



KITSAP HUMANE SOCIETY
PUPPY AND
BOTTLE BABY
FOSTER
MANUAL

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Foster Department Contact Information:

Email is the primary and easiest way to contact the foster team. Please address your emails to all team members to ensure a prompt response.

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Welcome! Before you get started, some basics...

Puppies under 8 weeks of age represent one of the most vulnerable and in need groups at KHS. Young puppies may require round-the-clock care and their incomplete immune system makes them highly susceptible to the common illnesses found in a shelter environment.

Foster homes represent a safe haven for these vulnerable animals and by following proper guidelines, you can keep yours that way.

General Guidelines and Expectations of Puppy Care

Health and Sanitation

- Foster puppies can carry illnesses into your home that could affect your health, the health of your resident animals, and future foster animals. You accept this risk when you agree to foster. KHS does not have the funds to pay for illness to personal animals and cannot be held responsible.
- All new foster puppies MUST be properly quarantined in a fully sanitizable space (absolutely NO carpet) for at least 2 weeks. Your foster puppy's quarantine may need to be extended if they are actively sick. When in doubt, check in with the foster team before letting your foster puppies out of their quarantine space.
- Wash or sanitize your hands before and after handling animals, their supplies, or their bodily secretions (vomit, feces, soiled puppy pads, etc.).
- Puppy living quarters and supplies should be cleaned daily and disinfected weekly. When cleaning, place the puppies in a separate, sanitizable space such as their carrier or a spare bathroom until their space is clean and completely dry.
- Foster parents must be able to bring their puppies in for routine vaccinations every 2 weeks to prevent a gap in their immunity and for medical care as necessary.
- It is highly recommended to keep a daily journal on your puppy's general health and appearance, including weight, appetite, bathroom habits, etc. The Foster Department has monitoring sheets that you may use as an example.

Housing and Handling

- All foster puppies and mother dogs MUST be kept at home to prevent exposure to potentially deadly diseases. It is unsafe for puppies to walk on any surface where another dog may have urinated or defecated (such as sidewalks or parks) until they are fully vaccinated (around 4-6 months of age).
- Foster puppies must be in a carrier if off the foster parent's property to reduce potential disease exposure, and for safety while being transported in a vehicle.
- Young children should not handle newborn foster puppies as they are extremely fragile. Once the puppies can walk and play on their own, children must be supervised closely and taught proper handling techniques.
- Foster parents can only have one litter of puppies at a time because of the difficulty of keeping litters separated and quarantined.

Returning from Foster

- Generally, foster puppies are ready for spay/neuter surgery and to become available for adoption when they are healthy and 8 weeks old. Returns are scheduled with the Foster Manager or Foster Lead and depend on current shelter capacity.

The Four Tenets of Puppy Care

While the needs of individual puppies will vary, four tenets or core principles guide puppy care across the ages. By ensuring that you are meeting these core needs for your puppies, you will be setting them up for long-term success.

Keep Them Fed

Puppies naturally eat small, frequent meals. Bottle babies may require round-the-clock feedings every 2-3 hours, even overnight. Weaned puppies should have access to dry food at all times and be offered wet food multiple times a day. Experiment with various flavors and styles of wet food until you find one preferred by your puppy.

Keep Them Warm

Puppies cannot regulate their body temperature until around 4 weeks of age. You must always provide appropriate heat to young puppies. Supplemental heat sources include rice bags (short-term only), warming discs, heating pads (be sure to cover exposed cords), and infrared lamps (securely out of reach). Puppies should always have the ability to remove themselves from the heat if they wish.

Keep Them Clean

Dried on food, feces, or urine can result in fur loss, skin irritation, and even infection. Any debris on your puppy should be removed promptly with a warm, damp washcloth. Flea combs can be a useful tool for gently removing caked-on debris. Full baths should be reserved for extremely dirty or flea-ridden puppies. Use only a gentle dish soap like Dawn. NEVER administer flea treatment or flea shampoo to a foster animal. Always dry your puppy completely after washing.

Keep Them Healthy

Puppies are born with virtually no immunity so care must be taken to not introduce pathogens into their space. Make it a habit to monitor their weight, appetites, urine/feces output, and overall body condition daily. Alert your foster team of any concerning changes. Healthy puppies should be bright, alert, active, and gaining weight steadily.

Your foster puppies depend on YOU for all their needs. Your foster team at KHS is here to support you in meeting those needs and with any questions or concerns that arise. We are always happy to answer questions, share tips and tricks, and teach you new skills as your foster career progresses. Fostering is a continuous learning experience!

Preparing for Your First Foster

Puppy Foster Supply Check List

Before you bring home your first foster puppy, make sure you have all the necessary supplies at the ready. The last thing you want is to bring home a puppy (or several) and find you're missing critical supplies! KHS is happy to help you with supplies. We can always supply essential items such as food, bedding, bottle feeding supplies (formula, bottles, nipples, etc.), and food/water bowls. For more "specialty" items such as baby wipes, puppy pads, kitchen scales (for weighing your puppies), etc., we rely heavily on donations and can supply these types of items as our stock allows. If foster parents wish to purchase their own supplies or supplement with ours, this is always an option as well.

Carrier: KHS can supply foster families with carriers that must be returned with the puppies when they return for adoption.

Enclosure: It is recommended to use a play-pen-style enclosure that has a "den" (crate/kennel), puppy pads, water, food, and space to play.

Housebreaking training pads: Also called puppy pads, potty pads, and pee pads, they are essential to housetraining.

Water bowls: Should be heavy and difficult to tip over.

Food bowls (at least 2): One is for the eat-at-will dry puppy food, and the other is for canned food. Bigger litters will need multiple bowls.

Food: You should have a supply of dry and canned puppy food. For weaned puppies, feed several small, frequent meals throughout the day and have water available at all times. Have a few food varieties on hand in the case of picky eaters.

Clean towels and blankets: You will want to change bedding daily, so having plenty of extra towels on hand is a lifesaver!

Scale: A food or postal scale is required to track puppies' growth and to catch early signs of any potential issues.

Heat: Unless the nursery is at least 85° and your puppies are at least 4 weeks old, you need to supply extra heat. Options include heating pads, warming discs, or infrared lamps. If you use a heat source that requires a cord, it's important to ensure that none of the cords are left exposed. Make sure your puppies can move away from the heat as needed.

Toys: Be sure that any toys the puppies have access to are appropriate for their age. Toys should not have small pieces or strips that can be chewed or ripped off and puppies must be supervised while playing/chewing. Any porous toy that can't be machine washed or disinfected thoroughly with bleach should be thrown away between litters

Puppy's First Stop: Quarantine!

