

## Behavior information for Foster Parents

### Feline

#### **Starting Out Right With Your New Foster Cat And The Litterbox**

Most cats have a specific preference about where they want to eliminate. By following the suggestions outlined in this handout, you'll be able to start off on the right foot with your new foster cat or kittens.

#### **Location**

Most people are inclined to place the litterbox in an out-of-the-way spot in order to minimize odor and loose particles of cat litter in the house. Often, the litterbox ends up in the basement, sometimes next to an appliance and/or on a cold cement floor. This type of location can be undesirable from your cat's point of view for several reasons.

If you have a kitten or an older cat, she may not be able to get down a long flight of stairs in time to get to the litterbox. Since she is new to the household, she may not remember where the litterbox is if it's located in an area she seldom frequents. Your cat may be startled while using the litterbox if a furnace, washer or dryer suddenly comes on and that may be the last time she'll risk such a frightening experience! If your cat likes to scratch the surface surrounding her litterbox, she may find a cold cement floor unappealing. Therefore, you may have to compromise. The litterbox should be kept in a location that affords your cat some privacy, but is also conveniently located. If you place the litterbox in a closet or a bathroom, be sure the door is wedged open from both sides, in order to prevent her from being trapped in or out. If the litterbox sits on a smooth, slick or cold surface, put a small throw rug underneath the litterbox.

#### **Type of Litter**

There are many different types of cat litter, DFL uses a mixture of litter that is non-absorbent clay and pine pellets. The pine pellets help reduce dust in the air and absorb odors. If your foster cat does not use the litter provided please contact the foster departments for other options. Once you find a litter your cat likes, don't change types or brands. Changing litter often could result in your foster cat not using the litter box. Many cats are put off by the odor of scented or deodorant litters. For the same reason, it's not a good idea to place a room deodorizer or air freshener near the litterbox. A thin layer of baking soda placed on the bottom of the box will help absorb odors without repelling your cat. Odor shouldn't be a problem if the litterbox is kept clean. If you find the litterbox odor offensive, your cat probably finds it even more offensive and won't want to eliminate there.

### **Number of Litterboxes**

You should have at least as many litter boxes as you have foster adult cats. That way, none of them will ever be prevented from eliminating in the litter box because it's already occupied. You might also consider placing them in several locations around your foster room.

### **Cleaning The Box**

To meet the needs of the most discriminating cat, feces should be scooped out of the litterbox daily. How often you change the litter depends on the number of cats you have, the number of litterboxes, and the type of litter you use. Twice a week is a general guideline for clay litter, but depending on the circumstances, you may need to change it every other day or once a week. If you scoop the litter daily, scoopable litter can go two to three weeks before the litter needs to be changed. If you notice an odor or if much of the litter is wet or clumped, it's time for a change. Don't use strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products when washing the litterbox, as it may cause your cat to avoid it. Washing with soap and water should be sufficient. When you need more litter just call the foster department to let them know.

### **Depth Of Litter**

Some people think that the more litter they put in the box, the less often they will have to clean it. This is not true. Most cats won't use litter that's more than about two inches deep. The litterbox needs to be cleaned on a regular basis and adding extra litter is not a way around that chore.

### **"Litter-Training" Cats**

There's really no such thing as "litter-training" a cat in the same way one would house-train a dog. A cat doesn't need to be taught what to do with a litterbox. The only thing you need to do is provide an acceptable, accessible litterbox, using the suggestions above. It's not necessary to take your cat to the litterbox and move her paws back and forth in the litter, in fact, we don't recommend it. This may actually be an unpleasant experience for your cat and is likely to initiate a negative association with the litterbox.

### **If Problems Develop**

If your cat begins to eliminate in areas other than the litterbox, your first call should always be to the foster coordinators. Many medical conditions can also cause a change in a cat's litterbox habits. The foster coordinators may want to schedule an appointment with a league veterinarian for further diagnostics. If the veterinarian determines that your cat is healthy, the cause may be behavioral. Most litterbox behavior problems can be resolved by using behavior modification techniques. The foster coordinators can put you in touch with the behavior department if necessary.

## **Play With Your Cat**

While foster parents would never consider withholding food or water from their foster cats, many forget to provide adequate exercise and stimulation. Yes, cats do sleep a lot, but play is an important component of any pet's health and well-being. The release of energy triggered by regular daily interactive play sessions can help alleviate stress and prevent behavior problems.

