

ETHICAL FRENCHIE

★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIPS MARKED

FRENCHIE 101

Meet the Big Sib

Bringing a Frenchie puppy home to a house with an adult dog, step by step.

6	110+	14	2026
STEPS	TIPS	EXPERT SOURCES	UPDATED

BEFORE THE BIG HELLO

Hi friend! Your dog is about to become a big sib.

Big or small, rescue mix or fellow Frenchie, every adult dog needs time to adjust to a new puppy. A slow, kind introduction is how a surprise turns into a best friend.

We gathered what vets, trainers and shelters recommend, added what we've learned placing Frenchie puppies in homes with dogs, and put it in one place. In this guide your adult dog is the **big sib**.

Go slow, keep it pawsitive, and text us anytime ♥



★ = Our tip
From raising Frenchies since 2017

Vet & trainer sourced
AKC, VCA, Dogs Trust & more

Any breed of big sib
Same steps for every adult dog

Text us anytime
212-739-0182

WHAT'S INSIDE

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How to use it: read Steps 1 and 2 before pickup day, keep the fridge list handy for the first month, and look for the ★ for our own Frenchie tips.



Step 1

Before pickup day



The best introductions start a week or two before the puppy arrives. Get the house, the gear and your big sib ready, so nothing about the change gets blamed on the puppy.

Is your big sib ready? Be honest

- Think about your dog's history with other dogs: social butterfly, picky, or always an only child?
- Make sure big sib's vaccines and parasite prevention are current, and know where the puppy is in his shot schedule.
- Pain, arthritis, hearing loss, anxiety or a cranky senior streak all change the plan. Big sib's comfort comes first.
- Line up a positive-reinforcement trainer now, just in case. It's easier than searching mid-crisis.

Set up two zones Each dog gets a safe space

- **Puppy zone:** a crate plus an exercise pen or gated area, away from big sib's favorite spots.
- Put an extra pen or crate where the family hangs out, so the puppy learns to settle when everyone settles.
- Do a sweep: pick up toys, bones, chews and treats big sib might guard. Check under the couch and between cushions.
- **Big sib's retreat:** a bed or crate the puppy can't reach, for naps and alone time.
- Moving big sib's bed or bowls? Do it a few days early so the change isn't linked to the puppy.
- Make a short list of things big sib loves most (the couch, your lap, a certain toy). Plan to manage those.

Practice and prep

- **Scent swap:** bring home a blanket or toy that smells like the puppy so big sib can sniff it first.
- Brush up big sib's basics with treats: sit, stay, come, and settling on a mat or in a crate.
- Agree on house rules with everyone at home. Puppy jumping is cute now, less cute at 25 pounds.
- Gear up: two 4 to 6 ft leashes (no retractables), baby gates, a pen, a crate, and separate bowls, beds and toys.
- Set up the puppy's crate and bed early. Big sib gets to investigate them before anyone moves in.
- Practice short naps behind a baby gate or closed door, so the gate feels normal, not like punishment.
- Keep big sib's routine exactly the same: meals, walks and cuddle time at the usual hours.
- Recruit a helper for the first meeting: one person per dog.

★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIP

Have more than one dog at home? Introduce the puppy to one dog at a time. Two adults together can gang up on a puppy, even when each would be sweet alone.



Step 2

The first hello



First impressions matter. Meet somewhere neutral, keep it short and calm, and let the dogs set the pace.

Pick the spot

Neutral ground

- Meet outside the home: a quiet park corner, a neighbor's yard, or a sidewalk neither dog thinks of as "theirs".
- Skip mealtimes and late evenings, when dogs are more territorial or tired.
- Until your vet says the puppy's shots are done, choose a spot with little dog traffic.
- If you must meet at home, use the yard or your largest room. Avoid hallways, doorways and food areas.

