



Deedee 312160: What to Expect

Deedee is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Deedee is a playful, affectionate, and active lab who would love nothing more than to be spoiled rotten in a new home. Deedee was brought in to OHS after living in a home with 12+ of her siblings and parents where she spent nearly 100% of her time in a crate, only to be let out to go potty and returned to her crate. She was physically carried to and from the crate, never walking on a leash or having a chance to run around a yard. You can imagine that growing up in this lifestyle has led to some trust issues for Deedee and she's developed a more sensitive disposition. When Deedee first arrived at OHS, she had some skin issues, was very fearful of people, never played with toys, and had never walked on a leash. During an early attempt to see if Deedee was interested in seeing one of her relatives, one of her brothers entered her kennel and attempted to mount her. Deedee's response was to get into a scuffle to get out of this ordeal and the other dog was able to be safely removed. She was moved to a quieter space in our Behavior Modification Program where dedicated professional trainers could help her heal and work towards her being more comfortable living a pet life.

Since moving into a quieter space with dedicated staff Deedee has come out of her shell and is flourishing. She loves to go for walks, loves playing with toys, and enjoys training with treats for rewards. Her skin has cleared up and we were able to test Deedee around other dogs to see if her comfort with them has healed as well. While Deedee is comfortable seeing other dogs on walks at a distance, she does not have an interest in interacting with other dogs. She will attempt to avoid any interactions by moving away, growling, and if pushed further or cornered will snap at other dogs. She can calmly and confidently walk by other dogs, but she does not enjoy any that will get in her face. Due to this we feel Deedee would like to be the only pet in the home, so she can soak up all the love and attention she deserves.

Prior to coming to OHS Deedee's world was a bubble confined to her crate and home. We imagine that things we consider "normal" will be frightening for Deedee such as, moving cars, noises from the TV, fireworks, and riding in a car. She will need a patient and understanding family as she adapts to a whole new wide world. We expect that Deedee will be overwhelmed by everything they encounter at first. During the critical first months in a new home, their safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

Here's how to help Deedee 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 Deedee is not comfortable with new 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.

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Deedee decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Deedee decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

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

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

Take Deedee outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Deedee out alone. They are easily frightened; they could easily hide under your deck or a bush. Deedee does like to go for walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to figure out the routine before being trusted off leash.

Use treats and toys to build trust. Maintaining and continuing Deedee's training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other. The more positive experiences Deedee has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

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

"Puppy proof" your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Deedee 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 Deedee 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 Deedee 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.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Deedee 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.). Deedee has shown us they don't have an interest in being around other dogs. 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 Deedee 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.

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 Deedee to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Deedee, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** or BMODTrainers@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!