



# FOSTER PROGRAM



Changing lives one animal at a time.

# WELCOME TO THE TEAM

Thank you for choosing to donate your time, home, and love to animals of The Anti-Cruelty Society. By becoming a foster volunteer with us you provide a vital lifeline for cats, dogs, and rabbits who are not ready for adoption room placement as well as those who may have already been waiting for adoption for an extended period of time. The individual love and care you provide gives animals an opportunity to flourish in a warm home environment, rather than in the shelter.

Being a foster parent for homeless animals is a rewarding and gratifying experience. With extra attention and socialization animals that are fostered are more likely to be adopted into permanent, loving homes. Thanks to foster volunteers like you we temporarily house over 850 animals in the program each year and this number continues to grow.



In an effort to better the foster volunteer experience we have created the following manual to best serve your needs. In it we address questions and concerns that you may have while fostering with The Anti-Cruelty Society. The contents also include specific information regarding animal care and shelter policies. Please review these carefully. We have also created a “Foster Resources” page on our website to provide you with additional materials, videos and educational articles at [www.anticruelty.org](http://www.anticruelty.org). A special thank you to our foster team for providing the photos used in this manual.

Thank you again for choosing to join this life-saving program. We’re excited to have you on the team!

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# ABOUT US

The Anti-Cruelty Society, SPCA of Illinois (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), is Chicago's oldest and largest private animal shelter and veterinary clinic. We are a stand-alone organization and are not affiliated with any other national groups. The Anti-Cruelty Society receives no state or federal funding and instead thrives through individual contributions, private grant funding, adoption fees, clinic fees, in-kind donations and special events.

**Our Mission: Building a community of caring by helping pets and educating people.**



The Anti-Cruelty Society is committed to caring for pets in Chicago and beyond. We commit to:

- Provide compassionate care for any animal in need
- Attempt to find a home for every healthy or rehabilitatable dog and cat that comes to us
- Intervene to prevent cruelty to animals
- Partner with the community to educate on animal issues and inspire compassion and respect
- Provide low or no cost spaying or neutering

We provide the best quality animal care through:

- Collaboration—only through partnerships and relationships can we achieve our mission
- Excellence—we will strive to have a best practice model in all that we do
- Professionalism—we will act with integrity and in an ethical manner
- Leadership—we will plan for the next generation of issues that will impact our organization, our community and pets
- Communication—we will fearlessly outline and communicate our commitment to being advocates for animals
- Transparency—we support the Asilomar Accords and proudly and publicly report our statistics

At The Anti-Cruelty Society we believe:

- In an open door policy—we will not turn away any animal in need
- There are no time limits placed on any animal in our care
- That no healthy or rehabilitatable pet should be euthanized
- The key to pet overpopulation is sterilization
- That education can prevent cruelty, abuse and neglect and promote responsible pet ownership
- If an animal's quality of life is severely compromised, euthanasia is the humane alternative

# FOSTERING

The Anti-Cruelty Society offers a unique opportunity for people in the community to get involved and help animals in need. The goal of foster volunteers is to provide a warm and nurturing environment in which shelter pets can flourish and prepare for placement in their forever homes. Foster periods vary from a few weeks to a couple of months, but the impact on the person and pet lasts a lifetime.



The Anti-Cruelty Society provides all foster animals with full veterinary care through our on-site clinic as well as support from our behavior specialists. Our foster support team provides fosters with direction on what care is needed for each individual animal and an estimate of how long the animal will be in their homes.

Foster parents are notified of an animal's availability for placement through our official [Foster Candidate page](#), which is updated regularly. Our team also provides check-ins with foster parents that have animals in their care, providing an opportunity for them to ask questions about the animal's behavior and health on a regular basis.

Foster volunteers are asked to supply wet food, toys, bedding, and the tender love and care an animal needs to become ready for their adoptive home. Whether you'll be fostering a sick, underage, undersocialized, or long-term animal, you have the opportunity to make a lasting impact in the life of each pet you bring home.

## Foster Volunteer Responsibilities

- Provide basic care, socialization, and training to assigned foster animal/s
- Communicate updates to our foster support team
- Seek out assistance for medical or behavioral problems
- Complete a detailed Foster Personality Profile on each foster animal before drop-off
- Act as a community ambassador for The Anti-Cruelty Society
- Follow all policies and protocols as specified in this manual

## Foster Training

To help prepare fosters for their role as animal caretakers we ask that all incoming foster parents complete the following:

- 1) Submit a Foster Program Application
- 2) Watch our Virtual Foster Orientation
- 3) [Sign-up](#) for Foster Orientation
- 4) Read our Foster Program Manual
- 5) Attend Foster Orientation

Once your foster training is complete you will be ready to schedule your first foster pick-up. Check the [Foster Candidates web page](#) on The Anti-Cruelty Society website to find an animal best suited to your lifestyle. Once selected, email us at [foster@anticruelty.org](mailto:foster@anticruelty.org) to schedule a pick-up. Upon pick-up you will be given a bag of food for the animal, an animal-specific contract, and medication (if needed).

# FOSTER PROCEDURES

## Selecting Your Foster

The Anti-Cruelty Society keeps an up-to-date list of animals awaiting foster care on our [Foster Candidates webpage](#). Included in the information provided will be the animal's age, breed, weight, foster reason, and estimated length of stay. If, at any time, you should find that your foster is not a good fit for your household or lifestyle – please let us know! We want you and the animal to have a positive experience, so don't be embarrassed to contact us if things aren't working out.

### FOSTER TIP

Fosters marked as “high risk” should only be fostered by experienced foster volunteers as these animals may be more susceptible to complications or passing while in care.

Reasons animals may need foster include:

- **Age:** Animals must be at least 2 months or older to be adopted. Animals that come in who are stable in health, but under the 2 month marker, may be added to the foster candidate list.
- **Weight:** Some animals may come to us neglected and emaciated and have a low weight as a result. The chief goal for these fosters is to gain weight in a timely fashion.
- **Illness:** Most frequently this is seen as kennel cough in dogs (not contagious to cats) and upper respiratory infection in cats (not contagious to dogs). These animals may be sent home with medication.
- **General Medical:** Some animals may need foster while a broken limb heals or for general medical rehabilitation.
- **Socialization:** These are shy, shutdown animals who would benefit from additional exposure to human socialization. In addition to the reasons above, some animals may be placed in our foster program for a special program or project including:
  - **Adoption Ambassadors:** In this unique foster program foster providers bring home an animal that is already approved and ready for adoption with the goal of recruiting their forever family straight from foster care. Partnering with the Volunteer Services and PR Departments, foster parents solicit their animal on and off-line, and attend events, in the hope of securing an adopter. This is a great special project to undertake for new or novice fosters.
- **SAFE Program:** Animals who enter the SAFE Program have owners who are facing a crisis such as domestic violence, housing displacement, or hospitalization. The Anti-Cruelty Society boards these pets, free of charge, for up to 30 days if the owners meet basic qualifications. If there is a SAFE pet who would benefit from foster care they will be noted on the Foster Candidates page.



- **Behavior Observation:** In this special project foster providers bring home an animal whose behavior history may have some gaps or need clarification. Foster providers are connected directly with the Animal Behavior & Training team prior to foster placement and maintain ongoing conversations on how the animal is adjusting to the home environment. This foster special project is recommended for experienced fosters only.

When choosing an animal to foster you will want to pay particular attention to the suggested foster length of stay as well as the reason for foster. Only choose animals who you feel confident in sheltering. All fosters also run the potential of developing a communicable illness such as Bordetella or upper respiratory infection (URI) – even if sent out for age, weight, or socialization. Keep all of these factors in mind when choosing who to bring home

#### FOSTER TIP

Most young foster animals do better in groups. If you're considering fostering a kitten or puppy who is amongst a litter, think about taking a sibling in as well. Many times young animals gain valuable socialization from their litter mates and provide round the clock companionship for the animal.

Once you have chosen your foster animal, contact the foster support team and indicate who you are interested in taking and when you are available to pick them up. Please wait for confirmation of your foster assignment before coming in.

#### Foster Pick-Up

Our customer service department, which assists fosters during pick-up, is open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. 7 days a week. When you arrive at the shelter, check-in with them in the adoption center lobby. A staff member will ask for your name and will confirm the number of animals you are signed up to foster. They will print out a contract for you to sign and will also provide you with a copy. Please keep this file for reference during the entire length of the foster animals stay.

Once the contracts are signed a staff member will bring the animal to the front desk. Unless the animal is too young, they will be microchipped and will be wearing a collar with their unique Society tag number. When picking up litters it is important to keep these collars on the animals to ensure proper identification during clinic visits and returns.

If you do not bring a carrier with you, the staff member will place smaller animals in a recyclable paper crate, or if the animal is walkable, will provide you with a leash. You will also be sent home with a bag of food and any supplies you may have requested in advance. Fosters receive a 10% discount in our store and are encouraged to pick up any additional accessories at the time of pick up.

## Foster Returns

### Foster Stay

Before returning a foster animal verify that they are ready to return. Were they sent out for age? If so, they need to be at least 2 months old and 2 pounds in weight to be passed for adoption. Were they fostered for illness? Make sure they have finished their medication and are no longer showing symptoms. Were they sent out for socialization or behavior? Be sure to check in with the foster support team to ensure they are ready to return.