How to do it

- One handler per dog, both on loose leashes. Tight leashes tell a dog something is wrong.
- Start with a **parallel walk** about 10 to 15 ft apart, each dog focused on their own human.
- Close the gap slowly while both stay relaxed. Back up if either gets too excited.
- Ignoring each other is a perfectly good outcome. Never force a hello.
- End on a good note, before anyone gets overstimulated. Several short meetings beat one long one.
- Let the puppy burn off some wiggles first with a short play session.
- Treat both dogs for calm behavior and for glancing at each other and then away.
- Allow a brief sniff hello (a few seconds), then keep walking. Repeat if it goes well.
- Stay calm yourself. Dogs read your mood. If you need to separate them, do it quietly.
- Finish with a walk together, 15 minutes up to an hour, side by side.

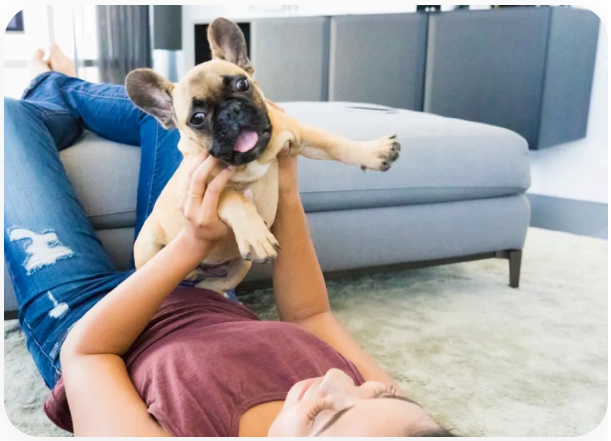
★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIP

On delivery day, have a second person walk big sib outside before the puppy arrives, so the first hello happens on the sidewalk, not in your doorway. If big sib is picky or leash-reactive, ask a trainer to help with the first few meetings.



Step 3

The first days at home



Think small and slow. A puppy with a little space and a big sib with a lot of patience is the goal for week one.

Walking in the door

- Take the puppy to the potty spot first.
- Pack away big sib's toys, bones and bowls for the first hour or two.
- Keep day one quiet: family only, no visitors, no big welcome party.
- Let big sib go inside first, then bring the puppy in. Some trainers do the reverse: whatever keeps things calm.
- Keep both dogs on light indoor leashes at first, so you can calmly guide them apart.
- Give the puppy crate time after the excitement. Puppies sleep up to 20 hours a day.

The first week

Barriers are your best friend

- Let them see and sniff each other through a gate, pen or crate while you reward calm.
- Do things near each other with two people: one treats big sib while the other plays with the puppy.
- No run of the house for the puppy in week one. Open up more space as potty training improves.
- Bring a blanket from the puppy's first home and keep the same food at first.
- If big sib looks relaxed near the gate, treat. If either charges or stiffens, add distance.
- Keep together-time short and supervised, then slowly make it longer.
- Sleep apart at first, to avoid overnight misunderstandings.
- Set up bowls and beds in separate areas after the first couple of hours, so each dog can eat and rest alone.

★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIP

Don't panic over a grumpy first day. Some big sibs drool or act testy for about 24 hours because of the new puppy smell. It usually fades within a couple of days. If something goes wrong, separate calmly, check both dogs, rest, and restart more slowly.

Step 4

House rules for two



Most squabbles happen over food, toys and favorite spots. Good setup now prevents problems later.

Supervise, then separate

- Watch every moment together for the first weeks, including exciting ones like the doorbell.
- Build in daily breaks. Puppy in the pen while big sib roams, then swap.
- Never leave them alone together for at least the first one to two weeks.
- When you can't watch, separate them: crate, pen, gate or closed door.
- Give both dogs water, toys and something to do while they're apart.
- Keep play supervised until the puppy is at least 6 months old.

Mealtime

Separate, every time

- Feed in separate rooms, or with the puppy in his pen. Many families keep this up for good.
- Never share bowls, and pick them up when meals end. Even empty bowls can start a squabble.
- Set out more than one water bowl.
- Put big sib's bowl down first.
- No free-feeding or leaving food out to graze.
- Any gulping, staring, freezing or growling near food? Feed them fully out of sight of each other.

