We ask that you use text for any questions or concerns. This could include medical questions, questions that pertain to behavior, placement/offsite opportunities, adoption, or any other foster pet related questions that you do not see the answer to in the manual. Our foster team will call you if it is necessary to address your question, but with the number of calls we get on a daily basis, please text to ensure we receive your message and are able to respond to it as quickly as possible.

We will reply to non-emergency texts as quickly as possible, but we cannot guarantee that it will be immediate. Feel free to reach out again if you do not hear from us within 72 hours. Our office line is best used for time sensitive or urgent phone calls.

For emergency medical situations, our vet staff is available Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. You must contact an HSCTX staff member

For life-threatening emergencies (the foster animals will pass away before the next work day) take your animal to an emergency vet, and HSCTX will reimburse any incurred vet fees.

Understanding Your Manual

This handbook summarizes many of Humane Society of Central Texas' (HSCTX) policies and procedures, including the ones that you, as a Foster Parent, must follow. A Foster Parent's failure to comply with the policies and procedures contained in this handbook may result in a termination of the relationship between a Foster Parent and HSCTX. All HSCTX staff members are responsible for administering the policies described in this handbook. We are happy to provide further information or clarification on this Handbook if needed. Please note that HSCTX managers and their designees may modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this handbook at any time. If any changes are made, HSCTX will notify Foster Parent(s) as soon as possible.

Legal Guardianship of Animals

All animals in the foster program are the legal property of HSCTX until the adoption paperwork has been processed, foster team has sent approval of paperwork received, and the animal has been altered. If adoption paperwork has been received, but the animal has not been spayed or neutered, this animal will still be the property of HSCTX.

Confidentiality Policy

Working with HSCTX, all Foster Parents are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information, including but not limited to history or prior owner information of an animal, changes in internal structuring or policy, etc., of HSCTX to which you are exposed. Failure on a Foster Parent's part to

comply with HSCTX Confidentiality Policy, may result in termination of the Foster Parent's Relationship with HSCTX.

Conflicts of Interest

As a supporter of and volunteer for HSCTX, a Foster Parent should avoid any outside activity that could negatively affect the independence and objectivity of your judgment, interfere with timely and effective performance of your duties and responsibilities, discredit HSCTX, or conflict/appear to conflict with HSCTX' best interest. The success of HSCTX rests on its reputation and the goodwill of the community. Unless expressly authorized, no outside activity should involve the use of HSCTX assets, funds, materials, facilities, or time or services of other HSCTX affiliates. Violations of this policy may result in release from the Foster Parent's relationship with HSCTX. If a Foster Parent is asked to take part in an activity that conflicts with the vision and philosophies of HSCTX, or if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises, please reach out to a HSCTX Foster Team member.

Foster Parent Expectations

- Abide by policies and procedures that are outlined in the HSCTX Foster manual and Foster Care Form
- Maintain regular access email and/or phone and provide updates to contact information when necessary
- Ability to provide transport to and from HSCTX when necessary for an animal in your foster care
- Provide a clean, safe and caring environment with food, water, enrichment and proper shelter
- Appropriately socialize with foster pets and treat them like a household pet while they are in your care
- Monitor and communicate any medical and/or behavioral issues
- Follow guidelines and policies for adoption outlined in our [Getting your Foster Adopted Section](#)
- Have up-to-date rabies and age appropriate vaccinations for all animals in your home

Adoption Prices and Receiving Payment

All adoption fees are waived for foster pets unless otherwise noted. If an animal has been identified as having an adoption fee associated with them, the adoption process will need to be carried out at the main facility. Payment must be given directly to a HSCTX employee. A Foster Parent may not ever collect money on behalf of HSCTX or solicit money from potential adopters for any reason.

Lost Foster Pet

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your foster pet may escape from you or your home. If this should happen, please [contact the HSCTX Foster Team](#) immediately with the following information:

- The animal's A# (EX: A1234567) and Name (this can be found on your foster pet's paperwork or emails)
- Last known location
- Date and time of escape
- What the situation was when escape occurred (opening the front door, walking the foster pet, etc.)

In addition, we ask that the Foster Parent report the animal as lost through the www.petharbor.com.

- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for DOGS
- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for CATS
- Click [THIS LINK HERE](#) to create a lost flier for other animals.

We suggest that you put up fliers around your neighborhood and place ads on local lost and found websites, Facebook pages (including your personal page and the HSCTX Volunteer and Foster page), Nextdoor and Craigslist. [Here is more information about how to do this.](#)

Should the animal be picked up by an animal control officer of HSCTX, the Foster Team will be notified and will contact you immediately. The Foster Team can request that an officer be sent out to survey the area if the animal was lost in the city of Waco. Always keep the Foster Team informed with any updates.

Stolen Foster

If you believe a foster pet is stolen while in your custody, please contact the Foster Team immediately. We also ask that you call 911 and create a police report to give any information that you might know about the situation. In addition, follow the same steps that are outlined above in the [Lost Foster](#) section.

HSCTX will also consider an animal stolen if we have been unable to contact you, the Foster Parent, and the animal has not yet been spayed or neutered. The Foster Team will send out communication during the fostering process periodically. If at any point during this, we believe you as the Foster Parent have become unresponsive, we will make every attempt to reach you. If at 60 days in the foster home we have been unsuccessful in making contact, HSCTX staff will proceed by releasing the animal as missing or stolen in the HSCTX Database. This could prohibit you from being able to foster or potentially adopt from HSCTX in the future.

Deceased Foster Animal

It is never easy to lose an animal and it affects each of us differently and personally. As a Foster Parent, it is important not to blame yourself for any loss that may occur. Please understand that sometimes we are operating against unknown illnesses or, especially in the case of neonatal animals, fragile populations. Due to this, we understand that accidents or a decline in health can occur. Remember that everything you do for these animals is in the efforts to create a positive outcome and to save a life. The Foster Team at HSCTX is always here to assist you in case an animal in your care passes..

If an Animal Passes in Foster:

1. Make sure the animal has passed. In some cases, especially with neonates, a very cold, hypoglycemic kitten/puppy can appear to be deceased but may not be
 - a. If the animal has not passed, please see the [fading puppy/kitten protocol](#)
2. Contact the Foster Team immediately via [the contact information](#) in your handbook
3. Wrap the animal in a cloth and place it inside of a zip lock bag or a bag that is size appropriate
4. With a Sharpie, write the animal's name and A# on the outside of the bag. This is very important as all deceased animals must be accurately reported in HSCTX records
 - a. If you do not properly identify the animal, a staff member will have to inspect the animal later to determine its' identity so please make sure this is done correctly
5. After you have gotten in contact with a HSCTX Foster Team member and you have placed the body in an appropriate bag with identification, come to the HSCTX facility and a staff member will further assist you
6. If you are not able to immediately bring the animal to HSCTX, or it is overnight, the animal may be stored in its appropriately sized bag in a freezer until you are able to do so.

After you have notified the HSCTX Foster Team, the animal will be cremated at no expense to you. If you would like to receive ashes and a pawprint, please let our Foster Team know when dropping off the animal.

Suspected Mistreatment of a Foster Pet

If there is suspected mistreatment of a foster pet, HSCTX will take appropriate measures to investigate. If you are found to have mistreated an animal, either as a Foster Parent or before joining the program, you will be immediately suspended or terminated from our Foster Program. A Foster Team member will contact you if there are any concerns.

Returns to the Facility

There are multiple reasons why your animal will need to return to HSCTX. Whether you are returning your animal to the main shelter for the end of the designated foster period or returning due to your foster pet not a good fit for your foster home, we ask that you always [contact the Foster Team](#) at foster@humansocietycentraltexas.org to alert us of the return of your foster pet. Foster pets will need to be returned at the Green Intake doors during open hours.

Our hours for returns are:

Monday – Friday 11 am to 6 pm,
Saturday 10 am to 6 pm

If you are attempting to schedule your animal for a medical appointment or heartworm treatment, please see our [Medical Appointment Section](#) for more details.

Preparing Your Family, Pets and Home for a Foster Pet

Pre-Treating Your Dwellings and Yard

Texas is home to several very common viruses carried by wildlife and domestic pets that are found on most ground surfaces in our backyards. The warm climate, minimal freezes, and rainy springtime can allow highly contagious illnesses, such as [Parvovirus and Distemper](#), to have longer gestation times outdoors than other states. Even if your backyard is fully fenced, wildlife can spread viruses through possible contaminants in your yard.

You can pre-treat hard surfaces, such as your patio or deck, with a bleach: water mixture of 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach) on any surface. With this pre-treatment, you should be able to safely let underage puppies out onto these locations. Puppies under 6 months of age should not go out onto the grass or dirt that you cannot pre-treat until they have had 2 rounds of booster vaccinations. Adult dogs that have been vaccinated are much less susceptible to contract these viruses and, in most cases, can go out into your fully contained yard onto the grass or dirt without the need for pre-treatment. We do always recommend pre-treating your dwellings if you are unsure of the tenant history.

If you have had a personal pet become sick with a virus in the past year, we recommend cleaning places that you can with a bleach: water mixture of 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach). This will ensure any foster pets you bring home will not catch the same virus.

Prepping for First Day: Items and Expectations

Here is a good list of items for you to have the first time you ever bring home a new foster pet.

BASICS ITEMS

- Species appropriate food. Look for brands with ingredients that you recognize
- Pet stain and odor remover with enzyme destroyers
- Grooming Brushes
- Water and Food bowls
- Bedding, Blankets, Towels
- Crate, Carrier and/or baby gate

FUN AND GAMES

- Food dispensing toys
- Toys to relieve boredom
- Training treats to learn new things!

DOGS SPECIFIC ITEMS

- 4-6 ft leash for walking
- Poop bags
- Long-lasting durable chews
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- 10-16ft leash for unsecured yards

CAT SPECIFIC ITEMS

- Litter Box and Scooper
- Litter (non-clumping)
- Scratching Posts of different varieties

Despite your experience level, we recommend checking out our section on reading [body language](#) before taking an animal into your home.

Housing Requirements

When fostering a pet for HSCTX, you are expected to provide a secure and caring housing environment . Cats and kittens must always be housed indoors while in the foster program unless specific arrangements have been made with the Foster Team. Puppies under 6 months of age should not go to outside public areas until they have received at least 2 rounds of booster vaccinations.

All dogs should be on leash when outside. Only allow for off-leash play inside your secure, fenced yard. They should not be housed outside in your yard when you are not home. Adult foster dogs should not be given free access to a 'doggie door' or any other access door to the outside when you are not at home. HSCTX will lend you a kennel to house your foster pet indoors when you are away from the home.

Additional Renter Information

Some apartment complexes and home rental managers have restrictions on having pets, and even breed restrictions, in apartments or rental homes. Check with your management to see if you have any type of pet deposit that must be paid in order to foster pets. As a Foster Parent, HSCTX expects that you have done this research prior to taking an animal into your home. HSCTX does not require you to provide renters agreements or leases prior to fostering. By taking an animal into your home, you are acknowledging that you will accept the risk of taking an animal home.

Health and Temperament

HSCTX does not guarantee any health or temperament of an animal entering your care. By taking an animal into your home, you are acknowledging that you will accept the risk of taking an animal home with unknown or limited history. All medical and behavioral information will be divulged at the time of pick up. It is the responsibility of the Foster Parent to ensure they are following the proper protocols for keeping their foster pet and family safe. We highly recommend familiarizing yourself and family with the prospective foster pet before taking them into your home.