## **Stress Reduction**

The average indoor cat is subject to a variety of stressors, usually the result of perceived or real invasions of her territory. Seeing a roaming cat out the window that she can't chase away, having houseguests, adding a new resident (human or animal) or a trip to the veterinarian can cause your cat anxiety.

One response to stress for many cats is eliminating outside the litter box. Another response may be redirected aggression – where the cat takes out her frustration on another cat, the family dog or you. Over time, stress can cause chronic medical problems. Engaging your foster cat in regular play sessions can help alleviate her stress and help keep her mentally and physically healthy.

## **Preventing Behavior Problems**

Without appropriate outlets for their energy, cats may attack ankles, play too roughly or interrupt their owner's sleep with nocturnal adventures. Several interactive play sessions per day, especially one timed shortly before bedtime, can help reduce or eliminate these behaviors.

## **Structured Play Sessions**

### *Simulating the hunt*

Create your play sessions to mimic the cat's natural hunting behavior.

Remember, cats are natural hunters, and we originally domesticated them to rid our homes and barns of rodents and other vermin. Choose a fishing-pole toy – one that imitates the noise of flapping bird wings is irresistible to most cats. Make the toy soar around the room, engaging your cat's attention. Or simulate mouse activity by sliding the end of the toy around on the floor in quick, jerky movements. Allow the cat to pounce and catch the toy and bat it around, then start again. End the play session by allowing the cat to capture the toy. (Avoid laser lights since it is important for the cat to enjoy the satisfaction of catching the toy or prey.)

### *After the play session*

Sessions should be long enough for the cat to get tired – probably 15 - 20 minutes depending on the age and activity level of the cat. About five minutes after the end of the session, feed your cat some canned cat food. This mimics what would happen at the end of a real hunt – the cat would eat her catch. Don't be surprised if your cat takes a long nap after a play session.

## **Managing Your Foster Kitten's Rough Play**

Play-motivated aggressive behaviors are common in young, active cats less than two years of age. When cats play they incorporate a variety of behaviors into their play, such as exploratory, investigative and predatory behaviors. Play provides young cats with opportunities to practice skills they would normally need for survival. Kittens like to explore new areas and investigate anything that moves, and may bat at, pounce on and bite objects that resemble prey. Kittens learn how to inhibit their bite from their littermates and their mother. A kitten that is separated from her family too early may play more roughly than a kitten that has had more valuable family time. In addition, if humans play with a young kitten using their hands and/or feet instead of toys, the kitten is liable to learn that rough play with people is okay. In most cases, it's possible to teach your kitten or young adult cat that rough play isn't acceptable behavior. If your foster kitten is playing rough please contact the foster coordinators for more help.

## **Encourage Acceptable Behavior**

Redirect your kitten's aggressive behavior onto acceptable objects like toys. Drag a toy along the floor to encourage your kitten to pounce on it, or throw a toy away from your kitten to give her even more exercise chasing the toy down. Some kittens will even bring the toy back to be thrown again! Another good toy is one that your kitten can wrestle with, like a soft stuffed toy that's about the size of your kitten, so she can grab it with both front feet, bite it, and kick it with her back feet. This is one of the ways kittens play with each other, especially when they're young. It's also one of the ways they try to play with human feet and hands, so it's important to provide this type of alternative play target. Encourage play with a "wrestling toy" by rubbing it against your kitten's belly when she wants to play roughly - be sure to get your hand out of the way as soon as she accepts the toy. Since kittens need a lot of playtime, try to set up three or four consistent times during the day to initiate play with your kitten. This will help her understand that *she* doesn't have to be the one to initiate play by pouncing on you.

## **Discourage Unacceptable Behavior**

You need to set the rules for your kitten's behavior, and every person your cat comes in contact with should reinforce these rules.

**Redirect the behavior-** offer your foster kitten a toy to wrestle with or to chase. This will encourage it to direct rough play onto a toy instead of a person. We recommend that you keep a stash of toys hidden in your foster room specifically for this purpose.

