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The Humane Society of Portage County



Foster Care Manual General Information



The Humane Society of Portage County
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Contact Names and Telephone Numbers

During shelter hours

Please contact the Adoption Coordinator with questions, or to schedule foster animal medical check-ups for sick, injured or routine maintenance appointments.

To reach the Adoption Coordinator, call 715-344-6012 ext. 308. If no one answers the phone please leave a message. If you need immediate assistance and can not wait for a call back please hang up and redial 715-344-6012 and press “0” to speak with reception.

For non medical emergencies you can email the Adoption Coordinator at adoption@hspcwi.org. Please allow at least an hour for responses as we are assisting customers that are visiting the shelter and are not always in the office.

For non-emergent medical concerns or to establish an appointment for you foster animals medical updates you can email the Medical Department at vet.tech@hspcwi.org.

Outside shelter hours

To talk to the on call emergency contact, call 715-344-6012 ext 305. If the Humane Officer does not answer, please leave a message as they may be on a call and they will call you back as soon as they are able. The following medical issues are considered an emergency:

- Seizures
- Difficulty breathing
- Anaphylaxis (a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death)
- Unexplained collapse and unconsciousness

If you decide to obtain medical care for your foster animal through a veterinary office without shelter authorization, we will not reimburse the cost of the services

Medical Care

When medical care is involved, the contact person will either arrange for you to bring the animal to the shelter where appropriate care will be administered, or they will direct you to the appropriate person. Please note that if you decide to take the foster animal to a veterinary facility without prior approval from HSPC, we will not be responsible for any of the costs incurred.

For a list of the shelter’s hours please visit our website at www.hspcwi.org or call our main number 715-344-6012.

How Foster Animal Candidates are Chosen

Not every animal is eligible for the foster program. Animals eligible for foster care are those who are expected to be deemed adoptable upon completion of a term of foster care. Animals with severe health or behavior problems that would prevent their being adopted even after specialized care are not placed into the foster program. Reasons animals are placed in foster care include, but are not limited to: weight gain, socialization, young age, wound healing, minor injuries, cruelty cases, URI (upper respiratory infection) and other illnesses/injuries at the Organization's discretion. Sometimes short-term fostering of healthy animals in advance of adoption events is requested, however, this is not as common as fostering for treatable illnesses or behavioral modification. **The HSPC retains discretionary authority for selecting animals for foster care. As a foster, if you choose to foster for another shelter or rescue, you must notify the Adoption Coordinator and return any foster animals to the HSPC.**

Species fostered: In general, HSPC places cats and dogs into foster care on a regular basis, because they make up the majority of the animals received. Rarely will other animals be fostered.

Animals will not be considered for foster care if any of the following apply:

- Represent a threat to public health or safety
- Have medical or behavioral problems in which the condition, prognosis or clinical course is unclear
- Have conditions (medical or behavioral) requiring an unreasonable investment of time and expense by the HSPC, the foster parent or the potential adopter
- Have prognoses of poor quality of life or chronic pain and suffering

The following guidelines will also be followed:

- An animal fostered for socialization will be at the shelter's discretion.
- Animals under four weeks of age will be fostered with their mother if possible.
- The length of fostering for any animal should not exceed three months unless specifically approved for long-term fostering by the Adoption Coordinator.



Suggested Fostering Supplies

The number of foster animals that HSPC is able to support is limited by the resources available to the program. Foster caregivers are encouraged to donate supplies for their own foster animals in order to maximize the number of animals fostered by HSPC. Some supplies may be available to give or loan to foster caregivers who require them in order to foster. The following is a list of supplies recommended for the care and maintenance of your foster animals.

- Animal food (of the type recommended by HSPC for the specific animal)
- Blankets and towels
- Paper towels and rags
- Newspaper
- Ceramic or stainless steel bowls are easiest to sanitize
- Crate: a large wire crate with a divider is useful for different sized dogs and litters of kittens (foster parents are expected to crate-train foster dogs)
- Grooming supplies including brushes, combs and flea combs, nail clippers
- Small, low sided litter boxes for kittens; larger litter boxes work well for adult cats and rabbits
- Use unscented, non-clumping clay litter or paper pelleted litter for kittens, scoopable clay is fine for adult cats; rabbits do best with paper pelleted litter
- Use sheets or tarps to protect floors
- Scratching post for cats (foster parents are expected to teach cats to use a post)
- Stain and odor remover
- Toys that can be cleaned and sanitized (rubber, nylon, etc.) Kongs are hard rubber chew toys that can be filled with treats for dogs and puppies.
- Bleach (diluted 4 oz. per gallon of cold or warm water). Note that bleach has a shelf life, and is not effective on dirty surfaces harboring organic matter such as feces. All surfaces should be cleaned first and then sanitized with bleach solution.
- Spray disinfectant (avoid using ammonia types such as Lysol with cats).
- Baby gates
- Collars and leashes (avoid using choke chain or pinch-type collars)
- Kitty Forts or cat climbers/perches

This list is not all inclusive. The above supplies are the basics that will help with dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens. Not all of the supplies will be needed if you only foster certain types of animals. The foster caregiver's best judgment should be used when obtaining supplies. Some supplies are available for loan—please ask the Adoption Coordinator!

Picking Up a New Foster Animal

- The Adoption Coordinator will contact a list of potential foster parents by email or telephone when an animal is in need of foster care. The first qualified foster caregiver who responds to the request, who is deemed by the Adoption Coordinator to be a suitable placement for the animal, and who accepts the foster assignment will receive the animal. You always have the option to decline a foster assignment for any reason.
- Foster assignments are generally made for two to four week intervals, with the option of extending your assignment if needed. A one week break between foster assignments is generally recommended for reasons of sanitation and mental health.
- **Once you agree to foster an animal, you are responsible for arranging a pick-up time within 24 to 48 hours and driving to the facility where the animal is located. Bring a transport carrier for cats and small animals, and a leash for adult dogs, if at all possible. If you do not have a transport carrier, please let HSPC know.**
- If you are unable to answer your phone the Adoption Coordinator will leave a message, but continue to call other foster caregivers. It is important that you call the Adoption Coordinator back as soon as possible with a yes or no answer and to make sure that the Adoption Coordinator has not found another foster caregiver to take the litter.
- HSPC may be able to provide you with any supplies you are unable to supply.
- You will get a foster instruction sheet, which will indicate the reason for fostering, any medications the foster animal is taking, test results for heartworm, feline leukemia, or parasites, and the date of the foster's medical and behavioral rechecks.
- You will leave with a sufficient supply of any necessary medications, dispensers, instructions and the medication log sheet if applicable.
- Foster dogs and puppies, and adult cats (over age 4 months), will be provided with collars and HSPC ID tags. Please make sure the collar stays on at all times. Please keep all foster cats and other small mammals (non-canine) strictly indoors. Foster dogs and puppies should be indoors except when out for exercise or elimination under foster supervision. **No foster dogs should be allowed off leash in unfenced spaces.**

Pet Proofing Your Home

It is important to ensure that your home and foster room are safe; animals can do the most unlikely things. HSPC will not be responsible for damage to a home or furnishings by a fostered animal.

- All cleaning supplies and medications should be kept out of the reach of jumping and climbing cats and dogs preferably in locked cabinets.
- Place all small chewable items out of reach.
- Put all socks, shoes etc. away because they are tempting to chew.
- Block off all small areas and hiding places.
- Trash cans should be kept covered.
- Wires, electrical cords, and mini blind cords should be placed out of reach.
- Drapery and shower curtains should be placed out of reach.
- Make sure your fosters aren't locked in a closet or stuck behind furniture.

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- Many house and garden plants are poisonous. Keep household plants out of reach and supervise your animals outside.
- HSPC does not recommend leaving your foster dog unattended in the yard, even if fenced. Some dogs will dig or jump fences. Cats should remain indoors.
- Toys must be safe! Avoid any toys that have small parts attached to them (i.e., eyes, ribbons, yarn, feathers, etc.). Also avoid soft rubber toys that can be chewed apart and squeaky toys.
- Protect your home from being damaged by using sheets, tarps and newspaper to protect carpet and floors. ANY unprotected surface can potentially be damaged.
- Use a wire crate for dogs when you are away from home. A wire crate may also be used with cats and kittens too. Crating animals when not under your direct supervision will help prevent home damage.

