

**HUMANE SOCIETY**   
OF WEST MICHIGAN  
**Foster Program**

How to Take Good Animal Photos

## Wipe Your Lenses

Smudges on your lens blur the subject and can make the quality of the photo worse. Use a microfiber cloth (or any soft cloth) to wipe away streaks, dirt, and oil.

## Take All the Photos!

Our phones have a lot of storage nowadays. Take tons of photos, as sometimes the best photos are the ones you weren't expecting! You can always delete the bad ones later, but don't worry about capturing that perfect shot. You have more chances of getting it with the more photos you take!

## Try Portrait Mode

Many phones come with a portrait mode setting that blurs the background, keeping all the focus on the animal. Give this setting a try for a unique, professional look for some of your photos!

## Distance

Try to get as close to your subject as you can. When zooming in, you lose quality of your image so it's best to be as close as you can to keep all the detail!

# The Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds relates to how you compose your subject in the shot. Many cameras have the rule of third grid that can be toggled on. This helps frame your subject to the center of the photo or on one of the lines.



# Angles

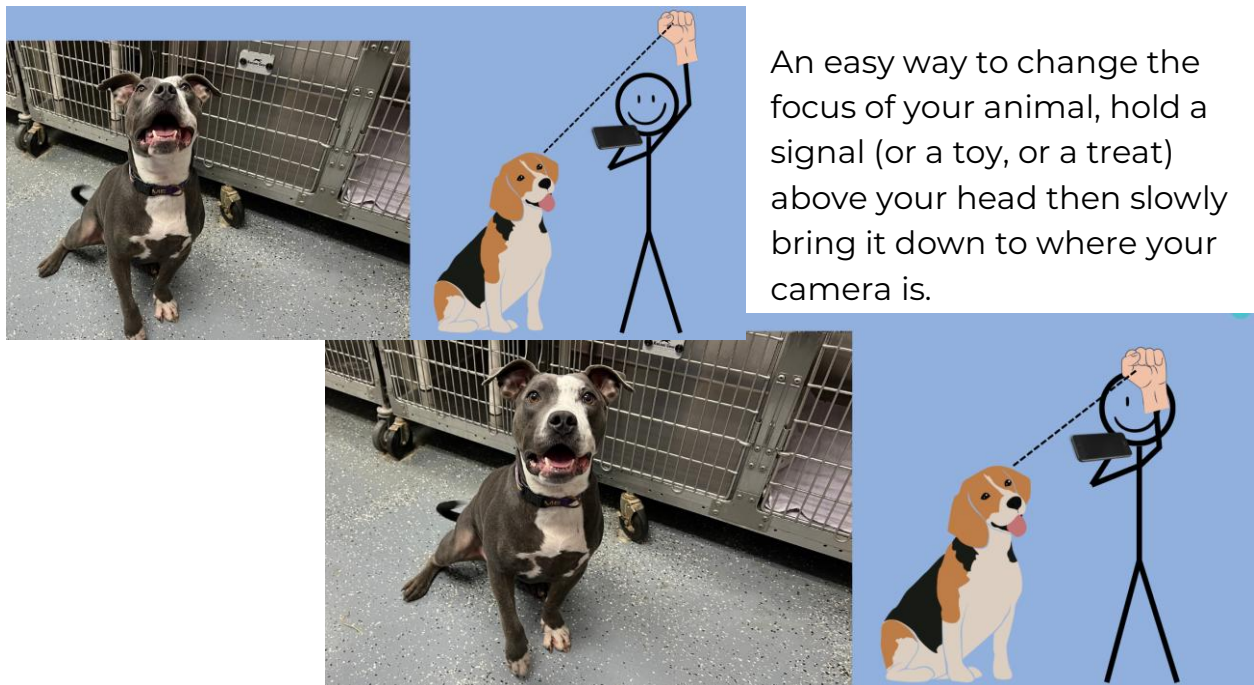
Play around with different angles to capture different feelings in your shots.



**Eye Level:** Level with what the animal sees, you see their point of view

**High Angle:** This is where you get the "puppy dog eyes" look. Animal looks smaller, most of the time their body will be hidden by their head.

To help get better eye level angles, try holding your phone upside down! The camera being underneath tends to be easier to capture eye level while keeping the angle of the phone straight up!



An easy way to change the focus of your animal, hold a signal (or a toy, or a treat) above your head then slowly bring it down to where your camera is.

# Lighting

Lighting makes or breaks the photo. In places without much light, the photo quality will be lower and you will be more prone to movement blur in your animal. Bright light facing your subject brings the best quality to photos, while a backlit or poorly lit photo will lose those important details in the darker spots. On the left, Chief is well-lit and you can see the details in his darker fur, while on the right, you lose those details like his eye color, and the darker fur blends to black.



Also beware of where you are in relation to the subject and the light source! Make sure your shadow isn't on the animal at all and isn't obvious in the photo, as that could be distracting and can take the viewers' eyes away from the animal.

## Step 6. Background

Pay attention to what's in the background when taking photos or videos! Something we get commonly but don't want is feet in the background! This can be distracting and pull the view away from the animal. In videos, be mindful of what's going on around you and what's being said around you. You wouldn't want to get an embarrassing conversation caught while recording, and you definitely don't want what happened to this beagle!



# Break the Rules

These rules are meant to be broken, if you know how to use them. You don't have to follow these to a T; they are tools to help you get better photos for your foster animal's profile. Sometimes the silly photos you catch on a whim highlight the animal's personality better, and that's what we want!

Include props in your photos! Whether that's a dog standing on a bench, dressed up in an outfit, or the animal playing with their favorite toy, these photos best represent the animal as you're capturing them in action with what they love!

THIS MEANS HUMANS, TOO. Don't be afraid to be in the photo! Showing potential adopters how the animal does with people is just as important as photos of just the animal. If they're a cuddler, capture a photo of them snuggled up with you!

These guidelines should help you capture better photos. Things don't need to be perfect, so have fun with it! Get those goofy photos, those playful photos, and those photos that you would want to see if you were looking to adopt!