

Decompression & Dogs

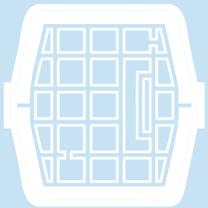
Thank you for taking your first SCCR foster dog!

Please read through the decompression information provided below to help set your foster dog, your family, and any resident pets up for success in your home.



Set up a Safe Space

Create a quiet place where your foster dog can go to relax and feel safe, and where any other dogs (and children) do not have access. This is where you will put the dog's crate, bedding, food, and water. You can use a separate room or baby gates to create this space. Please keep your foster dog & resident dogs separated for a few days; this gives them a chance to get used to each other.



Crate Training

Feed your dog in the crate to create a positive association. You can also toss high-value treats like cut-up hot dogs, cheese, or chicken into the crate to teach the dog that good things happen when they are in the crate (it's raining yummy treats). Crate for short periods of time, and gradually increase the amount of time the dog is crated. You can cover all sides of the crate (except the door) with a blanket, and play soft music to create a soothing environment. Ideally, let the dog out of the crate when they are calm and quiet.



Introducing Resident Dog(s)

Keep all dogs on leash & allow them to meet through baby gates first. Toss both dogs high-value treats. Only once the dogs seem relaxed with each other, should you allow them to meet without the gate. Relaxed body language includes a soft body, loose tail, no showing teeth or pulling lips back, ears not pulled back against the head. Avoid face-to-face greetings. Leash up both dogs, with one person handling each dog, and allow controlled butt sniffing and parallel walking. Try to keep the leashes loose. Tense leashes can cause added stress for the dogs.



If You Have Multiple Dogs in Your Home

Feed all dogs separately (ideally in crates). Do not leave bones or toys laying around to prevent resource guarding. Supervise dogs at all times, even if they appear to get along. Continue to pay equal attention to the resident dog(s) and the foster dog. You can keep leashes on the dogs at all times in case you need to quickly separate them.



Introducing Children

Keep the dog leashed & allow the dog to approach the child at its own pace. If the dog approaches the child, you can give high-value treats and praise. Keep interactions short & positive. Remind your child to avoid wild sudden movements and loud sounds. DO NOT allow your child to hug or squeeze the dog. Teach children how to gently touch & pet dogs beforehand (from chin to chest, 2-3 times, while the dog gets high-value treats from you, never petting the top of the head or looming over the dog). Teach children not to interrupt dogs who are eating or sleeping, and not to take things away from a dog. Never allow children to enter a dog's safe space (see above). Do not leave children and dogs together unsupervised; watch the dog's body language carefully. Children are not permitted to walk the dog or hold the leash outside of the home, unless they are an SCCR volunteer who has gone through orientation.



Do's & Don'ts for Going Outdoors

- Do use a Freedom harness or Martingale collar (city fosters only), especially if your foster dog is new to on-leash walking.
- Do expose dogs to new environments slowly. Pay attention to their body language, as many of these dogs have never experienced elevators, stairways, sidewalks, busy intersections, or trains.
 - Do give many high-value treats at these times to create a positive association.
- Do use a soft white noise machine to block outside sounds if you live in a loud neighborhood or apartment complex.
- Do not take your foster dog to dog parks or public restaurants/bars.



Common Problems in the First Week

- The dog cries when in the crate or left alone.
- The dog begins showing signs of separation anxiety.
- The dog has accidents inside.
- The dog growls or shows signs of resource guarding.
- The dog is shut down, does not want to eat or go outside, does not seek attention.

The first week can be the most difficult. Please have patience, take things slow, and give your foster dog a chance to decompress, you will see them thrive.

Should you have any problems that your foster buddy cannot help with, please email the Foster & Adopter Support Team at training@sccrescue.org. We are here to help and will respond within 24 hours.

Thank you again for fostering for SCCR—you are amazing!



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