Bringing Your New Foster Animal Home

- Ideally, set up the area where your foster animal will be staying BEFORE you bring your foster home.
- **New foster animals should be isolated from your existing companion animals of the same species for a period of at least 7-10 days and/or until symptoms of illness disappear. This quarantine period is to protect your own animals and should be strictly observed. HSPC will not be responsible for costs associated with treatment of contagious diseases of other non-fostered pets in your home.**
- Cats and kittens do very well in a kitty condo, crate, bathroom or spare bedroom.
- Introduce your foster animal to one room of the house at first. Try to have homecoming be a quiet experience for the animal.
- Cats and kittens need a cozy, secure place with a bed to snuggle up in. The bed can simply be a low box with a blanket in it.
- Show each cat and kitten where the litter box is located. One litter box per adult cat is the minimum number.
- Dogs and puppies should have a crate. The crate should allow the dog to turn around, stand, sit, and lie down comfortably, but should NOT be so large as to provide potty area in the back portion. The crate may be partially covered and should have a water bowl inside. A larger crate IS appropriate for a nursing litter, however. Better yet is a small room.
- Allow your new foster animal quiet time to adjust to the new environment.

Health and Medical Issues

Even if your foster animals appear healthy when you pick them up from our shelter, they may be incubating a disease. This is why it is important to observe the 7-10 day quarantine period when you first bring your foster home. **It is very important that your companion animals of the same species be current on all vaccines for their own protection and well-being.** You may wish to discuss the fact that you are fostering with your veterinarian. Due to the increased chance of exposure to animals with diseases, your veterinarian might recommend vaccines that are not routinely given, or a more frequent schedule.

It is important to observe your foster animal for any signs of illness. **Please keep a daily chart of signs of illness for use at veterinary re-checks.** Warning signs to watch for include:

- Sneezing and or coughing, gagging
- Green or yellow mucus from the nose or eyes
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Wheezing, or heavy breathing
- Tiring easily
- Vomiting for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- Straining to urinate or defecate, or crying when urinating/defecating
- Bleeding from any part of the body, including bloody stool or urine
- Twitching or moving abnormally
- Loss or decrease of appetite for over 24 hours.
- Change in attitude or behavior, especially being lethargic or depressed
- Rectal temperature over 102.5 degrees

If your foster animal develops severe or bloody diarrhea, severe vomiting or is very lethargic, contact the Adoption Coordinator immediately.

Common Illnesses/Medical Conditions Seen in Foster Animals:

- **URI.** Upper Respiratory Infection can infect dogs and cats. Cats generally cannot give URI to dogs, nor do dogs give it to cats, but it is often spread within the same species. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature.
- **Diarrhea.** Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool into the HSPC so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run. Feed dogs and cats a bland diet of cooked white rice and boiled chicken (3 parts rice to 1 part meat) until the diarrhea subsides. Animals with diarrhea may become dehydrated, so make sure plenty of water is available. Please call the Adoption Coordinator before making any feeding changes.
- **Dehydration.** Animals with diarrhea can quickly become dehydrated. To check for dehydration, pull up gently on the skin at the scruff of the neck. If it bounces back quickly when you let go, hydration is fine. If it does not go back or goes back slowly, your foster animal is dehydrated and needs medical attention quickly. Another way to

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check hydration is to slide your finger along the animal's gum above the teeth—it should feel slippery, not tacky.

- **Fleas.** Fleas can affect dogs and cats. A foster feline will be treated with Revolution. **Do not use any over the counter flea treatments at all—including flea collars.** If you notice fleas within a week of having the animal in your home, call the Adoption Coordinator. Although we do try to check for and treat fleas, we recommend that all of your pets be on a flea preventative. Please consult your veterinarian for a flea preventative.
- **Intestinal parasites.** All our animals receive preventative deworming treatments. Not all internal parasites are easily detected. If you see parasites in your foster's stool, contact the Adoption Coordinator to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti. Diarrhea is a common sign of worms or other intestinal parasites.

Placing your Foster Animal up for Adoption

- When your foster animal is cleared by the medical team for adoption, you will need to contact the Adoption Coordinator to discuss the appropriate adoption venue for the animal.
- **Please note that it is not mandatory for adopters to adopt pairs of kittens or puppies. While HSPC will house and promote animals in bonded pairs, there is no requirement for adopters to take both members of a pair.**
- Anyone interested in adopting a foster animal must contact the Adoption Coordinator.
- **Animals returned for adoption to the shelters do not have to be sterilized in advance. HSPC will arrange the sterilization appointments.**
- Occasionally, an animal may be posted on Petfinder for adoption instead of being returned to the HSPC. This is arranged through the Adoption Coordinator. If a foster is posted on Petfinder and someone calls the shelter to meet the animal you will be notified by the Adoption Coordinator. You be asked to bring your foster to the shelter for prospective adopters to meet the pet. **Please do not conduct meetings with prospective adopters in your home.** Foster families are not part of the adoption process. The adoption team will review the applications and make a decision.

Adopting your own Foster Animal

Foster caregivers are special volunteers with advanced training. We never seem to have enough trained foster caregivers. Losing even one reduces the resources available to animals in our care. While it is tempting to adopt your first or subsequent foster animals, you will be more valuable to the program if you continue to foster new animals rather than adopting and then ceasing to foster.

If you are interested in adopting your foster animal, please contact the Adoption Coordinator. Foster caregivers will be required to fill out an adoption application, and be approved to adopt their foster animal. They will then need to go to the source facility to process the adoption paperwork and to pay the appropriate adoption fees for their foster animal. Adoption fees are not reduced for foster caregivers, unless there is a special situation making the animal otherwise unadoptable.

Foster Animals Who Are Not Able to be Adopted

If a foster animal develops a significant behavior or health condition, or shows signs of serious temperament disorder, then the Adoption Coordinator or medical team may determine that the animal is not suitable for public adoption. This can be discovered during temperament re-checks or veterinary evaluation visits. The decision regarding a foster animal's adoptability is made by HSPC staff. Depending on the severity of the condition or behavior, two options are available to the Adoption Coordinator:

- **Option 1:** A decision may be made that the animal will only be offered for adoption to the foster caregiver. If the foster caregiver is unable or unwilling to adopt, then the animal will be humanely euthanized.
- **Option 2:** A decision may be made that the animal is not suitable for adoption at all and must be humanely euthanized.

The factors considered in this difficult decision include public safety; short and long-term cost of care; severity of health or behavior condition; and animal's level of pain or suffering.

If a decision has been made that a particular foster animal will not be made available for public adoption, then the Adoption Coordinator or medical team will contact the foster caregiver to have the animal brought back to the shelter. If the foster caregiver is not immediately reachable using the contacts provided in their foster profile, then the HSPC staff will attempt to leave a brief message indicating the urgency of the need for a call back by a specific time and date.

PLEASE NOTE: HSPC reserves the right to euthanize a foster animal prior to contact with the foster parent.

What to do if a Foster Animal Dies in your Care

Many animals are fostered for illnesses, and not all of them recover. While HSPC seeks to place animals with reasonable chances of survival into foster care, it is impossible to predict the course of a disease in any particular individual. In the rare instance that your foster animal dies in your care, please contact the Adoption Coordinator. If the animal passes during the night, place the animal in a plastic bag and keep cool or frozen. Please call 715-344-6012 ext. 308 and leave a message. The Adoption Coordinator will return your call upon their arrival the next day. Losing an animal is a very difficult thing to experience however it is not an emergency if the animal passes after hours.

Sanitizing Your Home Between Foster Animals

In order to prevent disease and parasite infestations in your home, thoroughly clean areas where the foster animal has stayed. The one week "break" period between foster assignments is a good time to do this.