**Withdraw attention when your kitten starts to play too roughly.** If the redirection techniques don't seem to be working, the most drastic thing you can do to discourage your cat from her rough play is to withdraw all attention when she

starts playing too roughly. She wants to play with you, so eventually she'll figure out how far she can go if you keep this limit consistent. The best way to withdraw your attention is to walk away to another room, and close the door long enough for her to calm down

**Please Note: None of these methods will be very effective unless you also give your kitten acceptable outlets for her energy, by playing with her regularly and using appropriate toys.**

### **What Not To Do**

- Attempts to tap, flick or hit your kitten for rough play are almost guaranteed to backfire. Your kitten could become afraid of your hands, or she could interpret those flicks as playful moves by you and play even more roughly as a result.
- Picking up your kitten to put her into a "timeout" could reinforce her behavior because she probably enjoys the physical contact of being picked up. By the time you get her to the timeout room and close the door, she has probably already forgotten what she did to be put in that situation.

**Aggression:** Kittens can bite or scratch through the skin. If you foster kitten bites or scratches please contact the foster coordinators, they can put you in touch with the behavior department for more direction on how to work with this behavior in your home. If you are bitten or scratched by you kitten be sure to thoroughly clean all bites and scratches and consult your physician, as cat scratches and bites can easily become infected

## **Canine**

### **Crate Training Your Foster Dog**

Crate training your foster dog may take some time and effort, but can be useful in a variety of situations. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his access to the house until he learns all the house rules, such as what he can and can't chew and where he can and can't eliminate. A crate is also a safe way of transporting your dog in the car, as well as a way of taking him places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he will think of it as his safe place and will be happy to spend time there when needed. Always provide water for your dog anytime he is in the crate. Spill proof bowls or bowls that attach to the kennel gate work best. If you need a crate please contact the foster department, they can find you the perfect sized crate for you foster dog or puppy.

### **The Crate Training Process**

Crate training can take days or weeks, depending on your dog's age, temperament and past experiences. It's important to keep two things in mind while crate training; one, the crate should always be associated with something pleasant; and two, training should take place in a series of small steps – don't go too fast.

### **Step 1: Introducing Your Foster Dog To The Crate**

- Put the crate in your designated foster area of your house. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Bring your dog over to the crate and talk to him in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is securely fastened open so it won't hit your dog and frighten him.
- To encourage your dog to enter the crate, drop small food treats near it, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If he refuses to go all the way in at first, that's okay – don't force him to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If he isn't interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days.

### **Step 2: Feeding Your Foster Dog His Meals In The Crate**

- After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him his regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your dog is readily entering the crate when you begin Step 2, put the food dish all the way at the back of the crate. If your dog is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as he will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed him, place the dish a little further back in the crate.
- Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat his meal, you can close the door while he's eating. At first, open the door as soon as he finishes his meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he's staying in the crate for 10 minutes or so after eating. If he begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Next time, try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period. If he does whine or cry in the crate, it's imperative that you not let him out until he stops. Otherwise, he'll learn that the way to get out of the crate is to whine and he'll keep doing it.

### **Step 3: Conditioning Your Foster Dog To The Crate For Longer Time Periods**

- After your dog is eating his regular meals in the crate with no sign of fear or anxiety, you can confine him there for short time periods while you're home. Call him over to the crate and give him a treat. Give him a command to enter, such as, "kennel up." Encourage him by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand. After your dog enters the crate, praise him, give him the treat and close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for five to 10 minutes and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, then let him out of the crate.

- Repeat this process several times a day. With each repetition, gradually increase the length of time you leave him in the crate and the length of time you're out of his sight. Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes with you out of sight the majority of the time, you can begin leaving him crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or letting him sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.

#### **Step 4:**

##### **Part A – Crating Your Foster Dog When Left Alone**

After your dog is spending about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you can begin leaving him crated for short periods when you leave the house. Put him in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave him with a few safe toys in the crate. You'll want to vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. Although he shouldn't be crated for a long time before you leave, you can crate him anywhere from five to 20 minutes prior to leaving. Don't make your departures emotional and prolonged, but matter-of-fact. Praise your dog briefly, give him a treat for entering the crate and then leave quietly. When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior by responding to him in an excited, enthusiastic way. Keep arrivals low key. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't associate crating with being left alone.

##### **Part B – Crating Your Foster Dog At Night**

Put your dog in the crate using your regular command and a treat. Puppies often need to go outside to eliminate during the night, and you'll want to listen for your puppy when he whines to be let outside. Remember that at first the dog may whine to get out but it's important to keep him in the crate until he calms down. Only let him out when he is calm or needs to go to the bathroom.

