



# Weekenders Foster Program: Guide Book



## Weekend Foster Care

Weekend foster care is a good way to get to know shelter dogs better, reduce kennel stress, and help dogs find a home.

This manual is designed to give you the resources you need to have a successful weekend with your new house guest. You will be provided with a dog and the supplies you need, all you need to do is provide the place to eat and sleep and provide the dog with both exercise and fun opportunities as well as time to relax away from the shelter.

Please read carefully and if you have any questions, please email Kate and [foster@madacc.org](mailto:foster@madacc.org).

## How to be a Great Host Family!

- ✓ Ability to keep in-house animals separate from Weekender
- ✓ Ability to spend the entire weekend hanging out with the dog
- ✓ Ability to take photos and video
- ✓ Ability to understand animal behavior and not push the animal too much, understand animal body language, and allow the dog to decompress and enjoy the experience
- ✓ Ability to deal with an animal that is adjusting
- ✓ Ability to take the dog with them different places for sunshine, exercise and exposure to potential adopters
- ✓ Fill out online survey before returning the dog to give us information and ask about their experience
- ✓ Fill out Itinerary/report for the animal to talk about the behavior and personality

## Contact Names and Numbers

Animals can be brought back early for any reason; however, you will not be allowed to foster again unless the situation was severe and unable to be safely managed.

In the event of an emergency, please feel free to call. During normal business hours please call MADACC's main number (414-649-8640) and ask for Shelter Outcomes Coordinator. Saturday and Sunday please ask for that Manager on Duty.

If there is an emergency that is too much for you to manage overnight you can call MADACC's emergency number (see chart below). There are only three situations in which the emergency number should be called.

1. Aggressive behavior where the dog cannot be safely crated overnight.
2. Severe separation anxiety that prevents a dog from being safely crated or allows dog to be destructive
3. Medical condition that develops post-surgery, or injury/illness that needs medical attention.

We encourage you to wait for the next morning for non-severe situations that can be addressed without putting humans or animals at risk.

Time Frame	Contact Person	Contact Number
Monday - Friday from 8am - 5pm	Shelter Outcomes Coordinator	414-649-8640
Monday - Friday from 5pm - 8pm	MADACC Front Office Staff (will direct call to proper person)	414-649-8640
Monday - Friday from 8pm - 9:30pm	After Hours Vet Tech	414-510-2588
Monday - Friday from 10pm - 8am	MADACC On Call Animal Control Officer	414-510-9865
Saturday – Sunday from 8am – 5 pm	Manager on Duty	414-649-8640
Saturday - Sunday from 5pm - 8am	MADACC On Call Animal Control Officer	414-510-9865

## How the Weekenders Program Works

1. Get pre-approved – you can choose any weekend you would like, more than one or only one
2. Make your reservation on Thursday night by 8pm.
3. Pick up dog and supplies (folding metal crate, food, dishes, any medications, collar and leash fitted ahead of time, Generic ID Tag saying return the dog to MADACC if found) Friday between the hours of 4pm – 7pm
4. Leave deposit for supplies via credit card
5. Sign waiver for the dog you are taking. A new waiver must be completed each stay over.
6. Receive weekend agenda, information packet, and emergency contacts
7. Take a minimum of 5 photos and one 30 – 90 second video of the dog doing fun or relaxing things!
8. Return dog and supplies on Sunday between the hours of 8am – 10am or 3pm – 4pm. Special times can be accommodated if arranged in advance.
9. Get refund for deposit at time of return.
10. If adoption is the outcome, apply deposit to adoption fee. Supplies can be purchased for \$175.
11. Host family should email the video and photos to [foster@madacc.org](mailto:foster@madacc.org).
12. Journal should be completed with comments on the dog's strengths and weaknesses before or shortly after the dog is dropped off.
13. Itinerary/Report with behavior and personality notes should be returned with dog.

## Items Provided

MADACC will supply you with any and everything you need to care for your foster pet. You are also welcome and encouraged to supply what you can. The following is a list of supplies are provided for the care of your foster animal. Please ask if there is anything that you need.