- Wash bedding in hot water, detergent and bleach.
- Discard non-washable surface toys.
- Disinfect all washable surfaces with a mild bleach and water solution (bleach/water ratio of 1:32 or 4oz of bleach per gallon of water is recommended). Bleach solutions should be prepared as needed, because they lose their strength after 24 hours. Bleach is inactive in the presence of organic matter so clean up dirt, hair, feces, etc. **before** using bleach to disinfect. **Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective.**

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- Vacuum all carpeted areas.
- Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes and scrub and bleach crates, carriers, scoops, food bowls and litter boxes.
- Clean any urine or feces soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner immediately to avoid residual odor (Nature’s Miracle Stain and Odor Remover works well).
- Regularly clean up all waste in the yard to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

Quarantine Periods:

Sometimes an animal is sent into a home before evidence of a serious disease has manifested. Quarantine periods are used to allow infectious diseases to die off in the environment. This protects future foster animals from being infected with the virus or disease. Specific quarantine periods are as follows:

- Feline Leukemia/FIV 3 days
- Sarcoptic Mange 1 week
- FIP or Canine Distemper 3 weeks
- Ringworm 3 months
- Panleukopenia or Parvovirus 6 months

If a foster animal is infected with one of the above illnesses, the foster parent will not be allowed to bring another foster of the same species into the home for the designated quarantine period.

Foster caregivers must understand that there is a risk of your owned animals contracting a disease from a foster animal. The HSPC will not be responsible for the treatment of owned animals in the case this happens.

Protecting Yourself from Animal Diseases

Most conditions for which animals are fostered are not transmissible to humans with normal immune systems; however, a few diseases can be transmitted from animals to humans. These are termed “zoonoses.” HSPC will make an effort to avoid sending an animal with an untreated disease that can be transmitted to humans into foster care. However, not all zoonoses are apparent or able to be diagnosed in advance. **Foster caregivers must understand that there is a small risk of contracting such a disease from a foster animal, and that HSPC will not be responsible for the treatment of humans in the home in the case this happens.** Foster caregivers are advised to seek medical attention from a professional if they suspect they have been exposed to a zoonotic disease, and alert the Adoption Coordinator immediately. If a human in the foster home is immune compromised, then fostering animals may not be advisable. Check with a medical professional. The best form of prevention is washing your hands after handling animals, feces, urine and avoiding being bitten or scratched. HSPC animals will be current on vaccinations and worming when sent into foster care if age and health status permits. For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/healthypets/

Examples of zoonoses include:

- Ringworm (fungal skin infection) passed by direct contact with the skin, lesions, or infected skin/hair.
- Leptospirosis (bacterial disease) passed through infected animal urine
- Bartonella (“cat scratch fever” a bacterial disease) passed by cat scratches or bites
- Giardia (intestinal parasite) passed by infected feces

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- Roundworm (intestinal parasite) passed by infected
- Hookworm (intestinal parasite) passed by infected
- Coccidia (intestinal parasite) passed by infected feces
- Toxoplasmosis (parasite) passed by infected feces of cats
- Rabies (rare fatal virus) passed by saliva from infected animal

Grievance Procedure

Please direct any concerns or questions regarding the foster caregiver program to the Adoption Coordinator.

Professional Conduct

Fostering can be an emotional experience, with significant highs and lows. HSPC expects that all foster caregivers will communicate and interact with HSPC staff members, potential adopters, other volunteers, and the general public in a professional manner at all times. Unprofessional behavior on the part of a foster caregiver may result in being removed from the foster caregiver program.

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FOSTER CARE MANUAL - FELINE

Introduction

Welcome to the dedicated Foster Caregiver Team of HSPC! The following guidelines will help you with the care of your fosters and will help you understand the policies and procedures of the foster caregiver program. Please keep the following items on this list in mind before you agree to bring foster animals into your home.

- A foster animal could potentially carry illness into your home that could affect your resident animals' (or humans') health.
- To protect people, young children should not handle the foster kittens and everyone should wash their hands after handling animals, fecal waste, or litter boxes.
- To protect other cats, foster animals should be separated from household pets for at least two weeks. This means that you should also prohibit the sharing of food and water bowls, litter boxes and toys.
- Kittens should be de-fleaed before they enter your home and as often as necessary to keep fleas off of them, because fleas can spread disease among cats and to people.
- You should **wash your hands** with soap and water before handling your own animals or children and you may also want to change clothes.
- You should routinely disinfect the foster kittens' quarters and disinfect the entire premises before new kittens are introduced.
- The best way to disinfect the area is to remove all organic material and fecal debris and then soak with a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water) for at least 10 minutes. All surfaces, bowls, toys etc. need to be disinfected (so you probably want to keep kittens in a room without carpeting).
- It is best to have only one litter at a time rather than constantly adding new kittens in with others. Keeping kittens in groups allows you to prevent disease and to disinfect between groups.
- It is possible even with these precautions that resident cats could be exposed to mild infections such as URI. Ask the Adoption Coordinator for more information if this is a concern.

Supplies you will need before you bring home kittens

- **Box or carrier** – You may want to use the carrier in which you took the litter home. It will provide a familiar-smelling, dark, quiet home for your foster kitties. However, a bigger box may be desirable, as it will allow you to see in, as well as provide plenty of room for the mother and the new, growing litter of kittens.
- **Newspapers** – Keep several layers in the bottom of the box, and they will come in handy when the kittens start to roam around the room and into their litter box.
- **Big litter box for mother cat (queen)**
- **Small litter box for kittens** - An oblong cake pan is perfect. Cut-off cardboard boxes also work well.

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- **Cat litter** – Any non-clumping variety of litter will be fine. The clumping litter may be dangerous if ingested by a kitten.
- **Water bowls** – Heavy and impossible to tip. Should be stainless steel or porcelain/ceramic, NOT plastic, as plastic is difficult to disinfect because it is so porous.
- **Food bowls (at least 2)** – One is for the eat-at-will dry cat food, the other for canned food. You can use TV dinner trays, paper plates or whatever you have; any relatively flat plate or saucer will do. The larger the litter, the larger the plate should be so that no one gets crowded out.
- **Food** – You should have both dry kitten chow, canned cat food (any brand for adults or kittens), and all-meat baby food (must not contain vegetables or onion powder). Offer several choices to weaned kittens to determine their preferences.
- **Heating pad, hot water bottle, or infrared lamp** – “Unless the nursery is at least 85° and your kittens are 2 weeks or older, you need to supply extra heat. **BE SURE THAT THE KITTENS HAVE ROOM TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE HEAT** (leave room for mom if she is with them). For example, if you are using a heating pad, place it under several towels, and make sure that it covers only half of the floor area of their box. The heating pad should be on "low" or "medium" to prevent overheating the kittens. Make sure to cover any electrical cords as well, so that the kittens are not tempted to play and bite on them. Alternatively hot water bottles or rice bags can be used as heat sources. These should also be covered by towels, and should be changed regularly to ensure that they stay warm for the kittens to snuggle up against.”
- **Clean towels and blankets**
- **Toys** – Plastic, disinfected toys are good to reuse for new litters. Kittens can also amuse themselves with empty toilet paper rolls. Empty 12-pack cardboard soda boxes are good for an inventive number of games. Clean tennis balls, old stuffed socks, caps from soda bottles and paper bags are marvelous toys as well. Young kittens do not respond to catnip, but mom will like it. Kittens will also "play" with anything they can find. Drapes, lamp shades and crystal ornaments are as much fun as the toys listed above. Be sure to "kitten-proof" your home. As they grow, their climbing abilities will develop, so anything irreplaceable should be kept out of reach!
- **Scale**, although not critical to success, a food or postal scale will be very helpful in monitoring small kittens' growth, which averages 4 ounces a week. (Note: HSPC does not have a scale to lend to caregivers.)

Introductions With Your Companion Cat

- Use your discretion in deciding whether to introduce your adult cats to your foster cats and kittens. Some resident cats have difficulty adjusting to fosters and may exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as urine marking.
- If you choose to introduce your adult cat to a foster cat or kitten, the introductions should be done gradually. Observing the 7-10 day waiting period will greatly facilitate this guideline.

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Most species of cats, including the domestic cat, do not normally live in social groups. Although cats can form close attachments to other animals, they are basically solitary. Cats are very territorial and do not develop the same type of social hierarchies or "pecking orders" as do dogs. Cats who live in the same house may never become the best of friends, but can usually learn to at least tolerate each other with a minimum of conflict. You will need to take some time to introduce your cat to other family pets in order to prevent fearful, aggressive and behavioral problems from developing.