### Personality Profile

Please submit a personality profile for each foster you return. These profiles allow the behavior specialists to properly categorize the animal for our Adoption Match Program while giving adopters vital information about each animal's observed personality. Click [here for the Cat Profile](#) and [here for the Dog Profile](#).

### Foster Drop-Off

Our Intake Department is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. 7 days a week. When returning a foster animal, staff will ask you for the name of the volunteer with which the animal was originally booked. Please keep this in mind if your partner or a friend is making the return. Please note that any toys or personal items left with the animal may not make their way with the pet to the adoption room.

### Spay/Neuter Drop-Off

If you have received instructions from staff to schedule a spay or neuter surgery for your foster animal, please be sure to follow the [Before Surgery Instructions here](#) the night before. Foster

surgeries are typically only scheduled for animals that are being adopted directly from foster or for those who are part of the Adoption Ambassadors program.

### Foster Return Follow-Up

A general weekly update will be included in the Foster Newsletter for all animals who are currently in the program, as well as those who have graduated from the foster program and are in the process of going to their forever home. While we can never breach the privacy of an adopter, such as giving out a name, address or telephone number, you can indicate interest on the personality profile for updates directly from the adopter. Foster parents may also check in on the status of their foster animals by emailing [foster@anticruelty.org](mailto:foster@anticruelty.org).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Anti-Cruelty Society has two campuses. The main shelter in Chicago's River North neighborhood is the location of both foster pick-ups and drop-offs, as well as the clinic and behavior services. Our satellite adoption center is located less than a mile away in Chicago's South Loop neighborhood within the PetSmart on the lower level of the shopping complex. This location primarily focuses on the adoption of available animals.

### **Foster Service Hours:**

Pick-Ups at 510 N. LaSalle: 9 a.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Drop-Offs at 169 W Grand Level 1R: 10 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.

### **Public Adoption Hours:**

Monday-Friday: 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Animal Intake Hours:** 10:00 a.m. – 5:45 p.m. (every day of the year)

**Clinic Hours:** Monday-Friday 10 a.m. – 4p.m.\*

\*Note that even when the clinic is closed there may be a veterinarian on-site and available to fosters.

**\*For a list of contact information for society staff, please refer to the last page of this manual.\***

### **Additional Adoption Sites**

In an effort to help more animals find loving forever homes, we have partnered with a few local organizations that also promote adoption. Due to these partnerships, some of the animals that you see on our adoption page may not be available at The Anti-Cruelty Society's main Adoption facility, but at one of our partner locations. Each animal's location will be stated in their online profile.

- **PetSmarts:** We offer cat adoptions at the Brickyard, Evanston, Skokie, South Lincoln Park, Wrigleyville, Four Corners, and South Loop stores.



### **Foster Mentors**

New foster volunteers will be paired up with a foster mentor at the beginning of their service upon request. Foster mentors are foster parents who have a breadth of experience in the program – and are an added resource to new fosters. These special volunteers are available to answer questions and will help to navigate you through your first foster experience.

### **Weekly Foster Newsletter**

Each week the foster support team sends out a Foster Newsletter which chronicles

upcoming events, provides foster animal updates, Society news, and more. The announcements are



compiled as an added resource to help foster volunteers remain engaged and connected throughout their service.

### **Foster Facebook Page**

Foster parents are encouraged to join our private Foster Facebook page which is open to all current foster volunteers. The page is a gathering place for fosters to share media, stories and gather insights from our foster community. The page also doubles as a space for us to gather information about your animals for creating promo posts for your fosters. [Request to join the page here.](#)

### **There are a variety of ways in which you can utilize the Foster Facebook Page:**

- Share updates about how your fosters are doing in your care
- Post funny or cute photos or videos of your foster
- Include success stories about your foster animal
- Ask other fosters for advice on non-emergency medical or behavioral issues
- Share positive animal stories from around the web
- Seek encouragement after losing, or returning, a foster animal

Foster volunteers are asked to maintain a polite decorum when utilizing the page. We are building a community of caring so please keep that in mind when choosing what to post or comment. The Anti-Cruelty Society reserves the right to moderate comments and posts. Posts may be removed from the page at any time.

## **FOSTER POLICIES**

Foster parents are licensed through the Illinois Department of Agriculture as an extension of The Anti-Cruelty Society. For this reason foster providers must adhere to the policies outlined below to maintain certain standards of care. Fosters should note that shelter animals remain the legal property of The Anti-Cruelty Society until they are adopted.

### **Supervision**

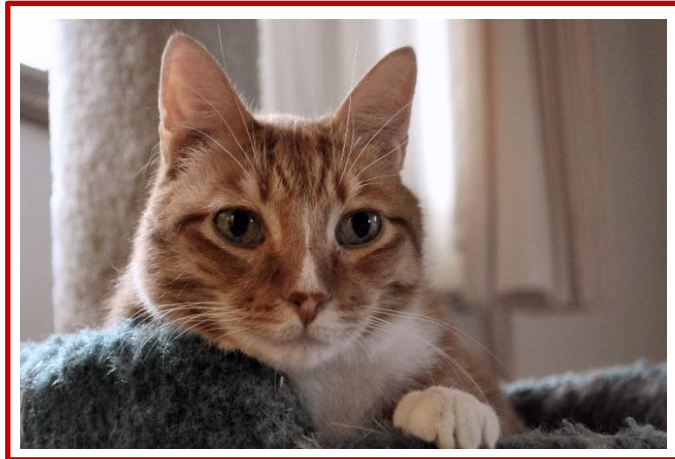
Foster animals should remain in the care of the licensed foster volunteer at all times. If an emergency results in a foster being unable to continue care for an animal they should contact the foster support team so other arrangements can be made.

### **Licensing**

The State of Illinois Department of Agriculture requires that all fosters obtain a fostering license through their sponsoring shelter. Foster licenses are \$25 for a full calendar year from the date of purchase and will be processed by The Anti-Cruelty Society upon your first foster animal pick-up by our Customer Service team. The Anti-Cruelty Society will pay a \$25 renewal fee on each foster's behalf annually. If a foster becomes inactive for 12 months or longer, they will be asked to pay the renewal fee and re-register for a license.

### **Animal Identification**

Each adult foster animal will be sent home with a collar and an identification tag, and in most cases, a microchip. Underage kittens will have a plastic tab band while neo nates will not have any collars since they are too small. Any collars and tags that come with your foster should remain on them at all times and checked regularly in case they become too tight or too loose. Microchips are embedded between an animal's shoulder blades and act as a back-up source of contact information should an animal become loose or lost. They are not tracking or GPS devices.



Cats must remain housed indoors and should be placed in a carrier whenever coming to or from the Society.

### **Leashing**

Dogs are required to be on a leash when outdoors. Dogs should never be left unattended in a fenced yard and should not be taken to off-leash dog parks or beaches.

### **Animal Behavior Problems**

Foster parents are required to contact The Anti-Cruelty Society should any behavior problems come up at any time during an animal's foster period. Behavior information is important in helping us determine behavior modification that may be needed, as well as making a successful adoption match for the animal in the future. Foster parents should contact our foster support team, or a member of our Animal Behavior & Training team, to address issues as they arise. Refer to the contacts list at the end of this manual for details.

### **Lost Animals**

The Anti-Cruelty Society should be notified immediately if a foster animal becomes lost. We will then mount a search effort while notifying local animal shelters and rescues. Immediately after notifying the Society, fosters should begin a search and rescue effort in the neighborhood where the cat or dog was last seen. Fosters should put up fliers and posters, and contact any surrounding veterinary offices and police and fire departments. For more information on what to do should a pet become lost please visit the [Lost Dogs of Illinois](#) or [Lost Cats of Illinois](#) websites.

### **Animal Death**

If a foster animal should die in your care please contact the foster support team as soon as possible. You will then be asked to return them to the Anti-Cruelty Society Intake Department. Society staff will then ascertain the cause of death and will notify you of any special precautions you may need to take before taking in another foster animal

### **Medical Care**

The Anti-Cruelty Society provides all foster parents with access to our full-service on-site clinic. Foster volunteers should utilize the clinic for all their medical needs and should not take their foster animal to a private practice. Foster parents should not use any medications or special treatments on their foster animals without prior clinic approval. This includes holistic, herbal, or over-the-counter medical treatments.

If your foster animal indicates a sign of serious illness, please contact The Anti-Cruelty Society as soon as possible. Any excessive vomiting, diarrhea, blood in the stool, loss of appetite and lethargy that occur in a kitten or puppy, or for more than 24 hours in an adult pet, may be life threatening.

#### FOSTER TIP

In the event of an emergency foster parents should call our operators at (312) 645-8220 between 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. and ask for a veterinarian or manager for assistance. Always identify yourself as a foster parent with a medical emergency when calling.

## Foster Safety

### Household Hazards

Always remember to cat or dog proof the area where the foster will be housed prior to bringing them home. Electrical cords, computer cables, medicine, cosmetics, plants, telephone wires, drapes, anything valuable or irreplaceable, etc. should be removed or secured. Survey the area where foster animals will be housed. Anticipate that as foster animals grow, or are rehabilitated, their capabilities may change (e.g. jumping over pet gate).

