

Tips for Meet-and-Greets

Prepare:

1. Meet at a public, low-stress, neutral location during daylight hours, especially if your dog is uncomfortable with new people.
2. Bring someone you and your dog knows well for support and safety
3. If distance allows, go to the meeting location a day or so prior to the appointment, especially if your dog has never been there before.
4. Plan to arrive about 20-30 minutes before the appointment so your dog can get used to the area. Walk him around and let him sniff. He'll be less distracted and less nervous if he's familiar with the area.
5. Give your dog plenty of exercise just before meeting. Burning off energy should help him be more calm.
6. Bathe your dog. He should have a collar / harness and leash in good condition. Have his ID and rabies tag attached.
7. Don't feed your dog right before the appointment so he's more interested in treats from the applicant.
8. If your dog has a trainer or had one in the past, ask him/her to facilitate the meet-and-greet, especially if your dog is meeting another dog.
9. If your dog needs a certain way to meet people, share the information with the applicant before the meet-and-greet
10. Bring treats for the person to give your dog

Control the introduction:

1. Introduce in the way that's best for your dog
2. Ask the applicant to ignore your dog if he is anxious when first meeting strangers.
3. Ask them to walk along as you walk the dog
4. Don't reach over the dog's head to pet
5. Squat down with their side toward the dog and avoid contact.
6. Have the dog sniff the person and once his body language is relaxed, tell the applicant to pet the dog on a part of the body he likes to be petted or scratched

Meeting applicants:

1. Consider multiple meetings; this will ease the transition
2. All members of the household must meet the dog
3. For nervous dogs, have the first meet n greet with the primary person or couple.
4. Answer their questions concisely
5. If you have questions, ask them open-ended. Don't ask, "Do you like to include a dog in activities?" Do ask, "What kind of activities do you think you'd include him in?"

Meeting other dogs:

1. Resident dogs must meet your dog
2. Take it very slow
3. First have them observe each other from a distance
4. Walk your dog alongside the person walking their dog. Parallel walks work best.
5. Let them sniff each other's back side to say 'hello'
6. Let them play if they are comfortable with each other or have a second meeting so they can get to know each other better.

Behavioral issues:

1. Be honest, never withhold info about behavioral issues
2. Describe behavioral issues objectively: Don't say, "He's aggressive with other dogs when we walk him." Instead say, "When he's on a leash and a new dog comes close, he will begin barking and pulling toward the dog."
3. Show techniques for managing the issue that work with your dog
4. Having a trainer with you is optimal