



Sitter Guidelines

Thank you for choosing to care for a BluePath dog in your home! This is a condensed document on basic care and handling. Safety is our highest priority; it's imperative that everyone in your home is safe at all times. **In an emergency, call us at 845-377-0477.**

Our mission

BluePath is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides autism service dogs, offering safety, companionship and opportunities for independence. We rely heavily on the generosity of donors and volunteers to fulfill our mission.

General guidelines:

- Carefully review the section below on preparing your house and yard.
- Feed the dog only his prescribed diet. Absolutely no human food and no treats off the floor.
- Don't leave the dog unattended unless he is safely secured in a crate.
- Don't let your dog off leash except in a securely fenced area. Even in an enclosed area, be sure to always watch him/her.
- Do not allow the dog on furniture.
- Do not take the dog to major events or dog parks. Avoid interactions with other dogs. Do ask questions anytime you are unsure if you should include the dog in a particular activity. Remember, younger puppies should have shorter, less vigorous outings.
- Foster dogs generally do not need to be taken to Formal Training while with sitters.
- During a busy gathering or holiday party, the dog should be secured in a crate in a quiet area of the house.
- Don't allow children to walk or lead the dog.
- For general dog questions, ask the raiser / foster or contact Megan Baker at Megan.Baker@bluepathservicedogs.org or 401-639-5235.
- If the puppy becomes ill at any time while in your care, please refer to the Health and Veterinary Care information section on our website. (www.bluepathservicedogs.org/resourcelibrary, password bluepath).
- **If you have imminent concerns for the dog's health, call us anytime at 845-377-0477.**

Safety First - Preparing your home and yard

Your home needs to be prepared for a dog in the same way you safeguard your home for a toddler.

- **Human medications are the number one cause of poisonings in dogs and should be put away in cabinets - never leave them out on countertops or bathroom vanities.** Tylenol, Advil (Ibuprofen) and Aleve (Naproxen) should never be given to dogs.
- Electrical cords should be completely hidden and away from your puppy's reach.
- **Mouse and rat poisons are prohibited in homes with BluePath dogs.** This applies to all areas of the house, including the garage, regardless of whether the dog has access to the room.
- All plants should be kept out of reach.
- All chocolates should be kept in cabinets or pantries and never left out on the kitchen counter or in bowls on coffee tables or kitchen tables.
- Grapes and raisins can be toxic and even deadly to some dogs, even with the ingestion of only one.
- Ingestion of gums, candies and food products containing the sugar substitute Xylitol can cause life-threatening liver damage and dangerously low blood sugar. Note that some peanut butters contain Xylitol.
- Other food items like garlic, onions, and macadamia nuts cause varying degrees of toxicity.
- Peach pits and corn cobs easily cause intestinal obstructions requiring surgery.
- Clothing items left on the floor or in accessible laundry baskets can be chewed into pieces or swallowed whole. Please keep socks and underwear in drawers or sealable laundry bins.
- Cocoa mulch used in some landscaping is dangerous.
- Garbage bins need to be kept in latching cabinets or in locking containers.
- Dogs should not have access to garages as anti-freeze is extremely deadly.
- Pools, rapidly flowing creeks and rivers, and deep-water ponds can be drowning hazards to all dogs, but especially young puppies.



There are many more dangerous and toxic items that can be found in the home and yard. Always know where the puppy is and what he or she is doing in your home, yard or in public. For your reference, here are important websites and phone numbers to refer to in an emergency. *Please note that this center charges a fee per call. This will not be reimbursed by BluePath.*

- **Animal Poison Control: 888-426-4435** (<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>)
- **Poisonous Plants: 888-426-4435** (<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>)

Feeding, watering, and relieving

The raiser or foster will provide dog food and amounts to feed. No other food should be given to the dog.

The dog should sit patiently while his food is being measured and poured into the bowl. Once the bowl is placed on the floor or inside the crate, the dog should wait for the release command, “break” before beginning to eat. Unless advised otherwise, feed your dog in the crate with the door closed.