Please remember to always use non-clumping litter with kittens under two months of age. If a kitten ingests clumping litter it can cause an obstruction in their digestive system.

Never allow a foster or your own animals to ingest chocolate, or other human foods, as many can have negative health effects. Visit the following website for a comprehensive and continually updated [list of toxic and non-toxic plants](#).

### Your Family's Safety

Children should remain supervised when interacting with foster animals at all times. In addition to managing behavior on both the child and animal's end, it is a foster provider's responsibility to ensure the safety of all parties. Should a child or adult be bitten by a foster in your care please contact the main shelter line immediately and ask to speak with a manager. Be certain you scrub the affected area with hot water and soap. You should also seek the consultation of your health care provider as soon as possible. A bite report may need to be completed by the authorities, depending on your community.

### Your Pet's Safety

The Anti-Cruelty Society highly recommends that new foster animals be kept apart from owned pets for a period of time once they have entered your care. This is not only to ensure that all animals in your household have a chance to properly acclimate, it is also to reduce the risk of spreading illness.

The majority of common dog and cat diseases are not transferable from one species to the other. Despite this, we still urge you to keep the foster animal segregated from your resident pet(s) for a period of time. Fosters should always wash their hands between handling a foster animal and a resident pet. As an added line of defense foster providers should ensure that all owned pets are up to date on their yearly vaccines. Note that the Anti-Cruelty Society will not reimburse you for medical attention for your own resident pets.

### Threatening Behavior

If your foster animal's behavior threatens the safety your family or a family pet, please return them to The Anti-Cruelty Society immediately. If The Anti-Cruelty Society is closed, segregate the animal and bring them in as soon as we open for intake. Please be sure to follow-up with the foster support team after their return so that the situation can be properly assessed.

# ANIMAL CARE BASICS

The Anti-Cruelty Society provides all fosters with basic supplies, such as collars, leashes and food. Fosters are asked to supply accessories and additional supplies as needed. Foster parents are encouraged to have all needed supplies on hand and set-up within their homes prior to picking up their foster animal from the shelter. Note that the foster support team may sometimes have donations available for the items above. If there is something you need – don't hesitate to ask!

Some basic supplies that you will need for each foster animal include:

- Carrier: For small dogs or cats
- Newspaper: For lining dog kennels or kitten play areas
- Litter Pans & Litter: One per cat, should be size appropriate. We recommend clay-based litter as it's what's used in the shelter
- Water Bowls: We recommend stainless steel
- Crate: Not required but strongly recommended for dog fosters
- Food Bowls: Size appropriate
- Canned Food: To stimulate appetite
- Towels: To act as bedding and for clean-up
- Treats & Toys: For rewarding good behavior and to keep them busy



## Food

Foster parents will be provided with a bag of species and age-appropriate Science Diet kibble for your foster animals. This is the same food that the animals are fed in-shelter, and since they'll return to this diet post-foster, it's important to keep them on it. Please follow the feeding instructions that are printed on the back of each bag. Foster parents are welcome to supplement with additional wet food as needed. Note that any change in diet – even such a minor one as switching brands of food – may cause diarrhea.

## Appetite & Adjustment

It is not unusual for some animals to have a reduced appetite for a day or two after entering foster care. Remember that the animal is coping with a new home and new people, which can be stressful. For this reason fosters are urged to maintain a calm and quiet environment in the beginning of each animal's stay. Allow your foster time to adjust to your lifestyle. Do not become overly concerned unless the animal is under-age, under-weight, or actively ill. If a foster animal develops persistent diarrhea, or does not eat after being in your care for 24 hours or more, please contact the clinic for assistance.

## Exercise and Play

Cats and dogs love to play and need plenty of exercise to burn calories, stimulate their minds, and help satisfy their urges to chase, fetch (dogs), stalk (cats), and run. If they don't have enough physical and mental stimulation, animals tend to get bored, which can lead to destructive behaviors. The amount of exercise and play necessary for your foster depends on their breed, age, and personality.

## Bowel Movements & Gastrointestinal Upset

All animals are given de-worming medication upon arrival at The Anti-Cruelty Society, however, further treatment may be required. Please monitor your foster animal's bowel movements. Loose or watery stools

may be an indication of continued parasite infestation and should be reported to the clinic. Details on specific gastrointestinal issues and parasites can be found in the Foster Health section in this manual.

### **Hygiene & Disinfection**

The Anti-Cruelty Society recommends the use of stainless steel food and water bowls. They are the most durable, easy to disinfect and keep free of contaminants. The best way to disinfect objects (toys, bowls, litter boxes, etc.) is with a mild bleach solution: 1 part bleach to 32 parts water (e.g. ½ cup household bleach in 1 gallon of water).

## **Introducing Animals**

Introductions between foster animals and owned pets need to be planned carefully. Each pet's previous experiences with animals will affect the introduction. For example, dogs that have been around bully cats may not be too excited about adding another cat to the household, or a cat that is used to living with a dog that chases the cat may decide to live his or her life perched in high places to avoid the dog. First impressions between pets are just as important as they are between people. The following tips and precautionary steps can help make a smooth transition for your pets and fosters. Should you need assistance with managing introductions, contact our behavior team.



### **The Introduction**

Before the introduction, keep the foster pet in a separate room for several days, with food, water, comfortable bedding, a litter box for a cat, and all of the necessities to keep them happy and healthy. The current pets should be free to roam the house while the new pet is getting acclimated to his or her room. If you wish to let the new pet out to explore for short periods of time, make sure the current pet is kept separate from the foster pet.

During the separation period, allow the animals to sniff under the door and to vocalize. Accepting the presence of a new animal or

other species is a change for them too. It is important that the door cannot be pushed open, allowing access to the other animal. Once the growling or hissing has lessened, let the animals see one another by slightly opening the door. This allows each animal to work out their defensiveness without being able to harm one another. Repeat this several times until you feel comfortable enough to introduce them face-to-face.

When your home is quiet, allow the new pet out of the room (dogs should be leashed) and let him or her explore. Unless you are certain the pet is used to other pets, make sure you have a way to control them (i.e. a leash or towel for wrapping). Do not force the pets together; instead, casually let them encounter one another on their own. Have tasty treats on hand to distract the pet if a problem does occur. It's entirely normal for pets to hiss and growl at one another. This behavior may go on for several days or weeks. Your pets and fosters shouldn't be expected to be friends right away; however, tolerance, and possibly a great friendship, can develop over time.

Never leave foster pets unattended until you feel entirely comfortable that they will not hurt one another. Signs of a problem include litter box lapses, severe fighting, lethargy, diarrhea, hiding, lack of appetite, and general depression. If your foster animal or owned pet shows any of these signs, do not hesitate to call our Animal Behavior & Training team for advice.

### **Tips for Introducing Cats**

Start your foster cat out in their own room while giving your resident cat free reign of your home. Gauge each cat's comfort level over the next 48 hours. Some hissing is normal. Provide toys on both sides of the door to encourage play. As the days go on, and the curiosity of each cat piques, provide opportunities for the cats to see each other in a controlled space. Some hissing is normal here too, however watch both cat's bodies for signals of aggression or extreme discomfort. Repeat these "sight only" visits several days in a row until both cats are comfortable in each other's presence. Feeding the cats treats and wet food during this step is also helpful. Then, as each cat feels comfortable, allow for physical proximity. Remember to watch each cat's body language throughout each step of introduction. To ensure a positive integration ensure each cat has their own litter box, food bowl, and water bowl.



### **Socializing Kittens & Puppies**

As with babies, kittens and puppies are not born understanding about the world and how to behave. The best time to teach them is during the primary socialization period, which is roughly from 3 to 12 weeks of age. This is when kittens and puppies are most open to new experiences and are thirsty to learn. After this time they become more cautious of new people and situations and their behavior is less malleable. Well-socialized kittens and puppies are more likely to grow up to be friendly adults who are easy to handle and not overly frightened or stressed. Lessons not learned by 12 weeks of age can be partially, but never fully, recovered.

When socializing your kitten or puppy, it is important to remember that exposure is not the same as socialization. Having a screaming 4-year-old yanking on their ears and tail could well cause the pet to be afraid of children for life. But meeting several young children who are calm and handle the animal appropriately can lead to a pet who adores kids.



If you have a litter of kittens or puppies in your care, begin handling them as soon as possible. There is no truth to the idea that a mother will reject her babies if they are touched by people. However, mom needs to be okay with you petting the babies in order to avoid accidentally teaching them to be stressed by petting (if mom does seem to be too anxious for the first few days try petting them while she is out of the room or sleeping). Gentle petting and holding for just a few seconds several times each day is ideal for newborns. The babies should be picked up and held in different positions for brief periods each day by about 2 weeks of age.

As they get older, it is okay to handle them more frequently and for longer periods of time. Once they are about 5 weeks old, more people should be interacting with them. Behaviorists recommend that kittens meet as many new people as possible, while canine babies should meet at least 100 people during the primary socialization period. Ideally, the kitten or puppy should be exposed to a variety of people for optimal socialization: young, old; male, female; wearing glasses; wearing a hat; light-skinned, dark-skinned; animated, laid-back; etc.

