

# Rescue dog: Albie breaks into new territory, puppy play date

**Albie got a new best friend when the Zheutlin family were asked to babysit Wilson, another lab from Labs4Rescue, who needed a crash-pad for the night.**

By Peter Zheutlin, *Guest Blogger* / September 14, 2012



Rescue dog Albie and Wilson's puppy play-date was brimming with romp and shared territory. Hanging out in the backyard and sharing toys indoors, the two labs bonded quickly.

When the good people at [Labs4Rescue](#), through whom we adopted Albie, called and asked if we could help another Lab in need, we said, "yes," of course. It wasn't a big request.

A chocolate Lab, who'd come north from the same part of Louisiana as our pup, was going to be fostered in a home not far from ours until a permanent home could be found. But the foster "mom" couldn't get to the shelter before it closed on the assigned day. Could we pick up Wilson and keep him with us for a few hours?

When my wife, Judy, and I came home with Wilson we weren't sure what to expect. Would Albie turn on him in a fit of jealous rage? Would he get territorial about our house and his toys? Would these two male Labs get along or get into a fight? In short, it was just like any other play date we'd arranged for our boys when they were little.

At first, Wilson and Albie could barely contain their excitement. In the backyard they jumped on each other, nipped one another, growled and took turns trying to show each other who's boss. New to having a dog, it can sometimes be hard to discern true aggression from merely aggressive play, but for the most part it seemed like roughhousing with a few brief moments of, "Hey, that hurt."

Once inside, we gave them both dinner, making sure to put down separate bowls at the same time and well apart from one another. Then, happily, things settled down. You could almost imagine the two of them, like brothers, sharing the house in quasi-equanimity. As the father of two boys I can vouch that general tolerance interrupted by occasional moments of true aggression just about sums up life with two boys, so this tableau seemed quite familiar. They played some more -- more gently than we saw outdoors -- and they alternately ignored each other and competed for affection; patting one on the head inevitably brought the other.

But the moment of truth came when Wilson helped himself to Albie's favorite chew toy, which, fortunately, is not our sofa (though he helped himself to that, too, making himself right at home where Albie is forbidden to go). How many of our kids' play dates ended over the enigmatic concept of "sharing"? How many tears have we seen shed over the equally enigmatic concept of "taking turns"? It was hard enough getting those concepts through to our children; it was surely not something that could be explained to a dog. Remember how proud you felt when your toddler first showed signs of generosity with things he treasured? When, instead of a tantrum, she responded to another kid taking a prized toy by busying herself with her second favorite? Those were occasions for heaping praise.

Well, I am very proud to say that Albie was perfectly content to let Wilson wail away on his chew toy, and he didn't even flinch when Wilson plopped himself down on Albie's L.L. Bean dog bed (and later on our bed here Albie is also not allowed). Is there any doubt that this is attributable to excellent parenting? And while I'm being the proud, pat-myself-on-the-back Daddy...as readers of these columns know, last week we had a growing concern about Albie barking and growling at visitors.

Well, I'm happy to report that the refrigerator repairman was here today, and Albie was totally chill (no pun intended). I think we're making progress.