



## ADDENDUM: Kids & Canines

**DOG NAME:**

**DOG DESCRIPTION:**

**DATE OF ADOPTION:**

Puppies are cute and fun, but also A LOT of work. We want you to be prepared for what is in store the next year or more, and that is why we have prepared this guidance and included it as part of our adoption process.

People often say they want a puppy so that they can train from the beginning, so that they don't inherit any bad habits, so the dog will grow up with the kids. These are great reasons, but they also come with a large responsibility: EVERY experience your puppy has over the next 12-18 months will help shape who he will be as an adult. It is impossible to predict what a puppy's complete personality will be when they grow up. This is why more than half of all dogs breed for service dog lives do not pass after months and thousands of dollars of training. A puppy will become the adult they will be in part due to nature, and in part due to nurture.

The puppy's nature has already been determined; the remaining responsibility falls to us now, to ensure through our nurturing that they become well-balanced adult dogs. If you are looking for specific characteristics or your household has specific non-negotiable needs, it is often best to adopt an adult or an older puppy, for example, 9-12 months old, who has been in foster care for several weeks, as these dogs can be better evaluated as to whether they will meet the specific needs.

Adopting a puppy is a lot like rolling a dice, but YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE with how you nurture your puppy. Below are several tips to help your puppy grow up to be a well behaved canine citizen. Any accredited training professional should be able to support you with the below if you need further guidance. As part of this adoption, the adopter recognizes and agrees to the following:

1. **Training, training, training!!** We can't stress enough how important formal training with an accredited professional is. This helps to build your dog's confidence, helps with socialization, and even your bond with the dog. No matter how many dogs you have had in your life, training with an accredited professional will NEVER hurt. If you have never had a dog before, or you haven't had a puppy in the last five years, as part of this adoption you agree to participate in a series of group training classes commencing within the next 60 days with your puppy.



<https://bit.ly/SOSTrustedTrainingOption>

2. **Dog body language.** Learning to read your dog's body language to recognize when they are stressed out and changing the situation BEFORE the dog makes a bad decision is critical to having a successful relationship with your dog. Some common misunderstood body language: yawning, lip licking, turning and looking away, leaning away. These are all signs that your dog is stressed or overwhelmed!!

It is important for all members of the family to understand these stress signals, especially children. Dogs will often exhibit these behaviors when being hugged, hovered over, or just not given enough space in general.

It is your responsibility as a dog owner to advocate for your dog's personal space. If you don't do it, your dog will learn that they have to do it for themselves. This will often be displayed as growling, showing teeth, and ultimately end in a bite if not recognized. You agree to:

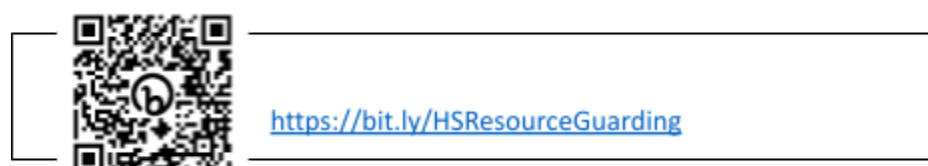
- Never let children in a dog's crate
- Never allow children near a dog when they are eating or chewing on a bone



3. **Resource guarding.** Resource guarding is when a dog does not want to give something up and acts to protect the object by growling, showing teeth, lunging, or even biting. The object could be anything that the dog sees as high value: food, a treat, a bed, their person, a tissue, the dog's own vomit! Resource guarding is a NORMAL dog behavior, but you can create a dangerous situation if you have not properly worked with your dog on the LEAVE IT command and do not respond appropriately to their body language.

The highest and most severe cases of returns we see are of 1-2yo dogs who were adopted out as puppies to homes with small children and are returned with resource guarding behaviors. This can easily be prevented by following a few simple rules:

- You agree to not put your hands in your dog's bowl when they are eating or move the food bowl around or away from the dog. There is no reason to do this – this is THEIR FOOD and the RIGHT TIME for them to be eating – and contrary to popular belief, this actually PROMOTES resource guarding.
- You will avidly avoid just taking things out of your dog's mouth. If they have something that they shouldn't have, you will always attempt to offer a trade. For example, if your dog has a sock and you need it back, throw a handful of really high value treats (pieces of hot dog, chicken, pepperoni) in the opposite direction. When they run for the treats take the object. When they return, give them more treats! This teaches them they by giving something valuable up, they are getting something better in return. Which will in the end teach them they don't have to "guard" their things.
- Starting in low stress situations and with positive reinforcement only, you will teach your dog a solid LEAVE IT command. This will be imperative to keeping your dog safe in case they get something dangerous in their mouth, and will help prevent resource guarding issues from developing.



*The adopter has had the opportunity to discuss this topic with someone from the SOSARL Adoption Team and/or a trainer/behaviorist of their choice and feels comfortable adopting this dog. Further treatment may be necessary/recommended if symptoms present, either related or unrelated to this history. The adopter understands these behavioral considerations and accepts responsibility for any further training or behavioral support needed for this dog, related or unrelated to these considerations.*

**SIGNATURE:**

**ADOPTER NAME:**

**DATE:**