

So, you want to adopt a puppy? That's amazing, and we appreciate that you want to adopt and not shop! There are so many puppies in need. Did you know that the average age of dogs in rescue is 1 year old? That's because puppies are adorable and small, but they're very soon much bigger, and without proper training they can become unruly. The number 1 thing we want to prevent (besides more litters) is puppies returned to the shelter just because they're full grown. So let's get into puppy ownership and go through the highs and lows to ensure you're prepared.

3 Rounds of Shots

Puppies cannot go anywhere but your home until they've received all 3 rounds of their puppy shots. Parvovirus and distemper are deadly, and puppies are very susceptible. They start their shots at 6 weeks old, and receive each round 2 weeks apart. We provide all of the shots, but it's very likely you'll bring them home before they've had all their shots. It's very important to understand that until they've received all 3 rounds, puppies cannot go on walks, dog parks, or visits. Ideally, they would only use pee pads, so they don't go into the yard. But if you want to take them outside, consider bleaching an area and only letting the puppy use that area and not wander around the yard. Parvovirus lives in the ground for years and only takes a couple sniffs to infect a puppy.

Chewing, Potty Training, Growing

Puppies start out as adorable little balls of love that run full speed on tiny legs, and then curl up for a nap on your chest for a nap. Puppies teeth on everything, but aside from sharp little teeth, they can't do much damage. They have tiny accidents that are so easy to clean up as they're learning.

But they start to grow, and grow quickly. Before you know it, your 10 pound puppy is 25 pounds, still running around the house full speed and maybe knocking into things and knocking things over. They're teething still and chewing on everything. Their accidents get more bothersome.

Maybe you wanted a puppy to grow up with your baby, but you realize it's getting less cute as the puppy grows. As the puppy gets a little bigger, he'll likely knock the baby over accidentally as he runs through the house. He might try to play with the baby and accidentally hurt it. If you're raising a tiny human, you know how hard that is already.

At 1 year old, your puppy is nearly full grown, but will still fill out some. Now he's a BIG puppy still maybe having the occasional accident or chewing up something you love. He's stronger and so is his teething--on the patio furniture cushions, kids' toys, shoes, and who knows what else. He's still filled with that same puppy energy and needs more outlets to get it out in a productive way rather than a destructive way. He needs consistent walks and exercise or boredom causes destruction. He's also still scrambling through the house full speed, probably jumping up on adults and kids. Now you're stressed to the max and want to return him.

The Importance of Boundaries from the Beginning

That last section probably sounded a bit intimidating, but puppy ownership doesn't have to be that way. It's important that the rules that you'll want in place while they're big, start when they're small. It might be cute when a little puppy is jumping up on everyone, but if you're not consistently discouraging that behavior, soon he'll be 5x the size and still doing it. Start out with boundaries when they're puppies so you don't end up with problem behaviors you have to try to fix in a few months. Just like kids, puppies have to be taught how to be good adults, but adult size comes a lot faster in puppies. If you let your puppy run wild, soon he'll be 75 pounds and still running wild and no one wants to deal with bad manners at that size. There are a lot of trainers that offer puppy classes, and I encourage you to look into one! We can even provide suggestions.

It's beyond frustrating and sad when puppies are returned just when they hit that magic 1 year mark just because they're acting the way puppies act when they don't get any boundaries or direction.

A kennel creates not only a safe space for the puppy to be when you're away or can't monitor him, but it can be a very positive space that your dog loves to have, too. Dogs are den creatures, and naturally seek out a smaller safe space for resting. Kennels are also extremely useful for house training. If you can't watch your puppy, kennel him for that time, and if he's whining, cover the kennel with a blanket. Eventually after your puppy is used to your routine, you might need the kennel less and less or even discontinue using it if you choose. But we highly recommend you search Kennel Training and read about how useful it is for your dog.

YouTube or Google searches are great resources for puppy training tips, and we even have some resources at the bottom of the FAQ page of our website. We're also available if you have questions because we want to ensure a successful adoption of every puppy that comes through our rescue!

After reading all of this, do you feel ready for a puppy? Fantastic! Let's get that adoption application done, and set you up with your perfect forever match.