



The Six P's—Prepping for Your New Pup!

Congratulations, Rescuer! You've made the incredible decision to open your heart and home to a deserving rescue pup, giving them a second chance at a happy life! We're thrilled you chose Paws Rescue League. You've likely scrolled through our website, social media, and countless profiles of adorable dogs waiting for their forever homes. Now, the wait is over!

As you prepare to bring your new furry friend home, we know excitement fills the air. Before the snuggles, playtime, and love begin, please take a moment to read through the important information that follows. This essential guide is packed with vital tips, and guidelines to ensure a seamless transition for both you and your new companion.

The concept of "The Six P's"- *Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance*- is a timeless principle that applies to every aspect of life, including welcoming your new furry friend. By embracing this simple yet effective mindset, you'll set yourself and your newly adopted pup up for success.

Effective planning involves researching, preparing your home, gathering essentials, and prioritizing veterinary care. It also means preparing your family by discussing boundaries, responsibilities, and expectations. Additionally, consider puppy-proofing your home and yard, planning for training, and anticipating potential challenges. Being an exceptional pet owner begins before bringing your dog home. The goal is a stress-free pickup day for everyone. Ideally, pick up day involves picking up your puppy/dog and heading straight home, where you'll introduce them to their new surroundings, immediate family, and other pets. This is where "The Six P's" come into play. By having everything in place, you'll be free to focus on bonding and establishing a routine for feeding and housebreaking. A thoughtful start sets the stage for lifelong happiness, minimizing stress and anxiety for both you and your pup. With proper preparation, you'll have essential supplies ready, understand veterinary care needs, and have a safe, puppy-proofed home. You'll also be prepared to plan training and socialization, and anticipate potential challenges. By walking through your door with confidence, knowing everything is ready, you'll create a happy, healthy environment for your new furry friend.

PUPPY PROOFING:

Take a moment to assess your space for potential hazards. Consider items on the floor or within reach, such as kids' belongings like backpack, shoes, and toys, as well as loose items like socks, remotes, and phones. To safeguard your home and pup, encourage family members to develop good habits like putting items away and designating a "dumping ground," like a Rubbermaid container in the entryway. Supervise your pup at all times, or crate when unsupervised, to avoid indiscriminate chewing and ensure their safety. Remind family members that protecting belongings and the pup's safety is a top priority. Establishing a clutter-free environment will foster good habits and a harmonious household. Simple steps like maintaining a tidy entryway, encouraging kids to put away belongings, and using storage containers can make a significant difference. Consider closing doors to various rooms, especially those that pose potential risks. Bathroom trash barrels, for instance, are a favorite attraction for curious pups. Bedrooms and rooms with carpets can also become trouble spots, particularly if previous pets have had accidents in those areas. Even if stains are no longer visible, lingering scents can attract your new pup. To prevent mishaps, start getting everyone in the habit of shutting doors behind them. This simple habit will significantly reduce the risk of messes and damage, facilitate housebreaking, and keep your pup safe from harmful substances. By taking these precautions, you'll protect your home from damage, keep your pup safe from harm, and create a happy, healthy space for everyone.

PROPER INTRODUCTIONS:

Proper introductions are essential, especially with existing dogs, small children, and cats. Avoid surprising your current dog with an unexpected newcomer, as this can lead to confusion, anxiety, and territorial behavior. Even if your current dog is well-socialized in public, home introductions can be challenging. A phased introduction approach is key. To conduct a successful meet and greet, meet on neutral ground with two people walking the dogs together on leashes - you with your dog and the foster or another person with the new dog. This approach can be applied both before adoption and when introducing the dogs at home. Begin by keeping the dogs apart, approximately six feet or more, and walk together for 10-15 minutes. This allows them to become familiar with each other's presence without feeling threatened. Gradually decrease the distance between the dogs to two or three feet, continuing to monitor their behavior. If both dogs appear relaxed, it's time for the next step. Allow the dogs to sniff each other's backsides, observing their body language



carefully. Positive signs include wiggly bodies and tails, while negative signs such as growling, teeth baring, or stiff bodies indicate discomfort. If you notice any adverse reactions, restart the introduction process. If all goes smoothly, short play sessions can follow, gradually increasing interaction time. Remember to reward calm behavior and provide separate spaces for each dog if needed.

PROPER INTRODUCTIONS WITH SMALL CHILDREN:

When introducing children to your new dog, it's essential to prioritize caution and calmness. Excitement can run high, but sudden movements and loud noises can frighten your new pet. Begin by standing still, allowing your dog to become familiar with your scent and the presence of children. Dogs have an incredible sense of smell, capable of detecting scents from over three feet away, so there's no need to offer your hand for them to sniff. After a few moments, kneel down to your dog's level, offering treats and speaking calmly. Encourage children to follow your example, moving gently and avoiding sudden movements. It's crucial to let your dog approach you and the children, rather than forcing interaction. When your dog does approach, allow them to sniff your hand before petting. During this introduction, remind children to respect boundaries and avoid hugging the dog's neck or crowding them.

FOOD:

It is essential to consider your new dog's dietary needs. To ensure a seamless transition, purchase an additional bag of their current food or the new food you plan to transition them to. A gradual transition is crucial to prevent gastric upset, and Paws Rescue League recommends consulting with your veterinarian or local pet supply store experts for guidance. A slower transition, typically spanning 7-10 days, allow your dog's digestive system to adjust to the new food. This cautious approach helps prevent digestive issues and ensures a healthy start.