- ◆ Confine the new cat to one medium sized room with its litterbox, food, water, and a bed. Feed the present cats and the newcomer near either side of the door to this room. Don't put the food so close to the door that the cats are too upset by each other to eat. This will help to start things out on the right foot by associating something enjoyable (eating) with each other's presence. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until the cats can eat calmly on each side of the door. Next, prop open the door just enough to allow the cats to see each other, and repeat the whole process.
- ◆ Switch sleeping blankets between the new cat and resident cats so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Also put the scented blankets underneath the food dishes.
- ◆ Once the new cat is using its litterbox and eating regularly while confined, let it have free time in the house while confining the other cats. This switch provides another way for the cats to have experience with each other's scent without a face to face meeting, and also allows the newcomer to become familiar with its new surroundings without being frightened by other animals.
- ◆ Avoid any interactions between the cats that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce the animals to each other so gradually that neither cat becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but don't give them the opportunity to intensify. If either cat becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them and continue the introduce process in a series of gradual steps, as outlined above.
- ◆ Precautions: You'll need to add another litterbox, and probably clean all the boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats is being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the box. Try to keep the resident cat's schedule as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance.
- ◆ Cats can make a lot of noise, pull each other's hair, and roll around quite dramatically without either cat being injured. If small spats do occur between the cats, you should not attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead, make a very loud noise, or throw a pillow at or a glass of water on the cats in order to separate them. Give them both a chance to calm down before re-introducing them to each other. Be sure each cat has a safe hiding place.

Introducing Cats and Dogs to Each Other

Step 1: Separate the animals

- Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent.
- Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog.
- If the dog obsessively digs at the separation barrier or barks at the cat for more than a day or two, the interaction likely won't work without proper training. You may need the help of a professional.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible.
- Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed to the next step.

Step 3: Make leashed introductions

- Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time, but keep the dog securely leashed.
- Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally.
- If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal's part, stay at step 2 longer.
- Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other.
- When no one is home, the dog or cat should be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

Step 4: Allow unsupervised interactions

Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

Training Tip:

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract them and get them to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash.

Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If they take the treat, repeat this process until they are no longer focused on the cat or door.

Warning Signs

- If the dog remains overly focused, does not take their eyes off the cat or the door, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match. If you are looking for a dog for your resident cat, try another dog. If this is your dog, you should probably not get a cat.

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- If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows any aggression toward a calm, quiet, still cat, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog. If you are committed to make the relationship work, you will probably need a professional at this point.
- If you are looking for a cat for your dog, and your dog displays questionable behavior around a cat who is growling, hissing and swatting, try again with another, calmer cat. If your dog continues to display questionable behavior around multiple cats, it is likely they should not live with cats.
- If it is your cat who is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. You might also need to try a different dog. A cat who continually hisses and growls at all types of dogs will likely not want to live with dogs. Your cat may tolerate a dog, but they probably won't be happy — which is an unfair situation for the cat.
- If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box or visiting with family members, they are not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice.

General care of kittens

Kittens under the age of 8 weeks need a mother- either a cat or a human surrogate. They are very vulnerable in a shelter and the chance to get them into a foster home within 24 hours is a chance to save their lives.

Young kittens should be kept in a large box or cat carrier lined with a towel for easy cleaning. It is very important to keep the kittens warm, and a heating pad is ideal for this. The more kittens in your litter, the better able they will be to keep warm by sleeping together in a heap. Small litters and singletons need more help keeping warm. Keep kittens away from heaters or cold drafts.

A mother works hard to keep her kittens clean, grooming them thoroughly to remove any sticky messes they may get into, such as kitten food or feces. Keeping kittens clean in the absence of their mother can be a messy business, but it is extremely important. If kittens are not urinating and defecating on their own (when they are less than 2 weeks old), they will need to be stimulated. This should be done every few hours (often right after feeding) by gently rubbing a warm wet paper towel on the kitten's anus and genital area. They will pee and poop into the paper towel.

A flea comb will get rid of dried feces in the fur. You can also stroke a kitten with a warm, damp cloth, using short strokes to mimic a mother's tongue. Be sure to dry them well to prevent them from getting chilled. Sometimes cat litter and dried feces can become caked on the underside of the tail or between the kitten's toes. This may be softened and removed by dipping the kitten's back end into a basin of warm water. Many kittens will not even notice that they are partially wet, but some will protest violently, and scramble to escape, so beware of sharp little claws!

Proper socialization

Any introductions of cats to other cats or cats to dogs should be made with great care and under constant supervision. Part of your job is to convince the kittens that humans are kind and loving. Outgoing, friendly kittens can be cuddled and played with freely, after spending a day or so to

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get accustomed to a comfy box in a quiet room. Shy kittens will need more encouragement. Try sitting on the floor with a kitten held against your chest, supported underneath, and facing outwards, so he can't see how big and scary you are. Stroke him and speak gently, telling him how cute and brave and fabulous he is (kittens love to hear that!). Continue this for about 30 seconds, then, put the cat down before the cat starts squirming. You want this to be a pleasant experience. The kitten will not be impressed, but if you cuddle him often enough, he will learn to love it. Sometimes holding a pair of kittens helps - they seem to reassure each other.

Feral kittens are a special challenge to socialize. The earlier feral kittens separate from their mother, the more likely they are to adapt to people. Even at 6 weeks, feral kittens can act like little tiger cubs. If your kittens are fearful and run away when you approach, try sitting or lying quietly on the floor near them and let them come to you. Spend time quietly in their presence to get them accustomed to your company. Stroke them and talk to them gently while they are eating to further reinforce positive associations. After 8 weeks of age, some people put kittens into solitary confinement briefly, which has the effect of making them very lonely and more willing to take comfort from a human. If they have the company of another cat, they are more likely to hide from you with the other cat. However, this practice can be cruel if the kittens are isolated for prolonged periods (more than a day).

There is no such thing as a "bad" kitten. Even if your kitten(s) doesn't enjoy being held and cuddled, if they will tolerate being stroked and don't cower under the sofa, they will make someone a wonderful pet. Not everyone wants an affectionate lap-cat. Many people prefer cats who are more independent and somewhat aloof companions.

It is useless to punish a "naughty" kitten. Their little minds do not grasp deductive reasoning. Try distracting a mischievous kitten with something else until they forget whatever they were doing (it should not take long!).

Care of the pregnant queen

If you are fostering a pregnant queen during her final week of pregnancy, it is important to remember she may not have a big appetite because the kittens are crowding her internal organs. Feed her several small meals daily, rather than one or two larger meals. Leave dry kitten food and water out at all times. It is virtually impossible to overfeed a nursing or pregnant queen. Food requirements increase up to three times the normal amount.

Prepare a kitting box. Place it in a dry, warm, relatively dark and out-of-the-way place, and put Mom in it. If she doesn't want to stay in it, don't insist, but you can encourage her by petting her and giving her little food treats. If your nursery room is not that warm, you can keep the box warmer by wrapping a heating pad in a towel, setting it on "low," and placing it under HALF of the box so that the mother and kittens can remove themselves from the heat source if they choose. One word of warning: you might consider wrapping duct tape or a cord protector around the cord, as the kittens tend to chew on it! Until the mother cat delivers, fill her litter box with shredded newspaper instead of cat litter. Many cats will deliver their kittens in the litter box. Newspaper provides a much cleaner environment for the cat and kittens than litter. Mom cannot clean the moist litter granules, which make a damp nest for the newborns. After the kittens are born, you can switch to your normal non-clumping litter.

The birth of kittens, or kindling

The majority of cats give birth with no problem or need for outside help. Before delivery, the queen may become irritable and restless. She will search for a place to have her kittens. Put her in the designated kittening box. She may choose not to have them there, so it helps to keep the box in a room with as few nooks and hiding places as possible. If she has her kittens outside of the kittening box, let her. When she is completely done with the delivery, move them all into the box. If the cat has had her kittens outside the box, don't worry about the "mess" - when she is finished she will normally clean up and leave very little evidence of the birth.