To keep current and future foster animals safe from communicable diseases, as well as protect any resident animals in your home, a 2-week quarantine in a fully sanitizable space for your new foster puppy is **MANDATORY**. Most illnesses, such as ringworm, parvo, or upper respiratory infection, will begin showing symptoms within 2 weeks. In the event your puppy DOES present with a communicable disease while in quarantine, this protocol will have kept any pathogens isolated to a single, easily sanitizable space. **By fully sanitizable space, we mean absolutely no carpet, poorly sealed/gapped wooden flooring, upholstered furniture, rugs, or other porous surfaces that can't be properly disinfected.** All toys and bedding should be either machine washable or made of a non-porous material that can be cleaned with a bleach solution.

While most puppy illnesses would not be contagious to a healthy, vaccinated adult dog, they do stay in the environment for a long time unless it is properly treated with a bleach solution.

This could prevent you from being able to foster puppies again in the future.

Bathrooms often make ideal quarantine spaces, require very few alterations, and can easily be disinfected with a bleach solution. It is possible to create a quarantine space in a spare room or office if all the same safety and sanitation requirements are met.

When entering your puppy's quarantine space to feed, clean, or socialize, be conscious of what items enter this space and where they go next. It's a good idea to keep a spare pair of house slippers outside the door, or plan to remove your socks when you exit the quarantine space. An extra sweater and pair of sweatpants specifically worn during socialization will keep your clothes contaminant-free.

Once the 2-week quarantine is over, puppies are permitted to explore your household! Take it room by room and ensure that you have properly puppy-proofed all areas your puppy will have access to. Puppies tend to explore the world via their mouths. Do not leave small items that may become choking hazards, toxic or otherwise hazardous materials, plants, power cords, or other such items within reach of your puppies. Be aware that any item that is left out is "fair game" to a puppy. Once they return for adoption, your quarantine space can be fully sanitized and is ready for the next batch of puppies.

Potty Breaks During Quarantine

If your puppies are coordinated enough to be eliminating outside (usually around 5-6 weeks old) you may **carry** them from their quarantine space to an area outside to go potty. However, you **MUST** know the history of your yard and be certain that no dog with parvovirus has been in the yard within the last 5 years. Please note that it is nearly impossible to sanitize a yard following parvo exposure, so it is best practice to wait until after quarantine to begin taking puppies outside to potty. If you are at all unsure about the history of your yard, it is safest to keep your puppies indoors and eliminating on puppy pads, even once out of quarantine.

Puppy Feeding, Care, and Development

Puppies experience a tremendous amount of growth and development in a relatively short period and the care requirements of a 3-week-old puppy are dramatically different than that of a 6-week-old puppy. By ensuring proper housing, feeding, and enrichment, you will help your puppy to grow into a healthy, confident young adult!

Puppy Stages

In their first two weeks of life, puppies are essentially helpless. They are still developing basic reflexes, are still developing their hearing and vision, and are unable to regulate their body temperatures. For all these reasons and more, neonatal puppies should be confined to a nursery area and handled minimally for the first 1-2 weeks.

From 3 weeks on, puppies begin to rapidly develop, both in size and behavior. From now until about 3 months of age, they are primed to learn all about the world around them. This is the most crucial and sensitive period in a puppy's life and when you should be working on socialization to ensure confident, well-rounded puppies.

See the chart on the next page for a timeline of puppy feeding and development expectations.

Feeding Puppies

It is important that your puppy receives, and eats, an appropriate amount of food each day to fuel its rapid growth and development. Puppies should be allowed to eat until they appear full but not bloated. Because dog breeds can vary so greatly in size, there is no single standardized feeding amount. Feed according to the manufacturer's instructions for your particular brand of food. Puppies, regardless of breed, should only be fed puppy-specific food to ensure they are receiving the proper nutrients to fuel their rapidly growing bodies.

In general, a healthy puppy's weight should increase 10-15% each day.

If a puppy is not gaining weight appropriately despite receiving adequate nutrition, there may be an underlying medical cause and the foster team should be alerted promptly.

We highly encourage feeding puppies in discrete meals, rather than leaving a large portion of food out at once. This helps both to reduce the likelihood of puppies overeating as well as make potty training go more smoothly, as puppies will generally need to eliminate after eating. Water should always be available to ensure adequate hydration.

Puppies' digestive systems are still developing and as a result, are fragile. Do not offer puppies treats; instead, use a brand of puppy food that is different than their main food. This will still entice and motivate them if used for training treats but will not upset their tummies.

Puppy Feeding and Development Expectations

WEEKS	FEEDING	DEVELOPMENT
0-1	Bottle feed per manufacturer's instructions every 2-3 hours, overnight feeding can be every 3-4 hours. If there is a mom dog, make sure that all puppies are nursing. Puppies can nurse from mom for up to 45 minutes at a time. A lot of crying or activity could indicate a problem with mom's milk supply.	At one week of age, the puppies should be handled minimally and be kept in a nesting box. Puppies will sleep about 90% of the time and eat the other 10%. Puppies should be kept in a warm environment (85-90F) as chilling is the number one danger to newborn puppies.
1-2	Bottle feed per manufacturer's instructions every 2-3 hours until puppies' bellies are full but not bloated. Overnight feeding can be every 3-4 hours.	Healthy puppies should be round and warm and wiggle when picked up. Healthy puppies seldom cry. The puppy's ear canal should open between 5 and 8 days. Eyes will open between 8 and 14 days.
2-3	Bottle feed formula every 3-4 hours, until their bellies are full but not bloated.	Puppies begin to crawl around and should be almost standing. They will begin to play with each other, biting their ears, tails, and paws before their teeth come in. They should be teething at this period. The nesting area should be 75-80F.
3-4	Bottle feed formula every 4 hours until the puppies are full but not bloated. Puppies may start to lap from a bowl.	Puppy eyes begin to look and function like adult dog eyes. Puppies will start cleaning themselves. At 3 weeks, puppies are in their canine socialization period. If they have siblings allow them to play at will. Can graduate to a pen enclosure with a crate providing a den space. Space should be 70-75F from now on.
4-5	Bottle feed as needed to keep puppies from crying with hunger. Puppies usually can drink and eat from a saucer by 4 weeks. Weaning should be done gradually.	Begin housebreaking at 4 weeks of age. After each feeding, place the puppy on the pad/outside for him or her to go to the bathroom. Be patient! He or she may not remember to do this every time.
5-6	Feed slurry (wet food watered down with water or formula) 4 times a day. Thicken the slurry gradually by reducing the amount of liquid mixed with it. Introduce dry food and water.	At about 5 weeks, puppies can start to roam around the room, under supervision. The strongest, most curious puppy will figure out how to get out of the nest and the others will quickly follow.
6-7	By this age, puppies should be eating dry food well. Feed the puppies at least three meals a day. Puppies may not eat much at a single sitting, they usually like to eat at frequent intervals throughout the day	By this time, you will have "mini-dogs". They can wash themselves and play games with each other and you. Some puppies may be food possessive, you may need to use multiple dishes. Be sure to take the puppies to their pads or outside after feeding, during play sessions, and after naps.
7-8	Offer dry food 3-4 times a day. Leave a bowl of water down for them to drink at will. Do not feed the puppies table scraps.	Continue playing and socializing with the puppies. You can even begin training such as sit, down, roll over, and come when called.
8+	Offer dry food 3 times a day. Leave down a bowl of water for them to drink at will.	By this time, the puppies should be ready for spay/neuter surgery and adoption.