Socialization should intensify at around 4 weeks of age by:

- Introducing new textures by playing with the kittens or puppies on carpeting, tile, wood, etc..
- Exposing them to household noises such as blenders, doorbells, banging pots, washing machines, alarm clocks, stereos, etc. If there are no children living in or visiting the home, buy a cd with the sounds of children and play it frequently. Very loud or harsh noises, such as a blender, can be muffled initially by covering the appliance with a towel or making the noise while the pups are in an adjacent room.
- Placing items, such as winter boots and books on the floor for the fosters to investigate.
- Offering a variety of objects for the kittens or puppies to play with, including empty plastic bottles, paper towel cores, and cardboard boxes in different sizes, as well as commercial pet toys.
- Continuing to handle the fosters daily, including touching every part of their bodies.
- To help guide you further with proper kitten or puppy socialization be sure to follow the species-specific socialization protocols found within this manual.

# FOSTER HEALTH

The health of your foster animal will be determined prior to them being placed in your care. All foster animals who are actively ill will be identified as such prior to placement. In some cases, however, it should be noted that a medical condition may surface after they have been in your home. Below is general information on the most common health issues that may arise.

## **Clinic Support**

Should you need medical advice or support, email our lead foster veterinarian Dr. Primiano at [mprimiano@anticruelty.org](mailto:mprimiano@anticruelty.org). Contact our clinic reception team with time sensitive concerns at (312) 645-8051.

## **Common Medical Conditions**

### **Vomiting**

In dogs and puppies vomiting can be caused by any number of reasons. It may be that the dog is stressed, ingested grass or a foreign body, or is eating their meals too quickly. Vomiting can also be an early sign of something as severe as parvovirus. If your dog or puppy vomits, pay close attention to the consistency and color, as well as texture. If the vomiting is accompanied by other symptoms, or happens more than once in a 24 hour time frame, please contact the Society clinic by referencing the contacts list at the end of this manual.

### **FOSTER TIP**

If you are fostering a cat or kitten who vomits note the consistency, color and texture and contact the Society clinic. Vomiting in cats may be an early sign of a severe illness and should be addressed immediately, especially if accompanied by other symptoms.

### **Diarrhea & Loose Stool**

Diarrhea and loose stool may be common among sick or stressed animals. Diarrhea can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, anxiety, over-feeding, or changes in diet. If the diarrhea is mild and the animal is otherwise alert, you should offer the animal less canned food (if you were at all) and more dry food. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 2 feedings, contains any evidence of parasites or blood, or is accompanied by other symptoms you should contact the Society clinic. The clinic may ask you to bring the animal in for an exam or observation, or may ask you to drop off a stool sample.

### **Fleas & Mites**

If a cat or dog is identified as having fleas or mites they will be treated by the clinic prior to being placed in foster. Should the problem persist, or should the foster identify fleas once the animal is already in your care, please contact the Society clinic for treatment information.

If a cat has been treated for ear mites you may notice a crumbly dark brown discharge in the outer ear canals. This is a residue that can be swabbed out gently with a cotton ball. Do not put anything (including "Q-tips") into the ear canal. If the discharge continues after a week in your care, please contact the clinic for potential follow-up treatment.

### **Ringworm**

Ringworm is a fungal infection that appears as irregularly shaped spots of fur loss. The skin will appear rough, blistered, or scaly. Ringworm is zoonotic, which means it is contagious to other animals including cats, dogs, and humans. If your foster animal has any unusual fur loss, please contact the Society clinic.



## Intestinal Parasites

There are a variety of intestinal parasites that may impact your foster animal including roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, tapeworms, etc.. If you find evidence of a worm, or worm egg, in your foster animal's stool, please bring in a stool sample to our clinic for diagnostics and treatment.

## Medical Emergencies

What constitutes a medical emergency? If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, we would describe this as "urgent" but not necessarily an emergency. If that is the case, call the clinic during business hours to schedule an appointment with a veterinarian.

Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Symptoms of distemper or fading kitten syndrome
- Signs of extreme dehydration: Pale gums, weakness, vomiting, not urinating, skin tenting (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Cold to the touch
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours (adults) or 12 hours (underage kitten or puppy)
- Non-responsiveness or unconsciousness

If a foster animal displays the above symptoms please follow the appropriate emergency protocol below.

If your foster is experiencing a life-threatening emergency during open hours (9 a.m. – 7 p.m.) please call (312)644-8338 ext. 381 and ask to speak with a veterinarian or shelter manager. Always indicate that you are a foster and that it's an emergency.

The Anti-Cruelty Society will *not* reimburse individuals for veterinary expenses acquired during our open hours. Reimbursement of expenses incurred after hours are reviewed on a case by case basis. Emergency clinics are incredibly expensive and should only be used in cases of dire emergencies. Please note that due to exorbitant costs and poor prognosis we are unable to reimburse any emergency expenses related to Fading Kitten Syndrome. If you have a kitten displaying symptoms of failure to thrive please utilize the following protocol.

## Emergency Protocol: Fading Kittens

**Open Hours** (9 a.m. – 7 p.m.): Call (312)645-8220 ext. 381 and ask to speak with a veterinarian or shelter manager. Always indicate that you are a foster and that it's an emergency.

**Before or After Hours:** Your goal is to stabilize the animal until they can be brought into our clinic. To do this, follow these steps:

**1) Body temperature:** If the animal is too cold, you will need to slowly, and safely, get them to a comfortable temperature. Be careful, as doing so too quickly can be a shock to the animal.

- Wrap their entire body in a towel leaving only their face out. Then wrap the towel in a heating pad.
- If you do not have a heating pad you can use tube socks and rice to make one. Please be sure to keep the pet warm as you do so.

- Fill two socks with rice and tie off the tops, microwave them for about two minutes. Carefully remove from the microwave and place them on the outside of the towel.
  - Check on the conditions inside the towel frequently so the animal does not overheat in the process.
- 2) **Blood Sugar:** Once the animal's body temperature is stabilized, help to increase their blood sugar levels by administering a sugar solution: Put a few tablespoons of sugar in warm water. Stir it up; you want the solution to be as strong as possible while still runny. Use a syringe, or your finger, to give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth
- 3) **Give TLC:** Keep the foster comfortable: Do your best to put the foster pet at ease. Keeping yourself composed will help to keep the animal relaxed. This way, in the worst case scenario, if the animal does not make it, their final moments will be ones of peace, and not distress.

### FOSTER NOTE

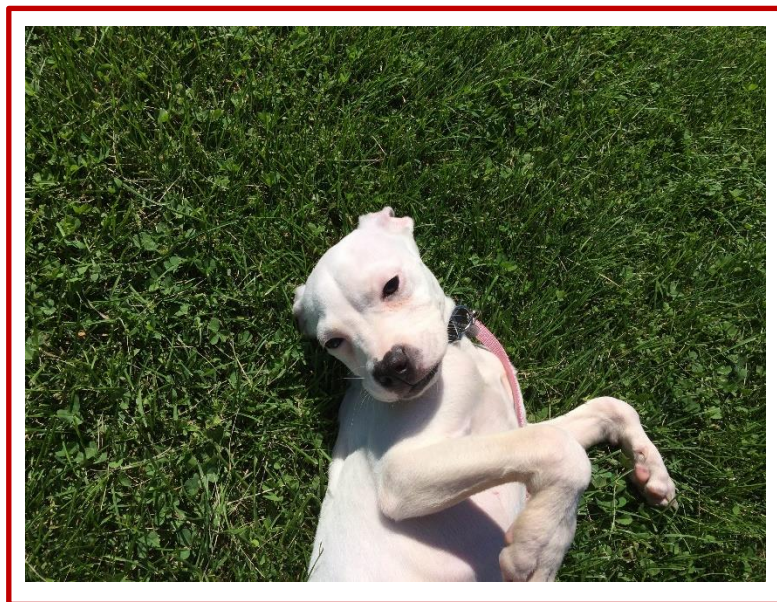
As a nonprofit organization we must carefully select the cases we pour our resources into. With the likelihood of fading kittens under a pound not surviving we are not able to reimburse emergency veterinary visits at this time.

## Potential Behavior Issues

### Improper Attention Seeking

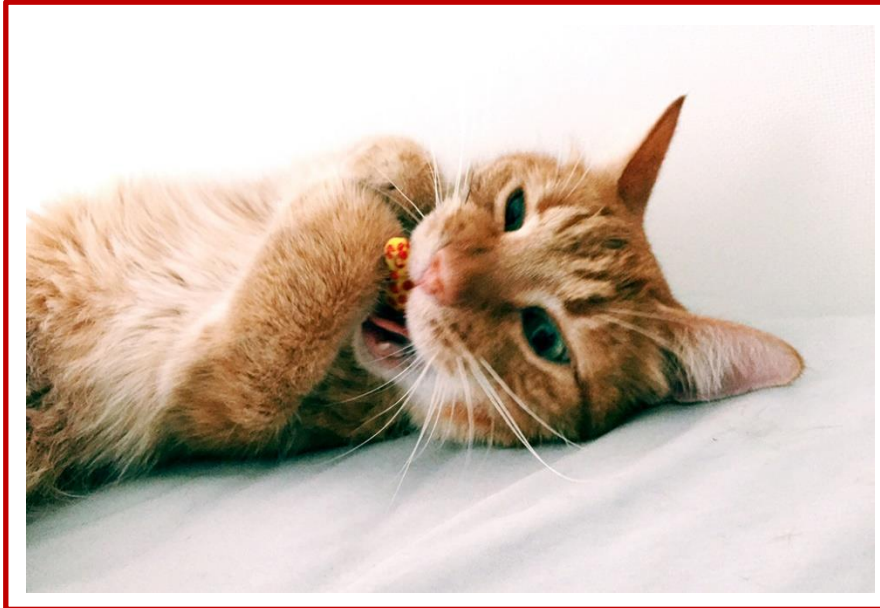
Cats and dogs are social animals that like our company. They are also pretty smart. Put those two facts together, and suddenly you have a pet that quickly learns how to make you heed their call. Responding to your foster animal's plea for attention isn't always a bad thing; for instance, you should take your foster dog outside to eliminate when they bark at the door. However, if your foster cat decides that 4:00 a.m. is the best time for cuddling, or your foster dog always seems to want to play every time you are on the phone, you probably need some help.

