

Simple Evaluation For Potential Transport Dogs

By Dee Ganley and Dana Rocco (2004)

I would like to start with a mini behavior evaluation. The following lists what interaction I will have with the dogs and what I am looking for. If at all possible plan to have someone videotaping the evaluation.

1. **Observe:** I will observe the dog in the cage looking for signs of friendliness.
 - Those who are shut down might be tested anyway, I will make note of kennel # and continue down the line looking for dogs with signs of friendliness first. Frequently I have success with those plastered to the back wall especially if they will eat the tossed treat.
 - I will pass on cage aggressive dogs at this time, but would like to talk with the kennel staff just in case it's only barrier aggression. I will toss in a few tidbits to see if can defuse behavior and make note of this.
2. **Take dog out of cage:** then I would like to take the dog out into the hallway. Selecting the quietest area of the hallway.
3. **Wait/talk softly:** now I will wait - talking to dog softly. Generally I am looking for a dog that, even if nearly overwhelmed by the shelter environment, chooses to stay near me. If it does stay near me, I will move away and see if it follows for comfort.
4. **Kneel:** then I'll kneel down. Again I'm looking for social signs and any invitation by the dog for more attention/comfort.
5. **Mouth exam:** ideally I am looking for a dog that will tolerate my pestering without getting snarky. We will do this matter-of-factly 3 to 5 times for a count of five - talking to the dog all the time.

I will offer treats in-between these exams if dog hasn't pulled away

6. **Hug** (maybe): if the dog is still good till this point might try a hug.

Important observations: As I am doing things to and with this dog, I am looking for body language/behavior/reactions that show me that the dog that is tolerating all of this invasive evaluating and still likes me despite the pestering. I will continually move away to see if the dog tries to follow me - showing that he wants to be with me. I am also watching the dog's body language to see how he is reacting to the stimulus around us.

If this dog shows he likes people and can manage the stress, then I would like this dog to be sent to the shelter for a week for more intensive training and evaluating before the dog is placed up for adoption.

A written description of the dog's evaluation should be done after the week in the kennel including what type of homes might be best for this dog. Then send out an email with pictures to the various shelters to see who might have room for him/her.