Neonatal Care: Bottle Baby Puppies

Overview

Orphaned puppies need a significant level of care until they are ready to be weaned and are eating on their own. It is the responsibility of a foster parent to ensure their puppies are receiving proper nutrition, hydration, adequate housing, and that they are consistently gaining weight during this crucial time.

Getting Started

You will need to purchase an animal nursing kit at a pet store that includes a bottle, extra nipples, and a cleaning brush. KHS can also provide you with these supplies (including puppy formula) to get you started! Cut a small “X” or poke a series of holes with a paperclip in the tip of your first nipple. You know that you have made the nipple opening just big enough if, when the bottle is held upside-down, the formula drips slowly from it. Too small an opening will make the puppies work too hard to get their formula, tiring them out before they’ve had enough to eat. Too large an opening will force too much formula into them, too fast. Miracle Nipples come pre-cut and fit both syringes and most bottles.

Please note that before you start feeding your puppy, you should assess their body temperature. NEVER feed a cold puppy.

Place them on a heat source to regulate their body heat and then proceed with feeding.

Feeding supplies should be sterilized often and it is generally best to use a fresh bottle at each feeding to reduce the chance of introducing bacteria or other pathogens. To sterilize your bottle-feeding supplies, rinse bottles and nipples thoroughly then place them into a boiling water bath for approximately 5-10 minutes.

Only a formula specifically made for puppies (puppy milk replacer/PMR) should be fed, such as Pet Ag PMR or Breeder’s Edge PMR. NEVER give a puppy cow's milk (or anything else besides the specified formula) as this can lead to gastric issues and nutrient deficiencies. KHS mixes formula according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Shaker bottles are handy tools for easily mixing and storing puppy formula. The unused formula should be labeled with the date/time and refrigerated. Discard leftover formula after 24hrs

Bottle Feeding Supplies



Mastering Bottle Feeding Time

Fosters and puppies may have different preferred feeding styles. Some fosters feed on a table or countertop while others feed on their laps. Puppies should be fed in a position that mimics how they would naturally be nursing from mom; all four feet pointed towards the ground and their heads level. However, some puppies may prefer to nurse standing on their hind legs while holding the bottle, or while wrapped in a hand towel like a burrito. Regardless, puppies should be kept in a mostly horizontal position with feet towards the ground. NEVER feed a puppy on its back like a human baby— this is extremely unsafe.

Examples of Proper Bottle Feeding



Bottle Feeding Tip #1

Many foster parents find using a bottle and nipple meant for human babies work well when bottle feeding puppies.

The formula should be fed at a temperature similar to the puppy's body temperature. The best way to warm the formula is by placing the bottle in a hot water bath. Test the formula temperature by squirting a few drops onto the inside of your wrist; it should feel warm but not hot. To feed, gently open a puppy's mouth with one finger and place the tip of the nipple on their tongue.

If they don't begin suckling, try petting them down the back; this replicates a mother dog grooming and can be an effective stimulant. Pull lightly on the bottle to encourage vigorous sucking or try moving the nipple back and forth on the puppy's tongue. Be sure to keep the bottle at a 45-degree angle to prevent the puppy from inhaling air.

Do not force the puppy to nurse or allow them to nurse too fast. It can take puppies some time to get used to nursing from a bottle. Be patient and go drop

Bottle feeding Tip #2

Hold their head steady with your non dominant hand while you use your dominate hand to control the bottle or syringe, If the puppy isn't latching, try different nipple sizes and warming up the nipple in warm water prior to feeding.

by drop if needed, allowing them to swallow in between – they’ll get the hang out of it.

You should never squeeze the bottle of formula when feeding puppies as this can cause aspiration. Aspiration occurs when the puppy inhales formula into their lungs while feeding. Aspiration can lead to serious complications.

After each feeding, the puppy should be burped by gently patting their back or sides a few times – it’s uncommon to hear a puppy physically burp so a few gentle pats should be sufficient when burping a puppy. If not done before feeding, they should be stimulated to urinate/defecate. This is done by gently rubbing a damp cloth or cotton ball on your puppy’s genitals and rectum until they eliminate. If you use a damp cloth, be sure to use a dry cloth afterward to ensure the puppy’s genitals and rectum are dry. Puppies should urinate at every feeding and defecate about once a day.

How Much to Feed

Overfeeding bottle babies is as dangerous as underfeeding! Neonates are still developing, and their digestive systems can only process so much at a time. Puppies should be fed an amount and at a frequency appropriate for their age. *Refer to the Puppy Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart from Maddie’s Fund.*

Keep an eye on your puppies at feeding time and monitor how much each is eating. Keep a written record of mealtimes and the amount consumed. Try feeding smaller amounts but more frequently if your puppy is struggling to consume their suggested amount in one sitting, and gradually decrease the number of feedings as they start consuming more at once. The amount of formula being fed should continue to slowly increase as your puppy ages.

Puppy Weight (lbs, oz)	Puppy Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement*	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)*	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day***
2 oz	57 g	11 kcal	13 ml	2 ml	6
4 oz	113 g	23 kcal	25 ml	5 ml	6
6 oz	170 g	34 kcal	38 ml	7 ml	6
8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	50 ml	9 ml	6
10 oz	284 g	57 kcal	63 ml	11 ml	6
12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	76 ml	14 ml	6
14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	88 ml	16 ml	6
16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	91 kcal	101 ml	18 ml	6
2 lb	907 g	181 kcal	202 ml	36 ml	6
3 lb	1,361 g	272 kcal	302 ml	54 ml	6
4 lb	1,814 g	363 kcal	403 ml	73 ml	6
5 lb	2,268 g	454 kcal	504 ml	91 ml	6
6 lb	2,722 g	544 kcal	605 ml	109 ml	6
7 lb	3,175 g	635 kcal	706 ml	127 ml	6
8 lb	3,629 g	726 kcal	806 ml	145 ml	6

Alert the foster team promptly if your bottle baby is eating poorly or is losing weight.