Decompression Period

Remember that this is more than likely a confusing time for your new foster pet. They have just left the chaotic environment of the shelter and are bound to be feeling a little overwhelmed. It can be tempting to bring them with you to shop or visit friends or go out to eat, but your foster pet should go straight to your home and be allowed to settle in before taking them anywhere. It can take days to several months for an animal to become comfortable in your home and with your routine. Be patient and allow for them to have some time to decompress.

You should plan to create a quiet space for your foster pet with [a crate setup](#) that is “den like” or give them a room like an unoccupied bathroom. If the foster pet you bring home appears stressed out or shut down, allow them to have a space that is entirely theirs. Allow your foster pet to relax before immediately subjecting them to social situations.

For dogs, when you first arrive home, walk your them around outside on their leash to allow for a chance to go to the bathroom. Keeping them on leash at first can be helpful, especially when entering a new environment with so many smells and potentially scary new sounds. A leash will keep them from running away from you or chasing objects that could be potentially harmful. Once you’re inside the house, it might take a bit of time for your new foster pet to relax. The more you can relax into a routine, the more your foster pet will, too.

For cats, starting with a small space can make them feel much more comfortable about their new dwellings. Often, they will want a place to hide and make sure the environment is safe to move in. Allow them to have a space that belongs to them without intrusion from other pets. As they begin to get more comfortable, you can allow them to have more free roaming time.

Please also note that all animals are individuals; they all have different adjustment and decompression periods.

Foster Pet Isolation

When you take a foster pet from HSCTX, we recommend that you keep them separated from your personal animals for at least 24-48 hours. This is recommended for the safety and protection of your personal animals. We can give no guarantees about the health and behavior of an animal coming from our facility into your home. Animals are fully vetted upon intake when arriving to HSCTX, but it is always a good idea to be on the safe side when it comes to your personal animals. Please note that some diseases will not always appear within the first 24-48 hours of arrival to the shelter or your home and can incubate in the body for longer than that time frame. An enclosed area or separate room with no carpet will often work best for your foster pet during the isolation period (such as your laundry room or an unoccupied bathroom).

Getting Started as a Foster Parent

Commitments as a Foster Parent range from just a couple of days to several months, so you can choose an option that fits your lifestyle. A Foster Parent of HSCTX is expected to work through adoptions or transport opportunities to other organizations to find these pets permanent placement. It is through this vital and supportive role for HSCTX that we can provide more lifesaving opportunities to and create a safety net for the animals that have come into the shelter facility.

Opportunities for a Foster Parent

Our large-scale foster program is all encompassing and provides a variety of different avenues. We encourage all Foster Parents through HSCTX to help us on our lifesaving mission. Opportunities currently are:

Short Term Fosters

Whether you can take an animal for 3 days or 3 weeks, a short-term foster opportunity can be a lifesaving decision. This type of foster is critical when space is low at our facility for dogs and cats. Short term fosters provide temporary space for our animals while we search for more long-term placement options, such as a transport or transfer to a rescue partner. If you are concerned about fostering long term, ask about our short-term foster opportunities.

Medical and Specific Treatment

Length of time for this opportunity varies dependent on the illness or injury. Reach out to your Foster Team for more information.

General Fostering

Almost any animal at HSCTX is eligible for fostering opportunities. We do put stipulations on animals that are highly desirable and easily adoptable. If you are interested in fostering a specific animal, we can more than often accommodate this request. [Contact the Foster Team](#) for more information.

Underage/Neonatal animals

The most critically at risk are the fragile neonatal population. HSCTX has many resources that can make fostering process easier for you. For more information about neonatal fostering, view our [Neonatal Foster Guide](#) attached to the back of this handbook.

Queens and Offspring

Help our royalty recover in style. Moms with babies can stay with a foster an average of 1 to 2 months, depending on the age of the underage pets. This rewarding experience is much easier than it might sound, as mom typically does all the work for you!

Selecting a Foster Pet

We will do our best to match you with your ideal foster animal when you first attend our orientation. However, if you do not find a match, or if your foster has been adopted, the Foster Team will communicate to you with daily emails on available foster opportunities. In addition, if there is an animal that you are interested in fostering outside of the daily emails, you can email Foster@humanesocietycentraltexas.org to schedule a time with us to pick out a foster pet.

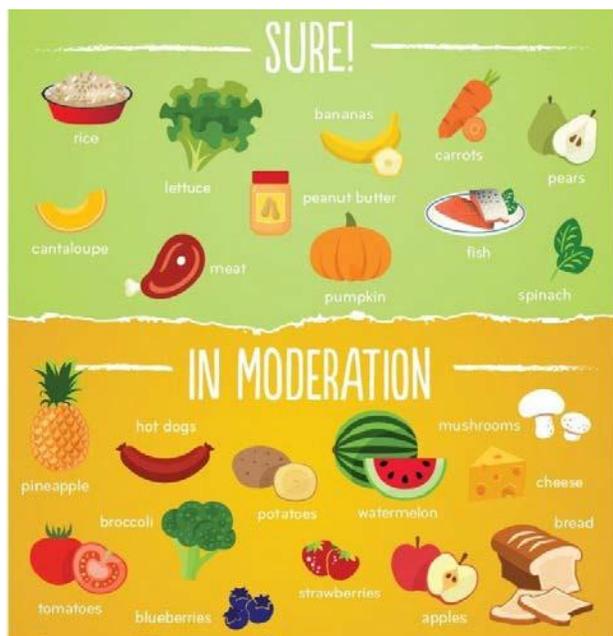
In the Home with a Foster

Feeding Guidelines

****Please refer to the [Neonates guide](#) for instructions on feeding animals under 8 weeks.**

Be sure to have the appropriate food for the arrival of your foster pet. The best types of food are not the most expensive but have ingredients that you recognize and are free of dyes, parabens, and fillers (ex. Corn). You should never give your foster pet food intended for people, nor should you feed them scraps off your plate. Certain types of human food can be toxic to animals and cause symptoms from allergic reactions, lethargy, organ failure, and even death. Treats Keep number of treats to a minimum; treats should only be about 1% of their daily diet. Make sure treats are labeled safe for appropriate age for your foster pet. Never leave your pets and foster pets with unattended treats. No rawhide, leather, or bone-type treats are allowed at any time.

Can My Foster Eat This?



Dog to Dog Introductions

With all animals, we highly recommend following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

This is meant to be a guide for introducing two social dogs to each other. Do not use this procedure if either dog has had a history of dog aggression and/or displays [On Leash Reactivity \(OLR\)](#) or [Barrier Reactivity \(BR\)](#) to other dogs. This reactivity can manifest as barking, lunging and even fighting or biting and can be displayed while the dog is either on the end of a leash or behind a barrier (fence, gate, etc.). While OLR and BR are not indicators of canine aggression, it can cause on leash introductions to go poorly. If you are attempting to follow this

procedure and either of the dogs seems uncomfortable or begins to display OLR or BR, please cease the introduction and [contact the Foster Team](#). Information pulled from <http://www.ourpack.org/dogdogintros.html>

How We Set Dogs Up to Fail

Many dogs have forgotten or never learned at all how to properly greet other members of their own species. Dogs are mostly on leashes, behind fences, rushed into greetings by their well-meaning people, and kept from situations that would have otherwise helped them learn canine greeting etiquette. Leash reactivity is one of the biggest dog behavioral issues caused by us humans. Tight leashes can create frustration when your dog sees other dogs on the street. This can cause body language in your dog that may look offensive to other dogs. Other behavior often facilitated by humans – pulling, hard stares, and running up to other dogs head-on – can turn greetings sour.

Dogs aren't all that different from people – they have personal space just like we do – and may become offended when a stranger invades that space. Think of it this way: if I were to wave to you from a distance, that would be a nice gesture. If I were to rush up to you and wave my hand right in your face, that would be rude, intrusive and somewhat threatening. Dogs are constantly placed into situations in which they are forced to endure invasion of their space and are set up to fail at greetings. The sad thing is that the dogs get blamed for snappy behavior or are said to be “aggressive” in these situations. But it's a normal reaction for a dog to get cranky about another dog running up, acting rude and rushing a greeting (especially so when the dog is on its own territory).

Some considerations first, please!

Before you set up a new-dog introduction, consider your own dog's general attitude towards other dogs. If your dog has a solid history of playing well with properly matched playmates, then you have a better chance at success. Pairings of the opposite sex tend to be most successful. Some dogs are uncomfortable with or reactive to new dogs and need very slow introductions. Realize that, like humans, dogs don't necessarily like every single dog they meet, and some do best as an only dog. If your dog has a history of reacting negatively to the company of other dogs, then it is probably best to just have them as an only dog.

Successful Introductions Lead to Successful Integration!

It is a must to properly introduce your current dog to a new dog, especially if the new dog is meant to become part of your family. Do not just walk a new dog into your home with your current dog waiting inside. Your dog will naturally feel that the newcomer is an intruder, not a new friend. First impressions matter! Properly introduced dogs are more likely to become buddies. The goal is to emulate the natural greetings talked about above.

To properly introduce your dog to a new dog, you'll need two people, one person per dog, and some high-value treats. These can be pieces of chicken, hot dog or cheese, anything that will get the dog's attention and that it doesn't get normally. Start by walking the two dogs on leash in the same direction in neutral territory. If you find that they pull toward each other, stare at each other or are overly excited, then you're too close too soon. Put some distance between the dogs and have them just hang out for a bit at that distance before continuing to walk. Use your treats to reward your dog for remaining calm and focusing on you. This gives them something to do while they get used to each other's presence. Be patient and relax so the dogs can relax too.

As the dogs begin calming down in each other's presence, begin to move them closer to each other. At some point they should become more relaxed, and you can proceed with your walk. What you're looking for is calm, relaxed and confident behavior. Neither dog should be overly aroused, nervous, stiff, or fearful.

(If the dogs don't seem to be able to relax and be friendly, it might be best to separate until you can speak to the Foster Team.)

If they are relaxed and nicely interested in each other, then go ahead and let them get close enough to sniff. As they sniff, watch carefully. Warning signs include stiffening, low growling, avoidance, or hard stares. If you see these behaviors, calmly move the dogs away from each other. Remember, some dogs don't like the company of other dogs and they should never be forced into a greeting. Some dogs may need more time or a few more intros to get used to another dog.

If the dogs remain relaxed and pleasantly interested in each other, one or both of them may gesture to play. Keep the leashes loose and let them interact on leash for a bit to make sure all goes well. If both dogs are still relaxed and showing loose, happy body language, you can drop the leashes and let them play while dragging their leashes in an enclosed area. Take away all food from this point forward – as it can be a trigger for an argument.

Watch the play for a while to be sure everyone is minding their manners: no rude behavior or pushy type of mounting behavior allowed initially. Every few minutes, before the dogs reach a state of high arousal or over-excitement, stop the play and get the dogs calm again or walk them. Then let the play resume. End the play on a good note; don't let them play into crankiness. With you as their leader to give them guidance and direction, the dogs will get to know each other and build a trusting bond.

The next step

After they have successfully played for some time, you can bring both dogs into your house or yard with their leashes dragging behind them. If the new dog is going to be a member of your family, it's best to crate the new dog often and not let it just roam around. Make sure that both dogs are fed in separate rooms or areas, and to not introduce high value objects like chewies or bones too quickly.

What if it doesn't work out?

We understand that sometimes it's just not a good fit. Please see the section in your foster manual about [Returns to the Shelter](#). This does not necessarily mean you would not be allowed to foster another dog with us, but we encourage following the steps outlined in this document or contacting the Foster Team for more tips to ensure the greatest success.

