

Temporarily caring for someone else's pet is a big responsibility. Both the pet parent that needs assistance and the potential fostering home should have a discussion on what to expect. Here are example questions to ask that might help you with the conversation.

For the Foster Home to ask:

1. How long will you foster the pet?
2. How often do you expect to be contacted by the owner?
3. Is it okay that the owner visits their pet? How often? During what times? Do they need to prearrange the visit?
4. Who is an emergency contact?
 - a. Are they authorized to make decisions?
 - i. If yes, can they authorize:
 - ii. euthanasia and if so, under what circumstances?
 - iii. your pet being brought to a shelter?
 - iv. your pet being moved to a new foster family?
 - v. how much money to spend on medical care?
5. What should you do if emergency medical care is needed?
 - a. Do you have an agreed upon emergency plan such as which vet clinic to use?
 - b. Can the clinic bill the owner directly or is there a set amount you can spend for reimbursement?
6. Plan with the owner what you should do if the owner doesn't come back for the pet on the agreed upon date?
 - a. What if they don't continue to touch base with you?
7. Do you expect the owner to provide you with all the food and other supplies for the pet?
 - a. What will you provide?
 - b. What will they provide?
8. At what point do you decide to bring the foster pet to the shelter or claim ownership, if the owner does not return for the pet? Detail out that agreement.

For the Pet Guardian (owner) to ask:

Many of the questions above reflect a mutual agreement between you and the foster home. You will want to review them with the foster home to ensure you both are on the same page.

1. How will my pet receive exercise?

2. Where will my pet sleep?
3. Are you home during the day? If not, how long are you away at work?
4. Will you be the only care provider?
5. If you need to travel for an emergency or have someone temporarily watch my pet, I would like you to.....
6. How busy is your home?
7. Do you have other pets? What kind and how many? Do they like new animals being in their home?
8. Do you have children? How many and how old?
9. Provide the foster family with two alternative people to contact, if you have an emergency and can't be reached.

Pet Behavior Questions

1. Has this pet ever bitten anyone?
2. Are there behavior concerns like behaviorally reactive to other animals, chases, guards food/toys, or has killed another animal before?.
3. What does your pet's average day at home look like?
4. Will your pet run away if I have the door open?
5. How often is your pet fed?
 - a. Once a day (morning or night)?
 - b. Twice a day
 - c. A grazer: eats from one large serving all day

Dog Questions

1. How does your dog do on leash?
2. Do you use a soft muzzle or other tools?
3. Should I stay away from other dogs when walking him?
4. Can he go to a dog park to run free with other dogs?
5. Does your dog require a lot of exercise?
6. What commands does your dog know?
7. When your dog is learning to not do something, how do you provide correction?
8. Does your dog dig in the garbage, eat socks/underwear or steal food from the table?

Cat Questions

1. Is your cat litter box trained?
2. Is it best to keep your cat in one dedicated room or in a large crate?
3. What quirky behaviors does your cat have?