

Music
CD
Inside

Adopting a Dog?



Start off right with ...

A Sound Beginning

HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP & GAIN TRUST

By Julie Dorsey-Oskerka,
Patricia Rattray & Rebecca Cann

Illustrations by Rosemary Orbegoso
Music by Bruce Oscar

asoundbeginningprogram.com

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SECTION I

BEFORE THE DOG COMES HOME

Create a Safe Place

Everyone needs their own place and dogs are no different. Set up a space that is out of the main traffic area but close enough so that your dog can still see and hear what's happening around the home. (Locking him in a laundry room, putting him in the garage, or confining him to a pen in the backyard will not do the job). You need to make it a calm and safe area where your dog will go instinctively if he is overwhelmed, i.e., when company arrives or there's a loud thunderstorm. It could be as simple as putting a comfortable dog bed next to a wall, or placing it in the corner of the room so nothing can happen behind him. You want your dog to love this place so make all associations with it positive. To further prevent and ease stress you could section off an area around his crate or designated area to make sure that no one bothers him or makes him feel trapped during his quiet time.

Until you know that your dog is reliably house-trained and not destructive, make sure your dog's safe place does not allow free access to the rest of the home unless you are there to supervise. Eventually your dog can have the freedom to come and go as he pleases, but for now, you will need to monitor his access until he's ready for prime time.

Make sure that no one is allowed to bother the dog when he's in his safe area. This means no children and no other animals. Think of this as your dog's room and treat it with respect. Not only will this place serve as a retreat, but by spending relaxed time there your dog will be learning how to be left alone.

Things that help your dog's area feel safe:

- Comfortable bedding
- Crate with an open door**
- Favorite toy(s)
- If your dog came from a foster home, ask for an item that the dog slept with such as a towel or blanket
- Doggy chew items such as: Nylabones®, Kongs®, stuffed bones, etc., that can be enjoyed in this area only (See Appendix).
- Blanket to cover the crate for privacy or to help create that nest-like bed that makes dogs feel secure
- Temperature controlled area. Avoid direct sun and cold drafts.
- Free of unsafe items such as electrical cords, heating vents, garbage cans, cleaning products, poisonous plants, or anything your dog could potentially ingest or be injured by.
- Free of anything valuable such as your wallet, shoes, purse, remote control, cell phones, briefcase, children's toys, etc.



***When introducing your dog to a crate make sure he has free access to go in and out of it as he pleases. You can still prevent him from roaming around by putting the crate inside a gated room or by using a pen around the crate. Leaving the door open allows him to make the choice of using the crate or not. This is important because with an adopted dog you have no idea whether he was over-crated and could therefore be fearful of being locked away and forgotten once again. Also, some dogs may be prone to separation anxiety. These kinds of dogs do not do well in crates or small areas because it can increase their anxiety.*

Preparing the Sleeping Area

If you are planning to have your dog sleep in your bedroom, set up an additional crate or dog bed there. Although many people like to have their dogs sleep in bed with them, your new dog may not be comfortable with that kind of closeness yet, and may prefer to sleep alone. Unexpected new noises or movements may unsettle him so having his own safe place in your room will help him feel more secure.

Dog Proof Your Home

Create an environment in which dangerous or valuable things are put out of reach, locked-up, or tacked down. Your dog won't arrive knowing which items are approved and which ones aren't, so remove or limit temptation. Your goal is to prevent mistakes from happening, especially in the beginning. Later on, training and boundaries can be established, but for now, lock up the garbage cans, keep kitchen counters free of food and dishes, and put gates across doorways where you do not want your dog to go. You won't have to live with this much caution and management forever, but make it easy on your dog at first.



**PUT THE CD IN YOUR CD PLAYER WITHIN
EARSHOT OF YOUR DOG'S SAFE PLACE.**

DAY 1: BRINGING THE DOG HOME

There is an expression that says you never have a second chance to make a first impression, and while your dog does not judge and critique you in this way, you'll want to consider that this first day is your dog's introduction to his forever home. You want it to be without stress, without anxiety, and without fear! Therefore, organize this day with that in mind.

The First Car Ride: For Your Dog's Physical Safety

- Prevent your dog from roaming freely around the vehicle by crating your dog or using a pet seat-belt.
- Limit the dog's vision. This can be done with blankets on the crate or over the backseat windows. Remember that your dog's field of vision is different from yours. Many dogs get over-stimulated by the activity whizzing by at 60 mph.
- Keep your dog out of the front seat because of potential harm from air bags.
- Do not allow access to the driver.
- Do not allow your dog to hang out the window because he might fall out. Dogs can also suffer eye damage from road debris hitting them at high velocity or become physically ill from the over-stimulation.
- Do not crate or tie your dog in the bed of a pick-up truck as it is unsafe.

Picking Up Your Dog

DO NOT BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY WITH YOU TO PICK UP THE DOG! At most, bring one other person, preferably another adult who can help you monitor your dog's safety.

