



No one can do everything,
but everyone can do something!

FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT

This Agreement ("Agreement") made as of

BETWEEN: NIAGARA DOG RESCUE ("NDR")

and

_____ ("**Foster**")

In consideration for the mutual promises contained in this Agreement, both NDR and the Foster agree as follows:

1.0 The Foster agrees that:

1. No member of the Foster residence has ever been investigated for, charged with or convicted of cruelty to animals.
2. The fostered animal ("Animal") will be housed indoors with the Foster.
3. The Animal will be secured while outdoors in a kennel run, within a fully fenced yard, or on a lead/leash with the Foster present. The Animal will never be tied out without the Foster present. The Animal will not be left unsupervised outdoors. The Animal must be under the care and control of a member of the Foster home at all times. At no time will the Animal be allowed to run loose outside of a fully fenced area.
4. The Animal will never be made to sleep outdoors at night.
5. If the Foster is away for more than a 24-hour period, the Animal must be in the care of a responsible adult who is also bound to the terms of this Agreement. If such care is unavailable, NDR will be advised, and alternate arrangements will be made for the Animal. The Animal must not be entrusted to anyone not approved by NDR.
6. The Animal will never be attack-trained or used to guard property. The Animal will never be used in any aspect of dog/animal fighting.
7. The Animal will be provided with all the care and attention necessary to ensure its health and well-being. All vetting must be pre-approved by an NDR representative. Vetting done without the consent of NDR will NOT be reimbursed.
8. NDR will be provided will receipts for ALL medical, grooming, or other reimbursable expenses within 30 days of the expense.

9. The personality traits of the Animal will be observed and documented for potential adopters.
10. NDR will be notified of ANY illness, injury of unusual behaviour, and the Foster will only take the Animal to a veterinarian if approved by NDR or for an emergency that is deemed life-threatening.
11. All children in the home under the age of 16 will be supervised at all times with the Animal. Children under the age of 16 should be advised to NOT hug, hang on to or be at face level with the Animal at any time. Adult members of the home are responsible for monitoring the behaviour and interactions between the Animal and any children.
12. NDR will be notified immediately of the death of the Animal.
13. NDR will be notified within 12 hours of any bite inflicted by the Animal onto a person or another animal. In this situation, the foster is responsible for any costs related to the incident.
14. The Animal will not be given ANY medications (including holistic) without approval from NDR.
15. The Animal will never be abused, beaten, or neglected in any manner.
16. The Animal will never be the subject of or subjected to any biological, chemical, psychological or any other experiments.
17. In the event the Animal is lost or stolen, NDR will be notified IMMEDIATELY, and the Foster will make all reasonable attempts to find the lost/stolen Animal.
18. The Animal will never be given, sold, or leased to any other person, business, organization or agency other than to return the Animal to the care of NDR. Further, the Animal cannot be entrusted to anyone not approved by NDR.
19. NDR will be promptly notified of any changes in residence, mailing address, email address or phone numbers of the Foster. The Foster will allow the inspection of the Foster residence and/or the Animal by a representative of NDR when deemed necessary by NDR.
20. The Foster agrees to immediately surrender the Animal to an NDR representative upon demand by NDR.
21. The Foster has NO legal ownership of the Animal, and all legal ownership shall remain with NDR at all times.

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2.0 NDR Agrees that:

1. All fostered Animals require a proper collar and leash. Slip-lead or martingale type collars are preferred. NDR will attempt to provide these items, but in a case where the Foster needs to purchase this type of collar/lead, NDR will reimburse the foster for the full purchase amount.
2. If for ANY reason the Animal must be removed from the Foster, NDR agrees to find alternative placement for the Animal as soon as is reasonably possible. If needed, provided all vaccinations are up to date, the Animal will be placed into a boarding facility.
3. There will be available, by phone or e-mail, an NDR representative or volunteer to assist the Foster home with any training or behavioural issues in regards to the Animal in the care of the Foster.

4. A list of all local NDR resources will be made available to the Foster (i.e.: grooming services, assessment volunteers, etc.). All reasonable efforts will be made by NDR to place an Animal that is compatible with the Foster's home environment.
5. NDR will make appropriate arrangements for potential adopters to visit the Animal in the Foster's care with as little interruption as possible to the Foster's regular schedule.
6. NDR agrees to disclose all known medical, behavioural and any other information relevant to the care and keeping of the Animal to the Foster both before and during placement.
7. Bills incurred by the Animal in the care of the Foster will be paid by NDR as long as they are pre-approved vetting or services required by the Animal. Repayment shall be in the form of E-transfer or cheque from the treasurer and will be repaid no longer than 30 days from the time of bill submission (and will, in most cases, be repaid within 7-10 days).