- ✓ Large folding metal crate
- ✓ Food/water bowls
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Treats/Treat pouch
- ✓ Leash/Collar (collar will come back to us)
- ✓ Harness
- ✓ Kong
- ✓ Any medications
- ✓ Adopt Me Vest
- ✓ Weekender Bag

## Preparing Your Home for Your Weekend Guest

Animals can and will do the most unlikely things, so it is important to prepare your home before you bring a foster pet in. Also, make sure your resident animal's vaccinations and monthly preventatives are up to date!

### **Dog Proofing**

To keep both the foster and your belongings safe, it is always best to do some quick dog proofing of your home before bringing in a new dog. Follow these tips to help get the job done! Walk into the room that you plan to use to house your foster dog, and ask yourself:

1. Is there room for the crate (dog's safe place)? A crate is not a place of punishment, but rather a safe haven for your guest. Be sure to put it in a quiet, low traffic part of the room. Put a bed or blankets in the crate so it's a comfortable place for your guest to rest.
2. Is there quick access to the outside for bathroom breaks?
3. Is there anything that can be chewed, such as drapes, couch, rugs, shoes, etc.? If there is anything of value within reach of the pup, move it. Chances are that will be the first thing that they chew on.
4. Are there any exposed electrical wires? Use zip ties or duct tape to make them inaccessible for chewing.
5. Are there coffee tables with objects that can be knocked off by a wagging tail? Removing knick-knacks and "nice things" from the room is always a good plan.
6. Are there plants in the room? Plants should be kept out of reach. Even plants that are non-toxic can make your dog vomit after eating them.
7. How will I clean the floors? Carpets are hard to keep clean with children or messy animals, an ideal space should have hard wood, laminate, tile or concrete flooring. Putting a tarp down is always recommended, regardless of what type of floors you have.
8. Can they get into the cabinets or closets? We keep many poisonous and dangerous items under the sink and valuable items in closets. Out of sight, out of mind does not apply to animals! If there is a way in, they will find it.

## While They Are with You: Expectations and Care

Show the dog where it is acceptable to go potty. If it does use the proper area for going potty be sure to reward heavily. This will help teach the dog what your routine is.

Use a baby gate or close doors to block off the entrances to other rooms. By keeping the dog in one room, you're helping prevent "accidents" that may occur because of stress or adjusting to your routine. Use a crate in this room for times when you are away from the house.

When you first arrive home with your foster dog or puppy, confine them to a single room such as a kitchen or family room where you spend a large part of your day, as dogs need to spend as much time as possible with you.

Show your foster dog where their food and water will be located. They need their own dishes, away from your pets' so that there is no concern over resource protection from any of the animals. Also, show them what toys they can play with, so they will at least have an idea of what is acceptable to chew on.

Be sure to be consistent with training and expectations of behavior. It does not help a dog if you let them jump all over you for attention on the first day because you just want him to feel loved and then later refuse attention for such behavior. Teaching manners properly though positive reinforcement does not make a dog feel unwanted or unloved.

## **For the Safety and Well-Being of Your Weekend Guest**

1. Place your foster dog indoors in a crate or other secure location when you are not with them.
2. Spend as much time as possible with your foster dog.
3. Place your foster dog in a room where the temperature is comfortable, and the area is dry.
4. Keep your foster dog on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in your secured, fenced yard. Do not ever leave a foster animal unattended in your yard, even if it is securely fenced.
5. Keep foster dogs away from strange dogs and your own pets.
6. Off leash parks can be dangerous for dogs, particularly those recovering from surgery or illness or under socialized pets. These parks are not a suitable place for outings with your foster animal.

## How to I feed my Guest?

Is common to want to spoil your house guest. Remember that changing a diet significantly can cause unpleasant results of stomach upset and diarrhea.

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster pet. Feed at the same time every day. Create a separate space for your foster animal to eat so that they will feel comfortable. If you have other pets at home, feed your foster pets in a separate room and close the door - this will help prevent any arguments or worries over food. Do not feed any "people food." You do not know what the adoptive family will want to do, so don't start a habit that they will have to change. By feeding only dog food, you are discouraging begging.

