

Here are some things to remember about newly adopted dogs and puppies:

- Your home will be at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> home your newly adopted dog/puppy has known - his/her original home, the shelter, and now your home.
- Many adopted dogs have never had forewarning about anything - they have just been moved from place to place. This can create some uncertainty in your dog until he/she gets used to your home.
- Keep in mind that grabbing at, hugging, and kissing are all primate behaviors, not canine behaviors. Many dogs can learn to tolerate and even enjoy these things once they are comfortable with a particular person (or people). Think how you would feel if a total stranger grabbed you and held you close!
- Grabbing a dog by the collar can be perceived by a dog as very threatening and can provoke a bite. Grabbing any collar, especially a collar that will tighten around the dog's throat, affects the dog's ability to breathe and swallow. Think about what you would experience if someone grabbed you around the throat.
- In order for a dog to **trust**, familiarity and predictability are necessary.

Key points for bringing a new dog into your home:

- Allow the dog to explore your home while leashed for several days and do not force him/her into any area if there is resistance.
- Use gates to keep your dog with you until you are certain that he/she is comfortable and behaves predictably in your home.
- Use barriers such as doors or gates, or a leash, to prevent your dog from slipping out of any open doors.
- It is best if the dog sleeps in the same area as the owner, even if the dog is crated. This simulates natural pack behavior and promotes a feeling of safety and security. Pack animals always share a defined space while sleeping.
- Keep water available for your dog/puppy at all times. Don't ever limit your dog's/puppy's access to water. If your dog is crated, you can use a water bottle designed for use with crates if he/she knocks water bowls over.
- Take your dog to the same area of the yard to eliminate and praise and give a treat as soon as he/she finishes urinating or defecating.
- Choose pull control harnesses for walking instead of choke or prong collars if your dog has a tendency to pull on the leash.
- Enroll your dog/puppy in a training class about 2 weeks after obtaining him/her. Choose an instructor who uses motivational training and who does **not** promote the use of choke, prong, or shock collars.

- Ask visitors who come into your home to ignore your dog by not looking at, touching, or speaking to him/her until you're certain your dog is comfortable interacting with guests.
- Recognize that protecting food and toys is normal canine behavior and is known as resource guarding. Choose a qualified animal behavior consultant to help reduce this behavior instead of trying to change it yourself.
- Establish a routine for feeding walking, exercising, etc., to help your dog get used to a predictable environment. Knowing what to expect is comforting to your dog and will help him/her adjust to your home.
- Take very brief trips (5 minutes or less) with your dog in the car, using a seat belt harness for restraint, to help him/her gradually get used to riding in the car.
- When walking your dog, if he/she becomes fearful or agitated by another dog, child, adult, or object, immediately turn around so the dog understands that you recognize the distress and that you are handling it. This may prevent your dog from developing unwanted behavior as a response to things that may upset him/her.
- Use treats to help your dog make a positive association with things that might be perceived as threatening, i.e., visitors, vacuum cleaners, hair dryers, musical instruments, alarm clocks, etc. However, give the treats before your dog reacts negatively to anything he might consider to be threatening.
- Do not correct problems because this can be perceived by your dog as threatening; instead teach your dog the behavior you want and reinforce that behavior with praise and a treat EVERY time the dog exhibits that behavior until it becomes almost second nature to your dog.
- Contact BARCS to reach a volunteer behavior consultant as soon as an undesirable behavior occurs. A behavior consultant can help you manage the behavior in a constructive way.

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