Most dogs can have water freely throughout the day. Monitor water intake with a young puppy carefully. Pull water bowl two hours before bedtime.

All dogs are required to be on leash when taken out to relieve themselves. Once the pup has relieved himself, you can allow him freedom in a fenced-in yard or on a long-line if the yard is not fully fenced.

Riding in the car

The safest place for a BluePath pup while traveling is in a crate.

Exercising the dog on a long line or fenced in yard

It is very important that you never let the puppy off leash in an open space that has no physical boundaries. The dog can be exercised on a long line or in a fenced-in yard. Both provide safety for the puppy and piece of mind to the caretaker.

If there are other dogs in the household, monitor the play to be sure that no dog is grabbing at the other dog’s collar. If this is the case, the collars must be taken off.

Walking in public, using the collar and leash

- When taking a walk with an older puppy (five months and above), try to keep the puppy walking on your left side. Use “Let’s Go” as the cue for your puppy to start walking with you.
- Please avoid walking in areas where many other dogs are also out walking. Use a wide buffer when passing other dogs.
- Give the dog a chance to urinate and defecate before and after the walk and keep the dog moving at your pace.
- Never allow children under the age of 14 to handle the pup on leash.



Household pets other than dogs

Many households will have a variety of other pets or companion animals. They all need to be handled slightly differently to ensure the safety of all your pets. Keep your dog separate from cats, birds, ferrets, rabbits, etc.

If you have a pet dog in the home, this introduction should be done outside in the yard or in the driveway. Put your pet dog and the puppy on leash and slowly allow them to greet each other. Do

not allow them to mouth, grab, or bite each other. Give them time to get acquainted and keep the leashes loose, praising both dogs for calm and appropriate behavior.

Crate

The crate is an essential tool for our dogs; it's a safe space for them to relax. With the exception of overnight, the dog should not be in the crate for more than four hours at a time. Use the crate:

- Anytime you will not have eyes on the dog.
- At bedtime. Keep the crate in a room where the dog can see people.
- When the dog is tired and needs a break from the home environment.

Use a couple of treats and say the word "go kennel" to send the dog into the crate. Also realize when the dog first comes to a new home, he may whine or complain in his crate. Ignore this behavior.

Basic house behavior

- It will be very important that the dog is always monitored in your home. If you can't be 100% focused on the dog, he or she should go into the crate.
- The dog should not be permitted to beg at the edge of the table or beg and get in your way while you are cooking. Place the dog in the crate if he demonstrates inappropriate behavior while you're eating or cooking.

Children

Protecting children around dogs and puppies is paramount with every encounter! Small children and toddlers should be carefully monitored around dogs and NEVER left alone together.

Toys

The dog's raiser or foster will bring acceptable toys and leave them with you at drop off. **Please do not buy any additional toys as these can cause harm to the BluePath puppy.**

Basic BluePath Commands

Break - tells your dog that he is free from the last position cued.

Down - tells your dog to lay his body on the ground.

Dress - tells the dog to put his head through a collar or jacket.

Drop – dog should release whatever he has in his mouth.

Get Busy – tells the dog to make an effort at toileting.

Heel – dog should sit at your left side.

Here - this command tells the dog to come swiftly to you.

Kennel - tells the dog to go into the crate.

Let's Go - This command tells the dog to walk casually next to you.

Load Up – tells your dog to get into the car.

Off - used for getting the pup off of people and furniture and any other object he should not be on.

Place - tells your dog to go to a bed or mat and lay down.

Sit - dog should put his behind on the ground.

Stand - tells the dog to stand on all four feet.

Stay – tells the dog to stay in the last position cued by the handler. Stay is most often used with your dog in the sit or down position.

Wait - tells the dog to remain in the last position cued and not to cross a threshold or barrier until told otherwise.

Thank you

We hope that sitting is a positive experience for you and your family; thank you for your support of our mission!