Dog to Cat Introductions

The best long-term results for a dog and cat introduction are to take your time and go through a step by step process of slowly acclimating the animals. With all animals, we highly recommend following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

Necessary separation

The dog and cat/s should not meet or see each other for at least a day so that the dog has time to get used to the new house and the scent of the cat. To give your cats a break and for them to also acclimate to the smell of the new dog, you can rotate "free" time in the house by kenneling or putting your dog in a secured closed off room and then allowing the cats loose in the house. If you have multiple dogs, you should do this with them individually. Multiple dogs can overwhelm a cat and create a "pack mentality" in the dogs that could make introductions extremely difficult.

The Introduction

The introductions should not last for hours on end. It is best for both animals to do several short 15-30 minute "introduction sessions" a day.

1. Grab some stinky treats, put your dog on leash and bring the cat into the same room using crate or baby gate to separate
2. Reward your dog with food for staying calm while the cat is visible across the room. Do not move the dog any closer until you're able to get your dog's attention in the presence of the cat
3. Reward the dog any time they look away from the cat and especially if the dog looks at you
4. If the dog lunges or gets over excited, say "no" or "uh-uh" and back away or put them up. Be sure to reward your dog if they choose a calmer behavior afterwards. Your dog can look at the cat but should be heavily rewarded for choosing to look away from the cat
5. If your dog is showing appropriate/ calm behaviors from across the room, begin to move closer and repeat the process. Only choose to move closer after your dog has successfully shown only positive behaviors at the previous distance 3 sessions in a row

If your dog is still showing too much interest or aggressive type behavior around the cat, keep separated and [alert the HSCTX Foster Team](#).

Next steps:

Assuming your new dog is remaining calm around the cat and you have moved closer in proximity to the cat in the crate or on the other side of a baby gate, you will start these exercises over again with the cat out of the crate or baby gate.

1. Start with your dog on leash across the room with the cat loose on the other side. This will look different to your dog since the cat can move more freely and normally
2. A common trigger for dogs is when the cat runs across the room so be sure to heavily reward your dog if the cat does move quickly or jumps up on something and your dog remains calm
3. Work up to a closer proximity to the cat but not allowing the cat to approach the dog or for the dog to have access to the cat

Step four:

If the dog is doing well on leash and is responsive to you around the cat, you can try them loose. Keep a leash on your dog but allow it to drag on the ground beside them like an extended handle that you can step on or quickly pick up if you need to interrupt your dog. Allow your cat to give appropriate warnings like hissing or swatting to indicate that he needs space. Your dog should respond to this by moving away, reward him when he does this. If your dog does not understand the cat's warning or thinks that it is play, help your dog by calling or guiding him away by the dragging leash. Continue to reward your dog for relaxed behavior and for any time that your dog looks at the cat but chooses to look/move away.

Reminders:

*Even dogs that respect cats indoors may chase or lunge toward cats outdoors so be very careful having your dog and cats in the backyard together.

*New dogs and cats should not be left alone together for at least the first 6 months you have the dog. You are still getting to know your new dog and what he/she will do in every circumstance.

*Every animal might have a different reaction to the other, so please be mindful and aware of your animal's comfort level.

Cat to Cat Introductions

As a species, cats tend to need more time to adjust to changes in their environment, and, like us, they can vary in their social personalities. When introducing one cat to another, consider things such as energy level, history with other cats, and/or behavior when viewing another cat. None of this can ever predict 100% your cat's reaction when you bring home another pet, but it could give insight into how they might react when they smell or see another animal in your home. With all animals, we highly recommend following [the isolation protocol](#) before doing any introductions.

Step One: Separate at first for long term success

The first impression between two cats matter because it can set the mood for the entire relationship. We are not entirely different from cats in this regard. If the first time you meet someone they say something unpleasant to you, it can take some time to shake off the first interaction. To aid in a successful first meeting, it is best to separate your resident cat from the new can when first brought home to control the initial introduction.

While separated, the two cats should be able to smell and hear each other, but not see or touch to prevent any negative interactions. This can be done either by placing your new cat in a spare bedroom, laundry room, a walk-in closet, or even a bathroom. To prevent negative touch, a baby gate is highly recommended to place in front of any door, but also a towel underneath can substitute for this. During separation, each cat should be provided with their own necessary items (food and water, litter box, scratching post, bed and toys) to alleviate any stress.

After a few days, we recommend allowing the cats to rotate between the two rooms. This allows your new cat to be able to explore, but also lets your two cats separately investigate the other's smell. Play around with removing the barrier that has been preventing touch at this point and notice if either cat's reactions to each other under the door is positive.

Step Two: The View

Once you begin to see no aggression (swatting, growling, etc.) between the two cats under the door, you can begin to introduce the cats to the sight of each other. A tall baby gate can be extremely helpful here, or even to rotate time in an extra-large wire crate if you have an agile cat.

Step Three: Meeting and Friendship

After viewing each other without any direct swatting, you can open the door to allow for the cats to interact with each other. Do not force the cats to interact, allow them to approach each other on their own terms. It is normal during this time for cats to hiss at or low growl at each other. However, they should not charge at or bite each other. If this happens and the cats begin to fight, do not attempt to pick them up or grab them. Try to separate them by using your voice or something that you can put in between them. You can also prepare yourself with a spray bottle filled with water. Once separated in their own rooms, go back to Step Two or even Step One to work on a slower integration process.

How Kids SHOULD NOT Interact with Dogs

It's common sense. Just imagine how people should interact with each other.

Avoid taking people's food



Avoid bothering dogs when they are eating



Avoid stealing other people's toys



Avoid taking a dog's bones or toys



Avoid putting your face right up to someone else's face



Avoid putting your face right up to a dog's face



Avoid bothering when asleep



Avoid bothering animals when they are resting. Let sleeping dogs lie.



Avoid pestering



Avoid grabbing tail/ears



Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid climbing on or trampling



Avoid pinching



Avoid hugging. Most dogs dislike it.



Avoid screaming around



Avoid hollering and shouting. Use your "inside" voice instead.



Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior

For additional free dog bite prevention resources and more dog behavior books and products, visit www.drSophiaYin.com



Dog Parks, Public Outings and Leash Etiquette

There is a saying that “a tired dog is a good dog” and that is actually very true! Dogs are like humans in that they’re happy when their physical and mental state is healthy. Giving a dog mental and physical exercise sets them up for success and understanding a dog’s age, temperament, energy level and health overall will help you in creating a satisfied pooch. When you bring home an animal that has an immeasurable amount of energy, take advantage of it! Taking a dog for a walk (or a run) not only exercises and tires them out, it creates a bonding experience for you and the animal.

Knowing the how to act in the public setting will set you and your foster pet up for success. We encourage you to exercise your foster pet, but we want you to be smart and considerate of others while you do. As the Foster Parent, you are always required to keep your foster dog on a leash in any public area. Foster dogs are not allowed to go to off leash dog parks. As fun as dog parks may seem, they can be a very high stress environment for any animal. When you are in public with your foster dog, understand the pet’s limitations and be able to recognize the signs of what makes the animal uncomfortable. See this [infographic](#) for more information on reading body language.

Remember that you are not permitted to introduce your foster dog to privately owned dogs. Along those lines, it is incredibly inappropriate to allow a foster dog to run up on other animals on the leash. Not only does this set up a meeting for failure, as outlined in the [dog to dog meet and greet](#) sections, but it might not be a welcome greeting by the other animal. Retractable leashes should not be used as they do not hold enough control if your animal becomes frightened or over-aroused.

Remember that you are your foster pet’s ambassador and showcasing your foster pet is very important in finding their forever home! Allowing your foster pet to be a rude and intrusive dog does not show off their best qualities, nor does it help them find a forever home. If you are struggling to have a nice outing with your foster, we recommend checking out the walking equipment and [Common Behavioral Tips](#) section to see if this alleviates behavioral concerns.

Walking Equipment

Whether you are struggling with a dog who pulls, barks, or tries to flee, having the appropriate walking equipment can make your outings go from annoying to enjoyable.

Front Clip Harness

Front-clip harnesses have the leash attachment in the center of the dog’s chest. Trainers often choose front-clip harnesses to lessen the dog’s pulling on the leash. The chest clip gives the owner control over the direction the dog is moving and allows for the dog to be redirected to face the owner if needed. Common types of front-clip harness include the Freedom Harness, the Sensation Harness, or the Positively Harness. When being used, always clip the harness to the collar, as shown in this photo. This eliminates any possibility of your dog slipping out of the front of the harness.



Gentle Leader/Head Harness



The Gentle Leader harness sits high on dog's neck without putting pressure on the throat. The Gentle Leader headcollar fits securely over your dog's nose. The nose loop redirects their head towards you when the dog pulls forward, preventing pulling and giving you full attention. If your dog is barking or lunging at objects on leash, this is typically the best tool to use to prevent continued bad behavior. See this section on [On-Leash Reactivity](#). Most commonly, people look at this equipment and think the animal is wearing a muzzle, but this is not the case at all! The dog still had full control of their mouth to pant, drink water, and play with toys. Common types of Gentle Leader are the Halti and Pet safe Gentle Leader harnesses.

Martingale Collar

Martingale collars, also called no-slip or limited-slip collars, are a type of dog collar that provides more control



than a typical flat collar and prevent dogs from backing or slipping out. These collars were originally designed for dogs with thick necks and narrow heads, such as a Greyhound or Whippet. However, martingale collars are getting more popular due to the extra amount of control they provide for all types of animals. Fearful or extra rambunctious dogs benefit from the design of a martingale collar,

due to the inability (when properly fitted) to slip out of the typical buckle style collar.

The collar works by constricting when the dog pulls on the leash. Tension on the leash causes the smaller loop to tighten, which in turn pulls the larger loop tighter—but not too tight. Martingale collars are adjustable and should not tighten past the width of the dog's neck. They offer comfortable security without harming your dog.



Teaching Your Foster New Tricks

Positive reinforcement training is a wonderful and positive way to not only teach your foster pet basic helpful home-living behaviors (such as sit, down, and off) but also a way for you to bond with your foster pet!

The basics of positive reinforcement training involve using reinforcements, or things a pet wants, to encourage the behavior we're asking for. Reinforcements can include treats (in moderation) and human interactions such as petting and praising to encourage good behavior. Praise and reinforce the behaviors you DO want - ignore the behaviors you don't. You do not punish by hitting, pushing, or striking your pet. These types of corrections have been scientifically proven to not only not work long term in building good behavior in pets and can also cause unwanted aggressive behaviors to appear or increase.

Puppies and Socialization

When we hear the word "socialization" we tend to recognize the need for introducing a pup to other dogs and people. However, it's important we choose appropriately. Puppies, especially the very young, would do best to interact with other young puppies and well-socialized adult dogs. Dog parks are NOT an appropriate setting for puppy socialization as there are unknown factors and far too much unpredictability. We also want to be careful about the people we introduce to our young puppy (or those who introduce themselves without asking). Make sure you pay attention to how the person is interacting with your dog AND the signals your dog is giving. It is okay to remove your pup from a situation when they seem uncomfortable.

LOCATION

For puppies UNDER 4 months, even if pup is up to date on all their vaccinations, their immune systems are still developing and so they are still at risk for contracting potentially life-threatening diseases like Parvovirus and Distemper Virus. You want to avoid high traffic areas like parks and pet stores, but neighbors' and friends' homes and yards are perfectly safe if all resident dogs are up to date on their vaccinations.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Never force a pup to approach anyone or anything, let them explore on their own terms! If a pup encounters a novelty and their initial response is wariness, praise them when they overcome it. Not only will they realize there's nothing so scary about it after all, but mom/dad LOVES it when they walk on this stuff! Toss treats around the scarier objects and let your puppy go at their own pace. We recommend following the Rule of 12 for any dog entering the home.