BOWLS:

Even if you already have existing dogs, it's crucial to provide separate essentials. One vital item is a dedicated food bowl, at the minimum. Opt for ceramic or stainless-steel bowls, which offer durability, easy cleaning, and reduced bacterial growth. Avoid plastic bowls, as they can be easily chewed and damaged, providing a breeding ground for bacteria. By providing your new dog with their own bowl, you'll prevent resource competition with existing dogs, maintain hygiene and cleanliness, and ensure a healthy environment for your new companion.

CRATE:

Before bringing home your new furry friend, it's essential to have a crate set up and strategically placed. Positioning the crate near the door you'll use most frequently for entry and exit simplifies training and reduces accidents. Consider having multiple crates in your home, including one in your bedroom for nighttime sleeping and another near exits for quick access. This setup is particularly beneficial for young puppies who require frequent nighttime outings. By planning ahead and placing your crate(s) thoughtfully, you'll create a comfortable and secure space for your new companion, simplify housebreaking, and reduce separation anxiety. A well-placed crate helps establish a routine and provides a sense of safety.

CHEW ITEMS & TOYS:

Consider stocking up on engaging and soothing treats. Kongs are a go-to favorite, providing mental stimulation and satisfaction. Prepare them in advance by filling with yogurt and kibble, then freezing. This gentle combination helps alleviate gastric upset from travel. As your dog settles in, you can introduce a wider variety of fillings, such as canned food, cream cheese, and peanut butter. In addition to Kongs, marrow bones and bully sticks offer hours of chewing pleasure for teething dogs. Introduce these treats gradually, allowing your dog to chew for shorter periods to build tolerance for richer flavors. Remember to avoid cooked bones and rawhide, as they pose safety risks. Consult with knowledgeable staff at your local pet specialty store to find safe, suitable products for your dog. For optimal convenience, consider purchasing multiple Kongs, which are dishwasher safe. While your dog enjoys one, you can have another ready to go in the freezer.

When welcoming a new dog into your family, it's tempting to go on a toy shopping spree. However, consider starting with a small selection of diverse toys to gauge your pup's preferences. Begin with three to five toys of different styles, such as plush, rubber, and interactive, to see which ones become favorites and withstand playtime. This approach will save you



from buying multiple toys that may end up shredded or ignored. Safety should always be top priority when selecting toys. Avoid leaving soft toys or squeaky toys in crates, as they pose choking hazards due to potential ingestion of stuffing, squeakers, or plastic eyeballs. Instead, opt for frozen, stuffed Kongs during crate time. Supervise playtime closely until you understand your dog's habits, and inspect toys for small parts and potential hazards. Unfortunately, toy-related accidents can happen. A founder of Paws Rescue League shares a personal experience where their dog ingested a toy, resulting in a blockage that required surgery. This cautionary tale emphasizes the importance of choosing durable, safe toys and monitoring playtime.

HARNES AND LEASH:

For safe and stress-free transportation, it's essential to choose the right equipment for your dog. A secure harness or martingale collar is highly recommended. Among martingale collars, buckle-free designs stand out as the safest option. These collars prevent dogs from slipping out, regardless of how much they pull, as long as they're properly fitted. In fact, Paws Rescue League relies on buckle-free martingale collars for their foster dogs. By investing in a reliable harness or martingale collar, you'll significantly enhance your dog's safety and comfort during car rides. This simple precaution reduces the risk of escape or injury, giving you peace of mind as a driver and dog owner. Whether you're heading to the vet, park, or road trip, prioritize your dog's security with the right transportation gear.

VETERINARY CARE:

At Paws Rescue League, we ensure each dog receives a thorough veterinary checkup before transportation to New England. A licensed veterinarian gives our dogs a clean bill of health and provides an interstate health certificate, unless they originated from New England. Additionally, our dogs see a veterinarian within 48 hours of arriving in Connecticut. Adopting a puppy or adult dog requires careful planning for veterinary care. Puppies are particularly susceptible to illness, similar to human babies, and need extra protection. Viruses like parvovirus can linger on surfaces for over a year and in the ground for years, posing a significant risk. To safeguard your puppy, avoid public places like pet stores, dog parks, and social gatherings until two weeks after their third DHPP vaccine. To ensure a smooth transition, have a veterinarian lined up and schedule an appointment within seven days of your dog's arrival. Paws Rescue League provides medical records to help you and your vet plan necessary vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery, heartworm prevention, and flea and tick management. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and holiday season, veterinary clinics are experiencing delays, so plan ahead.

TRAINING:

To ensure your adopted pup becomes a well-mannered canine citizen, investing in obedience training is crucial. Enroll your dog in a Puppy Kindergarten or Basic Manners class, followed by at least one upper-level obedience class. Before your pup arrives, research local trainers and ask friends, family, and the Paws Rescue League team for recommendations. Additionally, Aubrey Sancho, a partnering trainer, has created a valuable video with tips and advice on bringing your new dog home, available on the Adopter Facebook page. Beyond training, it's essential to consider your dog's emotional transition. All dogs, regardless of age, need time to decompress after entering a new home. This process typically takes three days but can vary depending on the individual dog. The 3-3-3 rule, included in your adoption folder, provides guidance on this transition period. By allowing your dog space and patience, you'll foster a calm and confident companion. Giving your dog time to adjust will strengthen your bond and set the stage for a lifelong, loving relationship. Early obedience training and a gentle transition are key to raising a well-adjusted and well-behaved dog.

As you embark on this exciting journey, Paws Rescue League is committed to supporting you every step of the way. To ensure a smooth start, consider the Six P's, a valuable guide for navigating the early days with your new pup. For personalized guidance, we recommend partnering with Aubrey Sancho, a certified trainer and valued partner of Paws Rescue League. Aubrey offers complimentary consultations and exclusive discounts for our adopters, providing expert advice tailored to your needs. Reach out to her directly at aubrey@pawsrescueleague.org.