Introducing a New Dog to Resident Dogs

FOSTERS & ADOPTERS

Start apart

Give each dog a separate safe space and separate food, chews, beds, and toys. Allow decompression before considering direct interaction. Do not force a meeting at the front door.

Prepare

Choose a quiet neutral area, two capable adult handlers, secure standard leashes, and enough distance for both dogs to remain relaxed. If either dog has a bite history or concerning reactivity, obtain a qualified behavior plan first.

Parallel walking

Walk in the same direction at a comfortable distance. Reward relaxed behavior. Reduce distance gradually only when both dogs stay loose and responsive. Do not drag them together.

Brief greetings

If both dogs appear comfortable, allow short, voluntary sniffing and then call them apart. Keep leashes loose and avoid tight, face-to-face restraint. End while the interaction is going well.

Inside the home

Continue short, supervised sessions. Keep food, treats, chews, and prized toys separated. Use barriers and separate rest areas. Do not leave the dogs together unsupervised until an individualized plan supports it.

Stop signs

Freezing, hard staring, stiff posture, repeated mounting, stalking, persistent avoidance, guarding, escalating barking, or one dog trying to escape. Increase distance and seek guidance; do not punish growling.

If a fight starts

Do not put hands between dogs or grab collars near mouths. Use a safe barrier or other non-contact separation method if possible, secure each dog, check for injuries, and contact GNR or your veterinarian as appropriate.