Toys, chews & favorite spots

- Each dog gets their own bed, bowls and toys.
- Keep fetch as a one-dog game until you know how ball-crazy each one is.
- Teach the puppy not to steal big sib's things, and reward big sib for staying relaxed when the puppy comes near.
- If guarding pops up, stay calm, don't punish, send each to a mat, and remove the trigger before reuniting.
- For the first few weeks, give chews and toys only when the dogs are apart. Bring favorites back slowly.
- Guarding is normal and usually fear, not "dominance". Manage it first, then train.
- "One for you, one for you": treat each dog in turn while sitting apart, slowly closing the gap.
- Crated dogs and dogs who wrestle should wear breakaway collars, or none at all, so nobody gets caught.

Give the puppy an outlet

- A tired puppy pesters less: short play, training games and puzzle toys.
- Teach "that's enough" with a short time-out, so big sib doesn't have to be the bad cop.
- Puppy class or a puppy playgroup lets him play rough with friends his own size.
- Walk together on loose leashes once the vet clears the puppy. It's a great bonding activity, even for a big sib who won't play.

★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIP

Crate the puppy whenever you're out until the two are true buddies. Frenchie puppies overheat fast: keep play short, the room cool and water out, and call a break at heavy panting. Wrestling stays on the floor, not off the couch.



Step 5

Reading the room

Dogs talk with their bodies. Learn the signs, step in early and gently, and you'll stop most problems before they start.



Happy signs

- Play bows, loose and wiggly bodies, wide sweeping wags
- Soft face, open mouth, choosing to sniff, sit or check in with you
- Taking turns: chasing and being chased, top and bottom
- Lots of little pauses in play
- Ignoring each other or wandering off (totally fine at first)
- Big sib walking away from a pushy puppy. Reward that smart choice!

Time to step in

- Stiff body, hard stare, deep growl, bared teeth
- Lunging, charging the gate, or trying to bite the puppy
- Cowering, trying to flee, or one dog always pinned underneath
- Quiet stress: lip licking, head turned away, leaving when approached
- Big sib getting *more* worked up when the puppy yelps, instead of backing off
- Can't stop staring at the puppy

Raised hackles alone just mean excitement. Read them with the rest of the body.

How to step in

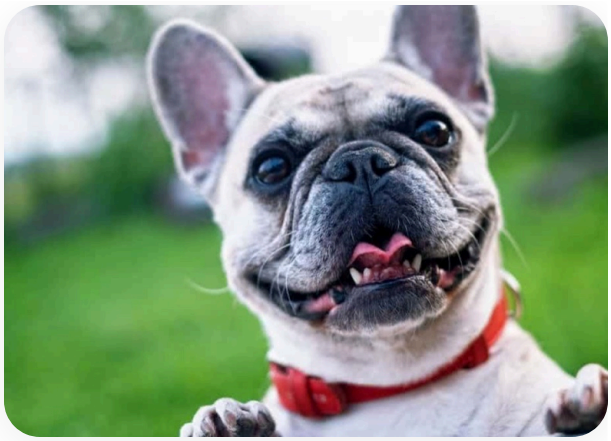
Early, calm, quiet

- Use a calm voice. No yelling, and no interrupting every few seconds either.
- Redirect with a treat, a toy, or "sit". Walk backward calling them, or pick up both leashes and move apart.
- **Puppy time-out:** if the puppy ignores big sib's "no thanks", remove him for about 20 seconds, then try again. Still pestering? Pen time.
- Never punish a growl. It's a useful warning, and punishing it can lead to bites without warning.
- For mild tension, call one dog away or send each to a bed, then let them relax.
- For barking, lunging or snapping, separate right away and give both dogs hours or even days to cool off.
- **Consent test:** every minute or two, gently move the more playful dog away. If the other comes back for more, play on. If not, play is over.
- Don't just "let them work it out". Big sib learns you won't help, and the puppy learns bad manners.



Step 6

Big sib comes first



Your adult dog's world just changed. Protecting their routine, space and patience is what makes a friendship possible.

Keep big sib's world the same

- Same meals, walks and cuddle times as before the puppy.
- Keep big sib's walks and games going without the puppy tagging along every time.
- Schedule quiet time away from the puppy. Big sib will be happier to see him afterward.
- Greet big sib first, leash them first, feed them first. Small things add up.
- Spend one-on-one time with each dog every day, and give big sib extra love.
- Treat big sib whenever the puppy appears, so "puppy" starts to mean "good things happen".

