



# KC PET PROJECT

## CANINE FOSTER HANDBOOK

LAST REVISED: MARCH 2023



## KC PET PROJECT FOSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

### FOSTER DEPARTMENT

Email: [dogfoster@kcpetproject.org](mailto:dogfoster@kcpetproject.org)  
Office Phone: (816) 648-0430

### FOSTER EMERGENCY NUMBER

Phone: (816) 648-0430  
\*Emergency: Medical, Escape, Bite

### VETERINARY DEPARTMENT

Email: [vetclinic@kcpetproject.org](mailto:vetclinic@kcpetproject.org)  
Phone: (816) 683-1353  
Non-Emergency Medical Concerns, click this [link](#).

### BEHAVIOR DEPARTMENT

Email: [behavior@kcpetproject.org](mailto:behavior@kcpetproject.org)

## KC PET PROJECT ADOPTION CENTER LOCATIONS

KC Pet Project Hours of Operations can be found online:  
<https://kcpetproject.org/contact/>

### Kansas City Campus for Animal Care (KCCAC)

7077 Elmwood Avenue  
Kansas City, MO., 64132  
(816) 683-1383

### Petco Pet Adoption Center (95th)

11620 W 95th Street  
Overland Park, KS., 66214  
(913) 438-9740

### Zona Rosa Adoption Center (Zona)

8721 N. Stoddard Avenue  
Kansas City, MO., 64153  
(816) 587-0224

## OTHER DEPARTMENTS

**Admissions:** [admissions@kcpetproject.org](mailto:admissions@kcpetproject.org)

**Adoptions:** [adoptions@kcpetproject.org](mailto:adoptions@kcpetproject.org)

**Keep 'Em Together, KC:** [pethelp@kcpetproject.org](mailto:pethelp@kcpetproject.org)

**Lost and Found:** [lostandfound@kcpetproject.org](mailto:lostandfound@kcpetproject.org)

**Rehome:** [rehome@kcpetproject.org](mailto:rehome@kcpetproject.org)

**Volunteer:** [volunteer@kcpetproject.org](mailto:volunteer@kcpetproject.org)





# WELCOME & THANK YOU

A Letter from the CEO/Executive Director & Chief Lifesaving Officer

Hello!

January 1, 2012 saw a new day dawn for animals in Kansas City. On that day, KC Pet Project took over animal sheltering services for our open-admission municipal shelter in Kansas City, Missouri. We had a vision of a place where thousands of animals from our community, including pets that were lost, injured, ill, victims of cruelty and neglect, or homeless due to unfortunate circumstances, would receive the veterinary care, nutritious food, behavior, and training support, and the love they deserved while they waited to bring joy to new families.

Within six months, we began saving the lives of 90% or more of all the animals that arrived at our shelter – something that had never been done in the history of Kansas City.

The number of animals arriving at our shelter has grown to more than 15,000 pets each year, but so has our ability to save more lives. We implemented innovative lifesaving programs, such as daily canine playgroups, canine and feline fostering programs, an in-house parvovirus ward to treat puppies with this deadly disease, a barn cat program, an FeLV adoption program, and our Keep 'Em Together, KC initiative. We opened our Zona Rosa Pet Adoption Center in Kansas City, Missouri, and a second permanent adoption center inside the Petco store at 95th Street in Overland Park, Kansas. And we partnered with ten (10) additional Petco stores across our community offering cats and kittens available for adoption in stores seven days a week. We took on the animal control contract for the City of Kansas City, Missouri, became a Tier 1 Pilot Shelter for the Human-Animal Support Services movement, and even launched Pets for Life in partnership with the Humane Society of the United States.

As a member of KC Pet Project's Volunteer Program, you are making a difference in the community and in the lives of 15,000 homeless pets in need that will enter our shelter this year. We're committed to a welcoming, judgment-free environment for both pets and people and are honored you've chosen to give your time and talent to KC Pet Project. Our motto remains "Solutions, Not Excuses" and with your help, we can continue to challenge the status quo every day – proving that high intake, open-admission municipal shelters CAN find new ways to help pets and people.

Welcome to our team!

Teresa Johnson, President/CEO & Chief Lifesaving Officer



# WELCOME & THANK YOU

## A Letter from the Canine Foster Program Team

Thank you for volunteering to be a KC Pet Project Dog Foster. By fostering, you will provide a dog with a safe place to live while they wait for their family. This handbook is designed as a reference for you as you begin fostering and become a seasoned foster. Fostering is providing a temporary home and love for a dog in need. We provide all of the supplies you need to take a dog in - you just provide the love and a safe home.

The amount of time you decide to foster is on your terms and dependent on each dog's needs. You can do short, fun Dog Day Outs where you take a dog out of the shelter for the day, you can keep a dog until they find their home (and help find that home for them!), or any amount of time in between. It's all up to YOU- any amount of time outside of the shelter is immensely beneficial to a dog. Shelter animals are homeless- so together, let's find them a home.

## FOSTERING SAVES LIVES!

Fostering is an important step in a dog's journey to finding their home. A home environment is best for their mental and physical well-being. Fostering allows dogs to thrive in a home environment and practice forming bonds with their caregivers. Fostering provides extremely valuable information to provide to their potential adopters, which helps to market them and find the best fit for them. For dogs that have been waiting longer for adoption, you can help by reassuring adopters that these dogs are a good fit for a home and speak to the type of family that is a good match for the dog. Fostering also allows the shelter to take in more animals in need. Fostering quite literally saves lives. It is very rewarding and fulfilling to be a part of this process. It can be difficult to say goodbye, but the role you will play in this dog's life will bring you much joy and fulfillment.





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# WHO WE ARE

KC Pet Project (KCPP) is a 501c3, nonprofit charitable organization operating the KC Campus for Animal Care, Kansas City, Missouri's, animal shelter. We care for more than 15,000 animals a year and now have 14 locations in Missouri and Kansas to adopt out pets. We focus on progressive programs to help people keep their pets through pet support services, our Keep 'Em Together, KC program, and pet safety initiatives like microchipping, pet identification, and more.

KC Pet Project also performs all animal control operations for Kansas City, MO, through our Animal Services Division.

## OUR MISSION

Leading the way in creating a compassionate, safe community for pets and people through progressive, lifesaving programs and services, community resources, and educational opportunities.

## OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of KC Pet Project is to provide sheltering and animal services to the community of Kansas City, MO by placing pets into homes with families, enhancing public safety through animal control services, being a resource to people and pets in our community, reuniting lost pets with their owners, establishing pet retention programs, providing humane education opportunities, and enriching the lives of pets and people in Kansas City to build up and support a more safe and humane Kansas City. We are reimagining the role of animal services in our community.



# ABOUT KC PET PROJECT



## OUR HISTORY

Prior to KC Pet Project assuming operation of the city shelter, it was known as the city's "dog pound" operated by the City of Kansas City, Missouri. Euthanasia rates of 60% – 70% for the overall animal population and 98% euthanasia rates for cats were the norm. As recently as 2008, only 38% of those pets made it out alive.

The newly formed nonprofit organization, Kansas City Pet Project, was selected by city officials in the fall of 2011 to take over running the shelter. We assumed operations of the shelter on January 1, 2012, and within just a few months we were saving more than 90% of all of the animals entering the shelter. We have consistently maintained a live release rate above 90% each month since that time and have improved our lifesaving efforts year after year. Due to limited resources and a nearly 50-year-old building, our organization embraced a "Solutions, Not Excuses" model to animal sheltering and progressive lifesaving. This model is what helped us achieve such incredible success in an old 14,000 sq ft building and continues to shape how we operate today.

On April 4th, 2017, Kansas City, Missouri, residents had the opportunity to vote for funding for a new animal shelter. KCMO residents rallied to the polls and our vote passed by 67%. With the help of the private sector, along with tax-payer funds from the GO Bond initiative, Kansas City now has a shelter that it can be proud of -- the KC Campus for Animal Care.

After a few years of construction, we officially opened the doors of the KC Campus for Animal Care on January 1st, 2020 – our 8th Anniversary as an organization.

In May 2020, we launched our Keep 'Em Together, KC program aimed at helping families stay together. Through this program, we've advanced our return-to-home services, safety net programs, and kept people and their pets together.

On December 1st, 2020, KC Pet Project officially assumed the contract for all animal control services for Kansas City, MO, through our Animal Services Division.

On January 1, 2022, KC Pet Project celebrated our 10-year anniversary as an organization.



## ABOUT THE KANSAS CITY CAMPUS FOR ANIMAL CARE

The Kansas City Campus for Animal Care is a public-private partnership between the City of Kansas City, Missouri and the Campus, and was built with support from GO KC bonds. The total project budget was \$26 million. \$18M came from GO Bonds and the rest were raised through private donations.