Weaning, a Glorious and Messy Time!

Weaning is the process of teaching puppies to eat on their own and typically begins at 3-4 weeks old. It is an equally exciting and messy time of a puppy's journey. To bridge the gap between nursing and solid foods, we begin by offering a shallow dish of slurry (wet food mixed with warm water or formula) to an applesauce-like consistency. You can similarly introduce dry food by soaking it in water first.

The weaning process can be a messy time. After each feeding, make sure to clean excess slurry off their fur to avoid hair loss and skin irritation.

Begin by placing one puppy near the plate of the slurry mixture; if they start eating, their littermates will probably catch on. Sometimes one will begin lapping right away and bite the edge of the plate while they figure it out. Some will lick the slurry off your finger and then you can slowly lower your finger to the plate and hold it to the food. It can take a few feedings to master. If they do not seem interested enough to even sniff your finger, try gently opening the puppy's mouth and rubbing a little of the food on their teeth and they'll hopefully start licking your finger.

During the weaning process, you should continue to offer a bottle after each slurry meal to ensure your puppy is getting enough calories. As they master munching, you can gradually cut back on this supplemental bottle feeding and the amount of liquid in their food mixture until they are eating dry kibble. Be sure that the puppies always have access to fresh water in a low, stable bowl.

Moms and Litters

If you get a litter of puppies with a mother dog, you're in luck! She will do most, if not all, of the care necessary for the puppies and teach them everything they need to know to be awesome dogs, from eating dry food to playing appropriately with humans.

It is important to have a warm, comfortable place for mom and her babies, ideally in their own room. Nursing mothers can be protective of their babies and should always be kept separated from any other pets in the home to reduce stress.

You should provide a warm and secure nesting area where the mom will nurse her puppies. A nesting or whelping area should be large enough for mom to comfortably lay to nurse and have walls high enough to prevent very young puppies from escaping yet low enough for mom to comfortably walk in and out. This may

**Example
nesting/whelping area**



take the form of a specifically designed whelping box or a simple plastic kiddie pool filled with blankets. Mother dogs should not go outside because of the possibility of tracking diseases into the house and onto her puppies. Instead, set down some puppy pads for mom outside of the nesting area and change them frequently. Once the puppies are around 4-5 weeks old and urinating and defecating on their own, mom can go outside to potty.

An attentive mother should teach her puppies to eat on their own at around 4-6 weeks old. If puppies are stubbornly refusing solid foods and continuing to nurse, it may be time to start separating mom for part of the day to encourage kittens to eat on their own. *Consult with the foster team before doing so.* Always offer food and try encouragement techniques before allowing the mother to nurse again.

Caring for Mom

While mom is nursing, be sure to always have water available to her and feed her two or three times a day as almost all her calories will be spent feeding her babies. Because of this, nursing moms can be lethargic but otherwise healthy. You should still be monitoring for dehydration, rapid weight loss, lack of appetite, or severe lethargy, which indicates illness. If you have a sick mother dog, she might not produce enough milk for her babies and/or not want to care for them. In these cases, you will have to supplement with bottle feeding and other care for the puppies. ***Even with an attentive mother dog, you should still be weighing the puppies regularly to ensure everyone is getting enough food and growing appropriately.***

Socialization with Moms

Most mother dogs will be attentive to her babies and social with humans and will teach their puppies to be that way. However, KHS occasionally gets mother dogs who are unsocial or have other behavioral issues and, in these cases, it is especially important for you as the foster parent to socialize the puppies. As soon as the puppies are at the age that they can start being handled and socialized they should get regular human interaction. If the mother dog inhibits socialization or won't let you near her babies and they are fully weaned, the foster team might suggest returning her to the shelter before the puppies are ready to come back. Puppies should generally stay with their mothers for as long as possible, so the decision to separate early will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Foster Manager or Foster Lead.

Puppy Behavior and Socialization

Normal puppy behavior is playful, mouthy, and jumpy. You shouldn't discourage their liveliness or love, but techniques to encourage and teach appropriate play should be utilized. Most foster puppies will be ready for adoption at 8 weeks old, so you won't be able to do in-depth behavioral work with them, but you can work on appropriate chewing, limit jumping, crate training, and wearing a collar. By starting to practice and build good skills in foster, your puppies will be poised for success in their forever homes.

Common Puppy Behaviors and How to Respond

Chewing and Nipping

Puppies play by using their mouths; this behavior is rarely aggressive and not intended to cause harm. In fact, mouthing is important! Mouthing littermates (or foster parents as may be the case) is how a puppy learns to control their bite. A puppy that is denied this learning experience may grow up to have a hard, uninhibited bite. Your goals should be to redirect your puppy to something desirable to chew on, such as an acceptable chew toy, and teach them that putting their teeth on skin is unacceptable. Teach your puppy that nipping “turns off” all interaction with you. As soon as you feel their teeth on your skin, yelp “ouch” in a high-pitched voice and ignore them for a few minutes. You may have to get up and physically distance yourself from persistent puppies. It may take repetition for your puppy to understand what is expected, so consistency is extremely important.

Jumping Up

When a puppy jumps on you, they want attention. If you push them off or nudge them away, you are inadvertently giving your puppy attention and reinforcing this behavior. When your puppy jumps up, hold out your arms, say “off”, and turn away from them. Remain with your back to them until all four of their feet are on the ground, then quietly praise and give a treat. When your puppy realizes that they get the attention they crave when they stop jumping on you and sit, they’ll stop jumping up.

The Power of Positivity! Using Positive Reinforcement Training

As a foster parent, you will have many opportunities to work with and train your foster puppies. KHS only promotes training using positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of something pleasant or rewarding immediately following the desired behavior. Decades of rigorous scientific study have concluded that this training method is not only the most humane but also the most efficient for shaping or changing an animal’s behavior.

When an unwanted behavior, such as chewing on furniture, is performed, re-direct the puppy with a kissy noise or a toy. Praise and reward your puppy for stopping the undesirable behavior and giving you attention instead. When you praise and reward good behavior, that behavior gets reinforced. Accurate timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately, or your foster animal may not associate it with the proper action.

