



Adopters: What to Expect at a DHDR Meet & Greet

After you have completed the application, phone interview, and home visit process, our matchmaker has emailed you to let you know you have been approved. When you and our matchmaker identify a possible match, or matches, we will schedule the Meet & Greet. The dog's foster parent will reach out to you to schedule after our matchmaker has filled them in. Keep in mind:

- Most often, we start with an initial Meet & Greet that does not include any of your pets, should you have resident animals. This allows you to determine if you feel the dog is a fit for you before you introduce the dog to your animals. If that goes well, the second Meet & Greet includes your resident dog(s).
 - If you do not have any resident dogs, a second Meet & Greet is not required.
- Meet and Greets take place on safe neutral territory (not on your property or the foster's property). A park is great, but a busy park or a dog park would not be ideal. You and the foster will agree on a mutually convenient location.
- Meet and Greets often do not happen until a dog has been under DHDR in-home foster care for at least two weeks, although exceptions can be made by the Executive Director.
- Any person, including minors, living in your household must be present at the meet and greet.

During the Meet & Greet with resident dogs, we adhere to the following process:

- Ensure your dog is comfortable and not "[over threshold](#)" when arriving in the neutral environment.
- Ensure your dog is on a secure collar and leash. Retractable leads should not be used, and DHDR recommends you use a secure martingale collar that can not slip. It will help if everyone has yummy treats on hand.
- First, the foster dog will meet the human applicants. We want to ensure proper initial touching - let the rescue Doberman come to you first, and do not immediately "get in their face," squeeze, hug, wrestle, etc. Our volunteers will also follow this process when it comes to touching your dog.
- If that introduction is successful and other pets are present, we will begin the meet and greet by doing a pack walk, with plenty of space (10-20 feet or more if needed) between the DHDR dog and your pet. If there is more than one dog, we will start with one dog at a time.
 - When the dogs look at each other, reward calm body language and behavior with praise and bits of treats.
 - If there are any signs of concern, even subtle, or strong leash pulling, increase the distance until the dogs are calm. Use this process to get closer without a tight leash and with good body language. Some dogs are not ready to meet right away.
- Once the dogs can calmly be within about 5 feet of each other, we allow the two to meet.
 - Do not allow nose-to-nose meetings. Allow one dog to walk behind the other, and then switch. Then, walk the dogs side by side. If that goes well, allow them to sniff.
 - Follow the three-second meeting rule:
http://www.thrivingcanine.com/letting_dogs_meet_the_three_second_rule
 - Watch for key body language indicators. Possible issues include growling, hair standing up, stiff body, posturing, hard/long stares, avoidance and hiding, and showing teeth.



- Also observe how the dogs are picking up on each other's body language. If one is fearful, and the other dog is not picking up on that, it is good to note.
- Appropriate social interaction is great, social indifference is ok, but reactivity and avoidance are less ideal. However, some dogs need more of an extended meeting period, even over weeks, so don't let it get you too down if it doesn't go well immediately.
- Be ready for the "leash dance" as you do not want leashes to tangle.
- Do not incorporate treats into the actual physical meeting until you have walked away.
- At the end of the meet and greet, we will ask that you think about it, and then email or call our matchmaker within 48 hours to let her know your decision. Our volunteer will do the same, and if everyone agrees it is a match, we move on to adoption!
 - Meet & Greet is not adoption day, which allows you to go home and think about your decision. In special circumstances, such as long distances being traveled, the DHDR Executive Director can make an exception to this policy.