



Black Tie Boston Rescue

Foster Parent
Survival
Handbook

Procedures
and Resources



Welcome to our Rescue.

Thank you for fostering a BTBR dog!



Foster parents are a crucial and irreplaceable part of our rescue mission. By fostering, you give our Boston Terriers (aka “BT”), and other rescue dogs, the opportunity to grow, learn and heal before being adopted and finding their forever homes—maybe with you, maybe with another family. Your generosity in opening your heart and home is so appreciated; you provide support and a foundation of trust to a homeless pup.



Some of you reading this are experienced fosters.

Please give us feedback on omissions, areas for clarity or improvement. If you’re new to fostering, we hope this handbook will give you the assistance necessary to feel confident and informed during the entire fostering process. And, once you’ve become experienced in fostering, give us your feedback on improving this handbook.



Thank you for helping us help them.

Black Tie Boston Rescue Team



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This. Is. Rescue.

Black Tie Boston Rescue (BTBR) is a 501c3 organization that has been rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming Boston Terriers (and honorary Bostons—other pups who need our support) since 2012. Historically, the Rescue has facilitated the adoption of dogs of all ages to approved families all over the U.S.

Our goal is to provide BTs, and other breeds who find their way to us, the best chance at a successful happily-ever-after.

With the effort of our staff and the aid of those who want to help us reach our goals, we know we can make a difference. Our network of foster parents, volunteers, fundraisers, transporters, veterinarian offices, and our community outreach continues to grow and to breathe new life into a timeless need.

BTBR isn't the BIGGEST rescue but it is LOUD. Every day, we do our best in being the voice for the voiceless.



Our Rules

(They're mercifully brief)



Fostering is a gift for the foster family and the lucky pup. With that in mind, the first rule of fostering is: **Be full of love**. The second, third and fourth rules are to **maintain a level head, a strong will and realistic expectations about your journey with a dog who may be in bad shape**.

Our team approaches rescuing as a fluid endeavor. This means, we work together to make the best decisions possible for the good of each individual animal. Being fair and transparent means articulating the fundamental rules that the Rescue will enforce.

Be Ready. Fostering is rewarding but ... fostering is work. We'll ask if you've thoroughly considered if fostering is right for you. We'll ask if you've spoken with everyone in your home and made sure they're onboard with fostering. We'll ask if you've considered what kind of foster dog will best fit you and your family's lifestyle.

We don't ask questions to deter you or because we doubt you. We ask because the dogs can't. And like all of us, you don't know what you don't know. It's our job to prepare and support you.



Be Reasonable. Rescues exist to help animals who have been let down by people. Some have been abandoned entirely; others have never known the love of a family, been abused, or lived outside without the benefit of training. Some are sickly and/or elderly and require a good bit of care. Know your limitations and availability. It's okay to admit that you can't take on the world or maybe ... you can. Recognize that you're the voice of your foster BT and their lifeline. Be their champion.

Be Resilient. A rescue dog isn't a blank slate. You must be consistent, patient, kind and firm. Don't give up and don't give in. There are great resources to help address the problems we face in fostering a rescue dog. Check out:

<https://iheartdogs.com/fear-aggression-in-dogs-and-how-to-help>,

<https://iheartdogs.com/search/3-3-3-rule>, among others. Remember: We all fail and then we pick ourselves up, dust off, and start again.

Commonly Asked Questions

We wish we knew everything about the history, health, and behaviors of our rescues but, unfortunately, that's a rare occurrence. Fosters are told what BTBR knows. Consider what you want to know *before* your foster dog arrives and make a list of questions.

Commonly asked questions and answers:

Q: Who should I call if there is a question or concern?

A: The Foster Coordinator is your primary contact at BTBR (foster@blacktiebostonrescue.org). The Medical Director will guide you in all medical needs (medical@blacktiebostonrescue.org).

Q: How long does the Rescue expect me to foster this dog?

A: There's no standard answer—it depends on the condition of the dog and how quickly we can place the pup in their forever home. Generally, expect to make a minimum two-week time commitment. If there's a time limitation, however, communicate it to the Foster Coordinator as soon as possible—like planned vacations, changes in family structure, etc.

Q: Who pays for veterinary care? What's my financial commitment?

A: The Rescue will cover all *approved* and required veterinary care expenses and monthly preventative treatments.

BTBR works with medical providers to determine a standard of care since BTBR remains responsible for the health and wellbeing of our foster dogs.

Every dog will be different, so establish a plan with the Medical Director *before* visiting the vet for a **non-emergency** visit. Typically:

- First Vet Appointment: Heartworm test, fecal test, and vaccines (if needed).
- Heartworm, Flea & Tick: Use what your vet recommends or purchase Flea & Tick over-the-counter. Only a one month supply should be purchased at a time unless the Medical Director directs otherwise.
- Core Vaccines: BTBR doesn't reimburse for Lepto or Bordetella vaccines (unless the Medical Director makes an exception). Also, we don't want to overwhelm a dog with multiple vaccines at one vet visit. When a dog needs more than two vaccines, they may be split into separate visits. Please have this conversation with the Medical Director.
- BTBR reimburses fosters for *pre-approved*, out-of-pocket expenses incurred via Zelle, PayPal, or Venmo. Wherever possible, the Medical Director will set up direct billing between the medical office and the Rescue. If you obtain medical records and/or have reimbursement needed for out-of-pocket expenses, reach out to the Medical Director (medical@blacktiebostonrescue.org).