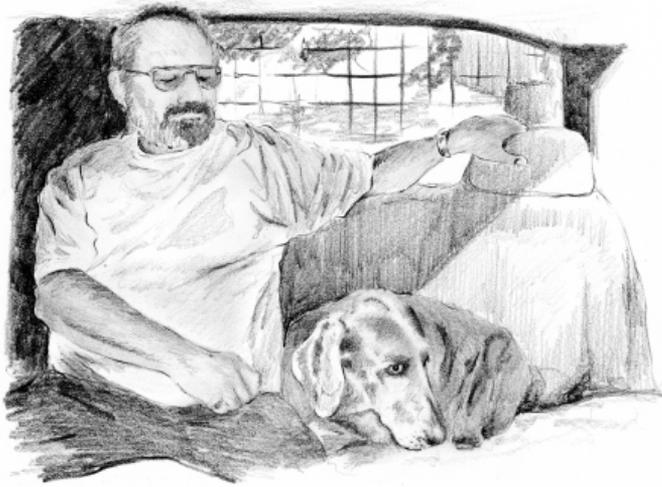


PLAY CD IN THE CAR ON THE WAY TO FEEL CALM AND PREVENT NERVOUSNESS ON YOUR PART. Dogs are social animals so they understand and pick up on our feelings. Even excitement can feed their discomfort, so arrive in as calm a state as you can!

Make sure the music is playing both when the dog gets into and out of the car, and during the ride home, but keep the volume low because a dog's hearing is way keener than ours and loud music could be startling. Calmness is the goal for entering the vehicle for the first time. You want to create an atmosphere of peace and tranquility so that your dog has a positive association with riding in the car.

Successful First Entry To The Car

- Have CD playing at a low volume with the engine off.
- Don't push or force him into the car. Let the dog check it out first!
- Bring plenty of high-quality treats with you.
- Allow extra time.
- Help your dog learn how to enter the car by guiding him with treats or rewarding him with praise and treats once he's gotten into the car.
- Bring a doggy chew item or stuffed Kong® which will give him something to do to make him feel comfortable during the ride.
- Bring towels and clean-up supplies just in case.



Once everyone is in the car, go straight home. While it is tempting to stop at the park or visit friends, you are still in an important transition phase and need to concentrate on your relationship with your dog before you introduce him to the rest of the world. When you arrive home, allow your dog to make the choice of when to leave the vehicle. **DO NOT DRAG OR PULL** your dog by the leash or collar as this would only add stress. If your dog doesn't want to get out of the car, try dropping treats on the ground and let him move forward on his own. This will take some patience, but you're creating a pattern for life and going slowly now will make things much easier down the road.

Before You Enter The Home

Take your dog out to his potty place on leash (even if it is a fenced-in yard) and let him explore as much as he wants. Enjoy this time by observing him. When he relieves himself in an appropriate area, reward and praise him generously. This will prevent him from having an accident as he enters his new home for the first time.

The First Entry To The Home



PLAY CD IN BACKGROUND DURING THIS TIME.

Keep this simple for the dog. Narrow doorways, slippery floors, or shadowy lighting can be scary for some dogs so give him time and space to enter as quickly or cautiously as he chooses. Use plenty of treats to reward his bravery for coming into the house. Dogs have amazing scent receptors so there will be a lot for him to take in as he enters your home for the first time. This can be a sensory overloading experience, so help your dog out by making sure the TV is not blaring, and by keeping children and all other people away from the door. Do not allow the other pets in the family to greet the new dog right away. Close them off in another room until everything is more settled. Allow your new dog to do some initial exploring and sniffing around the house but keep him on the leash so you can make sure he doesn't get into any trouble.

The First Meet 'n Greets

MEETING THE FAMILY

Your newly adopted dog has to learn to live in a people world and chances are he may have had trouble with that in the past. In this first day, keep all encounters short and low-key. To insure his success, let him initiate all interactions. Let it be his choice to solicit petting or attention. Don't overwhelm him with unwanted gestures and do not put pressure on him to socialize by inviting friends and their dogs over to visit until he's had a chance to settle into his new home. **THIS TIME IS FOR FAMILY ONLY!**

To introduce the dog to the family make sure everyone is sitting down in the main gathering room of the home. That will allow your dog to experience a calm introduction and meet everyone slowly and without interruptions. Let your dog choose to go up

and greet each person at his own pace. A shy and fearful dog may take a while to approach, while a friendly and boisterous dog may attempt to jump on everyone. Give the shy dog all the time he needs, and completely ignore and/or turn away from the boisterous dog until he calms down. Make sure to observe the following:

- Do not force or drag your dog up to say “Hi.”
- Do not allow anyone to approach him head-on or lean over to pat him on the top of his head.
- Do not put your face in the dog’s face.
- Do not reach for the dog.
- Do not stare directly into the dog’s face.
- Do not make a lot of sudden movements.
- Do not try to hug the dog.