Rule of 12 Positive Paws Dog Training ©2002 - Margaret Hughes

By the time a puppy is 12 weeks old, it should have:

Experienced 12 different surfaces: wood, wood chips, carpet tile, cement, linoleum, grass, wet grass, dirt, mud, puddles, grates, uneven surfaces, on a table, on a chair, etc.

Played with 12 different objects: fuzzy toys, big & small balls, hard toys, funny sounding toys, wooden items, paper or cardboard items, milk jugs, (all under supervision) etc.

Experienced 12 different locations: front yard, other people's homes, school yard, lake, pond, river, basement, elevator, car, moving car, garage, laundry room, hardware store, pet store, stairs, etc.

Met and played with 12 new people: (outside of family) include children, adults (male and female) elderly adults, people in wheelchairs, walkers, people with canes and umbrellas, crutches, hats, sunglasses, men with deep voices, people of different ethnicities, etc.

Exposed to 12 different noises: (always keep positive and watch puppy's comfort level-we don't want the puppy scared) garage door opening, doorbell, children playing, babies screaming, big trucks, Harley motorcycles, skateboards, washing machine, shopping carts, clapping, pan dropping, vacuums, lawnmowers, etc.

Exposed to 12 fast moving objects: (do not allow to chase) skateboards, roller-blades, bikes, motorcycles, cars, people running, cats running, scooters, children running, squirrels, etc.

And, if your puppy is over 12 weeks old, continue with the above until you have given him experience with all the above.

Keep in mind that you are not trying to overwhelm your puppy with new experiences - quantity is not better than quality. Make sure your puppy is confident, well rested, and having a good time whenever you introduce

The Do's and Don't's of Dog Training

DO's

- DO** use rewards like treats to train your dog so your dog will enjoy training. (Thought bubble: I LIKE TRAINING TIME!)
- DO** use comfortable, dog friendly equipment so that your dog feels relaxed and happy. (Thought bubble: WALKS ARE FUN!)
- DO** have your dog work for valued resources like meals, walks and toys so your dog looks to you for guidance. (Thought bubble: SIT = TOY!)
- DO** build a cooperative relationship based on mutual respect, communication and trust so both you and your dog enjoy being with one another.

DON'T's

- DON'T** use force or punishment when working with your dog or your dog will not think training is fun and will be afraid of you. (Thought bubble: TRAINING TIME SUCKS)
- DON'T** use aversive equipment like choke collars, prong collars or shock collars or training will be painful and scary for your dog. (Thought bubble: PLEASE NO TROUBLE...)
- DON'T** use confrontational methods that may frighten your dog or worse, cause your dog to react aggressively. (Thought bubble: IT'S SELF DEFENSE!)
- DON'T** use methods or equipment that are uncomfortable, painful, forceful, scary or intimidating to your dog. Positive reinforcement training is so much more fun for both the dog and owner. (Thought bubble: I TRY...)

EAST BAY DOG TRAINERS
www.eastbaydogtrainers.org

them to something new. Do not overdo it either. Puppies get tired very quickly, and most importantly give your dog lots of downtime after a new experience to recuperate and rest in a safe, quiet place.

Marketing Your Foster

Foster Parents are strongly encouraged to let others know that their foster pet is available for adoption using resources such as friends, family, work colleagues and social media networks like Facebook, Instagram, and NextDoor. Fosters of adult dogs may bring their foster pets to public places on leash to show off their foster pet as available for adoption. Public parks, pet stores, and restaurant porches are great places to expose your foster pet to people who may be interested in adoption.

HSCTX can help market your pet for fostering and transports when you send updated photos and videos of yourpet to Foster@humanesocietycentraltexas.org.

Photographs

A good photo is Bright. Clear. Happy.

Photographs can be the key to your foster pet's adoption. Getting photos that are well-lit, in focus and that give the viewer a window into a pet's personality can be tricky, but we have some ideas that can make this much easier for you.

Always Have Your Camera Handy

Without a camera handy, you may not be able to capture those intimate moments that will help your pet make an emotional connection, like when your foster cat is finally comfortable enough to rest their head in your lap, or when your own dog and your foster dog curl up together on the couch. Here are some examples:





Take Photos with People and/or Other Animals

Photographs taken with people and/or other animals are great because they not only feature the pet, they give information as well. A photo of two dogs together looking happy tells potential adopters, “This dog is good with (at least some) other dogs.” A photo of a cat and a small child implies that the cat is safe with children. Keep this in mind when creating marketing material for your foster pet.



Take Multiple Photos

One foster explains, “I am an awful photographer. This is easily combated by taking one million rapid fire photos at once. Odds are you’ll snap something to work with.” Whether you’re an ace photographer or not, taking multiple photos increases the chances of coming up with something good!



Take Photos of Dogs Outdoors



Studies have shown that photographs of dogs taken outside can help dogs get adopted more quickly. Outside, the options for nice-looking backgrounds are unlimited, and dogs’ stress levels may be lower, enabling you to get better photos.

Make Sure the Pet Is Looking into the Camera

The eyes are the window to the soul, so it follows that eye contact is helpful in establishing an emotional connection, even if it’s just from a photograph.

Use Photos to Showcase Personality

We want potential adopters to get a feel for our foster pets' personalities, so use photos in a way that does just that. Take photos that capture an aspect of a pet's personality. When viewed together, one gets a more accurate picture of who they are.

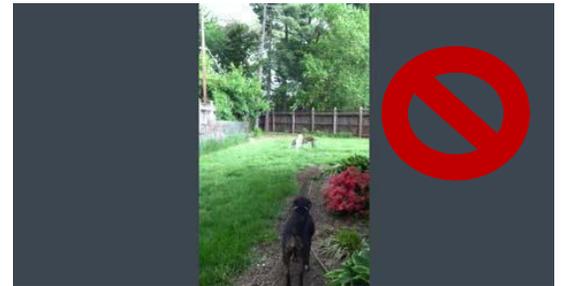


Videos

Great videos can give the best idea of who your foster is. Videos have the power to make a connection before an official meet-and-greet happens. The following are a few tips for making great videos.

Hold the Camera Horizontally (unless you're doing Facebook live)

Holding the camera vertically creates wide black lines on either side of the video.



Make Your Video 30 Seconds or Less

Attention spans are short, so make sure your video is fast-paced and succinct.

Getting Your Foster Adopted

Responding to Adopters and Scheduling Meet and Greets

Fosters are instrumental in finding the animal the right home – and it can be a tough job! Letting go of an animal that is basically a member of our family can be an intense experience sometimes. As the foster, you are not obligated to adopt out your foster pet to the first person who wants them. You are always allowed to “screen” your potential adopters by asking appropriate questions to ensure your adopting household understands and is comfortable in adopting your foster pet. After all, who knows the animal better than you? Do not let anyone rush you or intimidate you. If it doesn't feel right, move on to the next potential adopter.

With your main priority as a foster being to find an adoptive home, we set expectations that you will need to answer any incoming inquiries within 72 hours. Until the Foster Team has received paperwork for your foster animal, it will remain active on the website, and you will continue to receive inquiries that will need to be responded to. Failure to respond to Meet and Greet requests could affect your ability to foster with HSCTX.

Meet and Greets and Discussing Your Foster with Adopters

Inquiries for your foster animal will be sent to you through email, so it is important to ensure that it is up to date. When you receive an inquiry through us and decide to move forward, it's best to do this where the pet is most comfortable. This might be in the current home or out at a neutral territory, such as a park or restaurant. It's best that the first meeting starts off with only the humans of the household before adding any other animals, especially if there are children involved.

During the meeting, we strongly encourage you to listen to the way people discuss their animals, and not focus on any factors such as wealth or status. Remember that just because someone might not be the perfect home, they can give the animal a great and loving home. Have an open and honest discussion about what the adopter is looking for and how well it matches your foster pet. Do trust your instincts; if you don't feel good about the adopter then that's okay. It also just might not be the right fit.

Here are some standard questions that you might ask with a potential adopter:

- Have you had any pets? If so, how are they doing?
- Is this pet for you or someone else? Does that person know a pet is entering their life?
**We do not restrict adoptions of pets as gifts, but we do encourage the potential adopter to understand the species, size, and activity level of the dog they are getting.*
- What drew you to this particular pet?
- Do you have other pets at home?
- Do you know if this type of pet is allowed in your residence?
**We do not restrict renters or ask for copies of leases, but the potential adopter should always check on their pet policy just to be sure they would not have to unexpectedly return.*
- What is your lifestyle like – Active/Couch potato/Active on Weekends/etc.? How do you see that changing with this animal?

For dogs, we recommend doing slow controlled leash introductions for children that join meet and greets, even if your foster has been around children before. Please also see the infographic on [how children should meet animals](#). This will help gauge how the foster pet will react to children and children to your foster pet. If the potential adopter has another dog and would like to introduce them together, please ensure that you are following appropriate guidelines set by the [dog to dog introduction](#) section. We never recommend a cat meeting but encourage the adopter to follow the [cat to dog guidelines for meeting each other](#) should they decide to adopt.

Handing the Animal to the Adopter

Until the animal has been fully processed in the HSCTX system, meaning the adopter has signed all paperwork and the animal has been spayed or neutered, the animal is still the property of HSCTX. This means that the animal cannot go to the adopter's household. Once paperwork has been processed, a Foster Parent can either bring the animal to HSCTX or meet the adopter at another location to transfer ownership. Remember, if you do not get the approval from the HSCTX Foster Team, the animal is not eligible to leave the foster home.

Important Medical Information

HSCTX can make no guarantees about the health of an animal entering your home. During pick up, a Foster Team member will review your foster pet's medical notes and do a quick visual observation for any obvious signs of illness or injury. You will also be given a copy of the most current medical file of the foster pet, as well as any medication that they might be on. Please speak to a Foster Team member directly with any questions regarding your foster pet's medical history.

Scheduling an appointment with the Medical Clinic

If your foster pet is showing signs of illness or injury, they will need to come to the shelter for a medical appointment. This does not include Booster Vaccines! See [Vaccine Schedule](#) for more information on Booster Vaccines for your foster.

A medical appointment needs to be collaborated with the medical team, and therefore it is incredibly important that this is appropriately scheduled. This can be done by using the scheduling app on the Foster Resource Page on our website. www.humanesocietycentraltexas.org

Due to the busy schedule of our veterinarians, we ask that you always schedule appointments in advance and arrive 10 minutes before your scheduled appointment time. If you are late for your appointment, you may be asked to reschedule. If you are unable to come during the appointment slots, you may drop your animal off early and pick them up at least 20 minutes before closing.

Medical Emergency and Contact information

If you suspect your foster is having a medical emergency, please call the foster phone at [469-551-3956](tel:469-551-3956). **This phone is not answered after hours. If your animal is having a life-threatening emergency (they will die before the shelter reopens) please take them to an emergency vet clinic. The Humane Society will reimburse any incurred vet costs. Please note reimbursement only applies if it is proven to be a life-threatening medical emergency by a vet.**

An emergency can be described as:

- Trauma –sustaining a severe injury or suspected poisoning or burn
- Unable to breathe –struggling for breath, gasping, or shallow breathing (does not include coughing or hacking)
- Seizures
- Deep cuts and gashes that will not stop bleeding with pressure
- Extreme lethargy and foster is unable to waken or move
- Extreme instability or falling over
- Liquid diarrhea with blood and vomiting
- Rectal temperature 104.5 or above. (If not after a period of high activity.)