Some cats may want you to stay with them, and will try to follow you if you leave. You will probably have to spend some time with this kind of cat soothing her. Often after the birth of the first couple of kittens, she will be very busy and not so dependent on your presence. Other queens will try to get away from you and hide. Give her the space she needs, but keep checking in on her regularly. It is quite possible that you will miss the birth process entirely. You might wake up one morning or come home from work to find the new family born, dry, and nursing.

Stages of Feline Labor

The first stage may take 12 hours, during which the queen may purr and breathe rhythmically. She may become very active, try to dig at the floor, appear to be straining to use her litter box, and cry loudly.

In the second stage, the water breaks, and straw colored fluid is passed. A kitten will be delivered a few minutes later. The queen will lick the kitten clean and bite through the umbilical cord. She is bonding with her kittens through this process, and learning to recognize them as her own. Do not disturb her. It may look as if her treatment is too rough, but she is actually stimulating breathing and blood circulation. Kittens should begin nursing between subsequent births.

In the final stage, the placenta follows a few minutes after delivery of a kitten. The mother will probably eat some or all of the placentas. Kittens are born anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes apart, so most deliveries take 2 to 6 hours. The average litter is 4 to 5 kittens. Larger litters of 6, 7, or more are unusual.

If a kitten is not born within 2 hours and the mother appears to be continually straining or in distress, call for assistance immediately. (Please see contact numbers) If the mother is content and happy, she is probably finished, though there have been cases in which a cat resumed delivery sometime later.

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Feeding Kittens

Commercially available kitten formula should be given at the kitten's body temperature, about 100 degrees. Once the can is opened or the powder reconstituted, unused formula should be kept refrigerated and discarded after 24 hours. **NEVER give a kitten cow's milk (or anything else besides the specified formula). HSPC recommends KMR milk replacer for kittens.**

It is best to feed the kittens one-by-one, and on a counter-top – this allows them to feed with all four feet on the counter, and their head is level, much as they would if they were nursing from their mom. Some kittens prefer to nurse standing on their hind legs while holding the bottle. They will require a little support from you in this position. Gently open a kitten's mouth with one finger and place the tip of the nipple on his tongue. If he won't eat, try stroking him. Pull lightly on the bottle to encourage vigorous sucking. Be sure to tilt the bottle up slightly to prevent the kitten from inhaling too much air. Do not force the kitten to nurse, or allow him to nurse too fast. Avoid feeding a kitten while he is cradled on his back – if the fluid goes down the wrong way, it may end up in his lungs.

After each feeding, the kitten should be burped. Hold him against your shoulder and gently massage his back or pat it lightly.

Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding kittens! Keep an eye on your kittens at feeding time and monitor how much each is eating. If you see signs of diarrhea, separate them until you find out which one is sick. Your kittens will generally regulate their own food intake. If they need more food, they may whine or suck on their litter mates. A good indication that they are getting enough to eat is the size of their bellies – they should be filled out after a meal, but not bloated. The next section of this protocol discusses amounts of food required at various stages of kitten hood.

Nursing mothers should be fed dry kitten food mixed with some wet food. They need to be fed more often and in larger quantities than usual. **Please feed Purina One or Purina ProPlan food, as this is the brand HSPC provides.** This food may be available to you for free from HSPC for fosters. Using other brands can cause stomach upsets and diarrhea both in the foster home and again when they are returned for adoption.

It is important to make sure that each kitten is eating. If it appears that one or more kitten is not making its way to the dish or is getting squeezed out, set up another dish away from the first and closely monitor that kitten's intake. Kittens will continue to occasionally nurse during this time.

Expectations and care required at each stage of kitten hood

WEIGHT CHART		
AGE WEIGHT		
At Birth	3.0 - 3.7 oz	(90 - 110 grams)
Three - Four Weeks	11.7 - 15 oz	(350 - 450 grams)
Eight Weeks	1.7 - 2.0 lbs	(800 - 900 grams)
Kittens should gain 7 - 10 percent of their birth weight each day (10 - 15 grams)		
A kitten must weigh 2 pounds and be 8 weeks old before it is adoptable.		

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Kitchen Measurement Conversion Tables			
Liquid or Volume Measures (approximate)			
1 Teaspoon		1/3 tablespoon	5 ml
1 Tblspoon	1/2 fluid ounce	3 teaspoons	15 ml 15 cc
2 Tblspoons	1 fluid ounce	1/8 cup, 6 teaspoons	30 ml, 30 cc

Less than 1 Week of age

Feeding: Bottle feed formula per manufacturer's instructions every 2 - 3 hours. If the queen is with the kittens, they should nurse vigorously and compete for nipples. Newborns can nurse up to 45 minutes at a time. Be sure to watch kittens nursing at least once a day, if mom cat will permit it. Check that everyone is nursing and that there isn't too much jockeying for position. A great deal of activity and crying could indicate a problem with milk flow, quality or availability. When mom cat reenters the box, there should be some fussing for only a few minutes before everyone has settled down to serious nursing.

Environment: The temperature of the nest box should be nice and warm: 85-90 degrees. Chilling is the number one danger to newborn kittens.

Behavior & Training: At one week of age, the kittens should weigh 4 oz., and should be handled minimally. Kittens will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%

1-2 Weeks of age

Feeding: Bottle feed formula per manufacturer's instruction every 2 - 3 hours until kittens are full but not bloated- usually kittens will consume at least 1/2 tablespoon of formula per feeding.

Environment: Floor temperature of the nest box should be nice and warm: 80-85 degrees.

Behavior & Training: Kittens at 2 weeks of age will weigh about 7 ounces. Ear canals open between 5 and 8 days. Eyes will open between 8 and 14 days. They open gradually, usually starting to open from the nose outward. Short-haired cats' eyes will usually open earlier than those of Persian ancestry. All kittens are born with blue eyes, and initially no pupils can be distinguished from the irises – the eyes will appear solid dark blue.

Healthy kittens will be round and warm, with pink skin. If you pinch them gently, their skin should spring back. When you pick a kitten up, it should wiggle energetically and when you put it down near the mom it should crawl back to her. Healthy kittens seldom cry.

To determine the sex of the kittens, hold a kitten tummy-up in your hand. In females, the vulva is a vertical slit above the anus; they are very close together. In males, the penile opening is above the anus, but they are separated by a raised scrotal sac and thus seem far apart. It is easiest to see the differences between the sexes if you examine all the kittens and then find two who don't have matching equipment. Don't worry if it is still unclear; by the time the kittens are ready for permanent homes, their sex will be obvious.

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2-3 Weeks of age

Feeding: Bottle feed formula per manufacturer's instruction every 2 - 3 hours until kittens are full but not bloated – usually kittens will consume at least 1/2 tablespoon of formula per feeding.

Environment: Floor temperature of the nest box should be nice and warm: 75-80 degrees.

Behavior & Training: If there is a queen, she will begin to spend larger periods of time out of the nest, though she will not go far from it.

Kittens will weigh about 10 ounces. Their ears will become erect. Kittens begin to crawl around day 18. Kittens can stand by day 21. Kittens will begin to play with each other, biting ears, tails and paws even before their teeth have come in. Their milk teeth are cut during this period. Kittens learn to sit and touch objects with their paws.

Kittens begin their socialization phase - they will be strongly influenced by the behavior of their mother for the next six weeks. To further socialize kittens, increase the amount of handling, and get them accustomed to human contact. It is important not to expose them to anything frightening; children may seem intimidating and should be supervised closely while visiting to ensure gentle handling.

3-4 Weeks of age

Feeding: Bottle feed formula per manufacturer's instruction every 2 - 3 hours until kittens are full but not bloated – usually kittens will consume at least 1/2 tablespoon of formula per feeding. At this stage kittens may start lapping from a bowl.

Environment: Floor temperature of the nest box should be 70-75 degrees from this point onward.

Behavior & Training: Kittens will weigh about 13 ounces. Adult eye color will begin to appear, but may not reach final shade for another 9 to 12 weeks. Kittens begin to see well and their eyes begin to look and function like adult cats' eyes. Kittens will start cleaning themselves, though their mother will continue to do most of the serious cleaning.