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3.0 General Foster Care and Procedures

1. Please ensure all tags (rabies, microchip tag or other identification) that come with the Animal (or is given by the vet) is secured to the Animal's collar and worn by the Animal at all times while in the care of the Foster. · Microchips inserted by the vet are to be in the name of the rescue (Niagara Dog Rescue) and NOT the Foster's name. · If the Animal requires medical care, the Foster must advise vetting@niagaradogrescue.org, await approval from NDR, take the Animal to the clinic indicated by NDR, and administer any required treatment.
2. Please remind the receptionist at every vet appointment that NDR needs copies of all lab results (bloodwork, heartworm tests, x-ray copies, etc.) emailed to vetting@niagaradogrescue.org.
3. Please pick up a copy of the invoice for that day's vetting, even if the vet bills NDR directly. · Copies of EVERYTHING must be sent to vetting@niagaradogrescue.org (all grooming, vetting, etc.) so we have a complete file to give to the adopters.
4. Dog should not be introduced to people or other animals for the first couple of weeks.
5. They should provide basic training.
6. Take pictures and update bios to help the dog find a forever home.
7. Facilitate M&Gs
8. According to municipal bylaws, a foster dog is the responsibility of the foster as such, fosters need to ensure there are no incidents with other dogs or people. If there is an incident NDR will only cover the cost of vetting the NDR dog. The rest of the costs incurred will be covered by the foster

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4.0 Acknowledgments

The Foster agrees and acknowledges that the following information was provided by the Foster Co-Ordinator – (Applications) during the interview

1. The Foster is aware and understands the importance of NDR's decompression and crate training terms. (A more detailed description is provided below.)
2. The Foster is aware and understands the importance of proper pet introductions. (A more detailed description provided below)
3. The Foster is aware and understands NDR's no dog park/dog walker rule,
4. The Foster is aware and understands that although we do our best to provide a correct and accurate bio of our rescue dogs, not all behaviors are known at the time of transport.

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The Importance of Decompression When Bringing Home a New Dog

Rescue dogs are often riddled with anxiety because of a traumatic past. Unfortunately, most of these dogs come from high kill shelters and their pasts are unknown so we must assume that they did not have the greatest start to their lives.

Seeing these scared fragile dogs often makes people want to do shower them with all the love they feel they deserve. But what they actually needed in those first few months is space, a simple routine, and time to get to know and trust people on their own terms.

For many new owners and fosters, this approach can seem counter intuitive. After all, there's so much emphasis put on socializing new puppies and rescue dogs. But dog trainers and behaviour consultants, who work with high-risk rescue dogs, believe every new puppy or dog should have ample time to decompress when entering a new home.

Every Dog is an Individual

For fearful dogs or those stressed in the shelter environment, it could take a few weeks or months for them to start feeling comfortable. Robust puppies who are appropriately socialized, might only take a few days. They're all unique, of course, but it's unrealistic to expect any dog to arrive instantly well-adjusted and impeccably behaved.

Set Your Dog up for Success and Take it Slow

It's tempting, especially for children, to try to hug and play with a new dog immediately. But, while owners might have the best intentions, new dogs have no idea where they are, who they're with, or what is happening, and it takes time to build a positive relationship. The more patient an owner or foster is, and the more choice a dog is given over seemingly simple things, the faster trust will build. This includes basic interactions, like petting.

There are caveats, though, when it comes to decompression. For example, puppies have a critical sensitive socialization period from around three to 14 weeks of age. They're like little sponges, and the experiences they have during this time can greatly influence their future behaviour. Gradual introductions to new people and stimuli are still important.

Stick to a Routine

Predictability is reassuring for dogs, particularly if they're nervous or anxious. A routine and quiet atmosphere are essential when first taking a dog home, generally for at least a few weeks. Even well socialized puppies will have gone through a major transition, leaving everything and everyone they've ever known. This period could be even more unsettling for rescue dogs. Some have come from multiple shelters and foster homes, have had long transport rides, and have received necessary, but likely stressful, medical care and behaviour evaluations. This can understandably cause a great deal of stress for even the most well-adjusted dog.

A simple and consistent schedule can help prevent trigger stacking, which is “a harmful accumulation of stress from multiple stimuli that can result in difficulty coping and exaggerated stress responses.” Consider creating a routine for things like feeding times, toilet breaks, naps, training sessions, and playtime.

How to Recognize the Signs of Stress

Understanding the dog’s body language, recognizing signs of stress, and listening to what they’re trying to tell you are all key. You can prevent anxiety-inducing situations and work on building positive associations instead.