If your foster is not having a medical emergency, please schedule an appointment through the appointment app on the Foster Resource Page on our website. www.humanesocietycentraltexas.org

Mandatory Vaccinations and Preventatives

Please see the Neonatal Guide for information about your animal under 8 weeks of age.

All animals are given the following when they enter the facility:

- Microchip – Given at Intake and registered to HSCTX until adoption has been processed
- Rabies Vaccine – will receive if the animal is over three months
- Dewormer
- Species appropriate flea/tick prevention

All Dogs will receive:

Heartworm Test – if over six months

Heartworm Prevention

DA2PP Vaccine – given every two weeks until the pet is over four months OR two vaccinations have occurred

All Cats will receive:

FelV Test - if over six months

FVRCP Vaccine – given every two weeks until the pet is over four months old OR two vaccines have occurred

The Foster Team will alert you through email when your foster pet will need to come in for vaccinations. If you seek private veterinary care, you will need to send in the medical records to Foster@humanesocietycentraltexas.org.

Scheduling Spay and Neuter Surgery

All foster animals that are intact will be scheduled for their spay/neuter surgery as soon as possible.

If you have small kittens or puppies, please always be sure to weigh the animal the night before surgery and contact the Foster Team if the animal weighs less than 2lbs. The Foster Team can always reschedule an animal if it has not hit the proper weight for surgery.

If you need to reschedule a surgery day for any reason, please [contact the Foster Team](#) as soon as possible.

All animals that are adopted through HSCTX MUST be spayed or neutered per city ordinance of Waco.

Surgery Complications

Complications can sometimes arise with your foster spay/neuter surgery. If you notice an issue with your foster pet after surgery, email the Foster Team at foster@humanesocietycentraltexas.org to schedule a vet re-check. Include photos of the area you are concerned about in the email.

Sick or Injured Foster Pets

The symptoms listed below are not always indicative of an issue, but you should alert the foster team if you notice any of the following:

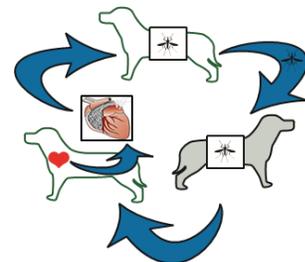
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Ears</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark, flaky debris, especially in cats• Dark, waxy discharge accompanied by yeasty smell• Painful when rubbed or cleaned• Consistent scratching at ear | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple Vomiting episodes – either heavy gagging with bile or phlegm |
| <p>Nose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yellow, green or heavy oozing discharge• Excessive sneezing with discharge | <p>Mouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trouble eating or chewing• Pale gums• Ulcers or lacerations on gums or lips |
| <p>Eyes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yellow or green discharge• Uneven pupils• Swollen or bloodshot eyes, including 3rd eyelid | <p>Fecal/Urination Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No bowel movement for more than 48 hours• No urination for more than 24 hours, especially in male cats |
| <p>Stomach (Internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of appetite past two meals | <p>Gait</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden lameness that does not improve with rest within a day• Animal exhibits pain or stiffness upon walking or handling |

*None of these symptoms should be considered an emergency. However, if you have concerns, please contact the Foster Team.

Common Medical Terms and Conditions

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in pets transmitted from a single mosquito. It can easily be prevented by providing a monthly preventative, which all heartworm negative animals are given at the time of intake. When an infected mosquito bites an animal, the larvae enter the animal's bloodstream where they eventually make their way to the heart. Here they grow into adult worms, sometimes reaching a length of 14 inches. Adult heartworms obstruct the chambers of the heart and large blood vessels leading from the heart to the lungs. Eventually other organs, such as the lungs and kidneys, can also be damaged. If left untreated, heartworm disease usually causes death.



A heartworm diagnosis can potentially be treated if it has not progressed for too long. The damage done to the heart can never be fully reversed, but the heartworms inside of the body can be killed and their reproduction stopped. If you are fostering an animal with Heartworms, HSCTX might be able to treat the animal in a foster home. [Contact the Foster Team](#) for more information.

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

The term “upper respiratory infection” is used to refer to any illness that affects an animal’s upper respiratory system; it is basically a cold. URI’s are common in shelter animals that can cause symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes, fever and loss of appetite. The symptoms of this virus are typically treated with antibiotics. Be certain to keep animals warm until they have recovered from a URI. URI’s are contagious to other animals through direct contact and can also be airborne.

Fleas

Fleas are bloodsucking parasites that are easily treated with a monthly preventative. On a mature animal, fleas are not particularly serious, but young animals do not have that much blood and they are virtually defenseless if they get fleas.

- Flea prevention that is specifically for one species can cause severe injury and/or death if used as a supplement for the other species. Only use flea/tick prevention for the species and weight/age range listed
- Over-the-counter flea treatments are not used because they are not effective and are much more toxic than what our veterinarians use
- Flea treatments that are meant for older cats or dogs can kill a kitten/puppy, so if you find fleas or flea dirt on kittens or puppies of any age, we’ll need to get them off! Since most flea treatments are too strong, we give warm dawn baths
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcDqHFAf0aU>

Ticks

Ticks are also bloodsucking parasites that can cause Lyme disease, anemia, and death in severe cases. HSCTX will give all animals, age permitting, in our care ongoing prevention starting at intake for ticks. As long as you continue to keep your foster pet on schedule for their prevention, any tick that latches on to your foster pet should die quickly. However, should you need to remove a tick, we have outlined the steps below:

- Ticks carry infectious agents that can seep into a human's bloodstream through breaks in the skin. It's better to play it safe and wear protective gear
- When you're getting ready to remove the tick you've got to keep your foster pet calm. Any unusual poking or prodding tends to make dogs and cats nervous. If there is another person available, have that person hold your pet and keep them relaxed
- Take a pair of tweezers—pointy ones work best—and grab hold of the tick as close to your dog's skin as possible. Be careful not to pinch your dog's skin
- Using steady pressure, pull the tick out using a straight motion. Do not twist or jerk the tick because you want to avoid leaving the tick's mouthparts behind. Also, make sure not to squeeze or crush the tick, since its fluids may contain infectious material. After removing the tick, examine it to make sure the head and mouth parts were removed. If not, contact the Foster Team and you can make an appointment take your pet to veterinarian to remove what's left in the pet's skin
- Kill the tick by placing it in a container with rubbing alcohol
- After you've removed the tick from your dog or cat, praise your pet for being good. Give him or her a treat and add in some extra playtime as a special reward

Roundworms, Tapeworms, and Hookworms

Intestinal parasites affect a digestive system and are very common. You can sometimes see these "worms" in or around an animal's rectum; you may see a long worm or what looks like rice protruding from its anus. Indications of worms are a large belly, diarrhea, and an inability to gain weight even when eating well. If you see signs of worms, alert the Foster Team. There are various medications given to the animal, depending on the type of worm, that easily take care of the problem. Worms can sometimes be passed through the feces to other animals.

Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is a virus that primarily affects dogs, however it can also affect ferrets and some species of wild animals (raccoons, wolves, foxes, and skunks). It is NOT contagious to humans, nor to domestic cats. Distemper can be spread by humans via secondary surfaces like shoes or clothes. Removing feces from the yard and not leaving water bowls out at night will help eliminate accidental spread from wildlife.

Distemper is spread to unvaccinated dogs just like the common cold, through contact with secretions. Unvaccinated dogs can also get Distemper through sharing water bowls, touching noses, or being in the same place at the same time as dogs with Distemper.

Fortunately, Distemper does not live very long in the environment. The virus dies very quickly - within minutes - as soon as it dries. It lives longer if it has a host or is in water or on wet surfaces, such as in food bowls or on water-soaked toys. However, the incubation period for Distemper Virus can last anywhere from two weeks to several months. The Distemper vaccine (DAPP/DHLPP) is VERY effective! HSCTX does vaccinate animals at intake, but it is necessary for the animal to have received two vaccines before contraction to be considered a successful vaccine.

If your resident dog(s) are healthy and current on their vaccinations, they should not contract Distemper. If you take home a dog who is Distemper exposed, on Distemper watch, or has Distemper, your personal dog(s) and any dog(s) that may come in contact (even through a fence) with your foster dog *must* be fully vaccinated.

FeLV and FIV

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) suppresses the immune system and can cause cancer or other serious illnesses in susceptible cats. FeLV is fatal and the life expectancy of a mature, infected cat is 2–4 years; most FeLV+ kittens do not survive to maturity. FeLV is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, as well as through urine, feces, and milk from infected cats. The virus can also be transferred through a bite wound, mutual grooming, shared use of litter boxes and feeding dishes, sexual contact, and from a mother cat to her kittens while in utero or during birth. FeLV does not survive long outside of the cat's body, probably less than a few hours, so carefully adhering to established protocols should limit the possibility of transmission.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that can cause a multitude of health problems in cats due to reduced immune system function; it is also known as feline AIDS. FIV is contagious, but only to other cats—people cannot get AIDS from their cats. Most cats with FIV live a normal life despite the virus and can live well with other cats as long as there is no aggressive fighting. Cats living indoors in a stable social structure have little chance of passing the disease to other household cats. Transmission occurs most commonly through deep bite wounds; less commonly, it is transmitted by an infected mother cat during birth or through sexual contact. FeLV and FIV+ kittens and cats are adoptable.

Parvovirus

Parvo is a highly contagious and life-threatening virus that infects the cells in the dog's body, most severely in the intestinal tract. The virus is highly resistant and can survive in the ground for up to nine months in the right conditions. The most at risk of contracting parvo are any unvaccinated dog, and/or young puppies under four months old who have not had their full round of booster vaccines.

Parvovirus will present with the following symptoms:

- Lethargy (low or lessening energy, listless)
- Inappetence (diminished or nonexistent interest in food/eating)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (usually bloody)
- Fever (normal rectal temperature for a dog is 99-102 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Severe, bloody diarrhea

Parvo is typically spread directly from dog to dog, but contact with contaminated stool, environments, or people can also spread the disease. Once infected, a dog with parvo may contaminate food, water bowls, collars, and leashes – as well as a dog's bedding or crate. Once a dog or puppy is infected, there is an incubation period of three to seven days before the onset of first symptoms. Pet owners can transmit parvo infections through their hands, clothing and shoes if they touch infected dogs and their stools.

If you have ever had a dog in your house that has contracted Parvo, you will be unable to take young or immunocompromised animals through HSCTX. It is highly recommended that you only bring home adult dogs who are fully vaccinated moving forward. By continuing to bring unvaccinated dogs into the home, you might continue to infect new dogs to the Parvovirus.

Panleukopenia

Panleukopenia, also known as "Panleuk," is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted through direct contact with saliva, vomit and feces. An infected mother cat can also transmit Panleuk to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating and difficult to deal with because the virus is very durable, can survive in the environment for up to a year, and is

highly transmissible. This means that other unvaccinated cats can become infected with Panleukopenia simply by coming into contact with places where an infected cat has been. Testing for Panleukopenia is not routinely done during intake since the test will not show positive until the virus is shedding. The test also does not have a high accuracy rate, and if the mother cat has been vaccinated, then the kittens will test positive. Vaccinated cats and kittens will sometimes have a false positive from the Parvo test. Symptoms of Panleuk include vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite and lethargy. Symptoms can take 3–10 days to present once a kitten has been infected. Once kittens are suspected or confirmed of having Panleuk, they are put into quarantine or placed with a specialized foster home for treatment. Due to the ease of transmission and the high number of potential fatalities from this disease, kittens with this disease must be isolated and brought to management immediately.