If your foster is engaging in an undesirable behavior to get your attention, the best thing to do is ignore them. This teaches them that their behavior has the opposite effect of their intentions. Yes, this can be difficult to achieve, especially if your cat tries to get your attention by standing on your head. Move away from your foster or put them in another room for a minute or two if you feel yourself losing patience. Again, cats and dogs are smart, so your foster will soon learn that certain behaviors don't work.



To make sure that your foster doesn't display "naughty" behaviors to try to get your attention (e.g., raiding the trash, meowing or barking, pulling your pant legs, scratching the furniture, etc.), be diligent about giving attention to your foster animal when they do something that you approve of (e.g., sitting, rubbing against your leg, lying on his bed, scratching the scratching post). That way you will have a courteous kitty or canine in no time.

Finally, should you find that your foster is seeking your attention several times a day or in increasingly mischievous ways, the answer isn't necessarily more attention, but rather structured attention. Schedule two or three play sessions a day (to total 30-45 minutes) and a couple of short "quiet-attention" times for cuddling, petting, massage, grooming, etc., as long as your foster enjoys these activities. Your cat or dog will be less likely to demand your time if he knows that he will be getting it at regular times each day.



### **Play-biting & Mouthiness**

Mouthiness or biting is not unusual during play. The key is teaching your foster animals to do so in a manner that will not inflict harm on a person or other animal. Play-biting may be the result of over-stimulation or the animal's innate predatory drive.

If your foster begins to bite during play, have a toy handy and direct the animal's mouth toward it. When they engage with the toy tell them "yes" to mark the behavior. With consistency and practice the

cat or dog will learn to look for toys instead of hands. A loud "Ouch" will frequently work too. If you yell "ouch", immediately stop handling or holding the animal. If the animal continues to bite, a 5 minute "time out" in a quiet room (bathrooms are good) can also be effective or you can walk away, thereby taking away their reward (which in this case is you!)

If a cat ambushes you by attacking your legs or feet, try using a squirt bottle filled with water and zap them once with it. If plain water does not work, add a bit of vinegar to the squirt bottle. Also try using a toy attached to a wand or stick and drag it behind you. Hopefully they'll attack that instead of your feet.

### **FOSTER TIP**

Aggression can come in many forms: defensive behavior, dominance, resource-guarding, territorial displays and predatory hunting. There are no easy solutions to aggressive behavior, and aggression frequently is multi-faceted. If your foster animal exhibits any aggressive behaviors, please contact the behavior or foster support teams immediately.

If a puppy or adolescent dog's mouthiness amplifies to the point of causing pain or bruising, contact the foster support team so that the issue can be addressed with the behavior team. Dogs who exhibit excessive mouthiness in a foster environment will usually amplify this behavior once back at the shelter – so training them not to before they return from foster is a priority.

## ALL ABOUT CATS

Each cat you foster will have a unique personality and a different set of needs. Foster providers should adjust their approach with each individual who comes in. This section will cover some basic general care practices that may help get you started.



### **Creating a Cat-Friendly Space**

Start your foster cat off in a quiet portion of your home. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot so if the cat feels the need to burrow they're doing so in a safe space. Carriers and shoeboxes make for great hiding nooks. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a cat can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The cat-friendly space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, and toys. Pheromone sprays or diffusers are an added bonus.

### **Cat Grooming**

Cats clean themselves, so bathing is rarely, if ever, required. Small kittens may not quite understand the concept of cleaning and preening themselves so a sponge bath is all that is needed. Be careful not to get a sick or high risk kitten wet as their body may not be able to regulate their temperature safely. Nail clipping is fine, especially for kittens with razor sharp nails. Be careful when doing so, make sure you clip off only the curved end. Avoid the pink area where the veins are located. Frequent brushing will help alleviate the chance of a cat developing hairballs and this will also keep their coat clean and shiny. If hairballs do become prevalent, contact the foster support team for clinic assistance.

### **Litterbox Usage**

Most cats have an innate instinct to relieve themselves in a designated spot. For domesticated cats – this is most often a litterbox. To set your foster cat up for success, make sure that the litterbox is set-up prior to

bringing the cat home. After removing the cat from their carrier, place them in their designated litter box. This way they can use their box as a point of reference to other items in your home. For more details on how to address litterbox lapses, read the Animal Behavior section manual below.

### **Facial Marking**

Once you bring your foster cat home you may see them rubbing his or her face on the corner of your coffee table or up against your leg. This behavior is known as marking. Cats have scent glands on the sides of their faces and other areas on their bodies. Rubbing on objects or on your legs lets other cats know your cat has claimed that territory or has laid claim to you. If you have cats of your own at home and have your foster cat segregated from them, gently rubbing a towel on each of their cheeks and then allowing the opposite cat to smell the towel is a great way to help the cats become introduced to one another's smell and pheromones.

### **Play**

Cats love to play and stalk make-believe prey. They enjoy chasing toys and balls. If cats aren't stimulated with play, they may try to get your attention by excessively meowing or acting out in other ways. It's very important to play with your foster cats and keep them stimulated. The best cat toys are those that dance, jump, or move to look like they are alive. Cats can act out their predator role by pouncing on toys. Avoid using your fingers as toys, as this type of play may cause biting and scratching behaviors. For more details on how you can prevent play-biting, refer to the behavior section of this manual.

### **Shy Cats**

Many cats in shelters who appear to be shy are actually stressed by their environment and prove to be outgoing, social cats once settled into a foster home. Others are truly shy and need controlled, prolonged exposure to warm up to any new person and situation. Regardless of which category your foster cat falls in, she is going to need time and assistance to feel comfortable in your home. The following are tips on how to acclimate a shy cat and draw them out of their shell.

- **A Safe Space:** Scared cats tend to prefer small spaces; large spaces are overwhelming. Set up your cat in a quiet room, such as a spare bedroom or a bathroom. She should have access to water and a litter box at all times. She should also have a cozy place to hide. It should be someplace the cat – and you – can easily access, but where the cat can be mostly out of view.
- **Feeding:** It is a good idea to measure the dry food you provide. This will allow you to monitor your cat's appetite and let you know how much she is eating. Not eating for more than 2 days can be dangerous for a cat so you do need to see right away what her food consumption is. Initially it might be necessary to spoon feed (which provides distance) the cat while she is in her hiding spot. As she becomes more comfortable, you can move a little closer and hand feed her, then transition to giving the food on a plate and luring her out of hiding to eat.
- **Play:** You might be surprised how many shut down, fearful cats spring to life when invited to play. Interactive toys are a great way to bond with your new cat and help her feel more comfortable. Wand toys are the obvious choice.
- **Slow Blinking:** Slow blinking, commonly called "kitty kisses," does help to soothe some cats, and you might even get your cat blinking back at you.

## Cat Health Concerns

### Upper Respiratory Infection

Upper respiratory infection (URI) in cats is a contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory passages. Bacteria may become involved secondarily. The incubation period for URI is anywhere from 2 days to 2 weeks, which is why cats may appear healthy upon pick-up, and may still develop the illness.

URI is highly contagious among felines. Note that humans and dogs cannot be affected by the virus. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose or eyes, lack of appetite, lethargy and fever. If you have a foster cat who begins to show preliminary symptoms, please contact the foster support team. If the symptoms begin to compound, and the cat is not eating or, if the discharge has become yellow or green in color, contact the Society clinic directly. A veterinarian will be in touch with you to determine the course of treatment which may sometimes include a physical examination, medication, or hospitalization.



When caring for a cat with URI in your home your most important goal is to keep the cat eating. When they are congested cats can't smell food and may lose their appetite. Offer smelly, fish-flavored canned food. Warming it up a bit in a microwave may help too. Gently clean the nose and eyes with a washcloth moistened with warm water. If medication is prescribed, make sure to give the animal all doses until it is completely gone. Call your assigned veterinarian if the animal is not showing any signs of improvement after one week, or if there is any deterioration in condition.

### Feline Distemper

Feline distemper, otherwise known as panleukopenia, is a highly communicable virus that is fatal to young kittens and senior cats with no vaccine history and poor health. It is spread by direct contact with infected animals or their secretions. Contaminated food dishes, bedding, litter boxes, and the clothes or hands of people who have treated an infected cat are routes of exposure.