4-5 Weeks of age

Feeding: Give 3 tablespoons (1-1/2 oz.) formula every 8 hours. They can usually drink and eat from a saucer by 4 weeks. Weaning should be done gradually. Introduce them to solid food by offering warmed canned food, mixed with a little water into gruel, in a shallow saucer. You can begin by placing one kitten by the plate of canned food gruel, and hoping for the best – if she starts eating, great! Her littermates will probably copy her and do the same. But without mom around to show them, many kittens do not have a clue about feeding time. The kittens will walk in it, slide in it, and track it all over the place. Sometimes one will begin lapping right away, and in its anxiety to consume as much as it can, it will often bite the edge of the plate. Some will prefer to lick the gruel from your fingers. Some will start licking your finger after they sniff it, then slowly lower your finger to the plate and hold it to the food. The kittens need to learn to eat with their heads bent down. Sometimes it takes two or three meals before they catch on. If they do not seem interested enough to even sniff your finger, try gently opening the kittens' mouth and rubbing a little of the food on their teeth. Hopefully then they will start licking your finger. If they're still not getting the idea, you can take a syringe (without a needle) and squirt a small amount of gruel directly into the back of their mouths.

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If there is a queen present, she will usually begin weaning by discouraging her kittens from nursing; however, some cats (particularly those with small litters) will allow nursing until the kittens are old enough for permanent homes. Some nursing activity is the feline equivalent of thumb-sucking, that is, for comfort only. Even if kittens appear to be nursing, they may not be getting all the nutrition they need from mom. Make sure they are eating food and gaining weight.

Be sure that the kittens have access to fresh water in a low, stable bowl.

Behavior & Training: Begin litter training at four weeks. Use a low box with one inch of non-clumping litter or shredded newspaper. Do not expose the kittens to the clumping variety of litter, as it is harmful if ingested. After each feeding, place the kitten in the box, take his paw, and gently scratch the litter. Be patient! He may not remember to do this every time, or may forget where to find the litter box, but he will learn quickly. Be sure to give the kittens lots of praise when they first start using their boxes. Most will use it from the start, but like other babies, might make an occasional mistake. It is a good idea to confine the kittens to a relatively small space, because the larger the area the kittens have to play in, the more likely they will forget where the litter box is. Keep the litter box clean and away from their food.

5-6 Weeks of age

Feeding: Feed gruel 4 times a day. Thicken gruel gradually. Introduce dry food and water. If you are fostering a litter with their mother, continue weaning. Some kittens will not like canned food. For reluctant eaters, try mixing any meat-flavored human baby food with a little water. The meat flavor is often more appealing to the picky eaters. Be sure the brand you get **does not contain onion powder** as this ingredient can be hazardous to kittens.

Behavior & Training: At about five weeks, kittens can start to roam around the room, under supervision. They will weigh 1 pound and the testicles of male kittens will become visible. The strongest, most curious kitten will figure out how to get out of the nest. The others will quickly follow.

Play with your kittens daily! It is a good idea to wear long sleeves and pants, as they can play roughly and their claws are sharp. If you sit on the floor they will play "King of the Mountain," using your knees and shoulders as vantage points. This game is lots of fun and good exercise for them. Some kittens may be fearful at first; do not force yourself upon them. You can get them used to your presence by sitting in the middle of the room making phone calls; this way they hear your voice but do not feel threatened. Make them an important part of your household activities; accustom them to the sounds of the TV, vacuum cleaner and other household sounds.

6-7 Weeks of age

Feeding: Should be eating canned and dry food well. Feed the kittens at least three meals daily. If one kitten appears food-possessive, use a second dish and leave plenty of food out so that everyone is eating. Bear in mind that a kitten at this age has a stomach roughly the size of an acorn, so, although they may not eat much at a single sitting, they like to eat at frequent intervals throughout the day.

Behavior & Training: By this time, you have "mini-cats." They will wash themselves, use scratching posts, play games with each other, their toys, and you, and many will come when you

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call them. Be sure to reintroduce them to their litter box after meals, during play sessions, and after naps. These are the usual times that kittens need to use the litter box.

7-8 Weeks of age

Feeding: Offer wet food 3 – 4 times a day (each kitten will be eating a little over one can of food per day). Leave down a bowl of dry kibble and water for them to eat and drink at will. If you have a litter with a mom cat, she should only be allowing brief nursing sessions, if any. DO NOT feed the kittens table scraps.

8+ Weeks of age

Feeding: Offer wet food 2 times a day. Leave down a bowl of dry kibble and water for them to eat and drink at will.

Behavior & Training: By the end of the 8th week, kittens should weigh 2 pounds each. If all the kittens weigh two pounds, take a deep breath, and prepare yourself to find them homes or return them to the facility where they came from. They are also old enough for early spay or neuter. If you have the queen and will be using two cat carriers, be sure to put at least one kitten in the same carrier with the mom. She may not be able to count, but she will definitely know the difference between some and none.

Keeping kittens healthy & recognizing common problems

A healthy kitten has bright eyes, a sleek coat, and a plump belly. Younger kittens are content to sleep between feedings. As they approach 8 weeks they begin to spend more time playing. Normal body temperature for a kitten is 100 - 102.5. Unfortunately, kittens do become ill and sometimes die while being fostered, so it is important to take steps to prevent disease and treat it appropriately as soon as it appears.

A note about treating your kitten: In general, if you need to treat a kitten, try to medicate him in an impersonal way. If you hold the kitten in your lap to medicate him, he will associate being picked up with being medicated, and think the worst every time you go to cuddle him. It's better to put the kitten up on a countertop, maybe wrapping him in a towel to administer medication.

Recognizing illness & when to call the HSPC

If you have a sick kitten, you should always call the HSPC and discuss the problem. We may advise you to come in or provide advice over the phone.

One of the first steps you can take to evaluate your kitten's health is to take his temperature. To take the temperature of your kitten, you will need a regular human thermometer and some KY Jelly. Don't forget to shake down the mercury in the thermometer first. Then wipe KY on the thermometer and insert just the tip into the kitten's anus. Hold it there for at least a minute and then read. If the kitten's temperature is over 103 or under 99, it is important to call the HSPC.

Please keep track of any information regarding the foster animal(s) on the **Foster Information Chart**. This information will be helpful for the HSPC medical staff.

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Abnormal signs to watch for in a kitten:

- Runny discharge from the eyes or nose.
- Lack of appetite for 24 hours
- Lethargy (lack of energy) for 24 hours
- Diarrhea over 24 hours
- Vomiting over 24 hours
- Weight loss
- coughing and sneezing

Emergencies- Please call the HSPC (see introduction for contact information)

- Continuous diarrhea for 24 hours or more
- Continuous vomiting for 24 hours or more
- Bleeding of any kind (nose, urine, stool)
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, limping, stepped on, unconscious.
- Difficulty breathing.
- A kitten that hasn't eaten for more than a day.

Specific disease conditions in kittens

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is common in kittens and be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, overfeeding, and other causes. If the diarrhea is mild and the kitten is otherwise alert and playful, you can try giving it less food but more often. Because kittens can become dehydrated very quickly, when a kitten has diarrhea it is a good idea to give the kitten a few drops of Pedialyte to prevent dehydration. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3 or 4 feedings, or contains blood or obvious parasites, you should call the Adoption Coordinator and bring in as much as possible of the feces in a Ziploc bag.

Ear Mites

Ear mites are tiny parasites which live in the ear canal. They cause intense itching, noted by scratching behind the ears and violent head shaking. Inside the ears you may see a crumbly, dark brown discharge, which may smell bad (the discharge closely resembles coffee grounds). Ear mites are contagious to other cats and can be treated with ear drops or an injection.

Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and Feline immunodeficiency (FIV)

FeLV and FIV are retroviruses cats get from other cats (or their moms). In the early stages, infected cats appear healthy but over months to years, they develop severe, ultimately fatal disease. The blood test for FeLV can be performed at any time and will be helpful for deciding which kittens should be fostered or if kittens need to be isolated. On the other hand, testing for FIV is more difficult until a kitten is four months old, although tests run at 6-8 weeks provide useful preliminary information.

