



## Home Visit & Meet-and-Greet Guide

*A practical, values-based approach to placing a dog safely and thoughtfully*

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### 1. WHERE: The Meet-and-Greet Location

Always do the meet and greet **at the adopter's home**.

If a person does not want you to come to their home, that is a **major red flag**. You should **never** adopt a dog out after a short visit in a parking lot or hand the dog over without understanding the environment she will be living in. Context matters.

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### 2. FIRST STEP UPON ARRIVAL: The Backyard Check

When you arrive, take the dog directly to the **backyard**.

- Let her sniff around and take a potty break so she can feel relaxed.
- While chatting with the potential adopter, inspect the fence carefully.
- Make sure the fence is secure, intact, and has no obvious escape points.

Remember: if you leave your dog there, she will likely be confused at first. A confused dog may dig, climb, or bolt if given the opportunity.

**If the fence is not in good condition, do not move forward.**

You can simply say that once the fence is fixed, you'll be happy to bring her back for another visit.

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### 3. INSIDE THE HOME: Reading the Space and the Energy

If the fence checks out, move inside the home.

Continue chatting, but also observe the space:

- Can you realistically see the dog fitting into this home?
- Is the home tidy or chaotic?
- Does it feel calm, stable, and welcoming, or stressful and disorganized?



This isn't about judging people. Some perfectly good homes simply aren't the right match for a particular dog. If you feel that this environment will make your dog anxious or overwhelmed, trust that instinct and **do not leave her**.

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#### **4. KIDS IN THE HOME: This Is Critical**

Pay close attention to how children interact with the dog and how the adults manage those interactions.

- Is the dog being climbed on or handled roughly?
- Are adults actively teaching children to respect the dog's space?

This is one of the biggest things to watch for. When adults don't set boundaries, dogs often end up rehomed later for "behavior issues" that could have been prevented.

#### **Dogs are not playgrounds.**

Respectful interaction must be present.

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#### **5. CRATE & BOUNDARIES: Non-Negotiable Early On**

If you are bringing a crate, ask where it will be placed.

- For me, the best answer is the **master bedroom**.
- Crating a new dog away from the family at night feels unnecessary and isolating.

If the adopter says they don't crate:

- Be clear that **they must crate at first**, especially if there is a doggy door.
- The dog needs boundaries and a sense of security before free roaming.

Explain that:

- Kids leave doors open.
- Doggy doors are easily forgotten.
- Promises to "always remember" to lock doggy door are not realistic in the early weeks.



<https://cowtownpets.org>

- A nervous dog free roaming in an empty home she doesn't know could be destructive too, which could lead to a rehome that could be preventable.

If the adopter pushes back or seems unwilling to follow this, that's a sign they may have unrealistic expectations about a new dog immediately fitting into their routine. In that case, **do not leave her.**

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## 6. IF EVERYTHING FEELS RIGHT: Trial Period & Paperwork

If all of the above goes well and you feel confident, move forward with:

1. A **two-week trial period**
2. **Paperwork** (you will provide this)
3. An **exchange of contact information**
4. A **commitment to stay in touch at least twice a week**, including photos during the trial

This keeps communication open and ensures accountability.

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## 7. FINALIZING THE ADOPTION

At the end of the two-week trial, return to the home to finalize the adoption.

This visit matters because:

- You can see how the dog has settled in.
- The household is usually more relaxed and authentic so you can confirm that the environment still feels right.

I've never had to remove a dog at this stage, but I would if the dog appeared distressed. Remember the adopter is not the owner until the final paperwork is signed.

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## 8. CONTRACT & ADOPTION FEE (VERY IMPORTANT)

**The Contract – bring two copies!! You keep the signed one!!**

The contract should include:



<https://cowtownpets.org>

- Everyone's contact information
- A clear agreement that the dog will be returned to you if anything changes during the trial or beyond

Everyone signs it.

This ensures the adopter always has your information and that the dog always has a safe return path.

### **The Adoption Fee**

Always charge an adoption fee — but **do not collect it until the end of the two-week trial**. The amount is up to you. It needs to be significant enough to reinforce a serious adoption. \$100 seems reasonable since the pet is current on all vaccines and spayed.

This fee:

- Gives you a legitimate reason to return for the final visit
- Sets expectation that the dog is not theirs to keep until final visit is successful
- Reinforces that this is a serious adoption, not a free internet pet
- Is the point when you provide full vet records

Always keep copies of all vet records for yourself.

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## **9. WHAT TO BRING**

### **Items to Bring to the **Initial** Meet-and-Greet (If Leaving the Dog)**

- Leash
- Collar, tags, harness
- Crate
- Bedding
- Toys
- Food she eats
- Bowls



- A short-written profile of the dog's history, likes, dislikes, and quirks (This helps the dog settle in and helps the adopter feel confident.)