Demodex Mange

Demodectic mange is a skin infection that is caused by mites that naturally live on hosts, such as dogs, cats, and humans. Yep, humans have their own form of demodex mite. The mites are not rare, most healthy pets have demodex mites. The problem occurs if your pet has an immune system that does not work normally and cannot keep the mite population controlled. The mites multiply and cause intense itching. Your pet scratches and develops secondary bacterial infections with pus. Your pet's hair falls out and leaves bald, red, weepy, infected areas. The skin may become leathery. A skin scrape is used to diagnose this type of Mange. This type of Mange is NOT contagious and resolves typically after a change in diet, parasite prevention/medication or improved living situations. Speak to your [Foster Team](#) to find out more about treatment.

Sarcoptic Mange

Sarcoptic mange is very similar to Demodex mange, except it is contagious. This contagious skin disease affects primarily humans and dogs caused by specific mites. These mites will burrow through the skin causing intense itching and irritation. The scratching that results from mange is what causes most of the animal's hair to fall out. This is a treatable medical condition. Like Demodex mange, a skin scrape is used to diagnose this type of Mange. It is treated typically with antibiotics for any skin lesions and a topical or oral parasite prevention treatment for the mites. Animals can become non-contagious in about 2-4 weeks, depending on treatment.

Ringworm

Contrary to its name, Ringworm is not a worm at all but a fungus – a lot like “Athlete’s Foot.” In fact, most ringworm is the exact same fungus as “Athlete’s Foot.” When this fungus grows anywhere other than the bottom of the foot, it is called ringworm. The fungi live on the surface of the skin and in the hair follicles.

Appearance

The usual symptom is a round hairless lesion. However, the characteristic "ring" that we see on humans doesn't always appear as a ring on animals. This lesion will grow in size and often become irregular in shape. Ringworm is commonly found on the face, ears, tail and paws. The lesions are scaly, and the skin may be reddened. The spots may or may not be itchy.



Transmission

Transmission can happen by direct contact with another infected animal or person. It can be passed from cats to dogs and vice versa and from pets to humans and from humans to pets. A ringworm infection in a person typically occurs after a person has pet an infected or carrier cat, but it can also occur after simply handling items that were used by an infected cat.

Can Humans catch Ringworm from Animals?

Yes, humans can contract ringworm by handling an animal with the condition or sharing a living area with them. Immune compromised individuals, such as the elderly and very young, are more prone to contracting ringworm.

Ringworm Diagnosis and Treatment

If you see ANY hair loss on your foster animal, please immediately inform members of the Foster Team by emailing Foster@humanesocietycentraltexas.org. Include photos of the hair loss in your email. Depending on the photos, they might instruct you to bring your foster pet in for a vet examination. If your pet is found to have ringworm, you will have the option to continue treatment in your home or leave your foster pets at the shelter. The FosterTeam member will give you more information on treatment options for your foster should you decide to continue.

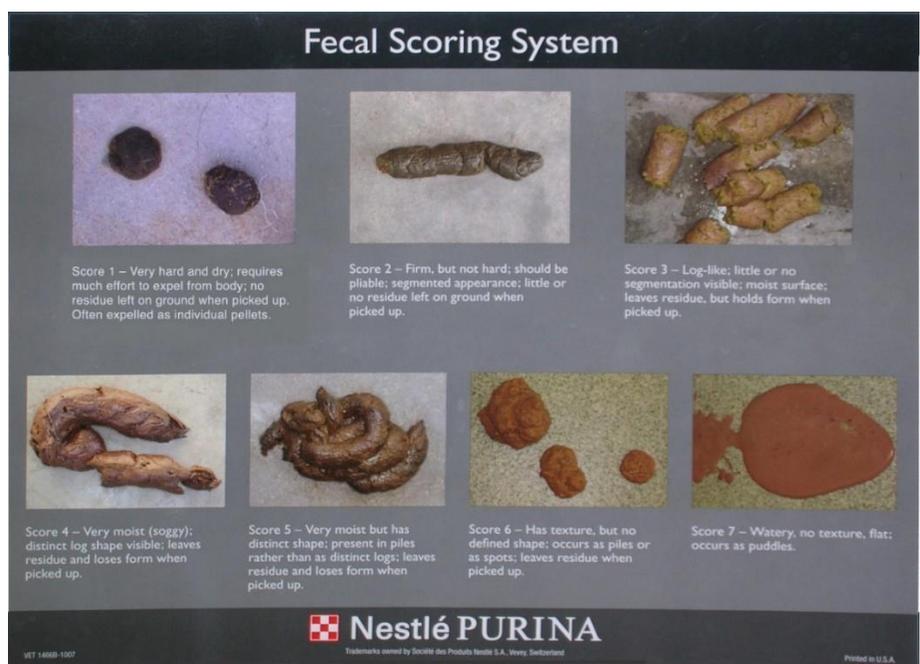
If your foster is diagnosed with Ringworm, you will need to decontaminate the environment. Use bleach mixed at 1:10 (of 5.25% - 6.15% household bleach) on any surface that you can at least every other day. This solution should kill 80% of the spores. Vacuum daily and dispose of vacuum bags / empty the vacuum canister, which will contain the spores. Steam cleaning of carpets and furnishings will also kill a large number of the spores – this is best done after the pets have left the home. Don't forget the animal's bedding! Wash all bedding in very hot water with detergent that contains color safe bleach and dry on high for 60 minutes. (Bleach note: Different bleach brands have different % solution. Be sure your bleach is 5.25% - 6.15% solution)

Coccidia and Giardia

Coccidia and Giardia are very common. They are protozoa that invade the digestive system and cause diarrhea. These are highly transmissible and can be spread through feces to humans and other animals. These parasites are easily treated with oral medications. Parasites can cause digestive problems as well as diarrhea. Diarrhea can be dangerous for a young animal and should be treated as soon as it shows up.

Deciphering Your Foster Pet's Fecal Matter

It might not be the most pleasant, but we can often find out an ailment from the consistency of your foster's bowel movements. There are several typical causes of diarrhea in our shelter animals. The most common reason why an animal might have diarrhea is due to a change in diet, such as changing brands or adding an extra stinky treat. Changes in diet are sometimes necessary to ensure a consistency to an appropriate food. If you find your foster has a sensitive tummy, or is prone to gas/diarrhea, you can always add a small amount of pumpkin or yogurt to their food. The best way to alleviate diarrhea is to keep your foster on a consistent diet. Some mild diarrhea will usually clear up on its own. However, if you



find that your fosters are consistently having diarrhea a few days past a food change, there could be another issue going on. Please contact your Foster Team member if the diarrhea remains after a few days.

Additional reasons we see diarrhea might be:

- Stress/excitement
- Coccidia or other parasites
- Viral (corona, panleukopenia, etc.)
- Failure to properly keep animal and/or living space free from filth.

The Importance of Cleanliness:

Keeping the animal's body and living space clean is crucial to having a healthy and successful experience.

- Make sure the animal's face, mouth and genital areas are always clean from food and/or organic matter
- If you are fostering an animal that uses a litter box, the litter must be emptied daily and replaced with fresh non-clumping litter. The litter pan must be cleaned as well
- Remove ALL organic matter before cleaning/bleaching any area
- Consider yourself 100% contaminated if you came in contact with a contagious disease
- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated animals should not be allowed to interact unless purposely housed together.

The faster we can identify the causes and type of poop in an animal, the quicker we can get a treatment plan in order. Just when we think an animal might have a parasite infestation, we could be looking in the wrong direction! It is crucial to keep in mind that there are various reasons for diarrhea and it is important to be able to understand why. If you are seeing diarrhea consistently after the first 48 hours from taking the animal home, please [contact the foster team](#) so the animal can be treated accordingly.

Common Behavioral Tips for Dogs

Mouthing/Play Biting

Aside from chewing, a common way in which dogs utilize their mouths is in play. It's very natural and (to a certain extent) acceptable for dogs to use their mouths when playing with one another. It's up to us humans to teach them that doing so is not acceptable when engaging with people. Here's how:

1. Redirect: As with chewing, you want to teach your dog what IS allowed. So always have toys nearby. When it comes to mild mouthing, simply engage them with a toy and continue playtime. You will probably have to repeat this several times even within the same stretch of playtime to help your dog understand
2. Remove all attention: If your pup isn't responding after several attempts to redirect, and/or the mouthing/play bites become more intense, say "no" or "eh eh" and then immediately walk away. Don't talk to them further, don't interact with them in any way. Simply remove yourself from them. To your pup, suddenly the game has stopped. With enough repetitions, they'll come to understand that being mouthy is what causes the fun to go away. Following this, if you catch your pup go to a toy or politely (not jumping or mouthing) approach you, you can give them lots of praise and re-engage them in playtime. (Note: Ignoring is also a great tactic for attention-seeking barking)
3. Teach a calming cue: You can teach your dog a cue called "touch" or "target" to redirect and calm them. [Click here for a video on teaching touch/target](#)

Chewing

Dogs interact with the world with their mouths. They don't have hands and opposable thumbs. Using their mouths is how they eat, play, explore, pick things up, etc. Not only is chewing natural for dogs, but it has health benefits as well (so long as they're chewing the right things). Then how do we make sure they don't chew what they shouldn't?

Management: Your dog can't chew on what it can't reach. Keep shoes, kids' toys, remotes and other curious and chewable items out of your dog's reach. If you need to cook dinner, make a phone call, or get involved in some other task that takes your attention away from your dog, have a dog-proof area. This can be a penned-off area or even the dog's crate. It's not a punishment, so make sure your dog has plenty of positive things to keep them occupied. (One of the many benefits of crate training is to prevent destructive behaviors like chewing.)

Redirect: If all we did was prevent and correct, we wouldn't give our dogs a clear message. We want to teach them what they ARE allowed to chew on. If you catch your dog chewing on something they shouldn't, interrupt them with a neutral (non-praise, but also non-punishment) noise that gets their attention. A mild "eh eh" or "no" or a light clap of your hands are a couple ideas. Offer them an appropriate toy or chew instead as a means of redirecting the chewing behavior. While your dog is in the process of learning, offer lots of praise any time your dog picks up something they can chew.

Exercise: There is an adage that "a tired dog is a good dog". Sometimes a dog chews for no other reason than they are bored (as one might chew on the cap of a pen in a dull meeting). It's important to make sure your dog has not only plenty of physical stimulation, but mental stimulation as well. Mental stimulation can include training games, puzzle toys, even a Kong stuffed with tasties. A dog can run around the yard for an hour and still have stores of energy (or at least enough for chewing!) but put that same dog in front of a puzzle toy that takes them fifteen minutes and suddenly you have one pooped pup!

Jumping Up

Puppy jumping is usually greeted with enthusiasm and affection. Then one day that same behavior is greeted with irritation or worse—all because the puppy grew up.

Never reward any dog for jumping. In fact, we want to engage them as little as possible. They jump for attention, and even a stern "no" or "eh eh" is attention. And many dogs consider pushing them away to be play. Here are a few ways to effectively deter jumping behavior:

- Teach an incompatible behavior: A dog can't jump if they're expected to do something that requires all four paws on the ground (what we call having four on the floor). Give your dog a solid foundation of sit. If your dog wants your attention, they must sit for it. They only get attention as long as they have all four on the floor
- The moment they jump up...
 - Remove all attention: Again, this means not even scolding them. Stand up and either a.) turn around and walk away, or b.) walk "through" (or past) them and keep walking
 - Make a game of it: If turning away from and walking "through" the jumping aren't enough to get the message across, try this game. Tether your dog to a piece of heavy furniture or another stable object/fixture. Have one individual, either a family member or a guest, approach at a time. If the dog keeps all four on the floor, they get attention and affection. The moment they jump up, the person walks away out of the reach of the tether. This way the dog can't pursue

attention. This is especially useful when managing an excitable, jumpy pup when guests are over. Just make sure your guests know the rules of the game! (Note: This technique is also useful for dogs who get mouthy out of excitement)

- o Use a leash: If your pup is prone to jumping, have always them wear a lightweight leash. We call this a “dragging leash” or “drag line.” When your pup starts to jump, tack the leash to the floor with your foot. The length between your foot and their collar should be enough that, if they have four on the floor, there is no tension; but as soon as they jump up, there is automatic and immediate pressure. This gives the dog instant feedback that jumping up is a.) unsuccessful and b.) uncomfortable.

