

## Why Should You Foster An Orphaned Animal?

If you love animals, have a strong desire to help them and want to contribute to your community in a positive way, please consider becoming a foster parent for an orphaned pet. Fostering is one of the easiest ways that you can literally save lives. No matter how many shelters, rescues, and kennels there are, there will always be times when they are too full and dogs will have to be turned away or sadder yet euthanized simply because there is nowhere to keep them. It's a widely unknown fact that in pounds all over the United States, healthy dogs and puppies are killed every day simply because there is nowhere for them to go. Rescuers work tirelessly against a tide of ever flowing dogs. They find places for them anywhere they can, but still some die. By fostering for a rescue you can clear a kennel space for one dog that otherwise may have died. Every life saved counts!

For many dogs being in a shelter is traumatic enough, then they have to be stuck in a cage in a boarding facility. Shelters and kennels can be a terrifying experience and many rescues need fosters to spare dogs the ordeal of spending weeks or months in an environment that could literally send them over the edge.

Imagine you were a beloved pet that has you have lived since puppyhood in a home and with a family, sheltered from fear and hunger, with plenty of love and attention. Then one day, your family loses their home or moves away and cannot take you with them. All of a sudden you are plunged head first into a world of constant barking of a multitude of other dogs, some who are downright mean. You are fed by strangers but are too scared to eat or sometimes your kennel mate will attack you over food. Gone are the quiet afternoons napping on a soft bed and instead you sit in your own waste in the corner of a concrete kennel that you may share with many other dogs. It is constantly noisy and dogs are jumping and howling and sometimes screaming all around you. Periodically complete strangers poke their head around your kennel door and stick their fingers in your face and jabber at you. You are supposed to perform for them to make them want to take you home, but you are just too scared. Every now and then a worker will come and take one of the dogs away and you never see it again. You cower in the corner, shying away from scary things that you cannot begin to understand.

Fostering a dog can help it adjust to losing it's family and the life it once knew. Fostered dogs who stay in a home environment are less likely to develop bad habits like food aggression, soiling the house, and barking. Regular attention, interaction and TLC also help the dog maintain its bond with people. Fostering makes the dog more "adoptable" and likely to be placed in a permanent home.

As much as you are needed, before you become a foster, carefully consider your family and lifestyle. You must discuss and have agreement from every member of the household since if just one person is against the idea problems can occur. Dogs can

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pick up instantly if there is tension in the household and will become stressed because of it. If you have other pets you must decide if it is fair on them to bring new dogs into their territory. If you have a dog with behavioral issues, another dog in the household can make the situation with that dog worse instead of better under the wrong circumstances.

Your work schedule and energy level also need consideration. Are you home most of the time or do you work 60 hours a week? An older dog might be fine with a longer absence, but realistically puppies need to go out at least every couple of hours. When you are home, are you a couch potato or a marathon runner? The last thing you need when you are snuggled up on the couch wanting to enjoy your favorite show is a dog who wants to run and play and jumps all over you. Finding a dog whose energy level and schedule is compatible with yours helps the dog adjust and transition better not to mention it keeps your stress level about being a doggie parent to a minimum.

Are your kids dog friendly? Be honest when evaluating this. Dogs who need new homes have been abandoned, are confused and some may have been abused. These dogs need reassurance and kindness and might not react well to rowdy children who won't leave them alone when they are told. The golden rule with children and dogs is that if the dog is asleep or eating the children are to stay away. Children shouldn't use the dog as a toy or pony, no hitting, grabbing, tail pulling or teasing, even running, shouting and waving their hands around can cause a dog to have a negative reaction. If your children are not old enough or able to follow the rules pertaining to the dog, then fostering should probably wait.

Make sure you discuss possible scenarios with the rescue. What if the dog escapes or gets away from you? If the dog needs to go to the vet in the middle of the night are you able and willing to take it there? What if the dog digs up your yard or chews your shoes? Also, find out exactly what costs you will be responsible for and what the rescue will provide. Discussing these issues in the beginning will help to avoid confusion and problems later.

If you decide you would like to foster an Akita or would like further information please contact us at [apassionforpaws@gmail.com](mailto:apassionforpaws@gmail.com). We appreciate your interest in helping to save the life of a rescued dog!