Normal corrections vs. real trouble

- **Normal:** a growl, lip curl, air snap or quick snarl that stops the moment the puppy backs off.
- **Not okay:** a correction that keeps going after the puppy has backed away, or bites that cause harm.
- Don't punish big sib for telling off an unruly puppy. Teach the puppy that manners earn freedom.
- Frail or senior big sib? Keep a bouncy puppy physically separate when you can't watch, to protect joints and hearts.
- **Normal:** a puppy yelping in surprise at a growl. A yelp doesn't mean he's hurt.
- Puppies under about 4 months can't read subtle signals yet, so expect to step in more often.
- Even a saint has a limit. "Puts up with it" isn't the goal. Be big sib's advocate.
- Give the puppy some training (sit, look, come) right next to big sib, so he learns calm around his sibling.

Not the goal: ✕ Instant best friends ✕ Big sib as babysitter ✕ "They'll work it out"

Some dogs bond fast, some take months, and some simply live together peacefully. A calm, comfortable home is a great outcome.

Timeline

What's normal, and when

Every pair is different, but most follow a similar path. Adult dogs almost never welcome a puppy right away, and that's okay.



Day 1
Short, calm, supervised. Grumbles and ignoring are normal.

Week 1
Puppy zone, gate time, never alone together.

Weeks 2-3
Toys come back slowly. Some harmony starts.

Weeks 4-5
Many big sibs start choosing to play.

4 months
Puppy gets better at reading big sib's signals.

6 months
Keep supervising play until at least now.

10-15 ft
Starting distance for the first parallel walk

4-6 ft
Leash length for the first hello. No retractables.

20 sec
A puppy time-out before trying again

20 hrs
How long puppies sleep a day. Crate naps help everyone.

When to call for help

- Call a positive-reinforcement trainer or behaviorist if big sib lunges at or tries to bite the puppy, stares hard, stiffens, or charges the gate.
- After a real scuffle, separate fully, rest for a few days, and get expert help before restarting more slowly.
- Call your vet if the puppy won't eat or drink on his first day home.
- Fear that doesn't settle, or guarding that keeps getting worse, deserves a pro.
- See your vet right away if either dog is hurt.
- Don't wait for it to fix itself. Problems get harder the longer they go on.

★ ETHICAL FRENCHIE TIP

We're part of the team. Send us a video of a meeting that worries you and we'll help you read it. Text 212-739-0182 anytime.

PRINT IT, STICK IT ON THE FRIDGE

The fridge list

The whole guide on one page, for the first month with your new puppy and big sib.

Do

- Meet on neutral ground, one handler per dog, loose leashes
- Keep every meeting short and end on a good note
- Give each dog their own zone, bed, bowls and toys
- Feed separately, big sib first, and pick bowls up after
- Supervise every moment together
- Crate or gate the puppy whenever you're out
- Keep big sib's routine and one-on-one time
- Reward calm, and big sib walking away
- Step in early and quietly
- Keep play short and cool. Frenchie puppies overheat fast.

Don't

- Force a hello, or meet in a doorway or hallway
- Leave them alone together in the first weeks
- Leave toys, chews or food lying around early on
- Let the puppy have the run of the house in week one
- Punish a growl
- Make big sib the babysitter or bad cop
- "Let them work it out"
- Visit dog parks before the vet clears the puppy's shots
- Expect instant best friends
- Wait to call a trainer if things feel wrong

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

Here's to double the love

Questions about introducing your puppy? We're here before pickup day and long after. Ask us about extra socialization around adult dogs before your puppy comes home.

Meet our puppies → | **Text or call 212-739-0182**

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Recommendations gathered from the American Kennel Club, VCA Animal Hospitals, Dogs Trust, Purina, Karen Pryor Clicker Training, Dogs Playing for Life, Animal Humane Society, San Diego Humane Society, Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA, Show Dog Prep School, So Much Pet-ential, Astro Loyalty, CVETS and Where's the Frenchie. ★ tips are Ethical Frenchie's own. Updated October 2026. · ethicalfrenchie.com