**Bringing a New Dog Home**

# **Before Adopting:**

* Gather all supplies that you will need - leash, collar, ID tag, crate or gate(s) (if needed), bed, bowls for water and food, treats, toys, waste bags, and grooming supplies (if needed).
* Dog proof your house. Move items that are valuable or hazardous that your dog could get into.  Check for loose cords and make sure they are secured or out of reach,
* Set up your house for your dog’s arrival. Determine where to put a water bowl, where you will feed your dog, and where your dog should sleep (in crate, in spare room, etc.)
* Determine the house rules for your dog and make sure all family members know what the rules are. Also determine your dog’s schedule regarding feeding time, walks, play time, training, and potty breaks and who will be responsible.

# **The First Day (Adoption Day):**

* Bring your dog straight home! Do not run errands or make any stops.
* Limit or discourage visitors to your home for the first week if possible. Your dog will already be overwhelmed and stressed due to the change in environment and you don’t want to add to the stress.
* Upon arriving home, keep your dog on a leash and walk around your property to familiarize your new dog with the area.
* Introduce your dog to the rest of the family outside one at a time. Make sure to use a calm-assertive energy. Let your dog approach new members and let your dog sniff them. You can have family members give treats to your dog to help associate the family members as good things.
* After meeting members of the family outside, bring your dog into the house on a leash and give a tour of the house. Keep the tour calm and relaxed.
* A long walk around the neighborhood is a great way to start bonding. Keep a distance from other people walking and other dogs for the first week and watch your dog’s body language. It will help you determine how he/she feels about people and other dogs.

# **Other Pointers to Help During the First Month:**

* DO NOT allow children (or adults) to hug, kiss, pick up, or stare at (direct eye contact) your dog during the acclimation period. Some of these behaviors can be scary for dogs.
* Keep a leash on the dog even when it’s in the house. Letting them drag a leash is a great way to help with training (getting off furniture if they aren’t allowed) or if they become door darters, you have a way to grab your dog before escaping.
* Take your dog outside often and praise your dog when they go to the bathroom outside.
* Establish daily routines – walks, feeding, play time, and rest time.
* Building a relationship (bonding) is the most important factor. Patience, daily routines, mental and physical exercise, and training will help your relationship and help your dog settle into his/her new home.
* All dogs are different, and it may take longer than you originally thought for your dog to bond with you or for training to start to take effect. You are just beginning to learn your dog’s personality and behaviors. It may take up to several months for you to get to know your dog’s true nature. But don’t forget that they are trying to do the same with you!

**Most important: Manage your dog’s environment so that you set your dog up to succeed!**

**Be proactive, not reactive. If you prevent inappropriate behavior from happening, then you will not have to correct it.**