Some common signs of stress include excessive panting, pacing, tucking the ears or tail, licking the lips, yawning, freezing, or crouching. Growling is another common sign a dog is feeling uncomfortable or threatened. Owners often panic when this occurs and punish the behaviour. But this should be considered a positive thing because it’s a dog’s way of communicating and trying not to bite. Punishing this behaviour may create a dog that isn’t only more worried about the owner or foster or the trigger that caused them to growl, but one that doesn’t give any warnings prior to biting. Instead, give your dog the space they need and try to establish why they’re growling. Then, when appropriate, you can work on helping them to feel more relaxed.

Offer a Safe Space

Always provide a quiet space your dog can choose to retreat to such as a ‘Zen Zone’, and this place is different for every dog. Some dogs like enclosed spaces and crates, while others might prefer a spot under a table, or in a bedroom. It may take a few weeks for an to determine where the dog is most comfortable.

The golden rule is: “Their safe space should be honoured as a place they can always retreat to when they want to get away from family activity and not be bothered, and this includes petting.

Tips for Building a Strong Bond

As well as ensuring interactions are on the dog’s terms and not forced, there are lots of other simple ways you can help them to feel relaxed around you. Begin with simply spending quiet time in each other’s company. When they’re ready and looking for it, offer them affection, food rewards, and calm play sessions. When it comes to training, start things off indoors and keep sessions short, fun, and, above all, positive. Using food, toys, and praise are great ways to build confidence, maintain motivation, and clearly reward desirable behaviours.

Studies show that environmental enrichment can be an effective stress reliever and confidence booster for dogs. Treat-dispensing toys and nose work activities are often particularly beneficial. Once your dog is comfortable, getting out on slow, sniffy, quiet walks is also often a beneficial decompression tool. You can use a long line attached to a well-fitting harness to allow some freedom to explore in areas where there are no other people or dogs to encounter.

“Giving dogs more choices and a sense of control in their lives is one of the most important things we can do for their well-being, and this is especially true when supporting them through the decompression period.

Fosters Initials _____

DOG INTRODUCTION

Proper introduction between dogs is a VERY important step when fostering, adopting, or even just looking after someone else's pet for a night. It can spell success or failure in introducing a new dog to your home.

1. Find a Neutral Spot to Make Introductions

If possible, find a neutral, outdoor, fully fenced space—an area that neither dog has “claimed” through frequent visits or walks. The space should be quiet with no other dogs or people, like the backyard of a friend who doesn’t have pets or a park during off hours when no one is there.

Unfortunately, this isn't always possible, so the next best option is an outdoor space with enough room for the dogs to roam on-leash as they get to know one another. If outdoor space isn't available, opt for a large garage or basement.

Put away anything that might cause a scuffle—like dog toys, bones, beds, and even empty food bowls. Consider everything, including objects that don't seem to interest your dog. An old bone might suddenly become valuable again if your new dog takes an interest in it.

2. Watch for Positive Dog Body Language

Since the dog introduction process begins with both dogs on-leash, you'll need a partner that understands canine body language to help out.

Watch the dogs for happy, waggy body language and interest in one another without hard stares, tense postures, freezing in place, or a lowered or tucked tail.

Look for signs that one dog is trying to get away, which are often missed or misinterpreted. If your dog runs over to you, don't send them back "into the fire" because this is usually an indication that your dog needs a break from the interaction.

If you're not comfortable with how the dogs are interacting during this first step, or you're unsure of what your dogs' behaviors mean, enlist the help of a trainer during the introduction process.

3. Walk the Dogs Together

After introducing a new dog, the next step is parallel walking with both dogs. They should be far enough apart that they're aware of each other, but not so close that they fixate on trying to reach one another.

Walk both dogs in the same direction with a comfortable buffer of distance between them (this will vary by dog). Then, turn back and trade places with the other dog-human team so that each dog has a chance to scent where the other dog walked.

Allow the dogs to investigate potty spots, since urine-sniffing is one of the ways dogs pick up information about other dogs. Both handlers should remain calm and keep their grip on the leashes as loose as possible.

If both dogs are offering relaxed, social behaviors towards one another, gradually decrease the distance between them while continuing the parallel walking. Don't allow a direct face-to-face approach as the dogs get closer, since head-on is a stressful and unnatural way for dogs to meet.

4. Allow the Dogs to Interact Off-Leash

If you feel comfortable with how the dogs are interacting, return to an enclosed area, drop the leashes, and allow them to interact. Give the dogs a few minutes to sniff one another while praising their calm interactions, and then encourage the dogs to continue moving with you for a final, brief walk together.

At this point, the dogs might continue sniffing to learn more about each other, or they might begin playing. Look for the universal dog invitation to connect: a play bow where dogs put their elbows on the ground and rear end in the air.

As the dogs play, watch for the signs of a respectful interaction: a mutual give-and-take with pauses in the action.

All of this seems small to you, but it can make a huge difference to an animal knowing it can trust another. It will go a long way.

When dealing with aggression these steps can be completed multiple times a day and separated at other times until you have success.