Feline panleukopenia is a leading cause of death in kittens. For this reason each cat is immediately vaccinated against the illness upon arrival at the Society, though it takes several rounds of the vaccine for a kitten to develop full immunity. Feline distemper bears no relation to the virus that causes distemper in dogs.

Early signs include loss of appetite, severe apathy, and fever. The cat often vomits repeatedly and brings up frothy, yellow-stained bile. The cat may be seen crouching in pain, their head hanging a few inches over the surface of the water bowl. If they are able to drink, they immediately vomit. With pain in the abdomen, the cat cries plaintively. Diarrhea may appear early in the course of the disease, but frequently comes on later. The stools are yellow or blood-streaked. In young kittens (and some older cats), the onset can be so sudden that death occurs before the cat shows any signs.

If you have a foster cat who is showing signs of feline distemper, please contact the Society clinic immediately. Also take precautionary measures until a diagnosis has been made by limiting the cat's exposure to other felines.

## Cat Behavior Issues

### Scratching

Scratching is a normal behavior for all cats, even declawed cats. They scratch for a variety of reasons, including exercise, play, agility, stretching, and most importantly, to remove the outer nail sheath that sheds routinely. By trimming your foster cat's nails every 2 to 3 weeks, nails will stay blunt and less likely to harm your skin or furniture. Provide your foster cat with a sturdy scratching post that allows him or her to stretch out completely when scratching. Try sprinkling catnip on the base or side of the post to entice the kitty. An occasional treat reward may be used as well. Scratching on inappropriate surfaces (such as furniture) can also be lessened by the use of double-sided tape, like Sticky Paws, available at most pet stores.

### Litterbox Use

Most cats have a specific preference about where they want to eliminate. All indoor cats need a litter box. Your foster cat's litter box should be placed in a quiet, accessible location where your foster can feel comfortable eliminating. A bathroom or utility room is often a good place. One litter box is recommended per floor in a multi-level home. Cats are sensitive creatures, so try to avoid moving the litterbox unless it's absolutely necessary. Keep the litter box clean. Cats won't use a messy, smelly litter box. Spot clean daily and completely clean and refill as needed. Don't use ammonia, deodorants, or scents, especially lemon, when cleaning the litter box.

#### FOSTER TIP

If you are unsure of why your foster cat is not using their litter box, and medical reasons have been ruled out by the clinic, call the behavior or foster support team for assistance.

Inappropriate litterbox use may arise from physical or behavioral problems. Always rule out medical conditions first by contacting the Society clinic. A kitten may have "accidents" because its living area is too large and is unable to make it to the box in time. Keep kittens confined to one room with their box when you are unable to closely supervise them.

### Over-Grooming

A cat that is grooming herself so much that she is creating bald spots or her skin is raw could be reacting to stress. However, there are a number of medical causes that should be explored first. The most common causes of this behavior are allergies and parasites. Parasites, such as fleas, are easy to diagnose. Allergies are not so simple to pinpoint. A cat that is biting and continually licking her belly may have feline lower urinary tract disease. Pain from conditions such as arthritis, cancer, and hyperesthesia can also lead to excessive grooming.

Even if you believe that your foster cat is healthy, consult with the Society clinic if your foster is engaging in any over-grooming. Delaying treatment of a behavior problem is not going to harm your foster cat; delaying medical care can lead to a sicker cat and more costly treatment. If your foster cat receives a glowing health report, our behavior specialists are happy to help you resolve your cat's behavior problem.

### Counter Surfing

The domestic cat's ancestors used to climb and perch in trees in order to hunt and to survey their territory. Nearly 75% of the world's wild cats live in forested areas. Is it any wonder that pet cats jump onto the kitchen counter? However, many people do object to this natural behavior. Fortunately, there are steps that you can take to prevent or break this habit in your foster cat.

First, understanding that the need to perch is instinctual in cats, you must provide an acceptable elevated place for your foster cat. Cat trees are available in a myriad of sizes and designs. It isn't necessary to spend a lot of money to satisfy your foster cat. Clearing off an upper shelf of a bookcase can accommodate your foster cat just as well as a tree. Some cats don't need to be very high up and are happy with a windowsill or window perch. Keep in mind that in a larger home, more than one option will likely be required.

Encourage your foster cat to choose the location you have picked for her by placing treats or catnip there or giving her a spoon of canned food there. Praise and pet her when she rests on her perch. A shelf can be made more attractive by outfitting it with a bed or towel. Some cats will use their perches more often if doing so gives them the chance to watch birds and squirrels outside.

Counters and other off-limits areas need to be made unattractive to your cat. Be sure that no food is left unattended on counters or tables. "Booby trap" the counter by placing any of the following on the surface:

- Sticky Paws brand (or similar) double-sided tape
- Upside-down carpet runner or X-Mat Pet Mat



None of these will harm your foster cat but they should be annoying enough that your cat chooses to avoid them. Yelling at, hitting, or spraying your cat with water will not solve this problem.

### **Biting During Play**

Many cats enjoy being stroked– they purr, knead their paws, and lean into your hand. Sometimes it seems they quickly change their minds and bite out of the blue. Other cats only briefly tolerate petting and show no indication of actually liking it. Why do otherwise friendly cats bite when pet? The answer – we aren't sure. Repeated stroking might stimulate the nerves to a point that it becomes uncomfortable for the cat. Some cats may have been handled roughly as kittens and formed a negative association with petting. Regardless, there are steps you can take to increase the amount of petting your cat will accept.

Almost all cats who have petting-related aggression give a warning before they bite, though the warning may be subtle or quick. Common signs include tensing the body, becoming still, wagging the tail, rippling the muscles, and flattening the ears. A more exaggerated sign is quickly turning the head toward the area that is being touched. You need to know how long it takes to get to this point or if there are certain places on the cat's body that will elicit these reactions, as this is where training will start.

Let's say that your foster cat is content when you pet her five times but on the sixth her tail wags and she will bite after eight or nine strokes. Pet your foster cat five times and then give her a treat. Wait a few minutes and then repeat. Gradually increase the number of times you pet her before you give a treat.

Make sure that all handling is gentle. Do not pat your foster cat or stroke her in the opposite direction of fur growth. Never hit or yell at your foster cat for biting. This will only reinforce in her mind that hands cause pain and she will become even less tolerant of handling. She could also become afraid of you. If your foster cat does bite, simply stop touching her and ignore her for 5 or 10 minutes. If she is on your lap and remains agitated, don't try to pick her up. Stand up and she will jump to the floor.



## ALL ABOUT KITTENS

Kittens are by far the most common foster candidates available at The Anti-Cruelty Society. Kitten season will usually begin in late March and can stretch out as late as October. As with all under-age fosters, we recommend taking kittens in pairs as often as possible. From time to time we may also have litters available with mothers who may require foster care. The information below will assist you in rearing and caring for your underage felines.



### Underweight & Underage Kittens

Kittens who go out to foster due to being too young or underweight may require extra feedings every day and assistance with appetite stimulation. Fosters who bring home kittens from this category should be taking daily weights to ensure that their kitten is gaining, and not losing, weight. Kittens in this category are also more prone to Upper Respiratory Infections which is why getting them out of the shelter as soon as possible can be life-saving. Ensuring the kittens are receiving proper socialization, have normal energy levels, and are eating heartily are the keys to a successful underweight/underage foster.

### Neonatal kittens

Any kitten under 1 pound is considered to be a neonatal kitten. Neonatal kittens are especially vulnerable as orphans and often times need to be bottle fed every 2-4 hours depending on their age. Neonate animals are in desperate need of the personalized attention and care that we just do not have the means to provide here at the shelter. These young kittens will need: a warm room free of drafts, and lots of observation and care.

Fostering neonates requires additional training, and we are always in need of extra support. If you are interested in helping neonatal kittens please reach out to the foster support team for one-on-one training.

## Litters of Kittens

Kitten foster parents will be provided with a bag Science Diet kitten kibble for your foster mom. Note that kitten kibble is higher in calories which makes it a great feeding option for nursing cats. This is the same food that the animals are fed in-shelter, and since they'll return this diet post-foster, it's important to keep them on it. Please follow the feeding instructions that are printed on the back of each bag. Foster parents are welcome to supplement with additional wet food as needed. Note that any change in diet – even such a minor one as switching brands of food – may cause diarrhea.



If the kittens are with their mother, and under four weeks of age, the mother should take care of the feeding. Once the kittens are about four weeks of age, you should start to notice them showing interest in their mother's food, this is an indication that they are ready to be weaned.

### Housing Set-Up

Create a safe space for litter or orphaned kittens by choosing a quiet room that you can close off from your resident pets, if applicable. It is very important to make sure it is temperature controlled and there are no drafts as kittens body temperatures can drop very quickly. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot so if the cat feels the need to burrow they're doing so in a safe

space. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a cat can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The cat-friendly space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, a litter box and toys. It is not unusual for some mothers to be territorial about their newborns. If your foster mom is displaying offensive body language it is best to give them their space for a few days.

At around 3 weeks of age you can introduce a shallow litter box to your neonates. The litter should be fragrance free, non-clumping litter. Place kitten in the litter box frequently so that they remember to use it. You can also stimulate them over the litter pan to make the association. Make sure the litter box is easy to access and clean.