Consistency is key and everyone in the family should use the same commands and reward the desired behavior, never the undesired behavior. Your puppy’s positive reinforcement may include food treats, praise, petting, or a favorite toy or game. Experiment a bit to see what works best for your puppy. Each time you give a food reward, you should also give verbal praise - something like “yes!” or “good dog!” in a cheerful tone.

Punishment is a Thing of the Past

Attempting to punish or scold a puppy for an unwanted behavior does not teach them *what* to do instead or stop that behavior. In reality, it may be teaching a puppy to fear retaliation, to hide a behavior, or even to respond aggressively when they feel overwhelmed. Using aversive training methods (such as prong collars or spray bottles) and punishment harms the relationship between animals and humans, whereas positive reinforcement methods strengthen that relationship and bond.

Housetraining

Since most foster puppies return to the shelter for adoption when they are 8 weeks old, you will only be able to work on basic housetraining habits. If you have a mother dog, she will clean up after her babies until they are 4-5 weeks old, which is when you can start housetraining.

Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience, and commitment. It is possible to minimize the number of house soiling incidents, but every puppy will have an accident in the house at some point. It is important to remain consistent, be patient, and set your puppies up for success!

Generally, puppies can hold their bladders for about one hour for each month of age, so most foster age puppies will require bathroom breaks at least every hour.

Eliminating Outside

Once the puppies are coordinated enough (usually around 5-6 weeks old), you may take them outside to eliminate but they must stay on your personal property. You **MUST** know the history of your yard and be certain that no dog with parvo virus has been in your yard in the last 5 years. If you are unsure, it is safest to keep the puppies indoors and utilize the puppy pads.

If your yard has a clean history, you should still minimize the amount of time spent outside. Limit time outside to short potty breaks; choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your puppy on a leash directly to the bathroom spot, praise them profusely once they've eliminated, and bring them immediately indoors.

Remember these five steps to successful house training:

1. Prevent accidents
2. Reward going to the bathroom
3. Anticipate bathroom needs
4. Interrupt accidents and avoid punishment
5. Clean up accidents with an enzymatic cleaner

When you catch your puppy eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt them, like making a startling noise (but not loud enough to scare them), and immediately take them to their bathroom spot, praise them, and give them a treat if they finish there. Never punish them for eliminating in the house!

Be proactive by taking puppies out frequently and watching closely for signs that they might have to go, including sniffing, circling, and squatting. Cleaning any accidents in the house with an enzyme cleaner is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces. Normal household cleaners often only mask these odors to us but leave them perceptible to animals.

Additional Reasons for House Soiling

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems, such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. *Contact the foster team if you suspect any medical concerns.*
- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play, or in anticipation of punishment.
- **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when left alone may house soil as a result. There are usually other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization.
- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, they may house soil when they are exposed to these sounds.

Crate Training

House training and crate training for puppies go hand in hand. A crate is a great tool when used appropriately. Crates are not meant as a means of punishment and should be established as a safe, enjoyable place to be. Crates offer a safe space for puppies to be when not actively attended, keeping them out of trouble. They can also serve as a den or safe retreat for puppies, a space where they can withdraw when they need a break. Crates are meant to be used only for short-term confinement. Long-term confinement areas should be created with an x-pen or by using baby gates.

Crates should be just large enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and stretch out. Puppies instinctively want to keep their den areas clean and will avoid eliminating in this space. However, if the crate is too large, a puppy may find there is space for a potty area. As your puppy grows, their crate will need to grow as well.

Begin crate training by feeding your puppy in their crate, providing chew toys only in the crate, and or playing crate games to build a positive association with the crate. Keep crate training sessions short and fun and practice having your puppy in the crate for short periods while you are home.

Puppy Socialization

A puppy's experiences during the first few weeks and months of life are critical in developing future sociability. From the time a puppy is 3 weeks old until approximately 12 to 16 weeks of age (this range varies depending on the specific dog) puppies are in a critical socialization period. During this time, curiosity and sociability outweigh fear. After the critical socialization period, fear of new things becomes more prominent. Because of this, the critical socialization period is the perfect time to introduce puppies to new things and expose them to the world they will be living in. Puppies who have improper socialization, incomplete socialization, or were simply under-socialized are at an increased risk for future behavioral problems that are rooted in fear and anxiety.

Puppies need to have lots of fun, safe, and new experiences with different people, places, items, sounds, smells, motions, and animals. When socializing puppies, it is important to make sure that there is a lot of variety in their experiences. Puppies should also be handled all over while in their critical socialization period to help acclimate them to future vet visits and grooming needs.

How to Properly Socialize Your Puppy

Not all socialization is good socialization. It's important that the puppies are having a fun, safe time. New things should be associated with "really good stuff" – new humans should have lots of delicious treats, and puppies should be given the chance to explore the world on their own comfort (i.e., don't place them on the stairs and force them down or drag them across new flooring).

Scary things can be magical treat-producing devices! Chicken might suddenly appear on the scary tile flooring right in front of the puppy. Yummy snacks might be found near a stationary vacuum (which doesn't move until the puppy is far enough away to not be scared by it) and as soon as it turns on, puppies get even more yummy snacks. If your puppy is nervous or scared by something, it's okay to back up a few steps and work at a point where they are comfortable. Time and treats go a long way with many puppies. Forcing them into scary situations and expecting them to just get over it can have the opposite effect and create lifelong fears.

Puppy Socialization Checklist

People	
Men—tall, bearded, variety of ethnicities, young/old, with canes/walkers, wearing hats, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women—tall, variety of ethnicities, young/old, with purses, with canes/walkers, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children—ensure behaviorally appropriate (keep puppies on the ground, gentle touching)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behaviors	
Laughing, talking loudly, walking/running, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Items	
Vacuums, mops, bikes, pots and pans, garbage cans/bags, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surfaces	
Carpet, tile, hardwood, stairs, grass, uneven/unstable surfaces, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Grooming	
Nail clippers, feet/ears/tail/mouth being touched, being brushed	<input type="checkbox"/>

It can be helpful to use a scoring scale to track your puppy's response to a stimulus over time. For example, using a 1-5 scale, a 1 would indicate your puppy entered a state of over-arousal or trying to get at the stimulus, while a 5 indicates the puppy stayed calm and relaxed, freely interacting with the stimulus.

