



# FOSTER FAMILY GUIDE

Dog version

THE ARISTOPAWS - [ARISTOPATTES.CA/EN](https://aristopattes.ca/en)  
2020 VERSION



# I. Introduction

Congratulations! You are now a foster family for a dog rescued by The Aristopaws organization. This document will serve as a guide to ensure you have a smooth experience. Be aware that this document does not replace the contract and that the clauses presented in the contract are very important. We suggest that you keep it handy and refer to it if you have any questions about your mandate.

The dog that you are welcoming in your home requires special attention due to its health and the details of its case will be provided to you directly by The Aristopaws. This document will be useful for basic care and important information to be aware of when taking care of a dog.

Thank you again for your commitment and enjoy your reading!

The Aristopaws - Foster family section





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## III. Contact and emergency

As you know, The Aristopaws rescues animals that have a more or less serious medical condition. It might therefore happen that certain situations require immediate contact with our organization. Remember that our organization is the legal owner of the animal, which means all medical decisions must be approved by the organization. Here's how to contact us:



**By Messenger, via The Aristopaws official page**



**By email at [familles@aristopattes.ca](mailto:familles@aristopattes.ca)**



**Contact the (438) 815-0840 and use the extension of the person you want to reach or use the phone number on your contract**

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

**Call (438) 815-0840 and press 0**

If the animal's life is at stake, please go immediately to *Centre vétérinaire Laval* or *Centre vétérinaire Rive-Sud*.



## IV. Welcoming the dog



In most cases, we don't know the dog's past so it will be a learning experience for both of you. Your foster dog must relearn how to live, in addition to be taught the new rules specific to your home. You must therefore be patient and give it time to regain its self-confidence.

Later in this document, we'll provide you with some tips on dog behaviour. It is important to keep in mind that we only rely on positive reinforcement and that punishment should be avoided in order to develop a good relationship with the dog.

Know that we are always at your disposal for any questions you may have to ensure a smooth adaptation.

Source: <https://www.demaindemaitre.ca/>



## IV. Welcoming the dog



If you already have a dog, here are some basic tips for when they first meet.

1. Choose a neutral location, preferably outdoors, that neither dog considers its territory.
2. Leash up both dogs and go for a walk, keeping them at a distance at first then allowing them to get closer as the walk progresses.
3. Watch for each dog's calming signals (these will be explained later in the document).
4. Repeat the walks several times and reward them frequently with treats.
5. Try to quickly involve play in their interactions.

Source: <https://www.demaindemaitre.ca/>



## IV. Welcoming the dog



If you have a cat, here are some tips for cohabitation.

The dog can be isolated in its crate or can be kept on leash when the cat moves freely around the house. The little feline must have access to a separate room where it can rest away from the dog. Kitty will therefore be free to approach the dog's crate to get acquainted at its own pace.

Feed both cat and dog using positive reinforcement. Be sure to reward the dog for good behaviour, that is when it's calm, respectful and doesn't chase the cat.

Also note that the more high places the cat has in each room of the house, the more comfortable it will be moving around as it will know it can get away from the dog at any time if it needs to.

Source: <http://educateur.com/>



## V. Basic care



### Food

The Aristopaws will give you a dietary sheet indicating what food and how much to give to your foster dog. It is very important to follow our instructions because diet is an essential element in maintaining good health or can even be a treatment. Also make sure the dog always has access to fresh water because dogs need a good amount of water to maintain good kidney function. Think of choosing a bowl suited to the dog's size. A large dog will benefit from a higher bowl. We do not recommend giving bones, either real or hide.

### Treats

The choice of treats may depend on the dog's medical condition. If it is not a condition requiring special nutrition, we recommend treats made of dried liver that can easily be broken into small pieces. Bigger treats don't make dogs happier; a tiny morsel is enough to reward them. Many treats on the market are very high in calories.





## V. Basic care



### Housetraining

For small breeds or puppies, you are free to choose a training pad or “pee pad” of your choice, but we can provide you with washable pads. If you want to use disposable pads, the costs will have to be covered by you unless we tell you otherwise. Please refer to our Behaviour Section for the basics of housetraining.