Commonly Asked Questions, Continued

Emergency vet visits are handled on a case-by-case basis but, as a rule, any situation where you'd call 911 for a person would be considered an emergency for your foster dog. Connect with a Rescue leader (see the listing on the last page of this handbook) as soon as possible once arriving at the vet's office or hospital.

The amount and frequency of medical care will vary per foster dog but the requirement that foster parents ensure scheduled vet appointments are kept and medications are properly administered is unwavering.

The Rescue believes in the ability of our foster parents to recognize when their foster dog is exhibiting concerning symptoms or worrisome behaviors. We're confident that together, we'll create a treatment plan that keeps your foster dog as healthy, happy and comfortable in your home as (s)he can possibly be.

Q: Can I deduct expenses paid for my foster dog?

Since the Rescue is a 501c3, non-profit organization, all non-reimbursed expenses (food, toys, other supplies, and medical expenses you choose to cover) incurred for your foster dog may be tax deductible. Consult your financial advisor to assess your individual situation.



Q: What happens if I can no longer foster the dog?

A: If you need to find a temporary or permanent placement for your foster dog, immediately contact the Foster Coordinator.

Q: What if I want to adopt my foster dog?

A: We believe that the foster family has adoptive priority. If your family decides to adopt your foster dog, just let the Foster and/or Adoption Coordinator know and the adoption process can begin.

Q: Who screens potential adopters, answers their questions and arranges visits with foster dogs?

A: The Adoption Coordinator finds homes for our foster pups; foster parents are not responsible for placements, but will be asked to review and contact interested applicants to ensure fit.

Foster parents can make a difference in marketing your BT by sending us great pictures—pictures capture the attention of potential adopters. See more on page 13.

Never hesitate to connect with the Foster or Adoption Coordinators as questions arise. AND, don't feel like any suggestion or concern is irrelevant.

Your Responsibilities; Our Expectations

Your foster dog should be treated like a member of your family. It's important, however, to realize that your foster dog is coming into a new environment and may be frightened, defensive or ill. Have a plan *prior* to bringing the foster pup into your home. Give them time to settle in and learn the sights, sounds, and creatures (on 2 legs and 4) in your home. The following is a high-level list of Do's and Don'ts to help navigate what it means to foster.

DO'S:

Help your foster dog acclimate to your home by establishing a routine and rules that give them support and stability.

Make sure your new foster dog has a comfortable and safe area where (s)he can decompress/retreat, if needed. All animals must sleep **INSIDE** your home, in an appropriate area.

Provide a safe, quiet and private place for your foster dog to eat and drink. Feed them high quality, weight-appropriate food on a regular schedule.

Create a Wishlist through AmazonSmile for your foster dog so that we can request sponsors for bedding, treats and toys, if needed.

Plan to take your foster pup to all pre-approved and necessary vet appointments.

Provide basic training and that special love and attention that allows your foster dog to be well-mannered and increase their chances of adoption.

Be an advocate for your foster dog throughout their journey to their forever home. Provide regular updates to the Foster Coordinator. Pictures, stories, and videos are a perfect way to get your foster dog adoption attention.

DON'TS:

Don't forget that your foster dog is going through a lot of changes in a very short period. Don't assume your dog will join your everyday activities immediately. Low-key introductions to family, friends and furbabies helps.

Never underestimate your foster dog's ability to find trouble. When they're exploring their surroundings, they can easily get into trash cans, toilets, electrical cords, medications, and lots of other things.

Dog-proofing your home will save you and your foster dog a lot of grief during the inevitable learning curve of a new environment. Be proactive.

If you are unable to care for your foster dog for a period of time, immediately connect with the Foster Coordinator for assistance. Turning a foster dog's care over to an unapproved person is not permitted.

Don't leave your foster dog unattended or off-leash outside. Exercise is important for your foster dog, but the amount and level of rigor depends on each individual dog. Dog parks are not permitted but a healthy run in a fenced yard and leash walks/runs are glorious.

Caring for Your Foster Dog

Feeding, Exercise, Training, Attention & Behavioral Issues

Feeding a dog is based on a variety of factors such as age, weight, and activity level. Some dogs may require a special diet due to food allergies or other medical conditions but, in general, the outline below is useful as a guide.

- *Adult dogs*: Dry adult dog food twice a day, once in the morning and once at night
- *Adolescent dogs (4 months to 1 year)*: Dry puppy food, twice a day, once in the morning and once at night
- *Weaned puppies (6-8 weeks to 4 months)*: Dry puppy food 3 to 4 times a day. Food can be moistened with water or puppy formula.

Always provide plenty of clean water.



Daily Exercise is important for dogs, rain or shine. The adage, “A tired dog is a happy dog,” holds true for foster dogs.

