



## Mushu 294586: What to Expect

**Mushu is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Mushu is a delightfully playful young shepherd mix that loves his toys, going for runs, and is motivated to learn new things! He loves to make new friends, both with people and other dogs. Mushu's history prior to coming to OHS is a mystery, but during his time with us we've gotten to know him fairly well. When left out of all the action, Mushu can whine, cry, and howl in the hopes that someone will come retrieve him from his kennel and let him join in on the fun. We've had success starting crate training and building a positive association with being crated and turning that into a safe place for Mushu rather than a signal that he's going to be left out. Future adopters will need to continue this work using positive reinforcement-based training to further Mushu's progress in having more positive experiences about his alone time.

Mushu is a young, adolescent dog who is still learning the ropes and boundaries of being a pet dog. Mushu loves nothing more than a game of fetch, but sometimes he gets too excited during this game, and he may jump up at the person throwing the ball if it's in their hand or as they reach to pick it up. We've been successful teaching Mushu to "sit" & "wait" while we pick up the ball to practice impulse control, but he will need patient owners who can continue this training. We don't see this as a resource guarding behavior at this time, but a lack of impulse control paired with over arousal at the excitement of being able to chase the ball.

Mushu loves meeting new people, and that excitement can turn into jumping up to seek attention and if overstimulated more Mushu may grab onto the leash, loose fitting clothing, and/or bags/purses with his mouth. We've been successful teaching Mushu to offer an alternative behavior when greeting people, like sitting and waiting, to help remind him to keep all four paws on the ground. While Mushu loves to play with other dogs and may do well living with another playful and social dog, we think he will do best in a home without cats or small animals. He could also be a good candidate for dog parks, dog daycare, and social settings with dogs, he can sometimes get overly excited at the sight of another dog, pulling or jumping on leash in his excitement. We've been successful teaching Mushu to "leave-it" so he can return his focus back to his handlers if he becomes excited at the sight of a dog, cat, or squirrel. Mushu is a big dog, and it's important to set him up for success in social situations like this and continuing to practice these skills will set both Mushu and his adopters up for success in the future.

### **Here's how to help Mushu settle in during your first months together:**

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Mushu responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. They will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping them learn to live in a home. Mushu will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

**If you're having people over, put Mushu on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.** Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Mushu to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

**Mushu needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Mushu loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

**Work on having Mushu settle on a mat** and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Mushu is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

**Practice crate training.** Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. When you cannot monitor your dog in the home, allow them some time to settle and relax in the crate.

**Walk Mushu on an appropriate walking tool.** We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Mushu to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Mushu sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated that they cannot run up to say hello and play, causing them to jump, pull, whine, bark, and sometimes growl. It will be important to never let Mushu run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

**“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training** to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Mushu on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Mushu drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate “freedom”, but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn’t. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate Mushu when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn’t get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

**Take a training class.** Mushu would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Mushu does very well at the vet, they handle meeting new being well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products may help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

### **Behavioral Medication for your new dog**

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog’s medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate weaning off protocol and to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a weaning off process.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment may be needed.

### **We’re here to help!**

We want Mushu to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Mushu, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Annika at **(503) 802-6713** or [annikah@oregonhumane.org](mailto:annikah@oregonhumane.org).

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!