With enough repetition of both these steps, your pup will pick up on the pattern: four on the floor = attention; jumping = no attention. To dogs, it’s really that simple. As your dog begins to show an understanding and offers a sit in a situation where they would usually jump, lavish them with praise and other rewards.

House Training

Whether you’re bringing home a brand-new puppy or an adult dog who’s lived in a home before, expect messes. Even a full-grown dog who is fully house trained will need to adjust to their new home and new routine, and sometimes there might be an accident or two. The basics for potty training puppies and adults, whether previously house trained or not, are generally the same. There are some key points to keep in mind during this process that are almost universally applicable:

Holding it period

Every dog has their time limit. Puppies under six months are typically unable to hold it in for more than a few hours. Prepare for this! Hire a dog sitter or walker to come once or twice a day while you’re at work. A healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for 8-10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions.

Frequent Outings are Necessary

To avoid accidents, you will want to make sure your pup has plenty of opportunities to go outside. You also want to give them ample time. Walk them for at least 15 minutes to encourage them and give them plenty of time to go. When they do go outside, you want to reward and praise this wanted behavior.

Reward the Wins!

It’s vital to successful housetraining that we NEVER scold a dog for going potty inside, even—especially—when we catch them in the act. Often, the dog won’t understand that you are scolding them for going inside. They are more likely to think you are scolding them for going at all, and as a result they will want to hide from you to do their business. This means sneaking off to quiet, isolated corners of the home or behind furniture, and no one wants to play “Find the Smell!” Instead, our focus should be on praising and treating every time the pup goes outside.

Prevention & redirection

If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you have eyes on your pup at all times. The second they start to go, quickly walk them outside. Remain neutral until they’re outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there you can reward! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please.

If you're having difficulty with frequent inappropriate urination or bowel movements, [contact us for an appointment](#) to rule out possible medical causes.

How to Leave your Foster Alone

While HSCTX does their best to give you as much information as we have on each pet we send home, for many pets at the shelter we simply do not have extensive background information on some of the pets that are in our care. Because of this, we recommend housing your pet in a secure manner whenever you need to leave home. HSCTX cannot guarantee that a foster pet is house trained or will not chew on furniture and belongings when you are not home supervising. If needed, we can provide a crate for your foster animal. See the below section on crate training for more information.

Crate Training

Dogs are, by nature, denning animals. This doesn't mean every dog will take to the crate with ease, but it does mean you shouldn't feel guilty about crating your pup. For a puppy, a warm crate can work as an aid to house-training and a temporary play-pen when they can't be directly supervised. Crates can offer a safe space all to their own for recuperation, whether it's from an injury or simply just to get away from the kids.

As long as we aren't using crating for punishment, it can also help correct some undesirable behaviors, such as destructive chewing. More importantly, crates can help prevent problem behaviors before they even start by helping establish a routine for your dog.

It's completely reasonable to crate our pups for up to 8-9 hours each day, so long as we set them up for success with the crate! The most fundamental and vital thing to remember about crate training is the crate is never a punishment.

What type of Crate Should I use?

Plastic and metal wire crates each have their pros and cons, but the choice largely comes down to preference of either the dog or the human. Go with what works best for you and your pup! As for size, the crate should be big enough for your pup to stand up and easily turn around.

How to Acclimate to a Crate:

Encourage your dog to investigate the crate. Toss some treats or a favorite toy in to begin the positive association. Work on this until your dog goes in and out of the crate without displaying any nervous body language. This could take a few minutes or several days

Food is an excellent training aid. Even if your dog isn't highly food motivated, we can still use this basic necessity to our advantage.

1. Start feeding your pup around the crate. Begin by setting the bowl in front of the crate and over the next several days (or longer, depending on the dog's comfort level) gradually move the bowl further into the crate. Do NOT work on closing the gate until your dog has eaten a few meals, while relaxed, when completely inside the crate
2. Once they've reached this point, you can begin closing the door while they're eating. At first, open the door once they've finished. Lengthen this over several mealtimes until they can stay in the crate calmly for up to ten minutes after eating
3. If at any point they begin to bark or cry or paw at the gate, DO NOT open the gate until they have stopped. Otherwise they will think complaining will make the gate open

After you get to this point, you can start crating your pup outside of mealtimes. In the beginning, they should be able to see you while in the crate. Wait a minute or two (this doesn't have to be while you are standing right in front of the crate, so long as your pup can see you) and then let them out. Once you've worked up to at least thirty minutes of calm, you can start leaving the home for short periods of time with your pup crated.

Departures and Arrivals

Even if your pet loves their crate, they might whine a little when you first leave. Avoid an emotional departure, as it can increase the nervousness of your dog. By being a source of excitement, we reinforce that our being away was something to be upset about in the first place. As much as we want to see how excited our dog is when we come home, we can intensify their stress when we leave by making a big to-do of our comings and goings.

Exercise to Crate More Successfully

If your pet is tired, they'll be faster to lay down and go to sleep when you leave, versus anxiously waiting for you to return home. Giving them plenty of exercise before they are crated will help them relax.

Other Alternatives

Ideally, we don't want to crate a dog for longer than they're used to. Realistically, many of us have full time jobs away from home and still want to prevent destructive behaviors and messes. There are ways to work around this reality without ruining progress with the crate. You can keep your pup in a bathroom or laundry room where they can't get into anything that might hurt them. Tiled and linoleum floors are also much easier to clean up than carpet. Another option is to buy a plastic playpen or metal x pen to keep them contained in a specific area of the house.

Resource Guarding

This is a broad-spectrum term that means showing possessive, or "guarding," behavior over any object. Guarding food and/or edible objects can be defined as "food guarding." When guarding behavior occurs towards a variety of objects, not specifically only food or toys, it may be referred to as "Generalized Guarding." An easy way to describe Resource Guarding with the public is that "the dog doesn't like to share." This behavior may present itself towards other animals, people or both. However, showing resource guarding towards one is not indicative of the other. EX: A dog showing food guarding towards another animal in the household is not guaranteed to show guarding towards a human in the house. [Contact the Foster Team](#) if you see Resource Guarding in your foster.

On-leash Reactivity

This is a behavior that occurs usually in the form of barking towards something while the dog is on leash. This is not a necessarily an indicator of aggression, but more indicative of the dog feeling excitement, fear, arousal, and/or frustration towards said object or individual. When a dog is displaying on leash reactivity towards an individual, it is advised to not allow a dog to engage with them until they have shown more relaxed behavior. Environment can play a big factor in this dog's behavior on leash. If a dog displays this behavior in shelter environment, it does not necessarily mean they will display it while in a home. Some dogs display this behavior only when in close proximity to an individual or object, others at a greater distance. Providing the [appropriate equipment](#) for your foster can provide greater control of a foster who is showing this behavior.

Separation Anxiety

Separation Anxiety is a complex issue that can have many levels and variables that compound it. Typically, a dog with Separation Anxiety will display a dramatic response within a short time of their person leaving. This can range in intensity, depending on the dog or the length of time that the dog is left alone. It is important to note that most symptoms of boredom share characteristics with minor separation anxiety, but dogs who are bored might display these behaviors less consistently. Addressing boredom first could eliminate the unwanted behavior. The most common of these behaviors are: chewing or knocking down easily accessible items, and howling, barking and/or crying.

Depending on the severity, we are looking for an adopter and/or Foster Parent who either has a flexible schedule or is home most of the time/works from home. They should be willing and able to devote time to crate-training and working on the separation anxiety. We may need to counsel the adopter if they live in an apartment or are renting (due to possible noise complaints, destruction to rental property). Depending on severity, anti-anxiety medication and/or an indestructible crate may be recommended.

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



**"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"**

Common Behavioral Tips for Cats

Using/Not Using the Litterbox

Most cats will instinctively gravitate towards using a litter box from an early age. However, inappropriate elimination outside of the litter box can occur for many reasons, creating stress between you and your new cat. Here are some important basics to know about the litter box, and tips for addressing inappropriate elimination.

1. Placement makes Perfect! When you are placing the litter box, it should be in a location that can give your cat a bit of privacy. Avoid placing it next to your cat's food or water dish, and/or loud or suddenly startling noises (such as the washing machine or dishwasher). If you have adopted a young kitten, we recommend starting them off in a small room with their box until you see them consistently using it.
2. One box per cat, plus one. Have you ever had to share your bathroom with a less than ideal roommate? Your cat may enjoy the company of their fellow friends, but sharing their box is a different matter. To keep the peace, we recommend having one litter box per cat, plus one more. This means that in a house with two cats, we recommend at least 3 litter boxes in various locations of the house.
3. Keep the box clean. No one likes a filthy toilet, and your cat will agree. Solid waste and clump should be scooped daily, and a complete wash of the box should happen at least once a month.
4. The Cat chooses the Litter. We suggest using a litter that is plain and unscented, but the choice is ultimately up to your cat. If you have a cat that is used to a certain type of litter, we recommend sticking with it. Cat's prefer a routine and stability and changing the type of litter can cause stress and inappropriate elimination.

If you are struggling with litter box issues, there could be several factors at play. We recommend doing the following:

1. Rule out illness. The first step to take if you notice your cat is not using their litter box is to discuss this with a veterinarian to rule out medical issues as the underlying cause. Contact the foster team to [schedule a medical appointment](#).
2. Clean up all messes. Any area that has been soiled should be cleaned properly with an enzyme-based cleaner. Cleaners that have this will break down the urine/stool traces in areas that you might not be able to see, but the cats can smell.
3. Prevention & Redirection: If you are still in the process of housetraining, or if you have already followed the above steps, make sure you limit the access of the house. This could mean a large crate or a small easily cleanable room (such as a bathroom or laundry room) to help re-train the cat to use the crate.

Managing Inappropriate scratching

We like this edited handout from the ASPCA about inappropriate scratching:

Cats like to scratch. They scratch during play. They scratch while stretching. They scratch to mark territory or as a threatening signal other cats. And because cats' claws need regular sharpening, cats scratch on things to remove frayed, worn outer claws and expose new, sharper claws. All this scratching can cause a lot of damage to furniture, drapes and carpeting!

What to Do About Your Cat's Scratching Habits

The best tactic when dealing with scratching is not to try to stop your cat from scratching, but instead to teach where and what to scratch. An excellent approach is to provide appropriate, cat-attractive surfaces and objects to scratch, such as scratching posts. The following steps will help you encourage your cat to scratch where you want them to:

- Provide a variety of scratching posts with different qualities and surfaces. Try giving your cat posts made of cardboard, carpeting, wood, sisal and upholstery. Once you figure out your cat's preference for scratching, provide additional posts of that kind in various locations. Keep in mind that all cats want a sturdy post that won't shift or collapse when used.
- Encourage your cat to investigate posts by scenting them with catnip, hanging toys on them and placing them in areas where they'll be inclined to climb on them.
- Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering other desirable objects.
- Put plastic, double-sided sticky tape, sandpaper or upside-down vinyl carpet runner (knobby parts up) on furniture or on the floor where your cat would stand to scratch your furniture. Place scratching posts next to these objects, as "legal" alternatives.
- Clip your cat's nails regularly. See this section on how to trim
- Consider putting plastic caps on your cat's claws so that they'll do no damage if they scratch on something in your home. These special caps attach to claws with an adhesive. They're temporary, lasting four to six weeks.
- If you catch your cat in the act of scratching an inappropriate object, you can try startling by clapping your hands or squirting with water. Use this procedure only as a last resort, because your cat may associate you with the startling event (clapping or squirting) and learn to fear you.