Foster dogs would love at least a 30-minute walk daily to release excess energy. If your foster dog is an adolescent, you will need to step up the activity level to include an extra walk or even regular runs, hikes or brisk walks. A dog that’s exercised regularly will tend to sleep when you’re not at home--and a sleeping dog doesn’t do undesirable things, such as bark, chew and/or become stressed and anxious.

As a tip, it never hurts to leave 6 feet between your foster BT and other dogs when you’re out for a walk. Social distancing is always their friend as it prevents dogs from unwanted conflict and exposure to illness.

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Caring for your Foster Dog, *Continued*

Training, Attention & Behavioral Issues

Training will help your foster dog seal the deal with their adoptive family. Whether it's crate training for wonderful potty habits or positive, rewards-based training for obedience, teaching your foster dog the basics of balanced behavior will make them more appealing to adopters.

Attention is essential for your foster dog. Positive human contact may need to begin slowly. Showing affection and providing structured play time for your foster dog will heal their neglected heart and improve their social skills.

You'll know when it's time for them to venture out and meet new people and experience new environments, but until then, giving them plenty of snuggle time and buttering them up with toys and treats won't hurt a bit.



Behavioral issues Some foster dogs will require some extra help becoming a successful member of your home. Often, we have no idea how the dog came to need us or what they've been through. Part of a foster parent's job is to support the dog's journey towards good behavior.

Most of the time, reinforcing good behaviors can be coupled with ignoring unwanted ones but, when correction is needed, positive reinforcement is key. Remaining positive gives your foster dog the opportunity to trust you and to develop into a well-balanced and wonderful family member.



If, at any time, you feel your foster dog has habits that you're unable to manage or require greater assistance, connect with the Foster Coordinator. Together, we'll determine the proper steps for the benefit of everyone.

From Fostering to Adoption

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

The foster family has adoption priority with their foster dog. If your family decides to adopt your foster dog, just let the Foster and/or Adoption Coordinators know and the adoption process can begin.

On the other hand, if fostering, not adoption, is your passion and you want to help many dogs find their happy new homes, that's equally wonderful.

The adoption process starts when an interested adopter inquires about adopting and submits an application to the Rescue for approval. The approval process is handled by the Rescue and, using the feedback from your updates, we check the potential adopter's references and determine their suitability.

Once the potential adopter is approved, they may wish to meet your foster dog. With your concurrence, we encourage this meeting to take place at a mutually approved, neutral location.

We'd also like your feedback on the potential adopter and their environment to determine if your foster dog would thrive in their home.

You have no obligation to be overly involved with potential adopters. But, you know your foster dog better than anyone else and, for that reason, your involvement in the selection of their potential forever home can make all the difference.

We ask that you keep an open mind but trust your instincts too. We want to make a choice together that takes everyone's best interests into consideration.



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From Fostering to Adoption continued

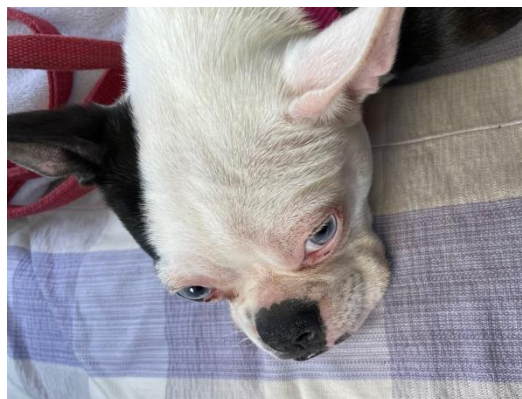
You're the Director of Marketing for your foster dog. A detailed bio, weekly updates highlighting things they've learned or enjoyed, and fantastic, high-resolution photos make potential adopters feel connected to your foster pup. We can't stress enough that a picture of them enjoying life, hanging out with their foster family, is absolutely worth a thousand words. It sounds overly dramatic, but a great picture can make *the* difference in a dog getting adopted. Pictures are the first thing people see when they are searching for a rescued dog. If the picture speaks to them, they click, they read, and they inquire.

Some great tips for your bios include accentuating the positive. It's important to be honest with potential adopters but phrasing like, "*She isn't potty-trained*" reads much better as, "*She is working on her house manners.*" We never want to fail our foster pups by covering up the truth, but being transparent can still be optimistic.

To get the most appealing shots, use natural light, a neutral backdrop and props. A well-exercised dog is a calm dog and that will help you get the perfect shot without too much coaxing.

Check out the competition. If you see an idea online that makes your heart jump, chances are mirroring that with your foster dog will cause the same reaction in others.

Marketing Your Foster Dog to Potential Owners: Tips for Great Bios & Photos



A black and white French Bulldog puppy is looking up at a person's hand with pink nail polish. The puppy is wearing a red collar. The background is a brick wall and green grass.

In Conclusion

We've tried to address many frequently asked questions in this handbook but not everything can be covered in a few pages. Please share your questions/concerns/feedback after reading this handbook with the Foster Coordinator.

This is a collective effort to save at-risk BTs and other dogs, and we need all hands on deck to accomplish our goals. We thank you for your time, kindness, and willingness to open your home, and adherence to the rules we've established to accomplish our mission.

Let's get to work!

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