It is not uncommon for animals to be finicky eaters when they are in a new environment. If they do not eat heartily for the first day or so and are otherwise acting healthy, do not fret! Feel free to contact the Foster Coordinator if you are concerned. Sometimes adding water or chicken broth to the food will make it more palatable. Avoid adding too many goodies to their food as we don't want them getting into any habits that will be hard to change later. (You can pamper them, just don't spoil them rotten!)

### **Amount of Food**

Feeding will depend on the age and size of your foster dog and the veterinarian's advice. All adult dogs should be fed twice a day, in the morning and evening, according to measurements below. Dogs should receive the amount of dry food, according to their weight, listed below, mixed with a little canned food and water. Canned food should not exceed 1/3 of dry food. In general feeding will be as follows:

### **Adult Dogs (twice a day)**

<b>Weight of Dog</b>	<b>Amount of Dry Food</b>
<b>5 lbs</b>	<b>¼ cup</b>
<b>10 lbs</b>	<b>½ cup</b>
<b>20 lbs</b>	<b>¾- 1 cup</b>
<b>40 lbs</b>	<b>1 ½ cups</b>
<b>60 lbs</b>	<b>2 cups</b>
<b>80 lbs</b>	<b>2 ½ cups</b>
<b>100 lbs</b>	<b>3 cups</b>

## What if I want to adopt?

1. If you want to keep the animal, you will have to come in Sunday and sign adoption paperwork and either return the supplies, or purchase them. Prior to adoption you will need an approved application if one is not on file.
2. Your deposit can then be put toward the purchase of the supplies or the adoption fee.
3. Hosts pay the regular adoption fee for the animal if you choose to adopt.
4. OR, if you find an adopter for the animal, that person may come in with you to fill out an application and then do adoption paperwork.

## What if I want to see if my guest gets along with my pets?

Keep in mind that due to the medical condition of the foster dog, it is necessary to keep them separate from your own animals. If you have decided to adopt, we understand that you would like to see if they get along with your pets.

1. Give them time to adjust to their new surroundings. **Do not do introductions until Sunday.**
2. Do not force foster and family pets to interact. If they choose to avoid each other, allow it.
3. Introduce animals in a large area (outside) so they do not feel cramped. This is also makes it easier to separate them, if necessary.
4. If possible, a neutral territory is always the best place for new introductions of animals.
5. Ask an adult friend or family member to help out. One person for each animal is a better ratio.
6. Give your own pets LOTS of love and praise.
7. Behave normally. Letting the animals know that you are fine; they are fine; everything is fine.
8. Give your foster pet a chance to adjust and begin to build confidence by making your home a sanctuary for them.
9. If there are multiple dogs in the house, introductions should be made one-on-one.
10. Remain alert and make the introductions gradually and calmly.
11. Leave leashes on the dogs initially (for up to one week) so that you can maintain control.
12. Go slowly with your foster pet as they may have been through a stressful surgery or a lot of recent changes.
13. It is best to wait 5 days after surgery to introduce foster pets to your pets.
14. Hold the leash loosely as you would normally; holding the leash too tensely during introductions can cause dogs to react with defensiveness.



## Positive Potty Training

Be patient with your foster animal. Even housetrained adult animals will make mistakes. Be sure to take it out every 15 minutes when it first gets home and reward for good potty habits so that it can learn your routine and what is acceptable. You can make trips out less frequent as the pet continues to do the right thing but be careful of making too large of leaps in time. Set your foster pet up for success so you both can be happier!

If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some animals may “mark” out their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately by bringing the dog outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer on the areas where the foster dog “marked” to increase the odds that he will not smell that area again.

**Never put the dog’s face in his mess, or yell at him after the fact. He won’t understand you, and you will be teaching him to fear you.**

## Time to Take a Bath?

MADACC will make every effort to bath your foster dog before he or she goes to your home. Because they have been spayed or neutered recently you are not able to give them a bath. Pet stores sell wipes that may help deodorize a stinky house guest. Remember to keep the incision clean and dry. No swimming for the weekend.

## Health Care and Medical Issues

Even if your foster animals appear healthy when you pick them up from the animal shelter, they may be incubating an illness. It is very important that your companion animals be current on all vaccines for their own protection and well-being. You may wish to discuss the fact that you are fostering with your veterinarian. Due to the increased chance of exposure, your veterinarian might recommend vaccines that are not routinely given.