Upper respiratory tract infection (URI)

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URI is, unfortunately, common in animal shelters. It is caused by airborne viruses and bacteria which are contagious and spread very quickly to other felines.

Signs of URI to watch out for:

- Sneezing and discharge from eyes or nose
- Congested breathing
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours
- Lethargy for more than 24 hours
- Dehydration

Vomiting

If your kitten is vomiting, it is possible that the kitten is eating his meals too quickly. You should watch him when he eats and not allow him to eat too much too quickly. If your kitten vomits for more than 3-4 feedings or 24 hours, please contact the shelter.

Fading Kittens

Once in a while, one or more kittens in a litter that were healthy and vigorous at birth will begin to "fade" after a week or two of life. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing and crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. The mother cat may push them out of the nest, where they often chill and starve to death. Kittens fade very quickly – they will not last 48 hours without medical care, and probably will not recover even with intensive care. If you think your kitten is fading please contact the HSPC immediately (see introduction for contact numbers).

There is no clear cause or reason for this condition – it has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress and infectious disease. Early veterinary treatment is imperative, but even with tube feeding, rehydration and monitoring, many, if not most fading kittens will die.

Care of Cats

Feeding Cats:

- Dry food in an appropriate amount (2/3 of a cup for a cat up to 10 lbs.) should be available at all times. Please feed Purina One or Purina ProPlan dry food.
- A small serving (2 to 4 tbsps.) of canned food can be given once or twice a day.
- Milk or cream should **NEVER** be given to cats.
- Fresh water should always be available.
- Cats should be fed away from their litter box.

Cat Behavior:

- Cats should be provided with a scratching post or other suitable surface to scratch. Recommended surfaces include rope, sisal, corrugated cardboard, or wood. Carpet is not recommended.
- Give your foster cat a variety of toys to play with. Rotate them periodically so they do not lose their novelty. You can try hiding your cat's favorite toys before leaving in the morning and create a sort of "treasure hunt" for him or her (make sure he or she sees you hiding at least a few of the toys).

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- Cats should **never** be allowed outside.
- Contact the Adoption Coordinator for suggestions and advice about specific behavior issues.

Follow- up or Recheck Exams

- Kittens will have their follow up visit requirements on your foster instruction sheet – please follow it. Although in many cases they can be approved to go up for adoption at that time, kittens must weigh 2 lbs. If they weigh less than 2 lbs. at the time of their exam, you might be asked to keep them until they weigh enough for sterilization.
- Animals fostered for age/weight gain are generally rechecked by our medical team. **Please schedule this with the Adoption Coordinator.**
- Animals fostered for URI or other medical condition must be rechecked by our medical staff. Typically HSPC requires the animal to be off all medications and symptom-free for one full week before the medical exam. **You must call during scheduled shelter hours to schedule exams.** Please try to call a few days in advance whenever possible, for ease of scheduling.
- Most foster animals will need to be sterilized prior to returning for adoption. **To schedule your foster animal's sterilization, please call during shelter hours.** Animals will either be dropped off the morning of the surgery at about 8 a.m. OR may have to be dropped off the day before the surgery by noon, in order to allow sufficient time for staff to update the animal's vaccinations and records. Post-surgery, animals are picked up either the same day as the surgery in the late afternoon, or the next morning. **Prior to bringing your adult foster animal in for sterilization or other surgery, please withhold food and water after 10 p.m. the evening beforehand.** If your adult animal eats or drinks anything after 10 p.m., please call the Adoption Coordinator as your appointment will have to be rescheduled. **Kittens under 4 months of age may eat and drink until 8 a.m. the day of surgery.**
- There are a limited number of medical appointments available for foster caregivers each day. It is critical that you keep any appointment you make. Please be respectful if you are in a staff-only area for your foster exam. If you have concerns or questions about the medical advice from the medical team, please contact the Adoption Coordinator.
- **Medical Staff Delays:** Unfortunately, it is the nature of veterinary care that emergency cases must be seen immediately, causing unexpected delays in the appointment schedule on any given day. Please be prepared in case this happens with your foster vet appointment. We recommend allowing at least 1 to 2 hours just in case. If your appointment is significantly delayed and you must leave the clinic, please contact the Adoption Coordinator to reschedule or make other arrangements.
- Please bring in **Foster Information Chart** for each foster animal when returning for any appointments with HSPC medical staff.

Administering Medications

Administering Pills to Cats

If the pill can be given with food, try hiding it in a piece of food or feline pill pocket (available at pet supply stores). A small amount of butter, tuna, cream cheese, liverwurst, canned food or semi-moist food like Pounce is often used however this method rarely works with cats. **(Please note: some medications cannot be given with dairy products such as cheese)** If your cat will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

- Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
- Bring the cat to the place you will give the pill, while talking to him or her in a happy, light voice.
- Ask to be shown how to correctly “scruff” a cat.
- **Burrito Wrap:** Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or a large towel so just his or her head is sticking out.
- Place the cat between your knees or at eye level on a table.
- Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger of your dominant hand.
- Using your other hand, gently but firmly grasp the cat’s head from above with your thumb on one side and your finger on the other.
- Tilt the cat’s head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. The cat’s lower jaw will automatically drop a bit.
- Place one of your free fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
- Quickly place the pill as far back in the cat’s mouth as possible, making sure it is over the hump of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far into the cat’s mouth because it might gag.
- Close the cat’s mouth. Hold it closed, lower his or her head to a normal position and gently rub or blow on the cat’s nose to stimulate swallowing.
- Talk softly to and stroke the cat or give another type of treat.
- If you are still unable to give the cat a pill, call the Adoption Coordinator.

Liquid Medication to Cats

- Start with the burrito wrap which includes wrapping the cat’s body and legs tightly in a towel leaving only its head sticking out. Insert the dropper between the cheek and teeth while tilting the chin upward. Slowly dispense the medication, remembering not to give it faster than the cat can swallow. The quicker you do this, the more cooperative the cat will be.
- Refrigerated medication **MUST** be kept in the refrigerator.

Applying Eye Drops and Ointments

Before administering eye medication, be sure the eye is clear of discharge. You can use warm water on a cotton ball to gently clean around the eyes. Use your thumb and forefinger to open the eyelid. With your other hand, place 1 to 2 drops (as directed) or a small amount of ointment on the eye or the pink tissue around the eye. The foster animal will blink and the medication will cover the entire eye. When applying medication to the eye, try to avoid the animal’s direct line of vision when approaching and **avoid touching the eye with the container of medication.**

Determining Gender of a Kitten

This information is not meant to be a substitute for veterinary care. Always follow the instructions provided by your veterinarian.

You just brought home a kitten that you intend to name Sam but your roommate tells you that you had better consider the name Samantha instead.

Determining the sex (gender) of a kitten is easy when you know what to look for.

Lift the kitten's tail. The opening just under the tail is the anus. Below the anus is the genital opening which is round in males and is a vertical slit in females. In kittens of similar size, the distance between the anus and the genital opening is greater in the male than the female.



anus

genital



Male 8 week old kitten

Female 8 week old kitten

As the male kitten grows the testicles become more apparent.

The color of the kitten may suggest its gender. Almost all (but not ALL) kittens of calico (black, white and orange) or tortishell (black and orange) color are females. More orange kittens are male than female although the association between color and sex is not as strong as in the calico/tortishell colored kitten.

Determining a Kitten's Age

Age	Characteristics
5-8 days	Ears open
8 days-2 weeks	Eyes open
2½ weeks	Can crawl
3 weeks	Ears erect; Stands up
3½ weeks	Sight and sound oriented; Can follow noise/objects
4 weeks	Can eliminate without help; Can learn to lap from dish and eat solid foods

Kitten Feeding Schedule

Age	Surrounding temp.	Feeding	Weight
0-1 weeks	85°-90° F	6 times daily	3-4 ounces at birth 6-8 ounces at 1 week
1-2 weeks	80°-85° F	5 times daily	8-10 ounces
2-3 weeks>	75°-80° F	4 times daily	10-12 ounces
3-4 weeks	70°-75° F	3 times daily	12-14 ounces
4+ weeks	70° F	3 times daily	14 ounces and up

Determining a Kitten's Age

<p>1 day old</p> <p>Eyes closed, can not stand. Ears folded.</p>			
<p>3 days old</p> <p>Eyes closed, can not stand. Ears starting to unfold.</p>			
<p>6 days old</p> <p>Eyes starting to open. Beginning to crawl.</p>			
<p>1 week old</p> <p>Eyes almost completely open.</p>			



Determining a Kitten's Age

<p>8 days old</p> <p>Becoming aware.</p>			
<p>9 days old</p> <p>Beginning to venture away from mama.</p>			
<p>10 days old</p> <p>Looking very alert. Closed eye on kitten #1 is from eye discharge.</p>			
<p>12 days old</p> <p>Mama has moved kittens. Kittens are now able to walk, although wobbly.</p>			
<p>13 days old</p>			

Determining a Kitten's Age

14 days old 2 weeks.			
15 days old			
16 days old			
20 days old Using litter box.			
21 days old 3 weeks.			