Puppy Wellness 101

A healthy puppy has bright eyes, a sleek coat, and a plump belly. Younger puppies are content to sleep between feedings and as they approach 8 weeks, they begin to spend more time playing. The normal body temperature for a puppy is 99.5-102.5 depending on their age. Unfortunately, puppies do become ill and sometimes die while in foster, so it is important to prevent disease and treat it as soon as it appears.

Performing a General Physical Exam

Whenever you bring home a new foster animal (once they are comfortable with handling) you should perform a general physical exam on them. Familiarize yourself with their general physical appearance and take note of any irregularities. We highly encourage you to take photos or videos of anything odd or concerning with your puppy and email us for guidance.

	Normal	Abnormal
General Appearance	Bright, alert, responsive Balanced and coordinated Interested in surroundings	Lethargic, disoriented Uncoordinated Non-engaged, “staring into space”
Eyes	Clean and clear No discharge	Visible third eyelid when not sleeping Watery, red, or colored discharge Irregular pupil size
Ears	Clean, both outer ear and pinna Pink and clean inner ear	Discharge (waxy or other) Crusty Scratching, shaking ear/head Red/Inflamed ear canal
Nose	Clean, no discharge	Scabbed Discharge (clear, mucus, bloody) Congested or blocked
Mouth	Eating/swallowing normally Gums pink and return to color 1-2 seconds after being pressed	Problems eating/swallowing Persistent vomiting Pale/white gums Drooling Foul odor
Skin/Hair	Shiny, glossy coat Oil-free coat Clean	Bald or thinning spots Dry or flaky skin Oily/dirty looking coat Scabs Visible fleas, ticks, lice, or other parasites.
Legs/Feet	Walking normally Healthy pads and nails	Limping Cracked or hard pads Irregular gait Pain response when an area is touched
Anal/Genital	Clean and free of discharge Normal stool	Discharge Abnormal stool (diarrhea or extremely hard stools) Excessive defecation or urination Posturing/vocalizing in the litterbox Visible parasites Redness/inflammation

Common Ailments in Puppies

Most of the puppies that we take in have unknown health histories, meaning, we have no way of knowing what illnesses they may have been exposed to or parasites they may have picked up. This is why our mandatory 2-week quarantine period is so important.

During your foster career, there are a few common ailments you are likely to run into with your puppies. Learning to promptly identify signs of illness and alerting the foster team is crucial to speeding up your puppy's recovery. If you notice any of these illnesses, please contact the foster team. Do not self-treat at home.

Illnesses

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is common in puppies and may be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, weaning off formula, stress, overfeeding, or other causes. Be sure to notify your foster team that your puppy is having loose stools.

Treatment: If the diarrhea is mild and the puppy is otherwise alert and playful, we suggest feeding smaller more frequent meals rather than a few bigger meals throughout the day and adding 1/4 teaspoon of pure pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling) to the food to help get rid of diarrhea. If loose stools persist past 48 hours, notify the foster team as severe dehydration can occur quickly in puppies with persistent diarrhea, and medical intervention is required.

Vomiting

If your puppy is vomiting, it is possible that they are eating their meals too quickly. You should watch them when they eat and not allow them to eat too much too quickly – feeding out of a slow feeder or scattering the kibble on the floor can help slow down fast eaters. One episode of vomiting is generally not concerning, but if vomiting persists, notify the foster team as severe dehydration can occur and medical intervention might be required.

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Nasal discharge accompanied by sneezing, ocular discharge, and/or coughing. Your puppy is likely to feel “dumpy” and may not be eating its normal amount. Full-blown URI is diagnosed when the puppy has colored nasal discharge. Clear or cloudy nasal discharge, or the absence of nasal discharge but the existence of ocular discharge and/or sneezing, might be diagnosed differently.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

Your puppy may be posturing or straining to urinate with minimal urination. Urination may be in small amounts, dark in color, and accompanied by vocalizations by the puppy. A urine sample is required to determine the form of infection, which is taken at the shelter.

NOTE: *If your puppy is straining to urinate and NOT producing any urine, they may be experiencing a potentially life-threatening urinary blockage. This is an emergency, and the foster team should be alerted immediately.*

Parasites

Ear Mites

Ear mites are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal. They cause intense itching, noted by scratching behind the ears and violent head shaking. Inside the ears, you may see a crumbly, dark brown discharge resembling coffee grounds, and the ears may have a bad smell.

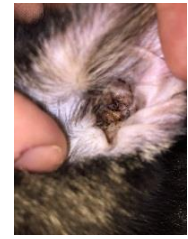


Figure 1 Ear mites

Roundworms

Roundworms are not, in fact, round, though under a microscope their eggs are. Roundworms are often found excreted in stool and described as “spaghetti-like” - yum! They are the most common culprit of the bloated potbelly that many young animals enter the shelter with.



Figure 2 A roundworm in fresh stool

Tapeworms

Tapeworms have long, segmented bodies that frequently break off into small sections. Most often, you will find tiny, individual segments that look like white rice in an animal's feces. You may also find tapeworm segments or eggs that resemble sesame seeds located around the anus.



Figure 3 On the left, tapeworm segments. On the right, tapeworm eggs.

Coccidia

Coccidia is single-celled parasites that love to take up residence in the intestinal wall and cause all kinds of mischief. While you won't spot wild coccidia with the naked eye, coccidia does generally lead to a very distinct, yellowish, loose, and foul-smelling stool.

Fleas

We've all seen these little pests – small black bugs that run and jump quickly. Most commonly found around the neck, ears, under the armpits, and around the genitals. Usually accompanied by large amounts of black flea dirt, digested blood that has been excreted. Fleas are transmitters of both roundworm and tapeworm, so if your foster animal has fleas, keep an eye on their poop as well.

Treating Fleas in Young Puppies

For puppies under 8 weeks old, topical flea treatment cannot be applied. Fosters should use a flea comb to remove live fleas. Dip the comb in warm soapy water first to trap the fleas, and after to rinse them off and kill them. *Only a mild dish soap like Dawn should be used.* In severe cases, puppies can be submerged up to the neck in warm soapy water – be sure to make a dish-soap collar around their neck first to stop fleas running onto their head. Very young, sick, or weak puppies should not be fully bathed unless absolutely necessary, as it may send their weakened bodies into a state of shock. Chilling is one of the number one dangers to young puppies who may still be unable to regulate their body temperatures.

*NEVER put a puppy away wet.
Thoroughly towel dry your puppy after any bathing and place them with a supplemental heat source to prevent chilling.
Do not blow dry your puppies – brushing can help speed up the drying process.*

Parvovirus and Ringworm: Two Hardy, Highly Contagious Diseases

While most of the above ailments are often relatively minor and easily treated, two highly contagious illnesses are the driving reason we take sanitation and proper quarantine so seriously: parvo virus and ringworm

Contact the foster team immediately if your puppies begin showing symptoms of either disease.