We opened the Kansas City Campus for Animal Care on January 1, 2020 and saw an immediate change in the lives of our animals and staff. Our campus facility offers many amenities that the previous shelter space could not compete with:

- 54,000 square feet (nearly 4xs larger than the previous shelter)
- Focused on “fear-free” housing with separation of species throughout the facility
- Music in all animal-holding areas
- Proper HVAC to decrease disease/odor and acoustical designs to decrease noise in animal holding areas
- Natural light exposure in almost all animal areas
- An 8,000-square-foot state-of-the-art veterinary clinic. Includes a large surgery suite, pre/post operation holding rooms for both shelter and public animals, a hospital/isolation wing for sick and injured pets, a small play yard for these pets so they can go outside, separate exam rooms for dogs and cats, and a beautiful lobby space for appointments
- Outdoor play yards for dogs, for adopter interactions, volunteer engagement, and daily playgroups
- A 600-square-foot retail store and gift shop
- Separate entrances for Adoptions (south) and Admissions/Vet Clinic (north)
- Outdoor “catios” for access to fresh air for our kitties, including one for FeLV-positive cats
- A Community Education Pavilion with a separate exterior entrance, for classes with the public, birthday parties, meetings, and other events
- A Roasterie coffee shop with an exterior entrance to service all visitors to the campus
- Nine (9) dog districts with a capacity to hold approximately 250 dogs
- 14,000 square feet of turfed play yards
- Indoor meet n' greet rooms and playrooms for dogs
- Five (5) cat condo rooms and four (4) free-roaming cat rooms with a capacity to hold approximately 70 cats



# FOSTER FAQS



## WHY SHOULD I FOSTER?

We believe that the young, abandoned, sick, abused, and stressed animals that enter our shelter deserve to have the best possible chance at finding a loving home. A foster parent has one of the most important jobs at the shelter. Foster parents allow our animals to receive the proper care and attention they deserve as they wait for adoption. As a foster parent, you'll not only save the lives of animals in your care, but you'll give other animals coming into the shelter a space on our adoption floor to find their own loving homes.

## DO I NEED TO HAVE ANY SPECIAL TRAINING TO BE A DOG FOSTER?

Foster care providers should be compassionate and patient. You will be informed of your foster pet's known history and any special needs before placement in your care. A foster coordinator will also be available to help answer questions and provide resources as needed. KC Pet Project Foster Program has amazing volunteer community of other fosters who are always willing to help.

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

Be willing to abide by policies and procedures in the handbook and foster care agreement. Be responsive to communication by KCPP staff and regarding parties interested in adopting your foster dog. Potential methods of communication are via phone, email, text message, or Facebook messenger. Be able to provide transport to and from KCPP's Kansas City Campus for Animal Care (KCCAC). Spend time with foster pets and love them like your own.

## HOW LONG DO PETS NEED TO BE IN FOSTER CARE?

Every situation is different. On occasion, the foster period will be for a fixed amount of time; but, in general, the foster tenure will last until the dog is adopted. Please let the foster team know if there is a date by which you will not be able to continue to serve as a foster for the dog in your care.

## HOW MUCH TIME WILL I NEED TO DEVOTE TO THE DOG IN FOSTER CARE?

It depends on the situation and the animal. Foster pets need all of the same things that owned pets do, and may require even more attention if they are recovering from an illness/injury or to learn skills to make them successful in the home.

## WHAT IF I NEED TO GO OUT OF TOWN?

While you may always return a foster animal to the shelter during business hours for any reason, please notify the canine foster team should you need temporary placement for your foster animal. Individuals within the KCPP foster network may be willing to care short-term for the foster animal until you can resume fostering.

## WHAT SUPPLIES AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MY FOSTER DOG?

We aim to provide fosters with all the necessary supplies for the care and comfort of a foster dog. This includes a crate, food, collar/leash, toys, treats, food/water bowls and waste bags. We will also provide any medications, supplements, preventative treatments, or specialty diets as applicable.

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOSTERS

Beyond providing plenty of love, foster homes are generally responsible for:

- Providing a safe, clean, and caring environment
- Providing shelter, food, water, and toys/enrichment
- Providing exercise and socialization, as appropriate
- Monitoring any medical and/or behavioral issues and working with our medical and/or behavior teams, as needed, to provide the best care possible for the dog
- Picking up their foster dog (typically from KCCAC)
- Transporting their foster dog to and from KC Pet Project KCCAC for medical appointments, meet and greets, behavior/training sessions, etc. and to and from adoption events as necessary; and working with anyone who is taking custody of their foster dog (a sitter, a new foster, or an adopter) on transporting their foster dog to them
- Actively marketing their foster dog for adoption
- Screening and meeting with potential adopters; being responsive and courteous towards potential adopters; and following our adoption protocols (transportation to and from adoption and exposure events may also be necessary)
- Carefully review all of KC Pet Project's dog foster communications and resources, including this handbook, and abiding by the rules and responsibilities set forth therein

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF KC PET PROJECT FOSTER PROGRAM

- Supplies for fostering: crate, food, collar/leash, toys, treats, food/water bowls, and waste bags (as available)
- Assistance with caring for your foster dog, including behavior and medical support
- All medical care for your foster dog, as deemed appropriate by our Medical Team
- Dog sitters for when you go out of town (if found)
- Assistance with marketing your foster dog for adoption and interacting with potential adopters
- Educational resources
- Responsive communications
- 10% discount on KC Pet Project retail and at The Roasterie located at the KC Campus for Animal Care
- 50% discount for one (1) adoption at KC Pet Project
- Specialized discounts for KC Pet Project Sponsored Events

## EXPECTATIONS OF FOSTERS

- **DO crate train.** Crate training is a valuable and transferable skill that a dog can benefit greatly from. Positive association with a crate as a safe space will allow a dog to transition to a new home more smoothly and will provide a familiar and comforting place for them as they move into a new home. Building up a crate behavior over time is preferable. More helpful crate training tips [here](#).
- **DO work on loose leash walking.** This is a great overview complete with a video of how to hone your own training skills to build a beautiful [loose-leash walk](#). This alone can impress any potential adopters and make walks for your foster dog very enjoyable.
- **DO prioritize house training.** Here is a great resource for [potty training](#), and here is a [video tutorial on potty training](#) as well.
- **DO offer [enrichment](#).**
- **DO exercise your foster dog daily.**
- **DO practice the basics.** Sit, down, place, stay, etc. Throw in some fun tricks and you will have a foster dog that easily impresses potential adopters in addition to having great fallback behaviors if you need to redirect their behavior.



## COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE DOG FOSTER DEPARTMENT

- As a foster parent, you have access to a number of teams to help you have a successful foster experience. We use various avenues for communication. Potential methods of communication are via phone, email, text message, or Facebook messenger. Please make sure that we have the best email address for you and that you check your email daily. We will email you general and dog-specific information at different times. The most common email you will receive is adoption inquiries for your foster dog.
- If your situation is not an emergency, please use your best judgment, and if possible, use our [KCPP Dog Foster Resource Website](#) to help. If you still need to communicate with someone on our team in a non-emergency situation, please call or text the dog foster shared phone number: **(816)-648-0430**
- As an approved KC Pet Project Foster Parent, you will be added to our KC Pet Project Dog Foster Facebook group. Please do not unsubscribe from this group since this is the method by which we communicate with our foster parents. We use this as a communication tool and a great resource for our foster parents. The group is there to support, ask questions, and help get dogs forever homes. We please ask that you actively participate by posting photos, about me, bios, and helpful tips. It is possible that another foster knows someone looking for a dog, like the one you are fostering.
- **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU CAREFULLY READ ALL THE INFORMATION WE EMAIL, INCLUDING ANY LINKED DOCUMENTS. EVEN IF YOU HAVE FOSTERED PREVIOUSLY, OUR EMAILS MAY CONTAIN NEW INFORMATION, AND IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU FOLLOW OUR PROTOCOLS FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOU AND YOUR FOSTER DOG.**
- Please bookmark the [Dog Foster Resource Website](#). It has beneficial information to help set your foster dog up for success!

## SUPPLIES

The shelter can provide all the necessary supplies needed to care for the dog. This includes a crate, food, collar/leash, toys, treats, food/water bowls, waste bags, etc. Additional supplies may be given out due to the type of foster dog(s) being cared for. Any supplies you can provide will allow the shelter to use their resources for other animals. We will replenish any supplies you might need for the duration of your foster, such as food. We do require that you return all the reusable supplies you have received from the shelter upon your foster dog getting adopted if you do not plan to take another foster. Please make sure these items are clean upon return. Supplies can be dropped off at any of our locations (KCCAC, Zona Rosa, Petco 95th Street).

