



## Wilder 295432: What to Expect

**Wilder is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Wilder is an energetic playful puppy who is curious and confident about the world around him. He loves to play with toys, go for investigative sniffy walks, and romp with other dogs/puppies. Wilder is **deaf and vision impaired**, he can partially see out of his left eye and has no vision in his right eye. This is a genetic deformity due to a double merle (coat pattern) breeding that often causes blindness and/or deafness in offspring. Despite this, Wilder is a curious and confident pup! He is eager, motivated, and patient to learn new things with his human friends. He already knows how to sit, lay down, stay, and walk nicely on leash. We use hand signals and physical touch to cue Wilder in to what we're trying to communicate. Upon adoption we will transfer these skills to you so you can continue his training using the same positive reinforcement techniques we've been successful using at OHS.

When we lose the ability of one or more senses, our other senses enhance to compensate, and that's definitely the case with Wilder. His nose is very strong, and a lot of his curiosity comes from sniffing and finding little left behind treasures, like crumbs or snacks that roll under the fridge or cabinets. It'll be important to keep the floor swept and yard clear so he doesn't become obsessed with something he can't reach or see but can smell. He would love scent based enrichment like snuffle mats, puzzle feeders, or learning scent work games.

Likely due to Wilder's impairment, he has started to display some obsessive behavior that requires medication and interruption to course correct. When alone, Wilder often finds shadows and light reflections on the ground and will begin to chase them. If not physically interrupted, Wilder will spin in circles and not stop unless redirected onto a toy or food. As Wilder develops and grows he has the ability to grow out of this behavior with the help of his owners and behavior medication. If left unattended, even in a crate or with little light to cast shadow, Wilder will default to these behaviors to entertain himself, and they have the potential to become compulsive. Wilder would do best in a home where his owners, at least for the next several months until he reaches adulthood, can spend a considerable amount of time helping direct his energy and curiosity into helpful and appropriate behaviors, such as chewing on toys and bones, chasing appropriate toys, and learning to relax. Taking walks, going on sniff adventures, disrupting all light/shadow chasing, and continuing training will help Wilder focus to species specific behaviors.

Wilder is very social with both humans and dogs but has the potential to chase cats or other small animals. Due to his impairment and curious puppy nature, he can't see fully and often runs into things or grabs onto items assuming they're toys. Because of this we think he would do best in a home without small children or small animals like cats.

### **Here's how to help Wilder settle in during your first months together:**

**If you're having people over, put Wilder on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.** Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Wilder to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

**Work on having Wilder settle on a mat, dog bed, or cot** and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Wilder is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

**Practice crate training.** Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. When you cannot monitor your dog in the home, allow them some time to settle and relax in the crate.

**Wilder needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Wilder loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

**“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training** to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Wilder on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Wilder drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate “freedom”, but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn’t. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate Wilder when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn’t get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

**Take a training class.** Wilder would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

**Skip the dog park.** Don’t take Wilder to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people or other dogs (such as Saturday Market, dog parks, coffee shops, etc.). While Wilder loves to play with other dogs, he can’t always see dogs coming in to say hello or play, nor can he always see a dog when he’s running around. Scheduled play dates with known dogs in a controlled environment will help him continue his confidence and socialization around other dogs.

**Use treats and toys to build trust.** Maintaining and continuing Wilder’s training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don’t understand each other. The more positive experiences Wilder has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Wilder responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. They will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping them learn to live in a home. Wilder will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Wilder does well at the vet, they handle meeting new people well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

### **Behavioral Medication for your new dog**

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog’s medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.

### **We’re here to help!**

We want Wilder to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Wilder, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Annika at (503) 802-6713 or [annikah@oregonhumane.org](mailto:annikah@oregonhumane.org).

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have questions or concerns, or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing! Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!