

Safe, fun, and enriching play for every pup! Daycare at Take Five is designed to be a positive experience where dogs can play, learn, and thrive in small, well-matched groups. Every dog is unique, so our goal is to make sure your pup feels safe, comfortable, and set up for success in our play setting.

What are the basic requirements for daycare at Take Five?

To keep all guests safe and comfortable, dogs must meet these guidelines:

- **Spay/Neuter:** Required by 6 months of age for group play at daycare.
- **Age:** We welcome dogs 16 weeks and older, as long as they have received two rounds of core vaccinations.
- **Vaccines:** Rabies and Distemper (DAPP, DHPP, DA2PP, DHLPP) are required. Bordetella (Canine Cough) is strongly recommended. If your dog is exempt from a vaccine, we just ask for a note from your veterinarian.
- **Parasite Prevention:** Must be on flea/tick prevention and free of parasites/skin issues.
- **Health Status:** Dogs must be in good overall health.
- **Time in Home:** Your dog should have been in your home for at least three weeks before attending daycare. We recommend three months when possible to give them time to build confidence and routine. We follow the 3-3-3 rule: three days to decompress, three weeks to settle in, and three months to build trust.
- **Temperament and Handling:** We evaluate each dog based on behavior and comfort, not by breed. To thrive in daycare, pups should enjoy being in a group setting, participate appropriately in play, respect basic commands, and allow basic care like leashing, redirection and gentle handling from staff.
- **Daily Routine Readiness:** Dogs should be comfortable with the flow of a daycare day. From group play, structured activities, rest time, and transitions in and out of the play yards. Pups who can settle during downtime and re-engage in play when it's time thrive best in this environment.

How do you approach group daycare?

We care for every pup like they're our own. That means we pay attention to how each dog is feeling, create playgroups that are safe, balanced, and help them settle into groups and our daily routine.

Daycare at Take Five isn't just about keeping dogs busy, it's about helping them feel confident, secure, and at ease in a group setting. Our team stays tuned in to each dog's needs, adapts the day when necessary, and supports healthy play through guidance and structure.

We believe in open, honest communication with pet parents. Above all, our goal is for every dog to feel safe, understood, and truly cared for while enjoying a fun, enriching day with friends.

What does an "ideal fit" look like in the daycare environment at Take Five?

We want your dog to feel as comfortable as possible during their day. Dogs who tend to do well in our environment often:

- Enjoy group play and can take breaks as needed
- Are friendly and tolerant toward other dogs and humans
- Adjust to off-leash play without excessive fear or stress
- Respond well to staff redirection and group routines
- Contribute to a balanced, safe, and fun environment

How do you decide if a pup is thriving, needs support, or isn't a fit at daycare?

We use a **green/yellow/red light system** to guide fit:

- **Green Light:** Engages in play, responds to cues, takes breaks, safe for group play.
- **Yellow Light:** Some challenges (shy, anxious, excitable) but manageable with staff support and group adjustments.
- **Red Light:** Persistent aggression, excessive fear, unsafe fixation (prey drive, bullying, ignoring cues), inability to rest or settle. These are behaviors we cannot safely work with in the daycare environment.

When we notice concerning behaviors, we'll share our observations and try adjustments first. If struggles continue, we'll reach out to discuss next steps.

How do you decide if daycare continues to be the right fit for my pup(s)?

Daycare is an ongoing journey, not just a one-time evaluation. Many pups need a little time to adjust, and it's rewarding to watch them grow more confident with each visit. Some dogs jump right in, while others learn at their own pace, and both are perfectly normal.

Our team pays attention to patterns over time, not just isolated moments. We'll celebrate progress with you, share observations, and make adjustments like group changes, schedule tweaks, or added enrichment to help your pup succeed.

If we notice that daycare is consistently stressful rather than fun, we'll be open and honest in our communication. Together, we'll decide on the best plan, whether that means continued daycare with support and adjustments, or exploring alternatives that may better match your pup's needs.

What if my dog is shy?

That's okay! Not every pup is a social butterfly, and our environment is designed to support a variety of personalities. Some dogs jump right into the fun, while others prefer to hang back, observe, and join in at their own pace. We create playgroups with plenty of space and structure so pups can engage at a level that feels comfortable to them.

During the first few visits, we get a good sense of whether a dog will settle into the routine at Take Five and if daycare is the right fit. Sometimes shyness is just part of a dog's process, and with patience and support, they blossom into happy daycare pups. Other times, certain behaviors may show us that group play isn't the best environment.

What if my dog is fearful or anxious?

It's normal for pups to be nervous at first, and we give them time and space to adjust. Some shy or anxious dogs learn to settle in and enjoy the group with gentle support. However if fear or anxiety turns into ongoing shutdown behavior (hiding, trembling, or avoiding interaction), daycare can become more stressful than fun. In those cases, we'll talk through options with you.

What if my dog is selective?

If your pup doesn't mesh with certain dogs, we can separate them. However, if a dog can't safely be placed with more than three other pups across our playgroups, it can become unmanageable. In those cases, we may coordinate schedules so they don't attend on the same days as their "do not put with" dogs, or we'll talk through alternative care options with you.

Can my dog still come if they mount or act dominant?

A little mounting or testing boundaries can be part of normal play. Our staff will step in and redirect when needed. However, if these behaviors are persistent and disruptive, such as bullying or constant attempts to dominate other dogs, it creates imbalance in the group. If it continues, daycare may not be the best environment.

What about high energy or overexcitement?

We love playful, energetic pups! Our structured play and rest cycles help balance that energy. Many dogs thrive in this routine, but some need more than group play alone. For those pups, we offer enrichment options like sniffari adventures or personalized one-on-one time (such as a tennis ball session) to channel their energy in positive ways.

If a dog cannot settle, take breaks, or self-regulate, becoming overstimulated to the point of disrupting others, group daycare may not be the safest or most enjoyable fit. In those cases, we'll talk with you about alternative care options.

What if my dog has a high prey drive?

Chasing is a natural part of dog play. However, if a pup fixates on other dogs (stalking, tagging, intense focus) and cannot be redirected, it can make others uncomfortable. Because our daycare is set on wooded property, chipmunks and other small animals can sometimes trigger prey drive, too. If a pup struggles to disengage in those moments, it can become disruptive to the group.

Sometimes, adjusting a dog's schedule, such as attending for half days, helps them succeed in our environment. Enrichment options like mindful play or the sensory journey can also give these pups a safe and structured outlet for their instincts.

If fixation or intensity continues despite these adjustments, group daycare may not be the best fit. In those cases, we'll talk with you about the next best care options for your pup.

A Note From the Team

Daycare is meant to be fun and fulfilling, but it's not one-size-fits-all. Our promise is to be honest and transparent, we'll celebrate your pup's wins, share updates, and let you know if challenges arise. We'll always share what we're seeing, explain any concerns, and work together to decide on the best plan for your pup's happiness and safety.