### RECOMMENDED SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Food
- Bowls for food and water
- Crate
- Toys
- Treats
- Waste bag dispensers and waste bags
- Kongs
- Nylabones and other chews (rawhides are not recommended)
- Dog bed
- Baby Gate
- Exercise Pen
- Potty Pads
- Enzymatic Odor Neutralizer
- Doggy Shampoo & Conditioner
- Dog Brush
- 6ft leash and Martingale Collar

\*\*\*All KC Pet Project foster dogs are required to leave on and remain on a martingale collar provided by the shelter\*\*



We recommend obtaining an ID tag for your foster dog's collar to allow for rapid identification and reunification just in case. The retail store will print an ID tag for fosters free of charge. If you plan to continue fostering, we recommend putting "Foster" on the tag along with one or two phone numbers. Then you can continue to reuse it as you find homes for your foster dogs.

# MEDICAL CARE

## MEDICAL CARE OVERVIEW

All medical care for foster dogs will be provided by the KC Pet Project Veterinary Clinic. There are veterinarians at the clinic 7 days a week. Staff is in the clinic from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and vets are in starting at 9 am. Please remember that the veterinary clinic provides care not only for animals in foster homes but all animals that enter KC Pet Project. This can include many different types of medical emergencies and the clinic is extremely busy.

More perspective: KCPP takes in over 15,000 animals a year! Our goal at the shelter is not to discover and treat every medical problem; it is to treat emergent problems and provide for the animal's basic needs, and then to get them into loving adoptive homes as quickly as possible where they will get the individualized care they need.

The clinic will make every effort to respond to your non-emergency medical concerns submission as quickly as possible. Please maintain open communication about any medical concerns or observations you have with a foster coordinator. **Foster dogs are not to receive care from any other veterinary clinic unless authorized by a foster coordinator and KC Pet Project Veterinary staff.**

For a non-emergency medical concern, to request some types of appointments, or to refill prescriptions and monthly preventatives, fill out the [Medical Concerns Form](#). For more urgent issues or if you are unsure whether your dog needs to be seen more quickly, reach out to your foster coordinators for support.

**Any non-emergency medical concerns received prior to 5:30pm will be responded to before the vet clinic leaves the building, in order of urgency. Any medical concerns received after 5:30pm will be responded to the following business day. When submitting a medical concern for a puppy, please include the most recent weight.**

## MEDICAL CARE-EMERGENCIES

In case of a medical emergency during business hours 7 am - 5 pm, **head straight to the clinic.**

**Always call the foster coordinator at (816) 648-0430** on your way to let them know the details, for further instructions, and/or to determine whether your foster is experiencing an actual emergency.

**Call (816) 683-1353** during business hours to reach the KCPP veterinary clinic. If no one answers, leave a message and go directly to the Vet Clinic at the rear of the building.

If after hours, please contact the Canine Foster Program Coordinator, **(816)-648-0430** to authorize emergency care at Blue Pearl Emergency Clinic:

Blue Pearl Pet Hospital  
3495 NE Ralph Powell Road  
Lees Summit, MO 64064

[Directions to Lees Summit Blue Pearl](#)

Life-threatening medical issues that may require urgent care include: ingestion of a toxic substance; unresponsiveness/unwillingness to move, seizure activity not previously documented or diagnosed; and/or symptoms of severe and unrelenting pain.

Emergency medical fees must be authorized by KC Pet Project. Any unauthorized charges for medical care will not be reimbursed.



## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING A MEDICAL CONCERN

1 Submit the [Foster Medical Concerns Form](#) instead of calling or emailing.

**Always do this first.** The clinic responds to these in the order in which they receive them AND based on urgency. With the current delay, please make sure to submit medication refills at least a week before running out. It's helpful to count your pills and make a reminder for yourself.

If you need to send clinic photos or videos regarding any health concerns, please email those to [vetclinic@kcpetproject.org](mailto:vetclinic@kcpetproject.org).

2 If you need to schedule a vet visit or recheck, submit a medical concern at least one week before the desired appointment date.

3 The vet clinic voicemail should be used infrequently since the med concern form should be our first step, but if you do need to call please:

- Keep messages clear and concise.
- State your name and number, your foster dog's name, and a summary of the reason for calling.

The clinic will respond to these messages in the order in which they are received and based on urgency.

4 When submitting a med concern using the form, you will get an auto-email response so you know your concern posted. If you send any supporting photos via email, you will get an auto-email response confirming your email went through. These two steps can reassure you that your concern was received.

5 If you haven't heard back from the clinic and have questions or wonder if a case would be considered urgent, please reach out directly to your foster team. **(816) 648-0430**.

Requests for refills of prescription medications and diets should be available for pick up within 48 hours, but **it is recommended to submit the form for refills at least one week prior to needing the meds**, as the clinic staff are very busy and can get behind. If photos are relevant, please send them directly to [vetclinic@kcpetproject.org](mailto:vetclinic@kcpetproject.org).

Staff will reach out to you as quickly as possible with a medical plan. They may ask you to wait and see if the dog gets better on their own. They may also prescribe medication based on the symptoms. Medications are picked up at the veterinary clinic at the main campus in Swope Park. You may be asked to bring the dog in for an appointment to be seen by one of the shelter veterinarians.

**If your foster pet is experiencing a life-threatening emergency during the hours that the clinic is staffed—7:00 am to 5:00 pm—do not use this form. Instead, please call the clinic to let us know you're on the way and then come in. Our direct phone number is 816-683-1353. Examples of a life-threatening emergency would be trauma (hit by car, ingested toxin or foreign body), suddenly unable to walk, or collapse.**

## PREVENTIVE MEDICAL CARE FOR FOSTER DOGS

All dogs over 6 months of age will be fully vaccinated, meaning that they have received every vaccination required by state law and by veterinary standards. This includes bordetella, distemper, parvo, and rabies vaccines. Animals over 2 months of age will be spayed or neutered, given dewormer, flea and heartworm preventative and microchipped. Puppies under 2 months of age will be given a flea treatment and dewormer. Vaccinations are started at 2 weeks of age. At 8 weeks and a healthy weight puppies will be spay/neutered and microchipped.

All dogs will need monthly prevention for fleas and heartworms. You are responsible for ensuring that they receive this important medication monthly. You will receive the prevention with the date it should be applied on a label, and dogs should not be bathed 48 hours after its application. We suggest putting a monthly reminder in your calendar for when your foster dog is next due for their prevention. Submit a medical concern form at least one week prior to needing to administer your foster dog's flea and heartworm prevention. If you live in an area where you may be concerned about ticks or go on woodsy adventures with your dogs, please let us know and we can switch your prevention to one that also prevents ticks.

# HELPFUL TIPS



## HELPFUL TIPS FOR TRANSITION

**Allow your dog time to decompress, sleep it off, and start off on the right paw - TRANSITIONING from the stressful shelter to a new home can be a process, and the best thing you can do for your foster dog is to be patient and keep their new world as calm and quiet as possible.**

- **DO plan to pick up your foster dog when you have some time to transition them** - you can set them up for success by allowing them a couple of days to get the lay of the land while you are home. We can assist in transitional support, and you can find more ideas on crate training on the [Dog Foster Resource Website](#).
- **DO have a routine**- giving your dog as much predictability as possible is a great way to make them more comfortable with their new home! Set up a schedule for feeding times, a relaxation routine at night, and frequently let them outside to establish where and when they go outside to relieve themselves.
- **DON'T have friends or family over, or take them anywhere new** - it is time to bond with your foster without other distractions, and they need to learn that they can trust you to keep them safe and secure.
- **DON'T be afraid to keep your dog safe, and advocate for them.** If someone is walking up to them, or begins to solicit attention from them, insert yourself.
- **DON'T pet them - unless they solicit attention - and even then, give them frequent breaks.** We naturally want to pet dogs - but they don't necessarily want to BE petted. They are taking in a lot of new things in their environment, and still need time to learn to trust you and bond with you. Some dogs absolutely love affection, but many need to build trust with you before they are completely comfortable with being petted or touched. Even if your foster dog does solicit attention by coming to you, or laying on the couch next to you - pet them for a short time (a few seconds), be observant of their body language, then stop. If they act like they want you to continue, you may. If not, leave them be. Absent-mindedly petting a dog can make them uncomfortable or make them feel the need to correct YOUR behavior. **Consent is key!**
- **DO learn more about dog body language.** They tell us so much without words. If you are intentional about watching them and learning your foster dog's subtle cues, you won't miss signs that they are uncomfortable or fearful. This can eliminate unwanted reactivity or responses from them. This [AKC guide to dog body language](#) is a great resource to brush up on before bringing a new foster dog home. We also really like this [video of real-life dog body language](#) cues to watch for. It will make you look at your dog differently, and will help build your skills of not only understanding dogs in general, but will make you more prepared to respond to the cues they are giving you so you can make them more comfortable.
- **DON'T allow your foster dog outside without being leashed**, even if you have a fenced-in yard. When a dog is in a new place, they are much more likely to be somewhat fearful or anxious, and they may attempt to escape from a yard. Many of the dogs in the shelter were originally strays, meaning they were likely to have escaped their previous home. You can buy a long leash so that you can safely exercise your foster dog in an open space outside and keep the end of the leash on your wrist, ensuring they are safe. We especially like this [waterproof long-line leash](#) for outside adventures, and it's easy to clean!
- **DO keep a drag leash (a light-weight leash clipped to their collar) on your foster dog for the foreseeable future** - even inside. This will be extremely useful if you have to move your foster dog. If you have other dogs in your home, they should also wear drag leashes just in case you need to break up a scuffle or separate them before anything happens.
- **DO have an identification tag made for your fosters just in case they get away from you** - this will help keep them safer and will allow faster reunification if they do get lost. **At our main shelter location, we make ID tags free for foster dogs!** You can go to our retail desk and tell them you have a foster. We recommend putting two emergency phone numbers on it and also labeling the tag "Foster" instead of the individual dog's name so you can reuse it for future foster dogs.