Determining a Kitten's Age

22 days old			
23 days old You can see that kitten #3 is going to be a med-long hair, and #2 med hair.			
28 days old 4 weeks.			
31 days old			
32 days old			

Determining a Kitten's Age

35 days old 5 weeks.			
37 days old			
40 days old			
42 days old 6 weeks.			
45 days old			

Determining a Kitten's Age

47 days old			
50 days old 7 weeks.			
54 days old			
54 days old			
56 days old 8 weeks.			

Determining a Kitten's Age

57 days old			
60 days old			
62 days old			
63 days old 9 weeks.			
70 days old			

Determining a Kitten's Age

75 days old

10 weeks.



Fecal Scoring System



Score 1 – Very hard and dry; requires much effort to expel from body; no residue left on ground when picked up. Often expelled as individual pellets.



Score 2 – Firm, but not hard; should be pliable; segmented appearance; little or no residue left on ground when picked up.



Score 3 – Log-like; little or no segmentation visible; moist surface; leaves residue, but holds form when picked up.



Score 4 – Very moist (soggy); distinct log shape visible; leaves residue and loses form when picked up.



Score 5 – Very moist but has distinct shape; present in piles rather than as distinct logs; leaves residue and loses form when picked up.



Score 6 – Has texture, but no defined shape; occurs as piles or as spots; leaves residue when picked up.



Score 7 – Watery, no texture, flat; occurs as puddles.



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Feline Behavior Foster Report

Thank you for fostering for the HSPC! Fostering an animal is such a wonderful thing for so many reasons, one of them being that you will have information to offer a potential adopter that we otherwise wouldn't have in a shelter setting. Please take some time to answer a few questions about your foster animals so can pass this information along to adopters. Feel free to attach additional notes to the report, the more the information the better!

Date ____/____/____

Name _____ A&D _____

Approximate Age _____ Sex _____ Breed _____ Color _____ Spayed/Neutered

Declawed _____

Personality

How would you describe your foster cat most of the time?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> Lap Cat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couch Potato | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shy | <input type="checkbox"/> Fearless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playful | <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talkative | <input type="checkbox"/> Aloof |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate | |

How does your cat like to play?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle | <input type="checkbox"/> Alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rough | <input type="checkbox"/> With other animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With Humans | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys |

Lifestyle & Home Life

Where did your foster cat spend most of his or her time? (circle all that apply)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen | <input type="checkbox"/> Window |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Living Room | |

Does this cat get along with other cats?

- Likes other cats
- Hates other cats
- Tolerates other cats
- Don't know

Does this cat get along with dogs?

- Likes dogs
- Hates dogs
- Tolerates dogs
- Don't know

Has the cat regularly been around children?

- No
- Yes
- 0-2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-18 years

How did this cat interact with children?

- Loved children
- Played together
- Child petted cat
- Cat hid
- Hated children

This cat is most comfortable with:

- Men
- Women
- Kids
- Teenagers
- Seniors
- Loves all people

Dietary Habits

The foster cat ate:

- Dry only
- Canned only
- Dry and canned
- People food

Please specify which brands you were feeding? _____

What types of treats does the cat enjoy? _____

How often did you feed your foster cat?

- Food always available
- Designated meal times _____

Does your foster cat vomit after eating? _____

Litter Box Habits

Does the foster cat use the litter box:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

Please describe any litter box accidents the cat has had:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinates outside the box | <input type="checkbox"/> Sprays on walls/furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urinates on clothing/furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defecates outside the box | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defecates on clothing/furniture | |

When did the litter box accidents begin? _____

Please describe what measures you have taken to correct this problem. _____

How often was the litter box scooped?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Everyday | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every few days | <input type="checkbox"/> Automatic litter box |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly | |

What types of litter was used?

- Unscented
- Scented
- Clumping
- Non-clumping
- Crystals
- Clay
- Pine
- Other _____

Other Comments:



Foster Instruction Sheet

Date of Pickup _____ HSPC Agent _____

Foster Name _____ Phone Number _____

A&D Numbers _____

- Kittens should be seen by the shelter veterinarian every two weeks until they are old enough to return to the shelter for adoption. At the appointments they will be dewormed and at six weeks will receive their first distemper vaccination. Foster caregivers- Please keep track of when your fosters need to return for updates and contact the Adoption Coordinator for an appointment.
- Weigh kitten(s) everyday and track weight.
- Kittens must be 8 weeks old **AND** 2 pounds before being brought back to the shelter for placement.

Feeding Needs:

- Syringe feeding _____ times daily.
- Bottle feeding _____ times daily.
- Hard food available 24/7 with water to drink.

Special Needs:

- Socializing (shy, afraid or under socialized kittens)
- Medication: _____

- Special care instructions:

Notes:

If you have any questions, please contact the Adoption Coordinator at 715-344-6012 ext. 308. In the event of an after-hours emergency please call 715-570-7244.



Foster Information Chart

Please use this form to keep track of your foster animal so when you visit the medical staff at the HSPC you will be able to answer any questions they may have.

Animal name _____ Color _____

Breed _____ A&D Number _____ Sex _____

Is the animal eating regularly? _____ If no, please describe eating habits. _____

Note: Kittens need to eat daily. If your kitten is not eating please contact the shelter.

Is the animal drinking regularly? _____ If no, please describe drinking pattern. _____

Does the animal have diarrhea? _____ If yes, for how many days? _____

Note: Animals that have diarrhea lasting more than 3 or 4 feedings need to be seen by HSPC medical staff. Please call the Adoption Coordinator for an appointment.

Please describe your foster animals activity level. _____

If your foster animal has been on medication, when was the date and time of the last dose?

If your foster kitten is over 4 weeks old are they using the litter box on their own? _____

If no, please explain. _____

Other concerns: _____

Animal name _____

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Date/Time	Ounces Fed	Weight	Medication

Foster Animal Medical Appointment

Foster Caregiver: _____ Date: _____

Foster Caregiver Telephone Number: _____

Foster A&D Number(s): _____

Appointment Time:

Monday _____ at _____
(Date) (Time– Between 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

Tuesday _____ at _____
(Date) (Time– Between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Wednesday _____ at _____
(Date) (Time– Between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Thursday _____ at _____
(Date) (Time– Between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Friday _____ at _____
(Date) (Time– Between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Felv/FIV Testing Distemper Dewormer

Other: _____

CVI's (Dogs only) The foster caregiver needs to have the dog at the shelter at 9 a.m. as surgeries start around 9 a.m.

Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

Foster Caregiver Tote Inventory

Items that can be stored:

- Foster Caregiver manual (1)
- Litter boxes (2)
- Litter scoop (1)
- Stainless steel bowls (4)
- Bottles (2)
- Measuring spoon for milk replacer (1)
- Oral syringes (2)
- Small bottle brush (1)
- Funnel to pour mixed milk replacer into bottle (1)
- Digital scale
- Flea comb (helps remove feces)
- Bath towel (2)
- Washcloth (4)
- Fleece blanket (1)
- Warming disk (1)
- Toys

Items to add in before pick up:

- Bag of dry kitten food (1)
- Canned food (6 small cans or 3 large, kitten food preferred)
- KMR or milk replacer (refrigerate after opening to keep fresh)
- Litter-for kittens it is preferred to use wood pellets over clumping litter