

All About Golden Retrievers

Golden Retrievers need your companionship.

Golden Retrievers are outgoing dogs. They need to be with, around, near, on the lap, or underfoot of humans, because they thrive on love and attention. In rescued Golden Retrievers, these traits are often even more evident. Because of the situation the rescued Golden Retriever has recently been through, he or she may appear timid and afraid at first and sometimes take a few days to warm up to the new Foster Family. Golden Retrievers cannot be maintained as outside dogs; they are indoor companions. Consider your lifestyle and household schedule—do you travel a lot, do you work long hours, are you busy with your children's activities? In other words, do you have time to give the love and attention a Golden Retriever needs?

Golden Retrievers need lots of exercise.

Golden Retrievers need to have consistent exercise (20-30 minutes twice a day, such as a brisk walk or throwing tennis balls in the yard) or they may have trouble adjusting to the calm house-pet role expected by most owners. Dogs will not exercise by themselves. Their owners must interact with them. As with all dogs, Golden Retrievers that do not get enough exercise can exhibit behavior problems such as excessive barking, inappropriate chewing, unruly behavior, and digging. Fenced areas for safe exercise are a must!

Golden Retrievers need regular grooming.

Golden Retrievers should be brushed every other day and professional grooming costs \$30 to \$50 every 6–8 weeks. Golden Retrievers need to have their toenails cut, their ears cleaned, and their teeth brushed frequently; all tasks are simple for the dog owner to learn to do.

Golden Retrievers need your food and veterinary care.

Feeding one medium-sized dog for a year will cost around \$300. Routine veterinary expenses run over \$200 a year. Golden Retrievers, like all breeds, have certain hereditary conditions. They are prone to skin allergies, hot spots, and ear infections, and occasionally have hypothyroidism (easily treated with daily oral medication) or hip and eye problems. Though many expenses are hidden in the grocery bill (food, dishes, leashes, collars, brushes, shampoos, toys, etc.), they do affect the family budget!

Golden Retrievers are:

- extremely tolerant of children but, like any other dog, will growl and may bite if teased, frustrated, or physically harmed. Golden Retrievers can be good family dogs but no dog should be unsupervised with young children
- medium to large-sized dogs. The breed standard for males is about 24" in height and around 70 pounds; for females, about 22" in height and around 60 pounds. In our experience with Rescue Golden Retrievers, males can weigh up to 105 pounds and females can weigh up to 85 pounds.
- Golden Retrievers have an average life span of 12-13 years, but we have seen Golden Retrievers as old as 16. Consider what your plans might be in five to 12 years. Will you still welcome the responsibility of a highly social dog when you have a family, go back to work, have an "empty nest" when the kids go to college, or when you retire and want to travel?

Golden Retrievers are not for you if:

- You want a fastidiously kept home. Golden Retrievers are a long, double-coated breed and they shed constantly. You will always find dog hair around, especially on rugs, furniture, nicest clothes, and your car. Like any other dog, Golden Retrievers' paws will track dirt, mud, and snow into the house. Golden Retrievers possess active tails, making clean sweeps of coffee tables.
- You object to a dog having your personal or household articles in his mouth. Golden Retrievers are retrievers—genetically programmed to carry laundry, shoes, kids' toys, etc. in their mouths!
- You want a guard dog. Though they may bark defensively, Golden Retrievers would just as soon give the intruder kisses and ask for a belly rub.

Fostering:

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some common questions about being a foster parent. If you think fostering might be for you, one of our volunteers will be happy to talk further with you about joining the GRRACE team.

GRRACE



What if I have other animals?

As long as all of your pets are current on vaccines and routine medical care, this is a great opportunity for GRRACE to learn how the Foster Golden interacts with other dogs, cats, and other pets.

What if I have young children?

All family members will be interviewed prior to placing a Golden into a Foster Home. For those with young children, great care will be taken prior to any interaction with a dog to ensure the safety and health of the family. Knowing how a Golden reacts to children – and especially young children – is an important piece of information when evaluating the dog for a Forever Home.

How long does a dog stay in a foster home?

The length of Foster Care varies with each dog. The average length of foster care for a healthy, well-adjusted dog is less than a month. Dogs with special behavioral or medical issues may need to stay in foster care longer. The number of adoption applicants and their preferences are also important factors in the length of foster care.

Does someone from my family need to be home with the dog all day?

No. Many foster family members are employed outside the home and still provide a quality environment for the dog. We strongly recommend that any time you are unable to directly supervise the Golden, he or she should be confined to a small, secure area (preferably a training crate or possibly a small room). This results in keeping both the dog and the foster family's possessions safe. As you evaluate the Golden, you may determine when you feel comfortable giving the dog free run of your house in your absence. At no time should the dog have access to a doggy door when he or she is unsupervised.



Does my yard need to be fenced?

Yes, a fenced yard is required. The foster dog must never be allowed to run free. If your yard is securely fenced, the Golden may be exercised there off leash. Outside the yard, the dog must be on leash at all times. Electric fences may be considered on an individual basis, but dogs must be supervised at all times in electric fence yards.

May I choose which dog I foster?

We try to place each Golden with the foster family that will best suit its individual needs, matching the dog to the volunteer's capabilities

and lifestyle. The Foster Application allows you to specify the kinds of dogs that you would be comfortable fostering. You may always decline a dog, and if your foster dog is not a good fit, he or she can be placed with another family.

How many foster dogs will I have at a time?

Usually, one. Occasionally dogs will come into our rescue program as siblings, and when appropriate, we try to keep those dogs together for both foster care and adoption.



Does it cost a lot of money to foster a dog?