# OBJECTIVE TERMS TO DESCRIBE DOG BEHAVIOR

## EYES

- Blinks
- Looks away
- Open wide
- Pupils dilated
- Relaxed
- Round
- Squints
- Stares
- Whale eye

## EARS

- Back
- Forward
- Neutral
- Relaxed

## TAIL

- Broad,/wide wags
- Held tight to body/tucked
- High/fast wags
- Low
- Neutral/at spine level
- Nutral/hanging
- Small wags/tail tip wags

## MOUTH

- Air snaps
- Bites or tries to bite
- Chatters
- Closed
- Closed: relaxed
- Corners of lips forward or back
- Licks lips
- Lifts lip
- Muzzle punches
- Open: relaxed pants
- Pursed/shor lips
- Salivates
- Shows teeth
- Softly mouths
- Yawns

## VOCALIZATIONS

- Barks: high pitch
- Barks: low pitch
- Groans
- Growls
- Howls
- Screams
- Whines

## MOVEMENT

- Bounces
- Bows
- Flees
- Freezes
- Head whips
- Hides
- Jumps up
- Leans back/forward/into
- Loose/relaxed/neutral
- Lowers body or head
- Lunges
- Moves away/toward
- Paces
- Piloerects (hair on spine raises)
- Pulls back/forward on leash
- Puts paw on
- Rubs against



# BEHAVIOR

## TRANSITIONAL STRESS

When transitioning from a stressful place like the shelter and into a new home, we cannot explain to our new foster dog that their life has just become a lot better - but it is up to us to SHOW them. **It is common for new foster dogs to experience some fear and anxiety, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and they are also at a higher risk of possibly running away.** This is due to being in an unfamiliar place, with unfamiliar people. Now more than ever, your new foster dog needs patience and time to adjust.

Build a protective bubble around them. Do not have anyone besides the people that live in your home over or interact with your new foster dog. Do not take them anywhere new within the first 3 days to a week. Avoid walks in crowded places and avoid being within 10 feet of other people or dogs. This beginning time is precious for your foster dog to build a bond with you and seek you out for comfort when they are feeling unsure. They have been through a lot, and extra TLC during this stage is very important. See [The Rule of 3's](#) for shelter dogs.

When bringing a NEW DOG into your home, it is common to see diarrhea for up to one week. Even streaks or drips of blood are common and OKAY! This is due to the stress of a new home (stress colitis) and a diet change. These animals are already stressed and adding yet another change to their life, they can easily develop diarrhea. Being in your home will help with their stress levels and is why fostering is so important! For **ADULT DOGS**, if the animal is bright and alert, eager to eat and otherwise acting well, you can do what we call a "GI reset". This would be skipping one meal and then offering boiled rice and chicken. Once their stomach settles, you can slowly (over about a week) introduce kibble back into their meals. Avoid treats and table scraps!

For **PUPPIES** that are brand new to your home, please keep in mind that they have been dewormed on intake, and are experiencing a diet change and some level of stress. If they are bright and alert, eating and drinking, and playful, remember their bodies are adjusting. If any dog has vomiting or lethargy, please reach out to clinic using the Med Concern link. If diarrhea persists or new symptoms develop, please also submit a concern.

To learn more about transitional stress please see the below resources:

[Layered Stress Model](#)

[Trigger Stacking](#)

## LOSS OF APPETITE

It is also common for a new foster dog to experience loss of appetite due to transitional stress. Entice them to eat with some wet food mixed with water or some sodium-free broth. If you need more ideas or have concerns about your foster dog's eating habits, reach out to a foster coordinator



## SEPARATION ANXIETY

Dogs in the shelter have been living a life away from people most of the time, so when they are finally able to be with people and have their social needs met, it can be difficult for them to accept you leaving to go to work, or going into a crate. We may or may not have a history on whether a dog has been crate-trained or allowed to free roam in a home. Set your foster dog up for the most success by reading the following resources ahead of picking up your foster dog, and build in opportunities to make the crate or a spare room a positive and safe oasis. Reach out to a foster coordinator if you need some additional resources or assistance, or submit a concern to [behavior@kcpetproject.org](mailto:behavior@kcpetproject.org).

## HOUSE TRAINING

- **Lack of House-Training:** Chances are your foster dog may need at least a refresher course in house training. Many rescued dogs have spent most of their lives outside and never learned the rules of living indoors. Other dogs may have once been house-trained, but may still have an accident or two when transitioning into a new home. Here are some key points to keep in mind during the process that is almost universally applicable:
  - **Holding It:** 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! A healthy adult dog, even among smaller breeds, should have no trouble holding it for up to 10 hours in a crate or overnight. There are, of course, always exceptions.
  - **Frequent Outings:** To avoid accidents, you will want to make sure your foster dog has plenty of opportunities to go outside (if they are fully vaccinated). 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 potty. When they do go outside, you want to capture this wanted behavior (just like when teaching a dog a new command). By capture, we mean giving lots of praise and treats for doing what we want.
  - **Reward Only!** 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. More often than not, 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. If your pup is learning for the first time or is struggling with learning outside from in, you can amp up the reward by "jackpotting" even a little outdoor tinkle with a BUNCH of treats and praise (or toys, or whatever your pup thinks is a great reward).
  - **Prevention & Redirection:** If you are still in the process of housetraining, make sure you have eyes on your pup at all times. Keep a lightweight leash attached to their collar always (what we call a "drag leash") so that, the second they start to go, you can quickly pick up the end of the leash and walk them outside. Remain neutral until they're outside, and as soon as they start to finish their business out there you can reward them! If you are preoccupied with other tasks, limit their access. Use a crate or exercise pen to keep them from going wherever they please.

## CHEWING

- Destructive chewing is a phase that all puppies go through. It usually starts around three months and can last until the dog is one year old. During this time, the dog's adult teeth are coming in and chewing helps relieve the pain. Adult dogs may also have problems with chewing, but for different reasons. Adult dogs usually chew on inappropriate things because they are anxious or bored, or because they have never been taught what is appropriate to chew on. The best solution for destructive chewing is providing your foster dog with something that is acceptable to chew on. Alternate chew toys daily and do not leave all toys out all the time. Dogs generally get bored of toys and find alternative things to chew. If you catch your dog chewing on something inappropriate, 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.
- If destructive chewing occurs when you are away, consider confining the dog to a crate. A crate will help keep both the dog and your home safe. It is also important to make sure that your foster dog is getting plenty of 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. Working a dog's brain is just as important as ensuring they are getting enough exercise!

## FOSTER DOGS AND CHILDREN

Foster dogs must be monitored closely around children. We may have a history of a dog from a previous home that reported your foster to have lived successfully with children. Usually, we do not have history on whether a dog has lived with children. Sometimes, we receive reports from Canine Care Staff or from Dog Day Outs on a dog's interactions with children. We prefer that you bring your children to your foster onboarding training so that we can observe their interactions with the dog. Even with a reported positive history with children, we must remember that our foster dog is transitioning, and every home, child, and situation can be different. Watch your foster dog's body language and gauge their comfort level with how children are interacting with them. Ensure that children are interacting appropriately with the dog. Do not allow them to chase, hug, or pull at the dog in a physical way. Do not allow children near the dog when they are eating or have a valuable item like a chew or a Kong. Do not allow children to ever enter a foster dog's crate. This is the dog's safe space and a dog could react if they feel cornered in a small area. Monitor interactions of the dog with toys, and prevent children from taking toys away from the dog. Intentionally separate children from foster dogs intermittently throughout the day.