What NOT to Do

- Do not hold your cat by the scratching post and force them to drag claws on it. This practice could seriously frighten your cat and teach them to avoid the scratching post completely.
- Do not throw away a favorite scratching post when it becomes unsightly. Cats prefer shredded and torn objects because they can really get their claws into the material. Used posts will also appeal to your cat because they smell and look familiar.

Is Declawing an Option?

Despite the term "declaw," it is important to understand that this surgery involves more than claw removal. The last bone of the digit must be amputated to make sure the claw does not grow back. Some people decide to declaw their cats to prevent or resolve a scratching problem. We are strongly opposed to declawing cats and will not provide any cats with a declawing surgery unless medically necessary. Declawing has not been proven an effective method for improving behavioral issues, including aggression towards people or other cats. It can also cause arthritis. It should never be used as a behavioral remedy or as a preventative measure. The only circumstances in which the procedure should be considered are those in which all behavioral and environmental alternatives have been fully explored, have proven to be ineffective, and the cat is at grave risk of euthanasia.

A variety of alternatives exist to manage natural scratching behavior, behavioral issues and to prevent injury from cat scratches. These include having a cat's nails trimmed regularly in order to blunt the tips, providing scratching pads, posts and other appealing structures for the cat to use and employing behavior modification techniques to induce the cat to use them, using deterrents such as double-sided tape to protect furnishings, and covering the claws with soft temporary. Pet parents should also be familiar with cat behavior and proper handling techniques to avoid being scratched.

CAT LANGUAGE



Humane Society of Central Texas Foster Agreement

_____ I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the HSCTX Foster Care Manual, and that I have read this Manual in its entirety. I agree to fully comply with the policies, guidance, and requirements set forth in the Manual as applicable to any foster animal in my care. I understand that failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Handbook, Foster Agreement, or Volunteer Form could result in my termination from any program at HSCTX.

_____ I understand that HSCTX reserves the right to check on the welfare of the foster animal in my care, which may include a visit to my foster home. I further understand that HSCTX may remove the animal from my care at any time and for any reason whatsoever.

_____ I understand that when I receive an animal as part of the HSCTX Foster Program, I assume complete and full responsibility for the behaviors and actions of that foster pet. I understand that I will be solely responsible for any injury or damage caused by my foster animal.

_____ I agree not to take the foster animals in my care to dog parks, off-leash areas, daycare facilities, crowded public areas, or any similar locations, unless given prior approval by the HSCTX Foster Program Team.

_____ I understand that per the isolation protocol in my manual, HSCTX recommends that the foster animal(s) in my care should be kept separate from any other animals currently living in my home for up to 72 hours.

_____ I understand that all HSCTX foster pets are the property of Humane Society of Central Texas and may not be adopted until HSCTX has received all adoption paperwork and HSCTX has expressly communicated the adoption is approved.

_____ I agree to notify the HSCTX Foster Program Team Member immediately by phone and in writing if the foster animal(s) in my care becomes lost or separated from me or if the foster animal demonstrates any aggressive behavior, including, but not limited to, biting a person or another animal.

_____ I agree to notify HSCTX if I am bitten by the foster animal in my care, or if I receive any other physical injury resulting from interaction with the foster animal in my care. I further agree to notify HSCTX and seek immediate medical attention, at my own expense, for myself or any member of my household who is bitten or suffers any other physical injury resulting from interaction with the foster animal in my care.

_____ I agree to return the foster animal(s) in my care at the scheduled time or at any time to any specified upon the request of the HSCTX Foster Program Team Member or any HSCTX staff member

_____ I agree to receive and respond to calls and emails concerning the foster animal(s) in my care, from HSCTX shelter staff, veterinary staff, and potential adopters.

_____ I agree to transport the foster animal to HSCTX or an approved veterinary facility to receive medical treatment as requested by the HSCTX Foster Program Team Members or HSCTX staff. If the foster animal experiences a medical emergency, I agree to follow the instructions outlined in the Foster Program Handbook.

General Release and Volunteer Form for Volunteers, Fosters and Non-Employee Interns

Thank you for offering your time to volunteer with Humane Society of Central Texas (HSCTX). By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read this General Release and Volunteer Form (the "Form"), the related Handbook(s), and understand and agree to the requirements outlined below.

1. **VOLUNTARY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION.** I acknowledge that I have voluntarily agreed to serve as a volunteer or foster for HSCTX. I am referred to as a "Volunteer." I offer to perform as a Volunteer of my own volition. No one has demanded that I participate in any activity with HSCTX.
2. **NATURE AND SCOPE OF SERVICES.** As a Volunteer, I will be contributing my time and effort to various programs of HSCTX and performing a wide range of Services (collectively, the "Services"). The Services will be performed by me as assigned by an officer, director, employee, or another volunteer of HSCTX. In the course of performing the Services, I agree:
 - To read the related Handbook(s) for my "Services," complete all required orientation, training, and paperwork relating to my volunteer position(s), and follow the procedures and policies contained in the related Handbook(s).
 - To inform HSCTX staff if I am unable to complete tasks or participate in volunteer activities because of any physical or psychological limitations. Since I may be interacting with animals, both healthy and sick, big and small, and may be lifting, carrying, moving, or otherwise engaging in physical labor, I will be respectful of my own limitations and will inform staff immediately of my inability to perform volunteer tasks because of any such limitations.
 - To read and to obey all safety rules and regulations. In the interest of the safety of the animals, staff, and volunteers, I acknowledge that HSCTX has the right to revoke privileges if these rules and regulations are not followed.
 - To treat all HSCTX staff, volunteers, the animals, property, tools, and equipment with respect and kindness. I will also return all HSCTX property when my volunteer relationship ends.
 - That either I or HSCTX can terminate the volunteer relationship at will.
3. **NO COMPENSATION.** I agree to provide Services to HSCTX without compensation. I acknowledge that I will not be compensated for my efforts and that I am not an agent or contractor of HSCTX. I agree that I am not and will not become an employee, partner, agent, contractor, or principal of HSCTX upon signing this Form or performing the "Services" as a Volunteer.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY OWN ACTS AND OMISSIONS.** I hereby agree to be legally and financially responsible and will indemnify and hold HSCTX and the City of Waco and its officials and employees harmless for my own acts and omissions relating to the Services I am voluntarily providing to HSCTX. I acknowledge that I am responsible for providing my own medical, liability, and autoinsurance during my volunteer service. I understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation nor insured by HSCTX or the City of Waco during the performance of my volunteer duties and tasks, including when driving a vehicle or transporting an animal.
5. **ASSUMPTION OF RISK.** I am voluntarily participating in the activities of HSCTX with full knowledge of the risks and dangers involved and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of injury, death, or damage to myself and/ or my personal property. As a volunteer, I may come into contact and interact with animals, and such work entails risk of personal injury due to proximity to animals, dangerous equipment, long-distance driving, and other considerations. These include, but are not limited to, being bitten, kicked, clawed, tripped, and possibly exposed to zoonotic diseases. I understand that
6. **PHOTO, VIDEO AND AUDIO RELEASE.** I understand that as a volunteer of HSCTX, I or my name and likeness, may be recorded on film, video, other electronic recorded images, or other media recordings ("A-V Recordings") for any purpose related to furtherance of the objectives of HSCTX, including use in Humane Society of Central Texas media properties such as its magazine and websites. I grant HSCTX permission to copyright and use, reuse, publish, and republish A-V Recordings, without restriction as to changes or alterations, for art, advertising, trade, or any other purpose. Further, I understand that all work product I create in my capacity as a Volunteer for HSCTX will be the property of HSCTX and that HSCTX will have the sole right to use, sell, license, publish, or transfer any such work product, in any and all media formats, including print, mechanical and electronic formats. I will disclose any such work product to HSCTX and assign all rights thereto to HSCTX.

7. RELEASE. As consideration for being permitted by HSCTX to participate in activities and provide Services, I hereby agree that I, my assignees, heirs, distributees, guardians, and legal representatives will not make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of HSCTX or the City of Waco for injury or damage resulting from any act, omission, negligence, or other acts, howsoever caused, by any employee, agent, contractor, or representative of HSCTX as a result of my participation in activities and performance of the Services or any A-V Recordings. I hereby release HSCTX and the City of Waco from all actions, claims, or demands that I, my assignees, heirs, distributees, guardians, and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury or damage resulting from my participation in activities and performance of the Services and any A-V Recordings.
8. CONFIDENTIALITY. During my association with HSCTX and thereafter, I will keep confidential, refrain from disclosing to others, and use only in the performance of Volunteer Services, all confidential information of HSCTX that I develop or learn about during the course of the volunteer relationship. I understand that this Form covers all confidential business and technical information and know-how of or about HSCTX which is not generally known to persons outside of HSCTX and which I have not been specifically authorized to disclose or use. Examples of confidential information include, but are not limited to, information on finances, membership and donors, volunteer performance, research and development, the condition of sanctuary animals, campaigns, outreach programs, and information received from others that HSCTX has agreed to keep confidential.
9. SOCIAL MEDIA. As a Volunteer of HSCTX, when I post on social media about HSCTX, I will only post in a collaborative manner. All social media communications shall remain professional and respectful. I will not post any information in a speculative manner or in a defamatory context about HSCTX or other staff, volunteers, fosters, or transfer affiliates. Failure to adhere to requested social media etiquette, could result in suspension or termination of my volunteer relationship with HSCTX.
10. I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE FORM AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT I WILL RELINQUISH ALL CLAIMS OR ACTIONS KNOWN NOW OR IN THE FUTURE AGAINST HUMANE SOCIETY OF CENTRAL TEXAS AND THE CITY OF WACO ARISING FROM MY VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES WITH HSCTX. I am of legal age and legally competent to sign this Form. I am signing this Form of my own free will without the influence of a HSCTX staff member.
11. TERM OF FORM. I acknowledge that this Form will apply to the entire term of my volunteer relationship, starting with the date I first perform Volunteer Services for HSCTX, even if it pre-dates the date of this Form, and continuing as long as I continue to be a Volunteer and thereafter as is necessary to protect the interests and rights of HSCTX arising herein with respect to confidentiality and use of my work products and/or A-V material as authorized above.
12. GOVERNING LAW. This Form will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas without regard to conflicts of laws or principles.
13. IN ADDITION, I ...
 - Agree to sign an authorization, waiver, indemnify form giving approval for the City of Waco to perform a criminal background search, if necessary to my position.
 - Have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment and will notify Humane Society of Central Texas if I am convicted Animal Cruelty, Neglect or Abandonment in the future.

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Date of birth (mm/dd/yy) _____

Emergency contact name _____ Phone _____

Volunteer Acknowledgement of Safety Rules at Humane Society of Central Texas

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and will follow the safety rules for all areas in which I volunteer, including, but not limited to, all animal areas and other departments or locations.

I further agree that if I am volunteering for HSCTX outside of the main facility or city of Waco, I will read and abide by all guidelines as outlined in the related HSCTX Handbook.

Signature of Volunteer _____ Date _____