### Warming Kittens

Wrap a hot water bottle or sock filled with dry rice in a towel and place it next to the kitten. Make sure the bottle or rice filled sock is warm but not too hot to hold against your own skin for 20 seconds comfortably. You can also place a heating pad (on lowest setting) down one side of a cardboard box and half way underneath the box. Place a towel at the bottom of the box. Make sure the kitten has room to move away from the heating pad if necessary but not enough room to lose its way back to the warmth.

### Neonatal Feeding

Bottle-feeding neonatal kittens requires an around-the-clock commitment. Fosters should only utilize a feline formula. Never use cow's milk with your kittens. When determining quantity of formula use your best judgement; if a kitten is eating less than recommended per feeding, you may need to increase the frequency of the feedings. If you're working with these small orphaned kittens - thank you in advance for offering your time and attention to these fragile babies.

Age	Weight	Amount Per Feeding	Schedule
0-1 week	50-150g	2-6 ml	Every 2 hours
1-2 weeks	150-250g	6-10 ml	Every 2-3 hours
2-3 weeks	250-350g	10-14 ml	Every 3-4 hours
3-4 weeks	350-450g	14-18 ml	Every 4-5 hours
4-5 weeks	450-550g	18-22 ml	Every 5-6 hours
5-8	550-850g	Weaning; offer wet food	Every 6 hours

### Bottle Feeding Kittens

If you are fostering a neonatal kitten, please follow these steps for feeding them. Note that depending on their age kittens need to be fed every 2-3 hours.

1. **Prep formula:** Place the bottle of KMR formula in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. Before feeding always test the temperature of the formula by placing a few drops on your inner wrist to be sure it is not too hot. It should be slightly warmer than your body temperature.
2. **Kitten Temp Check:** Make sure that your foster kitten is warm before offering them food. Do not attempt to feed a kitten who has a low body temp as it can have serious health consequences.
3. **Prep Kitten:** Wrap the kitten in a towel or blanket and position him so that his belly is toward the floor. Kittens should not be fed on their backs or in an upright position.
4. **Feed:** Turn the bottle upside down and allow a drop of formula to come out. Place the nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently wiggle it, holding the bottle at a 45-degree angle to keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach. This movement should encourage the kitten to start eating. If at first you don't succeed, wait a few seconds and try again. Usually the kitten will latch on and begin to suckle.

### Burping Kittens

Always burp the kitten after each feeding. Do this by rubbing and patting the kitten's back.

### Weaning kittens

Once your kittens are about four weeks old, it is time to start the weaning process. Your goal is to have the kittens eating on their own consistently by the time they're adopted. So, beginning at four weeks, start offering warm gruel (two parts wet food, one part formula) at all times, along with dry kitten food and water. Every four to six hours, discard any uneaten gruel and provide a fresh batch.

You will still be supplementing the kittens with a bottle every eight hours to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients they need, but encourage them to eat gruel before you offer a bottle. To get a kitten interested in trying the gruel, you may have to offer the gruel with a spoon or use your finger to place a small amount on the kitten's tongue. Ideally, by the end of five weeks, your foster kittens will be happily eating dry and wet food on their own.

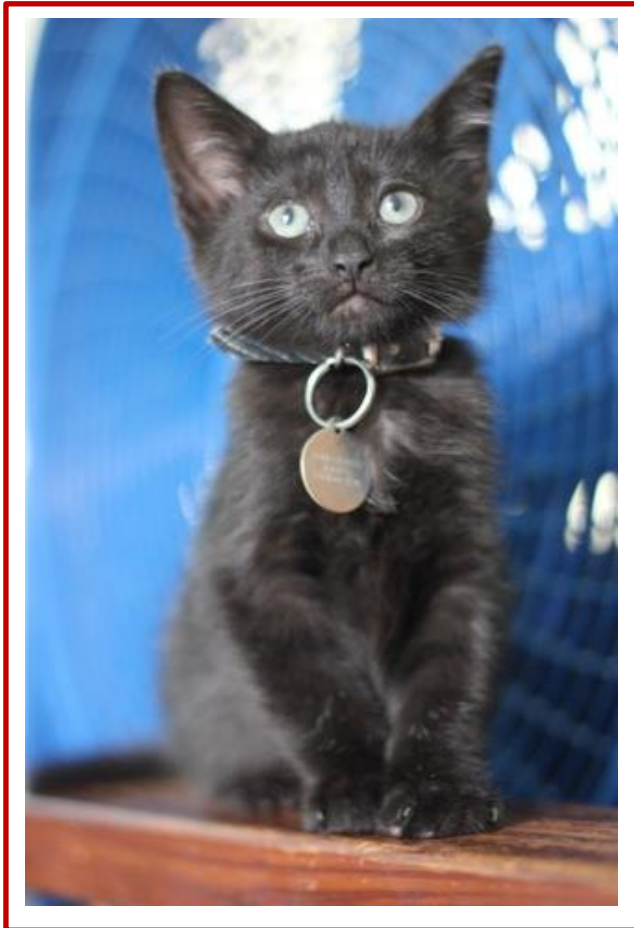
#### FOSTER TIP

To make gruel mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 mixed formula per kitten. You can add a little water if the kittens seem to like a looser consistency. It's OK make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it just remember to warm it up slightly before offering it to the kittens.

It is important to continue weighing your foster kittens every day, after each feeding, to ensure that they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the kittens to the litter box because they should be able to eliminate on their own by about four weeks of age.

### **Caring for independent eaters**

By six to seven weeks old, your kittens should be independent eaters. Dry food should be their primary source of food, but offer wet food frequently as well to encourage eating and maximize growth. Replace the water in their water dish twice a day and wipe out the dish if needed.



### **Dehydration**

Kittens can become dehydrated very quickly from not eating/drinking. When a kitten has diarrhea, it is a good idea to mix the kitten's bottle with Pedia-lyte in place of water. This will help prevent dehydration. If the diarrhea is severe (lasting over 24 hours) or contains blood, please contact the Foster Care Coordinator to schedule a time to bring the kitten in to be seen by a clinic staff member.

Severe dehydration in kittens requires immediate intervention. The most effective way to test for dehydration is to "tent" the skin on the kitten's back. This is done by pick up a fold of skin and watching what happens when you release the skin- it should spring back into shape. If the skin remains in a ridge, the kitten is dehydrated.

If you believe your foster kitten is dehydrated, contact the clinic to schedule a time to bring the kitten in to be seen by a veterinarian. Please keep track of what and when the kitten ate last.

### **Kitten Stimulation**

After each meal, kittens under 3 weeks of age must be stimulated to urinate and defecate. When kittens are with their mom she takes care of this by licking the kittens in order to stimulate their bowels. For motherless kittens, use a cotton ball dampened with

warm water to massage the area around the kitten's rectum and genitalia. This process is necessary after each meal until the kitten can eliminate on her own. At this time you can start putting the kitten in a litter box to encourage it to go on its own.

### **Litterbox Training**

When kittens are about four weeks old, they will begin to play in, dig through and explore loose, soft materials such as dirt or litter. As a result of this investigative digging, kittens begin to relieve themselves in these materials. So, kittens do not have to be taught by either their mothers or humans to relieve themselves in soft, loose materials, or to dig and bury their waste. Kittens are simply born knowing how to do it.

It's not necessary to take kittens to the litter box and move their paws back and forth in the litter. Doing so may actually be an unpleasant experience for them, causing them to have some negative associations with the litter box. However, litter boxes that don't provide an acceptable place to eliminate (from the cats' point of view) may cause cats to relieve themselves elsewhere. That's why it's important to provide a litter box that meets the kittens' needs. You want the kittens to like the box and use it consistently.

Be sure to choose a box that has walls low enough for the kitten to access it and clean the contents regularly. Praise the kitten when they're using it. Remember to only use non-clumping litter.

## Kitten Socialization

If you are fostering a kitten under 8 weeks of age you'll want to use the following guide to ensure each kitten is receiving age-appropriate socialization and exposure to sights, sounds and experiences that will help them build a proper behavioral foundation. Kittens raised in an enriched, stimulating environment have a more complex web of neuro-pathways. They are better able to handle changes and stress, have better problem solving abilities and are less nervous/hyperactive.

### Age 3-4 weeks:

- **Tactile Stimulation:** holding the kitten in one hand, gently stimulate (tickle) the kitten between the toes on any one-foot using a Q-tip. It is not necessary to see that the kitten is feeling the tickle.
- **Head Held Erect:** using both hands, hold the kitten perpendicular to the ground, (straight up), so that its head is directly above its tail. This is an upward position.

### Age 4 to 6 weeks

- **Handling & Restraint:** 10 minutes of individual handling and gentle restraint apart from litter each day
- **Routine Inspection:** Include nail trims
- **Joy Rides:** Introduce short car rides while in carrier(Or short walks in a carrier through the neighborhood)
- **Scratching Post:** Of appropriate size
- **Hiding Spots:** Provide safe hiding places for stalking and chasing toys and littermates
- **Noise:** Increase level and proximity to household noises like vacuum or doorbell
- **Other Species:** Begin meeting safe, friendly dogs and other animals when possible
- **New People:** Begin meeting new people and older children

### Age 6 to 9 weeks

- **Climbing:** Provide three dimensional access –cat trees, climbing poles, easy access shelves, etc.
- **Toys:** Provide safe hanging/dangling toys
- **Etiquette:** Begin teaching bite and scratch inhibition
- Continue inspection/gentle restraint – include brushing
- Continue meeting new people and children of all ages (supervised only)



## Fading Kitten Syndrome

Fading Kitten Syndrome Fading kitten syndrome, also known as failure to thrive, is when a kitten begins to



fade with little or no warning. It is especially common, and fatal in kittens under 1 pound. It is not a well-defined condition and can be spurred by environment, mother's neglect, birth defects, anemia, or simply low birth weight.