You will have some expenses for your Foster Golden: high-quality dog food, any toys you choose to provide, and phone calls to prospective adopters. All veterinary care is provided by authorized veterinarians and paid for by GRRACE.

What are the training expectations or goals to achieve while the Golden is in my care?

Although your foster Golden may only be with you a short while, we encourage you to focus on achieving some training goals to make the dog more adoptable and have a head start on good manners and behavior expectations. Please work to acclimate the Golden to living in a home environment (doorbells, ringing telephones, vacuum cleaners, etc.); establish house manners (sit to greet, stay off the furniture if need be, no counter-surfing); and begin or continue housetraining and basic obedience skills. GRRACE expects all Foster Families to use positive-reinforcement training techniques.

What if I have questions or problems?

GRRACE provides a Foster Home Handbook that provides guidance on all aspects of fostering. In addition, GRRACE will assign a mentor to each new Foster Family when they start out. Several volunteers are available by phone or email to answer general questions or work through challenges with your Golden.

What if we want to travel?

If you are fostering and want to go away for a weekend or take a vacation, the Golden can be cared for by another GR-RACE volunteer. Just give us adequate notice so we can prepare to care for the dog while you are away.



Will I become attached to my foster dog?

Of course – it's impossible NOT to fall in love with a Golden! Many foster families become especially attached to their first few foster dogs and want to adopt them all. It may help to remember there is always another Golden who needs your help in finding a Forever Home. When you meet the new family who's ready to provide a permanent, loving home, you will likely feel satisfied to see your foster dog move on to his or her new life. Each of us play an important role in the life of this Golden, no matter how temporary that role is.

What if I want to adopt the Golden I am fostering?

If you decide to be a foster home, it should be with the understanding that you are working toward helping a deserving Golden find a Forever home. If you think you might like to adopt a Golden that you are fostering, you should contact your GRRACE mentor, as board members must be notified of your decision. In addition, the Golden will not be posted on the Web site for other families to consider. The same procedures apply for a Foster Family in terms of adoption guidelines and fees.

Why is it so important to foster a dog?

The number of foster homes we have determines how many Golden's we can save - it's as simple as that! In addition to saving the life of a Golden, fostering allows us to prepare the dog in terms of obedience, house manners, and medical care so that he or she has the best chance of success in a Forever Home.



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Foster Homes for Goldens

GRRACE is in urgent need of Foster Homes – temporary homes for Golden Retrievers entering our rescue program. Foster families care for Goldens while they await adoption into a Forever Home. The number of dogs we bring into our program is based upon the availability of foster homes. The more foster homes we have, the more Goldens we can rescue!

GRRACE accepts Goldens from many situations. We may know nothing or a full history on a dog. He or she is probably scared and anxious because of the recent life changes. Each dog, regardless of background and history, needs to be evaluated by a GRRACE volunteer to ensure proper placement with a forever family.

By fostering, we are able to assess and teach dogs within a home environment. We can stabilize and evaluate his or her behavior and habits. This allows us to create the best possible Forever Home match and to offer the new family more information about the dog for a smooth transition. GRRACE needs caring, responsible Golden lovers to join our foster home team by opening their homes and their hearts to our rescue Goldens. Our current need is for several homes to be available as well as for homes with advanced canine behavior and/or training skills.

Foster Home Responsibilities

Below is an outline of what we expect from our foster homes.

- LOVE the Golden! This may be the first time her or she has experienced true affection. Providing a loving, secure, consistent Foster Home for the Golden is the first step toward the Forever Home.
- Provide for the dog's basic care needs such as food, shelter, exercise, and grooming. (GRRACE will assist with the cost of prescription diets if required).
- Provide toys such as hard white nylabones, rubber kong toys, and appropriately sized tennis balls for the Golden and teach him or her proper playing and sharing expectations. You should avoid stuffed toys, rawhides, and rope bones, which are easily destroyed and can lead to illness and injury.
- Reinforce or begin teaching basic obedience commands. Socializing the dog is beneficial.
- Get to know the Golden's personality, temperament, likes, and dislikes so you can write a biography for the GRRACE Web site to begin the adoption process.



- Schedule and attend appointments with a GRRACE-approved vet for any medical care the Golden requires. Keep detailed and current records of such care.
- Assist with the adoption process, setting a time for each prospective family to meet the Golden in your care. This interaction offers an opportunity to see how the family interacts with the Golden. Foster families may also take their Golden to Petsmart and community events for a GRRACE Meet-n-Greet, giving the Golden a chance to meet a larger number of prospective adopters.

Approved medical costs, including monthly hearworm preventative, are the responsibility of GRRACE.

Becoming a Foster Home

If you and your family have decided you'd like to become a Foster Family, please:

- Ensure you meet the Foster Family requirements
 - You must be 21 or over and have consensus from all members of your household.
 - You must live in Indiana and your name must be on the title or lease.
 - If you live in an apartment or other rental property, you must provide written verification from landlord that you have permission for pets. Deposits are the responsibility of the foster family.
 - By adding a foster Golden to your home, you must not exceed your city or county's regulations on the number of pets per household.
 - You must ensure a Golden is a good fit for your family – even though fostering is intended to be temporary. Please review the "All About Golden" document for information on the breed.
- Complete the Foster Home Application.
 - Once your application is received, one of our volunteers will call you to discuss further details and arrange for a home visit.
- Host a home visit.
 - The Home Visit volunteer will bring you a Foster Handbook, review foster policies, and answer any questions. He or she will also evaluate your home with you for any hazards to your Golden.
- Foster a Golden
 - Once the home visit is completed, the family is ready to foster and will be contacted as incoming dogs need to be fostered (could be the next day or several weeks).



Please consider fostering a Golden!