All of the above gestures can make an unsure dog feel very nervous and he may react inappropriately. It is therefore especially important for children to abide by these rules. By remaining seated and allowing the dog to investigate at his own comfort level, you will help your dog learn that the people in his new home are gentle and respectful.

Once the dog has had a chance to investigate everyone it is okay to briefly pet him. Pet your dog from the chin to the chest, 2 or 3 times only and then stop. If the dog wants more, he’ll return. By keeping it brief, it allows the dog to make the choice of what he can tolerate at this time. The use of treats will develop a positive association during these interactions. It is best to do this by tossing a treat on the floor next to the dog but away from you. That way he doesn’t have to make a choice between being afraid to approach or being hungry and just wanting the treat. Until you have a few days to get to know your dog, it is best for all family members to offer treats by slowly tossing them on the floor near the dog and away from the people.

MEETING THE KIDS

Contrary to the popular media image of kids and dogs blissfully paired together, kids are very confusing to dogs. They are unpredictable, noisy, and full of smells. So it is very important how the dog is introduced to them. It must be established from the beginning that the dog is an animal to be respected. It has feelings, wants, and dislikes and those must be acknowledged and discussed. Taking the time now to establish a positive relationship between your children and your new dog will minimize the risk of having an animal with a mouth full of sharp teeth in the house!



PLAY CD DURING CHILDREN AND DOG BONDING SESSIONS. This will not only help calm the dog, but the children, as well.

Please observe the following:

- Work one on one with the dog (have children take turns)
- Have child seated on the couch or on a chair
- Have child talk quietly & calmly to the dog
- If the dog approaches, praise and toss treats on the ground
- Keep all interactions short and positive
- End first meeting by tossing treats and guided petting
- ABSOLUTELY NO HUGGING THE DOG!

People often mistakenly assume that dogs like to be hugged. This is not so! Most bites happen to children's faces because they have reached for the dog or tried to hug him. The dog feels trapped, gets scared, and reacts inappropriately by biting the child's face because of its close proximity. This can all be avoided by teaching your children the correct way to pet the dog, as stated earlier: from the chin to the chest, while the dog gets tons of treats.

***Make sure the kids understand that dogs find loud noises, fast movements, and unpredictability very stressful. During times of high excitement be sure to encourage your dog to go to his safe place.*

***Make sure that children are never allowed in the dog's safe place, even if your dog seems perfectly fine with it.*

Introducing The Safe Place



PLAY CD DURING THIS TIME.

This is the optimum time to introduce music to aid in calming and help your dog settle into his forever home. Show your dog his safe place but don't be in a hurry. Remember that you are trying to help your dog understand that this is where he can retreat to when needed. Gently show him the area but don't force him to go there. If you are not introducing a resident dog, remove the leash and provide him with a stuffed Kong® or a highly desirable chew toy. Now and forever, you can play this music when leaving your dog alone, as it will help him learn to relax so he can begin to trust and be comfortable in this new environment.

Many dogs just want to sleep once they are brought home, as their stress level is very high. If your dog needs to sleep, please allow him to do so!

MEETING OTHER DOGS/PETS

If you have a resident dog, or other pets, please go to Page 74.

The First Steps Toward A Routine

FEEDING TIME



PLAY CD DURING MEAL TIMES.

For the first few days, feed your new dog in his safe place where he will not have to share his food with other dogs, cats or kids, and

make sure the CD is playing in the background to create a calm atmosphere. In these beginning days, prepare his food, set it down and leave. Ask for nothing. In the future he can earn his food but for now he shouldn't have to worry about it. Just let him learn that he will be fed. Make sure a water bowl is available. Leave him alone long enough to finish but after 20 minutes if he's shown no interest in eating, remove his bowl and try again later.

POTTY TIME

Stress causes excessive drinking and panting, so your new dog may have to eliminate more frequently on the first day. Set him up to be successful and earn rewards by observing the following:

- Monitor water intake. Do not restrict your dog's ability to drink but pay attention to how much he takes in and when.
- Make sure you allow for extra trips outside within a reasonable time, usually about 20 minutes after he eats or drinks.
- If he has an accident inside the house just keep quiet and clean it up. **DO NOT YELL AT OR PUNISH THE DOG FOR THIS!** Consider it a sign that he needs more access to the outdoors.
- **PRAISE and REWARD** your dog for eliminating outside in the appropriate area.

If you pay attention in the first few days, you will establish a routine and your dog will clearly know where the acceptable and rewarding place to go is!

BEDTIME

Hopefully, you have decided where your new dog is going to sleep before the end of this busy first day. If you want the dog to sleep in his own bed or crate, DO NOT give him the opportunity to choose his own sleeping arrangements, otherwise, you may regret it. Help him to his safe place or designated bedtime area. Make sure to potty him first because once he's in bed, you do not want to give in to his barking or whining to go out. If you do, it could establish an unenjoyable pattern of midnight trips to the outdoors.

If you want the dog to sleep in your bed with you, give him a few days to adjust before asking for so much closeness. Many dogs prefer to sleep alone until they've had more time to learn about you.