[Introducing Your Dog to your Children](#)

[Children and Dogs: How to Keep Interactions Safe](#)

[How Kids Should and Shouldn't Interact with Dogs](#)

## FOSTER DOGS AND RESIDENT DOGS

If you have other dogs, we can do a dog to dog (D2D) introduction at the shelter. This involves staff handling your dog and your potential foster dog and introducing them in our play yards. We will determine whether their interactions are appropriate and whether they will be a good fit together in your home. Keep in mind, this is only a snapshot of their behavior together. If your dog and the foster dog are approved to go home together, we still recommend separation of your resident dog(s) from the foster dog until the dog has transitioned into your home and can be slowly integrated with your resident dog(s). Dogs living in the same home together is another type of transition, and the dynamics are different in every individual setting. All dogs have different personalities and preferences. We will try to matchmake a dog for your resident dog(s) that will be a good fit with their playstyle and energy level.

**Do not leave your foster dog unattended with your resident dogs.** A great way to help resident dogs and foster dogs bond is to take them on walks together. We always recommend one handler per dog. **Foster dogs and resident dogs should never be fed in the same room together, or be given high-value items such as Kongs or bones/chews together.** Resource guarding is a natural behavior for dogs, and managing the situation so that it cannot occur is how it is prevented. Watch your resident dog(s) and foster dog closely for body language cues that any of them are becoming overwhelmed, overstimulated, or uncomfortable. Ideally, separate the dogs before any discomfort is observed so that you continue to build positive interactions between foster and resident dogs.

[Introducing Your New Dog to Other Dogs](#)

## FOSTER DOGS AND CATS

Many dogs can be acclimated to living with cats. We typically do not have a history on whether a dog has successfully lived with cats due to many coming to the shelter as strays. We do not have a way to safely test dogs with cats at the shelter, so we would try to place a dog with you that has not had any reports of a strong prey drive or reactivity toward cats previously. We also require a slow introduction process or complete separation if possible. If you are approved to introduce your foster dog to your cats, they must be separated at first. We like these guidelines for introducing foster dogs to cats:

[Introducing Cats to Other Pets](#)

[Cats and Dogs from the Cat's View](#)

## BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

Any behavior concerns or changes in behavior should be reported to your foster coordinators. As a KC Pet Project foster, you have access to our Canine Behavior and Enrichment Team. We hope that the transition from the shelter to your loving home will be a smooth one, however it is important to know that the first few weeks in a new home can be both exciting and stressful for the pet and foster family. Sometimes your new pet may display problematic behavior during this transition period. Often times these behaviors can be resolved with patience and a few adjustments to manage the behavior and reduce stress. The Canine Behavior and Enrichment team can help give you guidance during the transition if you have questions or concerns. The team can be reached at [behavior@kcpetproject.org](mailto:behavior@kcpetproject.org). KC Pet Project has a small but dedicated behavior department - our staff aims to respond to these submissions within 48 hours. Don't forget to check out the [Dog Foster Resource Website](#) for resources as well!



# MARKETING YOUR FOSTER



## MARKETING AND PROMOTING YOUR FOSTER DOG

We need you to help us to promote your foster dog. This is the most important thing we can do to ensure they find their forever home. **Please assist in marketing your foster dog by providing the foster department with several updated photos, short videos, and information on how the dog is doing in your home for their bio one week after taking them home.**

Please continue to inform us of any new information that can help us find their ideal home. We have several volunteers that will use your content to make a video that will be posted on your dog's profile on the website. An inviting bio, adorable photos, and a video to see the dog in action will encourage a potential adopter to meet your dog over another animal in the shelter's care. Fosters are strongly encouraged to write the bio but staff and volunteers can assist with this task as long as you provide the information. Sharing your foster dog on other social media sites (personal Facebook page, public Facebook pages that allow sharing of foster dogs, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, the Next Door app, etc.) are great ways to promote your foster. Talking about your foster with anyone who will listen spreads that word that you have a foster at home looking for a permanent family. Getting some ADOPT ME gear can also help promote your dog any time you take them into public places.

Adopt Me bandanas, leashes, leash sleeves, etc. are great for bringing attention to your foster pup. We also have foster dog business cards that we can provide you with to pass out to anyone interested in adopting your foster. If you are comfortable sharing your contact information with people that express interest in your foster dog, feel free to get in touch with them directly about next steps, or have them email [dogfoster@kcpetproject.org](mailto:dogfoster@kcpetproject.org). There are a lot of other tips and tricks on how to market your foster on the [Dog Foster Resources Website](#). If you would like to submit marketing information to our Marketing and Communications, you may do so by completing this [form](#).

## COMMUNICATING WITH POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

All dogs that are available for adoption while in foster care will be posted on our website. If you have a foster dog that is unavailable to adopters, such as underage puppies awaiting their spay/neuter surgeries or dogs on medical hold, notify your foster coordinators as soon as your dogs have been cleared for adoption or had surgery. They will then make your dog available on the website. Interested adopters will reach out via email to the foster department. That email will be forwarded to you, the foster parent. Please reach out to potential adopters within 24 hours. If you would like to loop us in on the conversation so we can help you with the process, feel free to copy your foster coordinators in your email communications, take notes during phone conversations and consult with us after, however you prefer. We are here to help! On the next page of this handbook, you will find a guide for the adoption process for your foster dog.

# THE ADOPTION PROCESS FOR YOUR FOSTER

When you have someone interested in your foster it is an exciting time but it also can be confusing, emotional, and overwhelming. The following has been created to help guide you through the process so you can find a home where your foster pet can thrive.

If you would like to loop us in on the conversation, feel free to copy your foster coordinators in your email communications or take notes during phone conversations and consult with us after. We are here to help!

## POTENTIAL ADOPTER QUESTIONS

Before a potential adopter meets your foster pet, it is good to have a conversation with them to determine whether it will be worth having a meet and greet. We have provided a few questions to help guide the conversation.

**Do you live in a place where pets are allowed? If so, are there any breed or weight restrictions?**

*Rental properties, HOAs, and cities can restrict breeds.*

**Describe your ideal pet.**

**Tell me about your family members and pets.**

*Include ages of family members and ask them to expand on their pets' personalities, play styles, and sociability.*

**What are you looking for in a new pet?**

**What type of energy level do you prefer?**

*Examples: couch potato, middle of the road, likes to go on frequent adventures, running partner, etc.*

**How would you describe the activity level of your home?**

*Do they frequently have friends over to visit or host parties? Do children or other dogs come visit their home frequently?*

**What kinds of activities do you do that you would like your dog to be included in?**

**What is your experience with pets you have or have had in the past?**

**Are there any behaviors that are deal breakers for you?**

**What does your average day look like?**

*How long will the dog be alone while they are away at work?*

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Use open-ended questions to prompt the potential adopter to provide more detailed answers. Ask for clarification when needed and take notes.
- Please honor the potential adopters' interest in the order in which you receive them unless your dog's restrictions or needs do not align with the potential adopter that expressed interest first. Be completely transparent with interested parties. Tell them your dog has another family interested ahead of them and that you are going to get back to them.
- Be knowledgeable about your dog's Medical Consults or Behavioral Consults, if any. Your foster coordinators will provide this information at your appointment, and ask for clarification on this if needed.



# NEXT STEPS

## What to do if you have determined it is **not** a good fit

You can refer them to us or you can let them know directly about other dogs that may be a good fit for them. Feel free to reach out to other fosters on the Facebook page to see who has a foster dog that we could suggest to them. Our goal is to get as many dogs as possible adopted, so if they are interested in adopting please use this opportunity to help another dog if yours won't work for them.

## What to do if you have determined it **may be** a good fit

Coordinate a meet and greet between your foster dog and the potential adopter. We suggest if this is your first introduction that you use one of our locations (Main shelter-KCCAC, Zona Rosa, or Petco 95th Street) to allow staff to help you facilitate the introduction. If you are comfortable, you may offer the potential adopters to visit your home to meet the dog or arrange to meet at a neutral place such as a park. If your potential adopters have other dogs in the home, an introduction between the dogs must take place with the exception of dogs under 6 months of age. This is to be facilitated by staff at any of our locations. All adopters must meet the dog before completing adoption paperwork-puppies included. Once both the adopter and you are ready to move forward with the adoption, adoption paperwork must be finalized before the dog is released to them. You and the foster dog do not need to be present to finalize the adoption but you must ensure this piece is completed before meeting them to pass the dog off. Please keep in mind each adopter needs a leash and collar in order to take the dog home. We must keep our leashes and martingale collars for internal use.