Parvovirus

Canine parvovirus, “parvo”, is a virus that attacks the canine intestinal tract and sometimes the heart. It is one of the most resistant viruses and can live in the environment for up to two years withstanding heat, cold, and most common disinfectants. Parvo is transmitted through the feces and vomit of infected dogs and puppies. Because it is so difficult to kill, the virus is easily transmitted by “fomites” - hands, clothing, or the shoes of anyone who encounters it.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs appear 3-12 days after exposure. The initial signs of parvo include loss of appetite, vomiting, dehydration, lethargy, fever, malodorous gray- or yellow-colored feces, or diarrhea streaked with blood. Some dogs infected with the virus exhibit no symptoms and never become ill, while others show a few of these signs and recover quickly. Some others die 24-72 hours after first exhibiting symptoms.

Prevention

The parvo virus is hardy; it can survive in carpets, cracks, and furnishings for up to two years. It is resistant to ordinary household disinfectants but can be destroyed using a fresh 1:32 bleach solution. Most dogs are exposed to parvo sometime during their life, so vaccination is crucial.

Ringworm

Ringworm is not a worm but a fungal infection affecting the skin, hair, and occasionally nails of animals and people. It is in the same family as athlete's foot and is not a life-threatening condition at all. In many shelter environments, however, it can represent a critical drain on shelter time and resources, as well as an extended stay in isolation for affected animals due to the high risk of transmission.

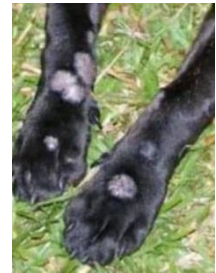
Signs and Symptoms

The most common finding in pets with ringworm is irregularly shaped areas of fur loss; the skin in these areas will usually appear rough and scaly and often the bald patch is round.



Prevention

Ringworm is most often spread from contact with an infected animal or a contaminated environment. Ringworm is very durable in the environment and if left untreated can persist for months in carriers, furniture, carpets, dust, and so on, and can infect animals housed in a contaminated environment. Keeping your foster in an isolated room, washing your hands, and changing your clothes in between handling can reduce the chance of spreading the fungus.



Puppy Veterinary Care

Overview

Your goal as a foster parent is to keep your puppies healthy and routine veterinary care is an important part of that. From receiving core vaccinations to medical check-ups, you should be prepared to bring your puppies into KHS about once every 2 weeks or more frequently as necessary. Caring for puppies can be a lot of work, but you are truly saving lives!

Mark Your Calendars, It's Booster Time!

Puppies are born with virtually no immune system but the antibodies they receive from their mother through nursing. These maternal antibodies gradually fade as puppies develop and the date varies puppy by puppy. Because of this variability, we administer core vaccinations every 2 weeks from the time puppies are 2 weeks old until they are 16 weeks old; the goal is to prevent an immunity gap that could leave puppies susceptible to deadly diseases like parvo virus. We also administer routine anti-parasitic medications.

You should expect to bring your puppies into KHS for routine boosters every 2 weeks. These appointments are generally brief and can be scheduled online at your convenience. Schedule booster appointments at www.calendly.com/khsfoster.

TYPE	WHAT DOES IT DO?	WHEN IS IT GIVEN?
DA2P	AKA Canine Distemper-Adenovirus Type 2-Parainfluenza Vaccine– this is the vaccine that builds up immunity to those viruses. Your adult dog will also get this every 1 to 3 years.	Every 2 weeks from 4 weeks old.
Pyrantel	A dewormer that kills several types of worms, but in puppies is most commonly used to treat roundworms.	Every 2 weeks from 2 weeks old.
Bordatella	A vaccination (given intranasally) to protect against Kennel Cough, a common and easily spread illness among dogs.	Once, on intake or at 4 weeks if puppies are less than 2 weeks old at intake.
Flea Control	Topical treatment to kill fleas and their eggs.	Once, at 8 weeks old

Vet Checks



It is a fact of fostering that sometimes animals will either come to you sick or become sick while in foster. KHS is fortunate to have a full-time veterinary staff including four excellent veterinarians to care for our animals. In the event your foster puppy becomes injured or ill, you should reach out to the foster team as soon as possible for guidance in setting up an exam with one of our vets.

Vet check hours are from 1-4 pm daily by appointment only; please do not show up without arranging a time first unless it's an emergency. Vet checks are scheduled directly with the foster team.

Medical Non-Emergency vs Medical Emergencies

Any medical concerns that arise with a foster animal should be reported to the foster team promptly; delay can lead to further complications, unnecessary suffering of your foster puppy, or even death. A healthy puppy has a lot of energy when awake; they are playful and will only spend a short time in your lap. Their eyes and nose should generally be free of any discharge. Their stool will be firm and well-shaped. They should be gaining weight every day. You should always notify the foster team if a puppy seems sick. For most medical concerns, it is appropriate to email the foster team and wait for a response. It can help to put "URGENT" or "IMPORTANT" in the email subject line to help it stand out.

Other medical concerns are much more serious and require immediate attention. To help you determine whether to email the Foster Department or utilize the emergency foster veterinary line, we have created the chart below.

<p><u>MEDICAL NON-EMERGENCIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny discharge from nose or eyes • Lack of appetite and/or weight loss • Lethargy and/or unusual behavior • Coughing and sneezing • Lack of bowel movement for more than 24 hours • Several bouts of vomiting or diarrhea • Large distended belly • Non weight-bearing lameness persisting for more than 12 hours • Swollen, painful joints or a gait that appears as if the animal is “walking on eggshells” • Lameness that initially improves but does not resolve in 24 – 48 hours • Incessant scratching of self <p>If your foster animal experiences one or more of these signs, please contact the Foster Department for advice or to set up a vet check.</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <p><u>MEDICAL EMERGENCIES</u></p>  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea for more than two days, especially if light colored—yellow or bloody • Vomiting for 24 hours or more • Not eating for more than 12 hours • Listless behavior or dehydration • Very high/very low temps (anal, above 102.8F/below 100.2F) • Any difficulty breathing • Any problem associated with systemic signs, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, weakness, and fever • Bleeding • Trauma <p>If your foster animal experiences one or more of these signs, please call the Emergency Vet Line</p> <p>If the emergency is during business hours (9 am- 5:30 pm), please bring the animal to KHS and notify the Foster Department</p>
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Checking for Dehydration

If you have concerns that your foster puppy is feeling unwell, a good place to start is assessing your puppy for dehydration. Dehydration can cause puppies to feel lethargic, unwilling to eat, and generally dumpy.