### Walks

Time and frequency of walks depend mainly on your foster dog. Keep in mind, however, that the more it will be able to burn its energy and explore new environments, the happier it will be. We prefer the use of a harness when walking, especially for dogs that have a tendency to pull. Choke collars, with or without spikes, are to be avoided as they may cause injuries.



## V. Basic care



### Toys

Choose toys that are safe, with no detachable parts. There is no point in having multiple toys, have two or three toys and rotate them out to keep them interesting. It is important to always supervise a dog that is playing with toys to avoid it swallowing pieces. Chew toys are important for doggy to work its jaw and focus its chewing energy. Choose toys that are safe and not too hard to protect your dog's teeth. We recommend Kong or Nylabone type toys. Toys that allow the dog to work for its food are also very beneficial.

### Crate

Some of our cases require a resting crate. It must be its home or safe place and not a punishment. You can place a blanket or a pillow inside, but make sure the dog is not destructive as he could easily swallow pieces.



## V. Basic care



### Brushing

Some dogs will lose a lot of fur while others will not. It is important to brush your foster dog often to keep its coat healthy and to prevent knots which can be painful. It is also a great opportunity to check the dog's skin. The choice of brush depends on the dog and your preferences.

### Nail clipping

It's very important to use a nail clipper specifically designed for dogs to avoid accidents. There's a vein and a nerve in each of a dog's claws, so you must be careful not to cut them too short. You can see the vein on a white claw, but you can put a light under the claw to make it more visible. The claw has to be cut just before the vein. For black claws, you have to cut layer by layer until a white dot appears in the middle. If you cut the nail too short and it bleeds, you can apply pressure with a pinch of cornstarch or styptic powder available in pet stores.



## VI. Safety



There are many hazards around a house and it's important to keep them in mind to avoid accidents. First, more than fifty plants are considered toxic for dogs and these must remain out of access. You can visit the [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org) website to know which plants are toxic. Also keep medication out of reach as some can be fatal.

Dogs can also be voracious and will eat anything. Several objects, even the most unusual, can be swallowed by a dog and cause a number of problems. In addition to the possibility of intestinal obstruction, several household products and medications are toxic and can cause death. Keep away anything that might end up in your dog's mouth and secure garbage cans.



## VI. Sécurité



### Toxic food for dogs

- Macadamia nuts
- Grapes and raisins
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Onions
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Alcohol
- Pits and seeds
- Chewing gum

\* We recommend never giving table food to a dog. However, if the dog eats one of the foods listed above, it is important to contact us IMMEDIATELY.





## VII. Health



Symptoms indicating a possible emergency:

1. Difficulty breathing
2. Excessive bleeding
3. Loss of consciousness
4. Inability to urinate
5. Excessive diarrhea and/or vomiting
6. Convulsions
7. Open wounds
8. Burns
9. Inability to move
10. Sudden excessive vocalizing

Trauma:

**Hit by a car** → Possibility of internal injuries, go to an emergency vet clinic. Be cautious, a dog in pain may bite.

**Burns** → If accompanied by loss of skin or redness, seek immediate treatment from a vet. Watch out for electrical burns.



## VII. Health



Trauma (cont'd):

**Head or neck injury** → Keep the dog's head and back straight and bring it immediately to a vet.

**Open fracture** → Wrap the wound with a clean cloth and use a rolled up newspaper or magazine to create support during the trip to the vet clinic.

**Penetrating object** → Leave the object in place and seek immediate treatment from a vet.

**Hemorrhage** → Apply pressure with a clean cloth and contact a member of The Aristopaws to assess the severity.



## VII. Health



### Frequent medical conditions:

#### 1. Gastrointestinal system

**a) Vomiting** → There are several possible causes such as a foreign object, new food, pain, digestive disease, etc. Notify us each time your foster dog vomits. If vomiting is excessive or you find fresh blood in it, contact us immediately.

**b) Loss of appetite** → A dog may refuse to eat for several reasons. Watch out for other symptoms that could lead it to lose its appetite such as a loss of energy or vomiting. Please let us know of any change in eating behaviour.