## You have found a family to adopt your foster pet

When you have found the family for your foster dog, let the foster coordinator that you have been working with know their name. They will put this information on their profile. If a dog-to-dog is NOT necessary and they are ready to make it official, your adopter may take advantage of our running foster adoption appointment at the main shelter at 11:30 daily, before the shelter opens to public so they can beat the line. Congratulate yourself on helping that dog get the life they deserve, and let us know when you are ready to foster again.

# POST-ADOPTION SUPPORT & COMMUNICATIONS FOR FOSTERS



As a KC Pet Project foster, you are an important part of the adoption process. If your foster finds placement through adoption, it is possible that the adopter may contact you with questions and updates about their new pet. All communications with an adopter are important to the adopter's relationship with KC Pet Project and in supporting the pet and person post-adoption. We require all KC Pet Project fosters to be exceptional representatives of our organization at all times, including while actively fostering a KC Pet Project shelter pet, and while interacting with the general public and other stakeholders.

As a KC Pet Project foster, it is critical that you represent the organization appropriately, in accordance with established shelter protocols and procedures, and in alignment with the organization's mission and philosophies. Miscommunications and misunderstandings have a direct impact on our organization's public reputation, credibility, and the support we receive from our community.

## AS A KC PET PROJECT FOSTER YOU ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Ensure that all information shared is accurate and in support of KC Pet Project's mission, philosophy, and shelter practices.
- Adhere to all KC Pet Project and Canine Foster Program policies and procedures, when providing post-adoption support.
- Communicate all relevant concerns made by the adopter directly to the Foster Department team so they can be documented in the animal and person profile(s) in the shelter's database.
- Never take a stance or make a decision on behalf of KC Pet Project.
- Never promise services and/or additional support without the explicit approval from an authorized staff member.
- If you are unsure how to address a question and/or request, please direct the individual to [KCPetProject.org](https://kcpetproject.org) and/or refer to an appropriate KC Pet Project team member.
- For relinquishment or pet support services, contact [petsupportcenter@kcpetproject.org](mailto:petsupportcenter@kcpetproject.org) or (816) 683-1383
- For lost and found pet services, contact [lostandfound@kcpetproject.org](mailto:lostandfound@kcpetproject.org) or (816) 683-1383
- For behavior concerns, contact [behavior@kcpetproject.org](mailto:behavior@kcpetproject.org)
- For medical concerns, contact [vetclinic@kcpetproject.org](mailto:vetclinic@kcpetproject.org)

## REQUESTS TO RETURN AN ADOPTED FOSTER PET

Sometimes an adoption simply isn't a good fit for the animal or their new family—that's okay! The goal is to find well-suited placement for shelter pets and to support adopters through the process in such a way that encourages them to adopt from us again when they are ready. Please know that giving up a pet is never easy, and is a decision never made lightly. Please approach these situations with empathy, kindness, and without judgment.

### If an adopter would like to return their pet to KC Pet Project, fosters must do the following:

- Try to identify if there are resources available to help the adopter keep their new pet.
- If no resources are available and/or they are not interested in finding ways to overcome their current challenge(s), discuss return options with the adopter:
  - An adopter can rehome the animal privately through KC Pet Project's Rehoming Support and Services: <https://kcpetproject.org/services/rehoming-support/>
  - An adopter can request an owner surrender appointment online by completing an appropriate surrender request form: <https://kcpetproject.org/services/pet-relinquishment/>
- Adoption Exchange Certificates may be available for adopters who return their adopted pet within the first thirty (30) days of adoption. This is not guaranteed.
- An appointment and owner surrender request form are required for owner surrenders and returned adoptions
- Any concerns for an animal's or person's safety must be immediately communicated with the Canine Foster Department

Please note: Fosters cannot accept an animal as a return on behalf of KC Pet Project. By taking possession of your previous foster dog without going through the proper channels, you are assuming the transfer of ownership and responsibility from the adopter to yourself and will be considered the authorized owner/guardian owner of the animal. Adopters must contact and complete all required paperwork with the Pet Support Center Team to relinquish the dog back to KC Pet Project before a foster may take possession of the animal.

# TYPES OF FOSTERING



## DOG DAY OUTS

KC Pet Project's Dog Day Out Program allows you to take a dog out of the shelter for the day, a few hours, for the weekend – however long you want! This program offers shelter dogs an opportunity to relieve stress outside of the shelter environment, gain behavior knowledge about the dogs, collect photos and bio information to be used for marketing purposes, and engage the community in our lifesaving efforts.

To learn more about the program, visit <https://kcpetproject.org/programs/dog-day-out/>.

## SHORT-TERM FOSTERING/FOSTER SITTING

KC Pet Project often has dogs looking for a temporary foster home as they await transport to one of our rescue partners or while another foster is traveling. Short-term fosters or foster sitters typically have the dog in their home for less than two weeks. This is an important piece of the foster program as it keeps foster dogs from coming back to the shelter or opens up a spot for an incoming dog since the dog has secured placement elsewhere.

## GENERAL FOSTERING

KC Pet Project continues to see increasing intake numbers. Due to these record-breaking numbers, we are always looking to place dogs into foster homes to make space for dogs entering the shelter. We will always try to make the best match for you and the dog!

## MEDICAL FOSTER

Dogs need medical foster care for many different reasons. We receive requests from the Vet Clinic for medical fosters regularly. The time required for medical fosters varies, and these dogs will typically require rechecks by a veterinarian until the dog is cleared for adoption. You should be prepared to make some visits back to the Vet Clinic when taking a medical foster home, and adhere to any instructions from veterinary staff regarding your foster's medical needs. Monitor your medical foster's condition carefully, and submit medical concerns and medication refill requests promptly.

## BEHAVIOR/SOCIALIZATION FOSTER

Dogs who exhibit behavioral challenges in the shelter or other settings often benefit from foster care placement. Dogs may exhibit challenging behaviors that are resolved by placing the animal into a foster home; however, some challenging behaviors persist. It is often difficult to distinguish between these prior to placement. A candidate for behavior fostering presents a behavioral or training challenge but, to the best of the organization's knowledge, is not a public safety concern. Foster caregivers are expected to actively manage and/or train their behavior foster. Foster caregiver compliance and objective (unbiased) feedback about the animal is important so that more specific pathway planning can be made for the animal.



## PUPPY FOSTERS

We have a steady supply of puppies that are underage (typically this is under 8 weeks), with their moms, or not even born yet. Sometimes they are not in optimal health or body condition, or they need some extra TLC in the form of socialization. In general, puppies need foster more urgently because it is necessary for both their health and socialization. Puppies under 8 weeks of age can not stay in the shelter. They do not have the immunities necessary to fight off viruses and they are at much higher risk in an environment with a very large population of dogs with unknown vaccine histories. When taking puppies home, we will schedule their spay/neuter surgeries when they are at a healthy weight and 8 weeks old. We will schedule vaccine and dewormer appointments based on age. See the chart below for details.

## FOSTERING BOTTLE PUPPIES

Bottle Babies are usually a 4-8 week commitment. Bottle babies need around-the-clock care and to be kept warm and fed at all hours. They start to become independent at around 4 weeks old. They become available for adoption at 8 weeks old or at least 2 pounds following their spay/neuter surgery. If it is your first time caring for puppies that are too young to be weaned from the milk, you will receive training on how to care for bottle puppies. We have a Facebook Bottle Puppy chat thread with many seasoned bottle baby fosters on it. We will add you to this chat as it is a great way to receive support and guidance and to grow your skills as a bottle-baby foster. We will provide specialized supplies, like scales, bottles, nipples, and warmies.

## FOSTERING MOMS AND PUPS

Mom and puppies and pregnant moms' time commitment will vary depending on the age of the puppies. If a nursing mom comes with the puppies, she will go to foster with her puppies. Pregnant dogs who are near-term or in active labor are sent to foster as quickly as possible so they can give birth in a calm and safe environment. Puppies become available for adoption at 8 weeks old or at least 2 pounds following their spay/neuter surgery. Mom will be spayed once she no longer has milk production, typically 2 weeks after the puppies have been weaned. We have a Facebook Mom and Litters chat thread with several seasoned mom and puppy fosters on it. We will add you to this thread so you can receive support and guidance through your journey as a foster to a family. We will provide specialized supplies, like scales, warmies, kiddie pools, and exercise pins.

Puppy Vaccine Chart				
Age	DAPP2	Bordetella	Pyrantel	Advantage Multi
2-3 weeks			X	
4-7 weeks	X	X	X	
8 weeks	X	X		X

For a more in-depth guide to raising pregnant moms, moms and pups, bottle puppies or weaned underage puppies, see this [Guide to Raising Puppies](#).