#### **Potential Problems**

##### **Too Much Time In The Crate**

A crate isn't a magical solution. If not used correctly, a dog can feel trapped and frustrated. For example, if your dog is crated all day while you're at work and then crated again all night, he's spending too much time in too small a space. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate his physical and emotional needs. Also, remember that puppies under 6 months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

##### **Whining**

If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether he's whining to be let out of the crate, or whether he needs to be let outside to eliminate. If you followed the training procedures outlined above, your dog hasn't been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from his crate. Try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you,

he'll probably stop whining soon. Yelling at him or pounding on the crate will only make things worse. If the whining continues after you've ignored him for several minutes, use the phrase he associates with going outside to eliminate. If he responds and becomes excited, take him outside. This should be a trip with a purpose, not play time. If you're convinced that your dog doesn't need to eliminate, the best response is to ignore him until he stops whining. Do not give in, otherwise you'll teach your dog to whine loud and long to get what he wants. If you've progressed gradually through the training steps and haven't done too much too fast, you will be less likely to encounter this problem. If the problem becomes unmanageable, you may need to start the crate training process over again.

### **Separation Anxiety**

Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety will not solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but he may injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate. If you believe your foster dog is showing signs of separation anxiety please call the foster coordinators for help with this issue.

### **Dog Toys and How to Use Them**

Many behavior problems in dogs are the result of boredom or excess energy. Toys offer mental and physical stimulation and enrichment. Directing your dog's energy into play with toys can prevent or help resolve such problems as digging and chewing on furniture, shoes or shrubbery. If you need dog toys please contact the foster coordinators.

### **Toys We Recommend**

**Interactive Toys:** These are toys that require your participation:

► Fetch toys – many dogs enjoy chasing balls and Frisbees®. Oddly shaped rubber toys (such as Kongs®) bounce erratically and make the game more fun. Flying disks come in many shapes and sizes, including soft versions that are easier on the dog's mouth. And devices for throwing the ball increase the distance the dog must run to get the toy.

► Rope toys, such as Tire Biter® toys, are good for tugging. See note below on playing tug-of-war with your dog.

**Distraction Toys:** These are toys that keep your dog busy when you don't have the time to play:

► *Food Delivery Toys:* Designed to be used with kibble or small treats, the dog must manipulate the toy with his mouth and/or paws to get the food to fall out. Some examples are: Buster Cube®, TreatStik®, Tug-a-Jug®, Kibble Nibble® and Everlasting Fun Ball®. \

► *Chew Toys:*



Hard rubber toys that are hollow with holes at both ends, such as Kongs, are good chew toys. To make these toys more attractive, they can be filled with kibble or treats. You can also encourage chewing by putting a small amount of peanut butter or cream cheese inside the toy.

Dental chew toys are hard toys that the dog can gnaw on and safely ingest small particles. Examples include: Greenies®, bullie sticks, and Petrodex® dental chews. You should watch your dog to make sure he does not break off and ingest large pieces of these toys.

Chew challenge toys are toys that make an edible chewy more challenging for the dog to consume. Examples include Funny Bones®, the Kong Goodie Bone®, and the Everlasting Treat Ball®.

#### ► *Puzzle Toys:*

Food puzzle toys require the dog to solve a puzzle in order to get treats. Examples are the Nina Ottoson® line of dog toys including the Dog Spinny® and the Dog Brick®.

Toy puzzle toys require the dog to solve a puzzle to get to a toy. Examples are the Kygen® line of toys, including the IQube®, Intellibone®, and Hide-a-Bee®.

#### **Comfort Toys:**

Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes but are not appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs that want to shake or “kill” the toy, it should be the size that “prey” would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size or duck-size).

Dirty laundry, like an old T-shirt, pillowcase, towel or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if it smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying and nosing.

#### **Getting The Most Out Of Toys**

Provide toys that offer a variety of uses - at least one toy to carry, one to “kill,” one to roll and one to “baby.”

“Hide and Seek” is a fun game for dogs to play. “Found” toys are often much more attractive. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good rainy-day activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space. For example, scattering a handful of kibble in the grass or on a patterned carpet will require your dog to use his nose to find the food.

Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active "people time." By focusing on a specific task, like repeatedly returning a ball, Kong or Frisbee, or playing "hide-and-seek" with treats or toys, your dog can expend pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation and/or boredom. For young, high-energy and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, such as jumping up or being mouthy.

### **Tug of War**

Tug of war has long been thought to be an absolute "don't" in many dog-owning households. However, by taking a few precautions and setting some basic rules it can be a fun game for you and your dog.

Choose a toy that will be reserved exclusively for this particular activity. This will help prevent your dog from grabbing and tugging anything you have in your hand.

Teach two commands:

- o "Let's tug" begins the game. Never allow the dog to initiate tug on his own and always use your starting phrase when you begin the game.
- o "Give" or "Out" ends the game. Teach your dog to release the toy by offering a treat or better toy in exchange. Do not start playing tug with your dog until he is consistently releasing the toy on command.

### **Safety**

There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy. Many of those factors are dependent upon your dog's size, activity level and play style. Although we cannot guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines:

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's current size. Balls and other toys that are too small can be easily swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that are not "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed off and ingested.

Monitor your dog's toys and discard any toy that starts to break into pieces or has pieces torn off.

Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a “squeaker” buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the squeak source and could ingest it, in which case squeaking toys should be given only under supervision.

Know your dogs chewing habits before leaving him alone with any toy. For example, some dogs will carry a plush toy around for years. Others will enjoy “disemboweling” the toy by pulling all the stuffing out. Still others will chew it apart and ingest the pieces, creating a safety hazard for that dog.

### **Children And Dogs: Important Information For Foster Parents**

Living with a dog can be beneficial to children. Dogs can enhance children’s self-esteem, teach them responsibility and help them to learn empathy.

However, children and dogs may not always automatically start off with a wonderful relationship. Parents must be willing to teach the dog and the child acceptable limits of behavior in order to make their interactions pleasant and safe. If you have children and are interested in fostering adult dogs or puppies the foster coordinators will work with you to find the right fit for your family.

- **Time and energy:** Puppies require a lot of time, patience, training and supervision. They also require socialization in order to become well-adjusted adult dogs. This means they need to be exposed to new things and new people. If you have a young child who already requires a lot of care and time, you should ask yourself if you will you have enough time to care for a puppy as well. Adult dogs require less time and attention once they’ve adjusted to your family and household routine, although you’ll still need to spend time helping your foster dog with the transition to his new home.

- **Safety:** Children should never be left alone with a dog or puppy without adult supervision.

Puppies, because they’re babies, are fragile creatures. A puppy may become frightened, or even injured, by a well-meaning, curious child who wants to constantly pick him up, hug him or explore his body by pulling on his tail or ears.

- **Rough play:** Puppies have sharp teeth and claws with which they may inadvertently injure a small child. Puppies and some adult dogs also tend to jump up on small children and knock them down. All interactions between your child and foster dog will need to be closely supervised in order to minimize the chances of injuries.

**Giving Treats:** Children tend to become somewhat fearful and anxious when a dog tries to take a treat from their hand. This causes them to jerk their hand away at the last second. The dog may then jump up or lunge to get the treat, which may result in the child being knocked down. Have your child place the

treat in an open palm, rather than holding it in his fingers. You may want to place a hand underneath your child's hand to help guide him.

**Supervising Play:** Children run with quick, jerky movements and have high-pitched voices. These actions are highly stimulating to a dog. Consequently, your dog may respond by chasing or jumping up on your child. Encourage your child to play quietly around the new dog until both become more comfortable with each other.

**If your dog is growling or snapping at your child for any reason the foster coordinators should be contacted immediately. Punishing your foster dog is likely to make matters worse. The Dumb Friends League only uses positive reinforcement training techniques, please contact the foster coordinator with any questions.**

