



Guide Dogs for the Blind

Evaluations, Assessments and Possible Outcomes

Most issues can be dealt with in the raiser home with advice and support from the leader and CFR. By quickly alerting the leader to any of the puppy's questionable behaviors, the raiser may help find an answer to a problem that otherwise could become impossible to change if left until the puppy is older. Leaders and CFRs are very committed and will make every effort to help raisers successfully develop their Guide Dog puppy.

There are times, however, when certain problems cannot be resolved in the raiser home. Sometimes, raising the puppy just doesn't work out - for any number of reasons. The puppy may just not be the right match for a particular household.

Sometimes, for the puppy to fulfill its potential, the difficult decision is made to transfer a puppy to another raiser home. Likewise, raisers may be asked to accept a puppy that was previously being raised in another home. Ultimately, some puppies are career changed as being unsuitable to enter formal training as a guide dog. These decisions are not taken lightly and will involve consultation with the club leaders, the CFR and often the Canine Resources Manager.

Individual Puppy Evaluations

- Individual puppy evaluations and assessments (outside of the regular evaluations scheduled for the entire club of puppies) are usually requested by a leader or CFR.
- Evaluations can occur either in the leader home, a designated assessment home, or at a GDB designated facility.
- Evaluations can take place for medical, temperament, cosmetic or behavioral reasons.
- Following evaluations, recommendations are made as to what should be done next, which may involve specialized training techniques, temporary or permanent transfer of the puppy, or career change.

Evaluation/Assessment Homes

Placing a puppy into an assessment home offers an opportunity to observe the puppy's health or behavior outside the setting of its raiser home. The process can help determine if the puppy's problems are the result of reactions to environmental factors or human influence.

Transfer Puppies

Some transfers are "planned transfers"; the raiser starts a puppy knowing that the puppy will be transferred to another home at a certain age. Other transfers are done to help fulfill our mission to raise successful guide dogs. The CFR, leader and raiser work together to find a solution that is in the best interests of the puppy's development and continuation in the GDB program.

Either temporary or permanent transfer may occur due to the following reasons:

- Need to observe behavior objectively in a different environment by a different handler.
- Need to remedy behavior by a more experienced handler.
- Puppy requires socialization or training opportunities not available in the current home
- A behavior that is considered correctable but is not being improved in the current home after consultation and implementation of a plan
- A current home environment that is hampering the puppy's development (examples: noncompliance to the program by another household member, another pet that is hampering the puppy's development)

- A medical or health issue that isn't resolving in the original home
- Risk to the puppy's safety
- Risk from the puppy to people or other animals in the home
- Due to abuse, neglect or endangerment in the home
- Due lack of program compliance
- At the raiser's request

After the Transfer

- If the puppy is transferred to another home, the raiser still will be invited to attend graduation and meet the individual who receives the dog (as long as the puppy was not transferred due to the raiser's inappropriate actions).
- The raiser may be eligible to receive another puppy. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis but is usually made if Guide Dogs for the Blind believes that the puppy placed into raiser's household was not a suitable match for that family.
- The raiser may also be eligible to receive another puppy at a later date if it is believed that there were temporary or resolvable circumstances that prevented the raiser and family from effectively managing or caring for the puppy at that time.

For more information see Policies and Procedures Manual – "Puppy Evaluations and Reasons for Removal of Puppy from a Puppy Raising Home."

Career Changed Puppies

- The puppy will be career changed from the program if it has a health, temperament, or behavior problem that would prevent it from being an effective guide.
- Usually the last raiser will be the first offered to receive the career changed puppy.
- Circumstances that may prevent raiser from being offered the puppy back include:
 - The puppy is dropped for inappropriate dog behaviors and raiser has one or more dogs in the household that GDB believes may not be able to safely live with the puppy.
 - If the career changed puppy has behaviors that may negatively impact current or future GDB puppies, the raiser may be asked to choose between continuing raising or adopting the CC puppy.
 - The puppy has exhibited assertiveness or other inappropriate behaviors toward people.
- For more information, see Policies and Procedures Manual – "Career Change Dogs and Retired Guides."