# FOSTER-SITTING



## FOSTER-SITTING (INTERIM FOSTER)

If you do not want to take on a foster dog long-term, but would be available to temporarily care for foster dogs when needed, being a Foster-Sitter or Interim Foster may be the right type of foster for you. Our foster community is always in need of short-term care of their foster dogs due to vacations and other commitments.

**Going into the care of a temporary foster is also a transition, and we must monitor dogs closely and maintain as calm of an environment as possible - limit meeting new people or animals, and avoid taking the foster dog anywhere.**

## THE RULES FOR A TEMPORARY FOSTER:

- 1 If you need a foster-sitter - ask in the [KC Pet Project Dog Foster Facebook Group](#) or ask your foster coordinators. Lots of fosters like to do interim foster. Be sure to post about your dog's specific needs in a foster home, whether they are dog/cat/kid friendly, and when and how long you will be gone.  
You CAN have a friend or family member watch your foster dog for you while you're away. They just have to fill out the [Dog Foster Sign-Up Form](#) and sign a contract for when the dog will be in their care via this [link](#).
- 2 PLEASE CHOOSE FOSTER-SITTERS CAREFULLY- we want to make sure your dog is a good fit in the temporary home, and we want to set every dog up for success when they transition into a new home- even if it's just for a long weekend. Your foster coordinators are always here to help if you have questions or concerns.
- 3 Let us know when you are going to be transferring your foster dog ahead of time, and also let us know close to or on the date of transfer to confirm that your sitter currently has your foster dog.
- 4 **Anytime a foster dog is going to be in the care of another person, the temporary or interim foster must sign a foster contract and contract must be provided.**
- 5 Be sure the foster-sitter has been briefed on the rules of fostering a dog:
  - Knows emergency protocols and has contact information for the department
  - No dog parks
  - Dogs must be leashed at all times when outside
  - No interactions with other dogs, limit interactions with new people, etc. A new home - even short-term- can be stressful and is another transition, and we want to limit other factors as much as possible. We can go over this information with foster-sitters as well.
- 6 Let your foster coordinators know when your foster dog is back in your care.

## RETURNING YOUR FOSTER DOG

- 1 If you are unable to continue to foster your foster dog, please communicate this to the foster department as soon as possible.
- 2 Make a plea for a foster takeover in the [KC Pet Project Dog Foster Facebook Group](#) or ask your foster coordinators to do so on your behalf. Be sure to post about your dog's specific needs in a foster home, whether they are dog/cat/kid friendly and the date in which you need placement by.
- 3 If you are unable to find a foster to takeover care of your foster dog, arrange a day and time to return your foster dog to the main shelter (KCCAC). All returns MUST be communicated to the foster department ahead of time. This allows us to ensure there is a spot for your foster dog upon arrival. Upon return, please bring your foster dog to the admissions department.

## CANINE AT-RISK

The Canine Operations Team utilizes an internal [Canine At-Risk Spreadsheet](#) to track the canines in our care while having a system of checks and balances. Being "at-risk" does not mean a dog is going to be automatically euthanized, however it is an opportunity for staff to focus attention and advocate for the dogs on the list by finding ways to improve quality of life or find appropriate alternative placements. It is also intended to help staff emotionally prepare in the event that tough decisions are made. It's not impossible for a dog to bypass the at-risk list and move to euthanasia if the situation warrants it. Dogs with a bite history or a medical emergency might be an example. Some key things you may need to know to better understand the spreadsheet:

- LOS (Length of stay)-dogs are automatically added to the spreadsheet when they hit 30 days in our care as that is more than a week longer than our average length of stay for dogs.
- The spreadsheet gets updated with new dogs weekly, typically by the Director of Canine Operations. We try to keep all other areas as up-to-date as possible.
- The spreadsheet is for dogs that are available for adoption, dogs that are on evaluate are already "at-risk" due to being unavailable for adoption due to behavior. This may limit the ways the dog can be advocated for as they may pose a risk to the community.
- QOL stands for Quality of Life.
- The highlighted dogs are dogs that are actively being discussed for euthanasia and need extra focus from everyone.
- The **blue highlighted dogs** are dogs that need extra attention. Their quality of life in shelter has sufficiently decreased and they should be a priority to get out of the building. A blue highlight may be improved if the dog is showing improvement. Dogs highlighted in blue are eligible for placement through adoption, foster, or rescue.
- The **yellow highlighted dogs** are dogs scheduled for euthanasia. These decisions are typically made on Wednesday afternoons and the appointments are scheduled on Monday. Dogs highlighted in yellow are eligible for placement through adoption or rescue placement only. They are not eligible for foster placement.

**Please note:** By accessing this spreadsheet and utilizing this resource, volunteers agree to adhere to KC Pet Project's Confidentiality Policy and Euthanasia Policy for volunteers as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.

**This spreadsheet is private, and confidentiality is essential. Please use this [link](#) to access the spreadsheet.**

If you have any questions about this spreadsheet, please contact the Director of Canine Operations via email.

## EUTHANASIA

KC Pet Project, as an open-admission municipal shelter, maintains a 95% live-release rate. However, there are times when we must euthanize animals in our care. KC Pet Project is committed to lifesaving and works within certain parameters, policies, and protocols to determine with euthanasia may be necessary. Some of these criteria include but are not limited to, severe illness or injury, quality-of-life concerns, and/or public safety concerns such as unpredictable aggression to humans, offensive aggression to humans, and/or an unintermittent drive. Quality-of-life includes animals that are too stressed in the shelter environment and/or have shown concerning behaviors while in our care—animals that continue to deteriorate while at the shelter, including losing weight due to stress, developing unsafe behaviors, or completely shutting down due to the environment.

No person, including staff, volunteers, or fosters, wants to euthanize an animal, and euthanasia decisions are not made lightly. KC Pet Project employs diligent processes and practices when discussing and determining euthanasia as a humane outcome. These processes include several team members and departments, and several "checks and balances" such as exploring alternative options like rescue, being returned home, and targeted marketing campaigns.

We require all KC Pet Project volunteers and fosters to understand, and support, the need for euthanasia in animal welfare. Volunteers and fosters must support euthanasia decisions with understanding, empathy, kindness, and compassion. Questions regarding euthanasia should be fielded to the appropriate department Director.



# POLICIES & PROCEDURES



## CONFIDENTIALITY

By fostering for KC Pet Project, you agree to adhere to KC Pet Project's Confidentiality Policy as stated in the Volunteer Handbook.

"KC Pet Project volunteers must keep confidential all sensitive information that they may have access to during volunteer activities. Sensitive information may include financial and vendor records, personnel and payroll records of current and former employees, adopter information, donor and client records, volunteer records, organization systems and databases, electronic mail, and facsimile transmissions. All such information must be used only as it relates to the volunteer's duties at KC Pet Project and volunteers with access to such information are responsible for acting with integrity.

Information that pertains to the Company's business, including all nonpublic information concerning the organization, its vendors and suppliers, donors, clients, or volunteers is strictly confidential and must not be given to people who are not employed by the Company.

Please help protect confidential information by taking the following precautionary measures:

- Discuss company matters only with those who have a specific business-related need to know or have access to such information
- Monitor and supervise visitors to the Company to ensure that they do not have access to organization information.
- Destroy hard copies of documents containing confidential information that are not filed or archived.
- Secure confidential information in desk drawers and cabinets at the end of every business day.
- Do not supply anyone not currently employed by the Company with documents from within the company, including computer files, donor or client information files, and/or folders.
- Volunteers are prohibited from distributing account, patient, and/or client information to anyone, in any form, except the named account holder(s). Missouri Statutes state that all client/patient records are strictly confidential and should never be disclosed to anyone unless by court order, subpoena, or as may be required to ensure compliance with any other federal or state law.

Cooperation is particularly important because of the organization's obligation to protect the security of our team, our community, and our own confidential information. Volunteers must use sound judgment and good common sense, but if at any time a volunteer is uncertain as to whether they can properly divulge information or answer questions, they are encouraged to consult a manager or director. "

A photograph of two young women and a dog sitting on a concrete ledge outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and purple sneakers, and the woman on the right is wearing a denim jacket and white sneakers. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. A black and white dog is sitting between them, also smiling. In the background, there is a red metal structure and green trees.

# RECORDING YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME

## RECORDING YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME

All volunteers are responsible for monitoring and reporting their completed service hours through Volgistics. The Volunteer Department will help guide you on creating a Volgistics account. Accurate accounting of volunteer hours is vital to the success of our organization, and your hours may contribute to grant awards that allow us to further support our mission.

- Volunteers giving service at a KC Pet Project facility must sign in using the volunteer portal at the beginning of a shift, as this is a safety issue in the event of an emergency. By signing in, we are able to see quickly what volunteers are on site, and what location they are working in.
- Volunteers giving service remotely, including transporting animals, and/or giving service at an offsite location must record and post their hours directly in Volgistics, and must do so within three days of their completed shift.
- Fosters who are recording volunteer service hours should submit three (3) hours of service per animal in foster care, with a maximum of ten (10) hours per day.