**c) Diarrhea** → Changing food is a common cause of diarrhea. Please notify us promptly. If accompanied by spots of fresh blood, this probably indicates irritation. On the other hand, black diarrhea is very worrying.



## VII. Health



Frequent medical conditions (cont'd):

### 2. Eyes, ears and skin

**a) Eyes** → An eye condition can deteriorate quickly. Signs to watch for are discharge, closed eye or redness. It is essential to make the dog wear a cone collar as soon as the first signs appear to prevent the condition from worsening.

**b) Ears** → Head shaking, excessive pawing at the ears or the presence of discharge in the ears can be signs of otitis, which can be very uncomfortable for the dog.

**c) Skin** → There may be different types of skin lesions. If your foster dog tends to lick or scratch the affected area, you must prevent it from doing so.



## VII. Health



Frequent medical conditions (cont'd):

### 3. Respiratory system

**a) Cough** → If you think your foster dog has a cough, please let us know as soon as possible. Any source of respiratory irritants such as textile deodorants, air fresheners, second-hand smoke, etc. should also be removed from the house.

**b) Reverse sneezing** → Although impressive, reverse sneezing is not dangerous for the dog. It is a periodic breathing difficulty that happens when the dog's soft palate gets stuck, often during a period of excitement or exercise.

**\*IMPORTANT!** If your foster dog seems to have respiratory issues, **contact us immediately**. Also look at its gums; if they're turning **purple or blue**, it is important to go immediately to an emergency centre as this indicates your dog isn't getting enough oxygen.





## VII. Health



Frequent medical conditions (cont'd):

### 4. Urinary system

**a) Urinary tract infections** → Relatively common in dogs for several reasons, it is a condition to be treated as quickly as possible. Signs include constantly asking to go outside, blood in the urine, urinating inside the house (often in comfortable locations such as a bed or a carpet), urinating small amounts, etc.



## VIII. Behaviour

Canine behaviour is very complex, and our guide cannot cover every behaviour issue. We've covered the basics here to help you out, but it is critical that you alert us to any unwanted behaviour so that we may help you find a solution quickly.

### Calming signals:

Dogs use calming signals to communicate. These can be movements, body postures, etc. that the dog uses to calm itself in a stressful situation, to express its discomfort or to appease an anxious individual to avoid conflict. It is important to recognize them as it allows us to better understand the actions of our furry companion and avoid accidents.

Source: <http://demaindemaitre.ca>

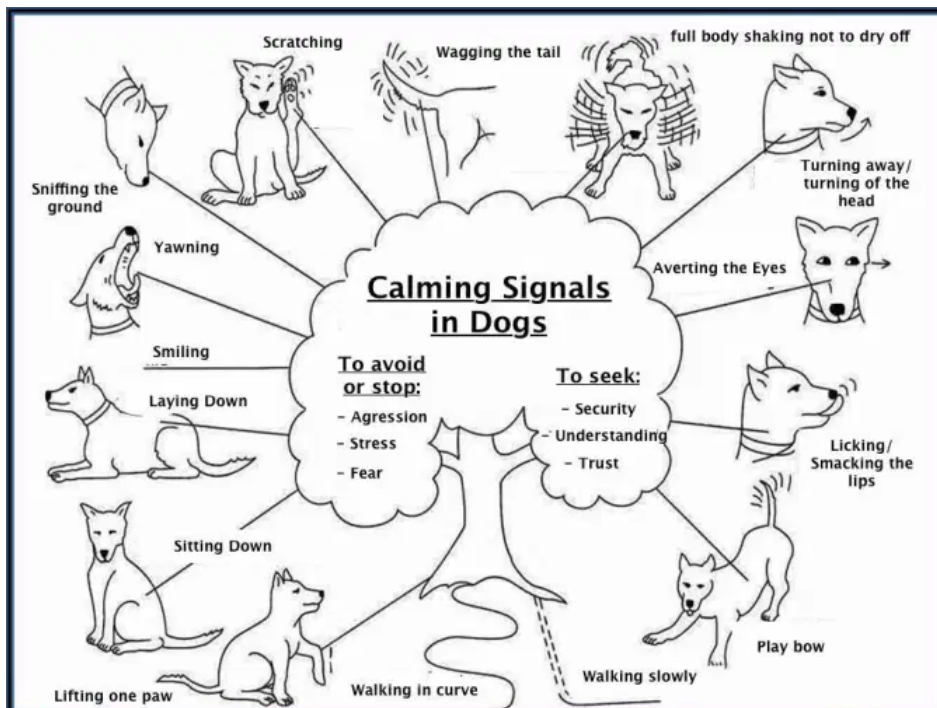


# VIII. Comportement

## Calming signals (cont'd):

Here's a list of some of the most common calming signals:

1. Yawning
2. Lip licking
3. Looking away
4. Sniffing the ground
5. Shaking off
6. Scratching



Source: <http://demaindemaitre.ca>



## VIII. Behaviour

### Positive reinforcement vs. punishment

By <http://fidelecanin.over-blog.com/>

Reinforcement: any consequence that causes the preceding behaviour to be more likely to occur again.

Punishment: any consequence that causes the preceding behaviour to be less likely to occur again.

The application of force or fear (punishment [...]) as the basis of dog training has long been the prerogative of some trainers. Why? Simply because it has always been thought that dogs (and other mammals) can feel no pain or emotion. We now know this to be untrue. Dogs feel the same emotions that we do and suffer both physically and psychologically. So why use force and fear as a training method? Especially since other methods are available today.

**The use of punishment is counterproductive!**



## VIII. Behaviour

Positive reinforcement vs. punishment (cont'd)

By <http://fidelecanin.over-blog.com/>

**Positive reinforcement:** Procedure by which the likelihood of a behaviour occurring more frequently in the future increases by the presentation of an appetitive stimulus following the behaviour, e.g.: my dog walks well on leash, so I give it a treat.

The technique of positive reinforcement does not only refer to food but to anything that the dog likes! Dogs also like anything that is pleasing to them: toys, playing, walking, running, chasing, petting, attention, words, freedom, etc. A dog can very well be trained with a tennis ball because it is its main motivation. Working with positive reinforcement means finding what motivates the dog [...]. Find what motivates it the most and he will adopt the right behaviour.

*Source: <http://fidelecanin.over-blog.com/2014/10/pour-en-finir-avec-les-propos-des-detracteurs-du-r.html>- translated by Danielle Dupuis for The Aristopaws*





## VIII. Behaviour

### Burning a dog's energy.

By Erika Laverdière,  
Animal Behaviour Specialist

	« Human » time	Conversion	« Dog » time
Physical exercise	60 min	1x	1h
Mastication	30 min	3x	1h30
Mental Exercise	3x 5 min (15 min)	10x	2h30
Exercise in total			5h

Here's an example of how you can burn your foster dog's energy. This can be adapted, but at the beginning you should aim for 5 hours/day. Over time, you may find that it needs more or less exercise time (depending on whether the dog exhibits less unwanted behaviours associated with the other strategies). You must vary the three exercises throughout the week as always repeating the same activity, chewing the same bone or learning the same trick is boring for everyone.



## VIII. Behaviour

### Burning a dog's energy (cont'd)

By Erika Laverdière,  
Animal Behaviour Specialist

**Physical activity** refers to moments when the dog is physically active, such as walks or play.

**Chewing** refers to any exercise where the dog uses its mouth continuously: eating a bone, a frozen meal, a Kong filled with food, etc.

**Mental exercise** represents moments when the dog has to think: training it to do tricks, teaching it new things, making it play games of mental stimulation. The newer the learning, the more exhausting it is for the dog. Conversely, asking it to do things it already knows is not exhausting.



## IX. Useful links

If you'd like to learn more about dogs, their health and behaviours, we've provided some helpful and trusted links below:

Centre vétérinaire Laval (under Dog info)

<https://www.cvlaval.com/en>

SPCA Montreal

<https://www.sPCA.com/en/category/tips-and-advice/>

Royal Canin

[https://www.royalcanin.com/ca/en\\_ca/dogs/health-and-wellbeing](https://www.royalcanin.com/ca/en_ca/dogs/health-and-wellbeing)

Purina

<https://www.purina.ca/articles/dog>

Hill's

<https://www.hillspet.ca/en-ca/dog-care>