There are two methods for checking your puppy’s hydration. The first and less accurate method is to pull up the skin at the base of your puppy’s neck. When you release the skin, it should “snap” back into place within 1-2 seconds. A delay or “doughy” feeling of the skin may suggest dehydration. *Please note that this method is generally inaccurate for very young puppies and older dogs, whose skin elasticity is variable.*

The second, more accurate method is to check your puppy’s gums for color and moisture. A well-hydrated puppy’s gums will be pink and moist to the touch. Pale gums or gums that feel dry or tacky to the touch suggest dehydration. You can also assess capillary refill time by pressing gently on the gums. The gums will initially turn pale and then return to normal in 1-2 seconds. If it takes longer than this for the color to return, this is a sign of poor blood circulation which suggests dehydration.

Dehydration should be addressed quickly, especially in very young puppies. Contact the foster team promptly if your puppy appears dehydrated. If additional concerns are present from the

“Medical Emergency” list above, contact the team immediately or utilize the emergency line for after-hours emergencies.

Fading Puppy Syndrome and How to Respond

Overview

Fading Puppy Syndrome or sudden failure to thrive is a life-threatening emergency in which a puppy, suddenly “crashes” and begins to fade. This sometimes happens in previously healthy puppies with little to no warning. Fading puppy syndrome is most commonly a result of hypothermia (low body temperature) and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Although, other underlying issues such as congenital defects, diseases, and untreatable illnesses can cause a puppy to fade rapidly. Even with early detection and intense intervention, puppies may not survive but this fading puppy protocol could help save their life!

Symptoms of Fading Puppy Syndrome include:

- Low body temperatures, the puppy feels cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy; not getting up, unable to stand, can't hold head up
- Gasping for breath or open-mouth breathing
- Crying out

If your foster puppy is displaying these symptoms, you must act IMMEDIATELY.

Fading Puppy Protocol

1. Get the Puppy Warm -
 - a. Immediately wrap the puppy in a towel like a burrito, leaving only the face exposed. Do NOT take the puppy out of the towel to adjust or check on it—this lets critical heat escape.
 - b. Wrap an external heat source such as a heating pad on low or a rice pack around the puppy burrito. At this stage, the puppy cannot raise its body temperature on its own. Do NOT try to use your body heat to warm a fading puppy. Your internal temperature is lower than a puppy's and will not help.
2. Work to Raise the Puppy's Blood Sugar -
 - a. As soon as the puppy is warmed up, begin administering three drops of Karo syrup or sugar water (1:1 ratio) orally **every three minutes**.
 - i. Use a syringe if available
 - ii. If the puppy is not swallowing or you have no syringe available, try rubbing some Karo or sugar water on its gums and tongue.
3. Call the Emergency Vet Line – if there is no answer, please leave a voicemail and try calling again. Once you reach one of our vets, calmly tell us your name, the name of the puppy, and what you are currently doing to help the puppy.

It may take an hour or more for your puppy to come out of its crash and start to act normally again, so it is vital to keep at it. Know that even with perfect treatment, some fading puppies will not make it. Please remember that you have done everything you could and there could be underlying, untreatable illnesses that contributed to the puppy's passing.

The Home Stretch! Preparing to Return Your Puppies

The Return Process

Puppies are ready to return when they are healthy and over 8 weeks old. Getting your puppies big and healthy enough for surgery is the endgame; it's our final step to making your puppies available for adoption and getting them into their forever homes.

Plans for surgery are made directly with the Foster Manager or Foster Lead. As your puppies approach the 8-week mark, you should reach out via email to begin coordinating a return date. Shelter space allowing, puppies will remain on-site after surgery and go up for adoption shortly after. When shelter space is tight, we may ask that puppies return to foster for a few days post-surgery.

Returns are scheduled for the morning of surgery by no later than 8:15 am or the afternoon the day before.

Preparing for Surgery

If you are returning your puppies the morning of surgery, you are responsible for making sure they have no food or treats after midnight the night before; water should be removed by 7 am the morning of. The Foster Manager or Foster Lead might give you other instructions before return, which will be communicated to you when coordinating return. Other than that, you should enjoy your puppies! Give them plenty of playtime and snuggles before they head back to the shelter.

Adoption and Promotion

There are many ways you can help your puppies get adopted once they have returned. The first and most important thing you can do is to keep good records of your puppies and their time with you. Foster families should write up summaries about their foster animals and can include photos, what the animal likes, dislikes, behavior, and medical history. This helps us match your puppy to the right forever home! Please DO NOT post photos or write-ups about your foster animal on social media pages except for pages specifically designated for KHS foster animals or your personal social media pages. If you receive inquiries regarding a specific animal that is currently available for adoption or general adoption questions, please encourage them to reach out to KHS directly. It's important to never speak for KHS as an organization on social media and to be mindful of what you are posting to ensure it isn't damaging to our lifesaving mission. Please reach out to the foster team if you have any specific questions regarding our social media policy. If a friend or family member wants to adopt your foster animal, please inform them that they must still follow the same adoption protocol as the public. We do not put

animals on hold for prospective adopters and you must make it clear that interest does not guarantee approval to adopt.

The First One is Usually the Hardest

Understandably, you or your family might get attached to your foster pets, but please remember that you are preparing these animals to find their forever home and that they will be loved, wherever they end up. The first-time fostering is usually the hardest to say goodbye, but you'll be able to help so many more animals in need if you allow them to be adopted by someone else!

If you and your family are absolutely sure you want to adopt your foster animal and are prepared to take on that lifetime commitment, you must inform the Foster Manager or Foster Lead **before** returning your foster animal. You will still need to fill out an application, go through an adoption counsel with one of our staff members, and pay the adoption fee.

Congratulations on helping your puppies reach adoption and thank you for all your hard work!

Additional Resources

We have compiled some of our favorite supplemental foster materials, from written guides to video tutorials into a Google Drive folder that is accessible to any foster parent. Please check out these resources in your spare time.

You can find that Google Drive Folder here:

This manual and supplemental materials will get your foster career off to a great start, but fostering is a continual learning experience. Whether fostering your first or your fiftieth foster animal, you are constantly going to encounter new challenges and opportunities to learn and grow your foster skills. We are always happy to answer your questions, address concerns, and help you to achieve your fostering goals.

On Facebook? Join the KHS foster community at The Official Kitsap Humane Society Foster Page