### Items to Bring to the **Final Visit**

- Flea and heartworm prevention (at least 1–2 months so he has time to order more)
- All vet records (with copies kept by you)
- A second printed sheet with all your contact information
- A reminder that you are always available if anything changes or help is needed
- If there is a microchip, be sure she has that information and YOU call to change it over to her name. Sometimes adopters forget to do this and it is so important.

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## 10. HOW TO EXIT A MEET-AND-GREET IF IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

You must always **trust your gut**.

If something doesn't feel right, **you cannot leave the dog there**. The moment may feel uncomfortable, but that discomfort is temporary. A bad placement can affect the dog for life.

Remember:

- You know the dog better than anyone else in the room.
- You have the responsibility and authority to decide what is best for her.
- You do **not** owe anyone an on-the-spot yes.

### How to Exit Gracefully in the Moment

If you decide not to move forward during the visit, you do not need to explain everything.

You can simply say:

- “I think a second meet and greet would be better for her to make the transition smoother.”
- “I want to give this a little more time and thought.”

These responses allow you to leave calmly **with the dog**, without confrontation.



## What to Do Once You Are Safely Home

After you are home, you can send a brief text letting them know you don't feel it's a good fit.

You may:

- Give a general reason (for example:  
*"I don't feel her energy is a good match for the children."*)
- Or give no reason at all and simply say:  
*"After thinking about it, I've decided not to move forward."*

Both are acceptable. You are not required to justify your decision.

## If the Person Pushes Back or Argues

Do not engage in a debate.

If they argue or pressure you:

1. Send **one final message**, such as:  
*"I'm sorry it didn't work out. I wish you the best."*
2. Stop responding and **block the number** if needed.

Most people do not argue much, because:

- You have the dog.
- You have the knowledge.
- You have the responsibility.

That gives you the upper hand — and it should.

## Final Reminder

Discomfort passes.

A bad placement does not.

Protecting the dog always comes first.



⚠️ HELPFUL CHECK LIST BELOW ⚠️

## Home Visit & Meet-and-Greet Checklist (Updated)

*Use this to protect the dog, trust your instincts, and avoid rushed decisions.*

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### BEFORE YOU GO

- Confirm meet-and-greet is **at the adopter's home**
  - Bring: leash, collar/tags, harness, crate, bedding, toys
  - Bring **food she currently eats**
  - Bring **food & water bowls**
  - Bring short written profile (history, likes, dislikes, quirks)
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### ARRIVAL: BACKYARD CHECK

- Take dog to backyard immediately
- Allow sniffing + potty break
- Inspect fence:
  - Secure and intact
  - No gaps, loose boards, dig points, or climbable areas

▶ **Unsafe fence = stop visit and leave with dog**

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### INSIDE THE HOME: ENVIRONMENT CHECK

- Home feels calm, not chaotic
- Space appropriate for dog's size and energy
- You can realistically see dog fitting into daily life

⚠️ Mismatch ≠ bad home. Trust your gut.

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### KIDS (IF APPLICABLE)



- Children interact calmly and respectfully
  - Adults actively supervise and guide
  - Dog not being climbed on or overwhelmed
  - No boundaries now = future rehoming risk
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### **CRATE & BOUNDARIES**

- Ask where crate will be placed
  - Preferred: master bedroom / near family
  - Adopter agrees to crate **at first**
  - Adopter understands:
    - Kids leave doors open
    - Doggy doors are easily forgotten
    - Nervous dogs roaming early can become destructive
  - Pushback = unrealistic expectations
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### **IF EVERYTHING FEELS RIGHT**

- Offer **2-week trial**
  - Review paperwork
  - Exchange contact information
  - Confirm check-ins **twice weekly with photos**
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### **EXIT PLAN (IF IT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT)**

- Do NOT leave dog
  - Say:
    - “I want to give this more thought,” or
    - “A second meet-and-greet may be better.”
  - Leave calmly with dog
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### **AFTER YOU'RE HOME**

- Send brief text declining adoption
  - Optional reason or none at all
  - If they argue:
    - Send one final polite message
    - Stop engaging / block number
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### **FINAL ADOPTION VISIT (END OF TRIAL)**

- Dog appears relaxed and settled
  - Home still feels appropriate
  - Complete contract (all parties sign)
  - Collect adoption fee
  - Provide vet records (keep copies)
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### **FINAL ITEMS TO BRING**

- Flea & heartworm prevention (1–2 months)
  - All vet records
  - Printed contact information
  - Reminder: dog must be returned if anything changes
  - Microchip information provided**
  - YOU call to transfer microchip registration**  
(Do not rely on adopter to do this.)
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### **REMEMBER**

- You know the dog best
- You do not owe an on-the-spot yes
- Discomfort passes — bad placements don't

**Protect the dog first. Always.**