## **Positive Reinforcement:**

### **Training Your Foster Dog or Cat with Treats and Praise**

Positive reinforcement is the presentation of something pleasant or rewarding immediately following a behavior. It makes that behavior more likely to occur in the future, and is one of the most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet's behavior. Correct timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately, or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if you have your dog "sit," but reward him after he's already stood up again, he'll think he's being rewarded for standing up. Consistency is also essential. Everyone in the family should use the same commands. It might be helpful to post these where everyone can become familiar with them. The most commonly used commands for dogs are "watch me," "sit," "stay," "down" (means lie down), "off" (means off of me or off the furniture), "stand," "come," "heel," (or "let's go" or "with me") "leave it" and "settle." Consistency means always rewarding the desired behavior and never rewarding undesired behavior. For your pet, positive reinforcement may include food treats, praise, petting or a favorite toy or game. Food treats work especially well for training your dog. A treat should be enticing and irresistible to your pet. It should be a very small, soft, piece of food, so that he will immediately gulp it down and look to you for more. If you give him something he has to chew or that breaks into bits and falls on the floor, he'll be looking around the floor, not at you. Small pieces of soft commercial treats, hot dogs, cheese, cooked chicken or beef, or miniature marshmallows have all proven successful. Experiment a bit to see what works best for your pet. You may carry the treats in a pocket or a fanny pack on the front of your belt. There are even special treat packs available in many pet stores. Each time you use a food reward, you should couple it with a verbal reward (praise). Say something like, "Good boy" in a positive, happy tone of voice.

**Note:** Some pets may not be interested in food treats. For those pets, the reward could be in the form of a toy or brief play.

When your pet is learning a new behavior, he should be rewarded every time he does the behavior (continuous reinforcement). It may be necessary to use "shaping," with

your pet (reinforcing something close to the desired response and gradually requiring more from your dog before he gets the treat). For example, if you're teaching your dog to "shake hands," you may initially reward him for lifting his paw off the ground, then for lifting it higher, then for touching your hand, then for letting you hold his paw and finally, for actually shaking hands with you. Intermittent reinforcement can be used once your pet has reliably learned the behavior. At first, you may reward him with the treat three times out of four, then about half the time, then about a third of the time and so forth, until you're only rewarding him occasionally with the treat. Continue to praise him every time, although once he's learned the behavior, the praise can be less effusive - a quiet, but positive, "Good boy." Use a variable schedule of reinforcement, so he doesn't catch on that he only has to respond every other time. Your pet will learn that if he keeps responding, eventually he'll get what he wants. If you have a dog who barks until you reward him by paying attention to him, you've seen the power of intermittent reinforcement. By understanding reinforcement, you can see that you're not forever bound to carry a pocketful of goodies. Your pet will soon be working for your verbal praise, because he really does want to please you and he knows that occasionally, he'll get a treat, too! There are many small opportunities to reinforce his behavior. You may have him "sit" before letting him out the door (helps prevent door-darting), before petting him (helps prevent jumping up on people) or before giving him his food. Give him a pat or a "Good dog" for lying quietly by your feet or slip a treat into his Kong toy when he's chewing it, instead of your shoe. Punishment, including verbal, postural and physical, is the presentation of something unpleasant immediately following a behavior, which makes it less likely that the behavior will occur again. To be effective, punishment must be delivered while your pet is engaged in the undesirable behavior, in other words, "caught in the act." If the punishment is delivered too late, your pet will feel "ambushed." From his point of view, the punishment is totally unpredictable, and he's likely to become fearful, distrusting and/or aggressive. This will only lead to more behavior problems. What we humans interpret as "guilty" looks, are actually submissive postures by our pets. Animals don't have a moral sense of right and wrong, but they are adept at associating your presence and the presence of a mess, with punishment. If you've tried punishment and it hasn't worked, you should definitely stop using punishment and use positive reinforcement instead. Physical punishment usually involves some level of discomfort or even pain, which is likely to cause your pet to bite, as that is the only way he knows to defend himself. Scruff shakes and "alpha rolls" are likely to result in bites, especially if the dog doesn't perceive you to be his superior. Also, punishment might be associated with other stimuli, including people, which are present at the time the punishment occurs. For example, a pet that's punished for getting too close to a small child may become fearful of or aggressive to that child.

## ***The adoption process***

When your foster animal(s) is ready to return, you may either schedule an appointment for its spay/neuter surgery or for its permanent return.

Please bring the animal(s) to the foster department office and fill out a questionnaire about the animal's health and behavior while in your home. This important information will help in matching the animal with the right person. Also, if you have a good close-up photo of the animal (no people), please share it with us for our Web site and the pet biography card on the front of the adoption kennel.

If you have found a potential adopter for your foster animal, please notify the foster department immediately. We will set an adoption appointment with our customer care staff. Provide the animal's ID number (A#) when you call. Note: the foster animal cannot go to the potential adopter's home until the adoption has been finalized.

***Thank you for providing loving care to a foster animal.***