

## Bicho 295387: What to Expect

**Bicho is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Bicho is a little dog with big feelings and lots of love to give! He bonds strongly with his people and wants nothing more than to be their one and only adventure buddy. When he is feeling safe, he is playful, affectionate, and active. Bicho was briefly adopted and returned after a mismatch with his previous owner's lifestyle. This was a higher traffic home, which made Bicho very nervous and feel unsafe. Bicho is an insecure dog, and he advocates for his space by charging, growling, barking, and if his boundaries aren't respected, he has nipped at hands that attempt to touch him. It can take a slow introduction for Bicho to feel comfortable meeting someone new, often needing to meet them several times. Guests, even if they've been successful in the past, should allow Bicho to approach as he feels comfortable. Treats and playing hard to get are the fastest way to win over his trust.

Bicho needs an owner who can continue to advocate for his space, by ensuring guests don't attempt to pet, pick up, or corner him simply because he's "a cute little thing." People often disregard the feelings of little dogs due to their size and this can create distrust with people resulting in reactivity and biting at strangers. It can take three or more months of consistent advocacy and training before Bicho is going to trust his owners have his best interest at heart and for him to decompress in the home. Due to these behaviors, we feel Bicho would not be a match for a home with other dogs, cats, small pets, or children under the age of 18. He's looking to be someone's one and only, and who can continue his training with the same positive reinforcement techniques we've been successful using here at OHS.

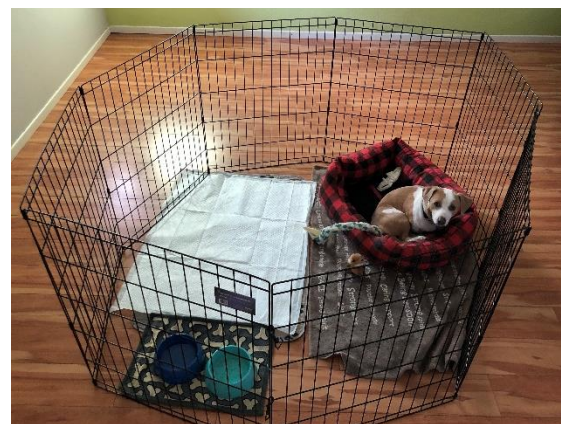
Bicho's reactive behaviors like barking and lunging are also amplified when barriers (like fences, baby gates), and leashes are involved. These barriers can be frustrating for a dog, as they cannot remove themselves from situations that might make them feel uncomfortable. We've been very successful in using the leash as a form of communication rather than an added stressor for Bicho paired with treats, and his future adopters should continue working with Bicho to continue his progress! He would love to be a little adventure dog; he adores going for walks and exploring. Continued training will better set him up to have positive outings that are enjoyable for both parties!

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

**Designate a "safe spot" in your home.** You can use a crate or taller baby gates to confine them to a smaller area where they have access to water, bed, and toys. When you are unable to supervise the dog, leave them in their safe spot. Slowly work toward leaving them alone, unsecured, once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

**Be your dog's advocate.** It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Bicho is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.

**Limit introductions to new people.** Take your time to get to know Bicho before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Bicho to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Bicho at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.



*Bicho's "safe spot" when no one is home.*

When you have people over, **it's okay to put Bicho in another room.** If you'd like Bicho to meet a guest, put them on a leash and give them time to adjust before allowing your guest to interact. Let it be Bicho's choice to go to them for pets or hang back and watch. Crowding Bicho or forcing them to interact can make fearful behavior worse.

**Use routine to get Bicho comfortable in their new home.** It will take a couple weeks for Bicho to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home.

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Bicho 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. Bicho will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

**Bicho needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Bicho loves to run around, go for 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.

**Take a training class.** Bicho 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/>).

**Practice "Leave it."** Bicho may bark and lunge if they see other dogs out on a walk. When a dog is sighted, **before** they start barking, say "leave it." When they turn to look at you, reward with praise and a treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

**Skip the dog park.** Don't take Bicho to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people or other dogs (such as Saturday Market, dog parks, coffee shops, etc.). Bicho has shown us they don't have an interest in being around other dogs/people. Taking leashed hikes to the river, playing in the backyard, or to places not frequented by many other dogs will allow for exercise, but keep Bicho calm and engaged with you.

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it's an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Start with positive visits just for treats. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if your dog already trusts you, your presence may help them feel more comfortable. Bicho has a history of being overwhelmed and uncomfortable with vet handling and may do best with pre vet medications and an understanding medical team!

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.

### **We're here to help!**

We want Bicho to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Bicho, 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!