Volunteers are able to view their accumulated volunteer hours at any time by signing in to their Volgistics account. Volunteers may also request documentation of completed volunteer service hours from the volunteer department. Requests for documentation must be made in advance and may take 3-5 days to complete. If you have additional questions regarding recording your volunteer hours, please contact [volunteer@kcpetproject.org](mailto:volunteer@kcpetproject.org).

## COMMUNICATION WITH PRESS OR MEDIA

Volunteers are not allowed to contact any representatives from the media regarding KC Pet Project, its pets, or matters involving the organization. Media inquiries must be referred to the Chief Communications Officer and/or the President/CEO. This policy includes all forms of contacting and/or responding to the media, including off-the-record and anonymous statements.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS

As a representative of the organization, it is important that staff, volunteers, and fosters work together to represent KC Pet Project accurately and appropriately. KC Pet Project respects the rights of fosters to use online forums on their personal time as a medium of self-expression, and it is not our intent to police the online activity of our volunteers. However, KC Pet Project reserves the right to monitor and regulate foster postings/activities on any forum when it relates to our organization's interests.

When using social media, fosters should consider and adhere to the following:

- Posting information, photos, and videos that can help promote KC Pet Project and garner more support for the organization and adoptable animals is a great way to support the organization. Happy stories and resharing company-created content are also strongly encouraged.
- KC Pet Project logos and trademarks may not be used without written consent. The exception is if you are sharing company-created content on social media and/or using a company-approved template for public-facing marketing materials (ex.: lost pet flyers, foster flyers, volunteer recruitment flyers, etc.)
- Volunteers are strictly prohibited from creating KC Pet Project-related or focused social media accounts, messenger groups, Facebook groups, social media pages, or other public engagement platforms without the explicit consent of the Executive Leadership Team. This includes, but is not limited to, Instagram pages, web pages, blogs, etc.
- Fosters are not authorized to speak on behalf of KC Pet Project or represent that they take a stance on behalf of the organization.
- Fosters may not post content that states or implies that the volunteer's opinions reflect the opinions of KC Pet Project or are endorsed by KC Pet Project.
- Fosters must abide by all KC Pet Project policies while using any public forum including confidentiality and data protection policies. Breach of confidentiality or sharing other sensitive and/or proprietary information may result in dismissal from the volunteer program.
- Fosters are prohibited from posting any information or commentary about KC Pet Project that may undermine the company's employees, philosophies, operations, mission, and/or that may be reasonably viewed as disparaging of KC Pet Project or unsupportive of its policies, procedures or practices.
- Fosters must be respectful towards KC Pet Project, volunteers, other fosters, staff members, clients, other agencies, and partners always.

## ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS

KC Pet Project's main source of communication is through our various Facebook groups. Our Facebook groups are meant to be a positive, uplifting, informative communication platform for KC Pet Project staff, fosters, and volunteers and our goal is to always keep communication channels open. When used appropriately, groups are a great way to connect with other volunteers and build community. We encourage everyone to participate in the various groups available to them. Volunteers are responsible for adhering to all group rules as a condition of their membership and participation.

KC Pet Project reserves the right to moderate comments and posts, and they may be removed from the page at any time by administrators. Administrators may remove individuals from the page temporarily, or permanently if they repeatedly post inappropriate content.



# CANINE FOSTER CARE CONTRACT

**Foster Pet's Name or #**

**Caretaker understands and agrees to the following terms and conditions:**

***Please initial each below statement:***

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Kansas City Pet Project is the sole and rightful owner of the animal(s) in foster. All decisions regarding the animal shall be made by KCPP staff.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not have any right or authority to give, transfer, or adopt out the custody of the foster animal to any other person or organization unless approved by a KCPP designated representative.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to return said animal(s) within 24 hours upon request of any member of KCPP staff or if I am no longer able to care adequately for them. If for any reason I am unable to continue to house, keep separate and care for the foster animal; I will notify the KCPP Foster Coordinator immediately and will return the animal to KCPP when the Foster Coordinator is on duty.

\_\_\_\_\_ I attest to having both experience and competence to handle and care for the foster animal(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand for the duration of the temporary custody, the animal becomes the responsibility of the foster parent and is subject to all the Rules, Ordinances and Regulations of the city Municipality, Town, Township, Borough, Village, County, and the laws of the State wherein the Foster Parent and the animal resides.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree that the animals shall be provided the following: A) Reasonable exercise in a fenced-in yard, dog run, or on a leash. B) Chaining and tethering shall not be used as a primary means of confinement. C) The animal shall be always under the immediate control and protection of the Foster Parent and will not be permitted to roam outside of the fenced area or quarantine room.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to incorporate the animal into my daily routine; and to crate and leash train, housetrain, give medication, socialize, and work with any behavioral problems including but not restricted to appropriate obedience. All uses of training equipment must be approved by the KCPP Behavior Department.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to keep KCPP updated on the health and behavior of the foster animal(s) in my care. In addition, I agree to respond to any inquiries about my foster animals in a timely manner.

\_\_\_\_\_ If an animal is harmed due to my negligence, I understand that I will be held responsible for the possible bills of vetting, surgery, and/or meds.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree not to have the animal(s) interact with other dogs, animals, or children in the home until the animal and the other dogs, animals, or children have become acquainted and approval has been granted by KCPP. I agree to be present and have visual contact with the animal(s) and when loose around other dogs, animals, and children.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that KCPP suggests that I keep animal(s) in a closed-off area segregated from my current pets for a designated period of time in my care. Even though KCPP animals are vaccinated there is still a small risk that my pets can get sick from the foster animals. I understand that KCPP cannot be held responsible for any illness that is passed along to owned pets. KCPP will not be held financially responsible for any vetting or medication that my pet may need.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to feed the foster animal(s) separately from any other pets already living in the home.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to keep the animal(s) in clean surroundings and to perform routine grooming and brushing to further maintain the animal in good condition.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that there will be learning opportunities given by the shelter staff to help with my foster needs. I will keep in contact with the Foster Coordinators with regular updates or if any questions or concerns arise.

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge that KCPP or any volunteers of KCPP have not made any warranties regarding the future condition, temperament, or conduct of this animal. I agree and understand that an animal can be unpredictable and that KCPP cannot anticipate or ensure against unexpected conduct of an animal fostered from KCPP.

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to immediately contact the Foster Coordinator in the event of an emergency. An emergency is defined as an escape, bite to a human or another animal, or medical emergency (example-ingestion of a toxin).

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to hold the Kansas City Pet Project harmless from any direct or consequential damages arising out of this foster care arrangement. I hereby accept this animal and assume all the risks and responsibilities associated with this animal; including bites, and fully and completely release, indemnify, and hold harmless, KCPP, its owners, directors, volunteers, and agents from any claim, cause, or action, of liability or any sort or nature, whether, known or unknown, directly, or indirectly arising out of or in connection with this animal.

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Clause:

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***Signing below, I certify that I have read and agree to all the above terms and conditions:***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

## KC PET PROJECT DOG DAY OUT CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am taking the animal named \_\_\_\_\_ out of the KC Pet Project location at:

- Kansas City Campus for Animal Care** 7077 Elmwood Ave., Kansas City, MO. 64132
- Zona Rosa** 8721 N. Stoddard Ave., Kansas City, MO. 64153
- Petco** 11620 W 95th Street., Overland Park, KS. 66214

on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ and will return said animal to this location by \_\_\_\_ (AM/PM) on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I have a current foster application on file with KC Pet Project \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the animal remains the property of KC Pet Project and I agree to keep the animal in my care until his/her return. I do not have any right or authority to give, transfer, or adopt out the custody of the animal to any other person or organization. \_\_\_\_\_

I assume full responsibility for this animal while it is off KC Pet Project property. If said animal is harmed due to my negligence, I understand that I will be held responsible for all possible bills of vetting, surgery, and/or medication. I agree to hold the KC Pet Project harmless from direct or consequential damages arising out of said animal, and accept this animal and assume all risks and responsibilities associated with the animal, including bites, property damage, and spread of disease. \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to contact KC Pet Project staff immediately if an emergency or serious incident occurs while the animal is in my custody. \_\_\_\_\_

I agree not to have the animal loose with other animals (NO DOG PARKS) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# KC PET PROJECT

## HELPFUL LINKS & NEXT STEPS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

Please complete an Acknowledgment and Receipt of the Handbook by using this link:

<https://form.jotform.com/230304855490151>

### SCHEDULING A FOSTER APPOINTMENT

<https://kcpetproject.org/programs/foster/foster-appointments/>