### **Common Illnesses and Medical Conditions**

1. URI- Upper Respiratory Infection can infect dogs and cats. It is called Bordatella, or Kennel Cough in dogs. Cats cannot give URI to dogs, nor can dogs give it to cats, but it can be spread within the same species. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature.
2. Diarrhea- Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused

by overfeeding. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, please let the staff know on his or her return.

3. Dehydration- Animals with diarrhea can quickly become dehydrated. To check for dehydration, pull up gently on the skin at the scruff of the neck. If it bounces back quickly when you let go, hydration is fine. If it does not go back or goes back slowly, your foster animal is dehydrated and needs medical attention quickly.
4. Fleas- Fleas can affect dogs and cats. All weekenders (or fosters) will be given a general flea preventative before going into foster care. **Do not use any over the counter flea treatment.** If you notice fleas, call the Foster Coordinator. Although we do try to prevent fleas, we recommend that all of your pets be on a flea preventative.
5. Worms- Your foster will be treated for the most commonly seen worms before coming to your home. If you detect worms in your foster's stool, please let staff know on his or her return.

## Quality Time with Your Foster Pet

### **Children and Your Foster Pet**

Children under 12 years old should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with a foster pet. Do not allow children to behave with the foster pet in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a foster alone when he is eating, chewing, sleeping, or any time he is in his crate. Allow your foster pet to have its space. Observe its behavior and if it is moving away from a child or animal, allow it to be alone. If its space is not respected, it may feel threatened.

Lots of human contact is important for all animals. Attention/Playtime is a reward for your foster pet. Be sure to give your foster pet several sessions of playtime periodically through the day. When giving a dog a toy or treat, try to have him sit before giving it to him. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat - making it a reward.

Always supervise playtime with children and dogs closely! Trauma can cause a lifelong impact so never overdo it and keep the experience positive!

### **Off Leash Areas**

**You should never take your foster dog to an off leash area or dog park.**

## How to Make Your Foster Pet More Adoptable

Our homeless animals benefit greatly from exercise (with the exception of any medical condition), basic training, special love and any attention you give them. Providing them with basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy animals will benefit

from your patience, a consistent routine and slowly exposing them to new people to build their confidence.

### **Photos**

Snapping good photos and videos and writing descriptions can get an animal adopted! Send pictures and descriptions to Anne at foster@madacc.org, and she will upload them onto Petfinder! Shoot for at least one 60 second video and 5-6 great photos!

### **Out on the Town**

After your foster dog for the weekend has had a little time to adjust and get to know you (Netflix and Chill) take him or her out on the town. Check the “Dog Friendly MKE” sheet to get ideas.

### **Social Media**

Share photos of your foster on Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! Check in at dog friendly places! Use hashtags #weekenders #dogfriendlyMKE #adoptmadacc #pitbullproud

## Eight Ways to Become a Successful Foster Parent

1. Divide your time between your foster animal and your own animal and give each lots of attention and affection. The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. The animal may have lived a difficult life before coming to your home; your love and attention will help to heal the animal's physical and psychological wounds.
2. Learn as much as you can about pet care. Before you bring your foster animal home, learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.
3. Make your home pet-friendly. Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure you "pet proof" your home. For example, remove poisonous plants and protect furnishings. Keep that animal's room warm and comfortable. Also, take steps to prevent the animal from escaping.
4. Keep your pets up to date on their vaccinations. Even though you will be keeping the animals apart, there could still be disease transmission. All animals should be current on the vaccinations that protect them from diseases. Before you bring home a foster animal, consult with your veterinarian to make sure your own animals have received any preventive treatments they need.
5. Keep foster animals away from your own pets. A foster pet may come into your home with a URI, eye infection or other minor illness. Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution.
6. Recognize your limits. Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy – both emotional and physical. Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently; you may burn yourself out.
7. Return the animal to the shelter on time. The shelter depends on you to make its program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time. If you decide to adopt an animal you foster, go through the shelter's normal adoption process. If a friend or relative wants to adopt the animal you are fostering, GREAT! Bring them in when you return the dog!
8. Although fostering takes a great deal of commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home and helping that animal get to an adoptive, loving home.