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INTRODUCING YOUR NEW DOG TO YOUR CURRENT DOG(s)

Introduction. This is a set of recommendations on bringing a new dog into your home when you already have a dog. It is an intentionally over cautious and GO SLOW approach that will help reduce risk of conflict between the dogs and increase likelihood of a smoother transition to a new pack dynamic. A new dog situation is stressful for the new dog AND the current dog(s) and requires humans to provide leadership: Protection, direction, guidance and security for all the dogs. Transitions are potentially difficult for dogs and it is worth investing in a smooth transition to avoid having to fix a problem later.

1. PREPARE.

- a. Read Bringing Your New Dog Home hand out and FOLLOW IT.
- b. If you are having behavior problems with your current dog(s), UNDERSTAND that getting a new dog is UNLIKELY to make things better and MORE likely to create two problem dogs. (Solve the issues with current dog before adopting another)
- c. Pay to have Contented Canines LLC supervise a deliberate introduction of your current dog to your new dog in a neutral location BEFORE you finalize the adoption.
- d. Obtain a suitable crate for your new dog and determine best location to set it up in your house to provide your new dog a safe, quiet restful location where it is not disturbed by current dog(s).
- e. If your dogs are going to fight in the first few weeks it will be over territory (couch, bed, house, yard), food, valued items (toys, bones, chews) and control of humans/ human attention.
- f. SO, Pick up ALL toys, bones, chews, and similar items that could become a source of competition.
- g. DO NOT leave food bowls down or allow access to dog or human food/ trash during the transition period (3 weeks).
- h. Get the WHOLE FAMILY on the same page to follow your NEW DOG integration plan and exercise appropriate control of all resources including, access to outside, place on furniture, attention and affection. What are the rules, boundaries and limits for ALL the dogs that ALL the humans will help enforce?

2. FIRST THREE DAYS (Go slow, Be aloof, let dog decompress)

- a. Follow the Bringing Your New Dog Home handout.
- b. BEFORE you bring the new dog into the house do a supervised and properly controlled introduction with each dog individually in a neutral location.
- c. Before taking the new dog into your home, take all the dogs on an extended on leash walk together under human control and leadership. Purpose is for dogs to walk together under human guidance not to play or physically interact.
- d. After walk, keep all dogs on leash and lead them into the house, around areas of the house you allow the dogs, and the yard.
- e. Do not allow new dog run of the house. New Dog should be crated, in a physically separate room or on a leash under a suitable family members direct control both inside and outside the house.
- f. Recommend all other dogs are dragging a leash so humans can calmly intervene/ give guidance without getting between dogs or grabbing dogs directly.
- g. Give new and old dog(s) appropriate guidance if they become too pushy with the others, too playful/energetic. Goal should be calm dogs in same space for short (15-30 minutes) periods and then give them a break.
- h. DO NOT leave new and old dog(s) together without diligent, continuous and undistracted adult human supervision.
- i. FEED new dog separately (in the crate) from the current dog(s).
- j. Do not bring out treats, toys etc when the new and old dogs are together.

2. First Three WEEKS.

- a. In addition to following the ideas of Bringing Your New Dog Home, add deliberate short (under 30 minute) sessions for the dogs to be together in the same space(s) with the humans present and monitoring.
- b. If things between the dogs are going well, allow them more freedom by dragging leashes instead of having humans hold them.
- c. Consider outside supervised play periods of 15-30 minutes. Initially have dogs drag leashes and as dogs show loose bodies and polite play consider letting them off leash (but make sure all dogs have properly fitted collars).
- d. Do not use toys or chews for the first weeks and introduce them VERY thoughtfully (if at all).

- e. Manage the play. If it goes on energetically for more than 2-3 minutes without a natural pause/ break create a break, calm dogs down and then allow them to resume play.
- f. Play. Look for Clear play signals. Loose bodies, Open relaxed mouths, bouncy exaggerated body motion, reciprocal play (both dogs take turns being chased, being on the bottom etc). Does not have to be 50/50 but one dog should not be allowed to bully/ dominate the other even "in play". Practice calling breaks in play for no reason when energy levels are still moderate to low. If one dog shows it is done by moving away, looking away, sitting or laying down make sure the other dog respects that and interrupt if dog keeps pestering the tired/ "done" dog. Ideally YOU stop play sessions BEFORE either dog is ready to quit and then put them up/ crate them to allow rest and calm.
- g. Feeding. It is OK to feed dogs in separate locations. If you decide to bring them into the same location, use a very deliberate feeding ritual/ plan to maximize human role and to minimize opportunity to fight over food. If you decide to feed in same area (not necessary), space the bowls well apart and put a human in between to stop a dog from visiting the other. PICK UP bowls after 15 minutes whether dogs are finished or not. DO NOT leave food out. Do not allow a dog to sniff around the other dogs bowl even if it is empty and other dog has moved away.
- h. Places of Rest. YOU assign rest locations for each dog and don't let them choose/ compete for locations. I recommend using dog beds/ cots on the floor and keep furniture for humans only for the first weeks and depending on behavior, longer.
- i. Be alert to dog interactions in all situations. They ARE communicating with each other- you want to help them make good decisions and to understand the HUMANS are in control of all things and that the dogs can earn the good stuff by calm cooperative behavior..