Foster's Initials _____

TIPS FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS...

For an adult dog, the first few weeks in a new home are a critical transition period. How well you manage the dog's behavior during this time will determine whether s/he develops into a well-behaved, loving pet. This information will help you know what to expect from a new dog.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Jumping up (which you can discourage by ignoring the behaviour and making sure you don't reward it)
- Exploratory behaviour, including sniffing, mouthing and chewing new things
- Stealing food
- Accidents in the house (shelter rules differ from the new home's rules, which will take time for the dog to learn)
- Wild running and play in the house (frequently children, and even adults, encourage this behaviour
- the new dog cannot yet distinguish between indoor and outdoor behaviour)

YOUR DOG DURING THE TRANSITION

The first few days are critical for learning rules and breaking bad habits. Dogs are particularly impressionable in a new environment, especially the first time they try a new behavior. Therefore, plan to invest time during this period to socialize, teach and get acquainted with your dog. Plan and prepare for the dog in advance:

- Read about basic training
- Get food, bowls, collar, leash, brush and comb, toys, and dog gate or crate
- Decide where the dog will be confined when you're not home and arrange a bed or crate in that area
- Decide what area outdoors will be the dog's bathroom

Prepare yourself mentally- not all things will go smoothly at first. As soon as you get the new dog home, begin managing his behavior and supervising him closely. Do not give him the run of your house.

The most important thing s/he needs for the first few weeks is STRUCTURE -- enforced rules for living in your house. Freedom comes later as s/he develops the responsibility to handle it. Failure by the owners to teach a dog the house rules is a chief reason for unsuccessful adoptions/fosters.

RULES TO TEACH

House training. Take the dog out on a long leash at two-to-three hour intervals to the area designated as the bathroom. Allow him/her to explore and get used to the area. When s/he poops or pees, praise effusively and then reward him/her with a few minutes of play, sniffing or a walk. The dog should be kept near you in the house so that if s/he begins to potty inside, you can reprimand (say "nah-ah-ah") and take him/her out immediately. Punishing a dog after the fact is ineffective and confusing to the animal.

Jumping up should never be permitted. When dogs jump at you, all they want is your attention and can easily learn they will not get it if/when they are jumping. If your dog jumps up at you, just turn around with your back towards him/her. When s/he stops, turn to face him/her and praise.

Chewing and mouthing is permitted only on dog toys. As you introduce your dog to each area of your house, take him/her there on a long leash. Bring along some toys and chewing items and make them available on the floor. Do not leave electrical wires where the dog might chew on them. Always monitor the dog with a new chew toy and remove immediately if the dog is breaking the toy apart as it could become a choking hazard or cause intestinal blockage.

Stealing food is an important reason not to feed the dog table scraps. It may lead to food stealing and the dog may eat something that is harmful to him/her. Read up on what people-food can safely be given to dogs, and always use their food dish away from the table.

SOME MANAGEMENT RULES THAT OWNERS MUST LEARN

Correct, praise and re-direct. If the dog ignores corrections, work to improve your communication skills. Pay attention and be consistent. Don't send mixed messages. If you correct a behavior sometimes and ignore (or even inadvertently reward) it other times, the dog will be confused and never behave reliably. Keep the rules simple and enforce them, but always remember to praise.

Dogs look for authority in their lives. If none is forthcoming from people, they begin to act as their own bosses and may even try to push around their human companions by growling, snapping, and lunging. Leadership with a dog is a positive relationship, not based on punishment or abuse. If you decide to adopt the dog, shortly there-after, enroll in a positive reinforcement-based obedience class to get expert help in developing leadership and control. This greatly reduces the possibility of problems later.

A new dog should not roam when no one is home. A new dog that is free to wander in the home in the owner's absence is almost certain to get into trouble or practice bad habits. In most cases, the damage is not done out of spite, but because the animal is nervous, stressed, frightened, stimulated to escape, bored or just exploring. Restrict the dog's access when you are out, at least until s/he has comfortably adjusted to your home. To do otherwise jeopardizes your possessions, the dog's safety, and your new relationship.

Never tie or tether a metal training collar (AKA "choke collar," though if it's choking the dog, the handler is using it incorrectly). This can kill your dog and should be used only when leash-walking and only after learning to use it correctly. Incorrect use of a training collar will cause problems rather than cure them. Keep regular leather or nylon collar bearing license and ID tags on the dog.

Dogs have an amazing way of making people happy. You can enjoy all the benefits, with some well-directed efforts, to help the dog adjust to life in your new home.

PLEASE BE PATIENT WITH YOUR RESCUE DOGS, THEY ARE WORTH IT!

Foster Signature: _____ Date: _____

Foster printed name: _____

Foster address: _____

Foster phone number: _____

Foster email: _____