Signs of fading kitten syndrome include:

- Low body temperature
- Lethargy
- Not Eating
- Gasping for breath

If you notice these symptoms here's what you need to do immediately:

1. **Keep the kitten warm** by wrapping them in a towel. Once in the towel do not unwrap them, by unwrapping or adjusting the towel you will be releasing heat. Utilize a heating pad if available.
2. **Increase the kitten's blood sugar.** There are a few different ways you can do this.
  - If you have regular sugar put a few tablespoons of sugar in warm water and stir it up; you want the solution to be as strong as possible while still runny.
  - Use a syringe or your finger to give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth
  - You can also rub Karo syrup on the gums, this will absorb quickly for a blood glucose spike.
3. **Provide comfort.** Stay calm so that the kitten is not stressed further. Comfort the kitten.

If caught early kittens can *possibly* recover from fading kitten syndrome but considering the fact that 15%-40% of kittens under 12 weeks of age will pass, it is not likely. For this reason The Anti-Cruelty Society cannot reimburse emergency room visits for kittens who are fading.

### Kitten Mortality

Many factors play a part in kitten mortality, and death is an unfortunate reality when we deal with the most vulnerable populations. Kittens born on the streets are subjected to influences that can significantly reduce their chances of survival and may have congenital or inherited defects that we are unaware of. Despite our best efforts, young kittens do die. The death of a kitten can be an emotionally disturbing experience. It is important to understand and accept that some kittens will not survive. What we can do for these kittens is surround them with warmth, care and love while they are with us. In the event that one of your kittens passes, please notify the foster support team and wrap the body in preparation for returning it to the shelter.

## ALL ABOUT DOGS

Dogs are one of our most popular adoption candidates, yet helping them become “adoption ready” is one of our greatest challenges as an organization. And that’s exactly why dog fosters are critical, especially those willing to take large unruly canines. By sending an adult dog out to foster we are not only gathering additional information about their personalities, fosters are also laying a foundation of training and polite behavior which will make them more successful in their adoptive homes.



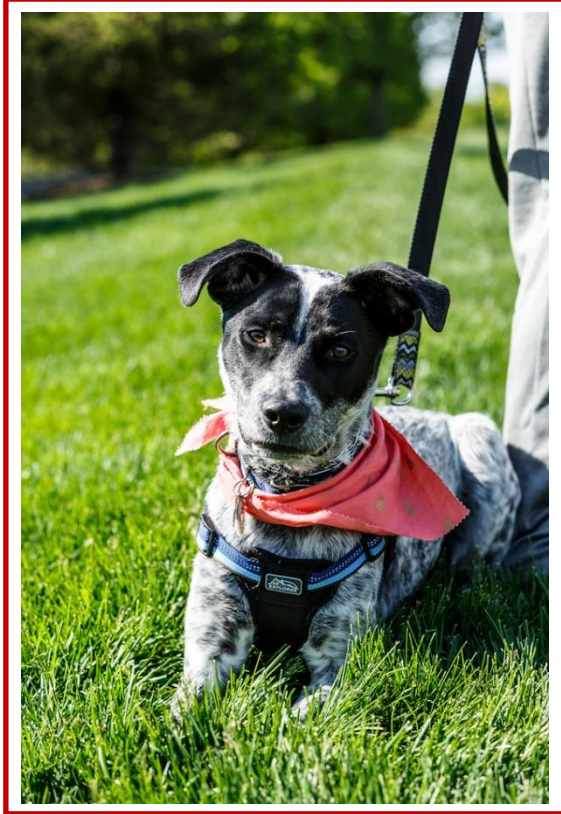
### **Training**

A well-behaved dog is a joy and makes them a more desirable adoption candidate. Teaching your foster dog the basics—“sit,” “stay,” “come,” “down,” “off,” “leave it”—will help prepare them with basic life skills that they’ll need once they’re adopted. Utilizing positive reinforcement methods, which reward good behavior and re-direct unwanted actions, will help you to train your foster dog into a model citizen. Know that behavior is context dependent, meaning that all social animals behave differently in different environments. Understand that every dog, no matter what their age, comes with a need to learn new skills or change some behaviors in their new home. Your foster dog will make mistakes.

Foster parents should not utilize punishment or dominance based training with foster dogs. If you are in need of training assistance for a particular animal, please contact the behavior or foster support teams.

## **Dog Grooming**

Foster parents are welcome to give their foster dogs a bath – though they should wait a period of time to get to know the animal first. If giving a full bath, always use a mild shampoo. Dogs who are being treated for kennel cough, who are underage or underweight can be bathed but should be blow dried immediately afterward to prevent their body temperature from dropping. Puppies in particular are difficult to keep clean. Frequent sponge baths or baby wipe-downs may be needed to keep their paws free of fecal material.



If you are comfortable trimming a dog's nails – please do – but watch their body language closely as some dogs do not like having their paws handled. Don't do any kind of grooming that may put you or the dog at risk.

## **House-Training**

Foster parents should never assume a foster dog is house-trained. Shelter dogs come from a variety of backgrounds, and even if trained at one point in time, their stay in the shelter may have caused this training to lapse. For this reason all foster parents should anticipate that they will be doing some house-training with each foster dog. Additional information on how to address house-soiling and training dog can be found in the Dog Behavior Concerns section of this manual.

Accomplish housetraining by using the 4 C's:

- Consistency of feeding and walking schedule
- Confinement when they can't be watched
- Cleaning accidents with products designed for dog waste
- Celebrate your dog for doing positive things with rewards like treats, petting, and play

## **Crating**

Foster parents are encouraged to house dogs in size-appropriate crates when unsupervised. Some dogs do not like crates, and most dogs need to be transitioned or "trained" to use a crate, so it's up to the foster parent to decide whether to crate or not. Putting the dog in a crate while you are gone will give you peace of mind knowing that they are in a safe place, away from harm, and not doing any damage to your belongings or themselves. For many dogs, a crate can also represent a safe and comfortable place to call their own and provides them with a sense of security. Dogs actually like having a "den" to cuddle up in. Crating should never be used as punishment.

## **Chewing**

Most dogs love to chew – so make sure to give them lots of appropriate outlets for this behavior. Make sure chew toys are manufactured in the United States. Foreign imports may contain pesticides or chemical preservatives.

## **Dog Parks**

Foster dogs should not be taken to any off-leash dog parks or beaches. The full behavior history of your foster dog is not known and we want to prevent any incidents in which a foster dog may get into a fight with another canine. In addition, these spaces are often a breeding ground for germs and we don't want to expose fosters to additional pathogens. Leashed walks through non-dog parks are okay.



## First-Time Dog Foster Tips

The tips below are meant to help fosters with transitioning foster dogs home. Time and patience are the keys to success. Some dogs adjust to new homes quicker than others, so fosters should be prepared for some bumps in the road.

Things you *should* do:

- Remember, even a well-adjusted adult dog can be a bit shell-shocked when you bring them home, and the dog you have on day one might be very different than the dog you have in 3 days or 3 weeks.
- Teach your dog to “say please.” Saying please teaches a dog impulse control and manners. For example, a dog has to earn his dinner by sitting politely. Good things come to those who wait.
- Take the dog outside on leash right away and let them sniff around.
- Keep the dog on a leash even in a fenced yard.
- Let the dog meet one family member at a time. They should try to make a good first impression by being calm, patient, and approachable. Treats are always a good idea!
- Avoid big parties and gatherings with your new foster dog until you know the dog’s personality better. Does he like kids? Does she like being the center of attention, or is she shy?
- Let your new foster dog sleep in the same room as you, if possible, in a crate. Dogs are social animals and sleeping alone in a strange place can be tough for some dogs. If it’s not possible to be in the same room, make sure the sleeping area is dog-proofed, cozy, quiet, and safe.
- Assume that the foster dog will chew on things left on the floor. If the dog does have something they aren’t supposed to, try to distract them and re-direct them to something appropriate. Be sure there is a toy in every room.
- Dogs are opportunists. Keep food off the counters, low tables, and keep garbage cans closed.
- Keep your face away from the foster dog’s face, don’t hug or grab the dog, and avoid letting young children interact with the dog without carefully watching for signs of discomfort from the dog.



Things you *shouldn't* do:

- Give your foster dog a bath right away. Unless the dog is matted, filthy, or in dire need of a scrub, wait until they are settled in.
- Kiss or hug the dog until you get to know them more. Some dogs dislike it. Think of it like kids getting pinched on the cheek by their aunt.
- Leave your foster dog loose in the house. Your dog should be in view of you at all times, in a crate, or in a sectioned off area.
- Allow rough housing or chase games of any kind between children and the foster dog.
- Pester the dog while they’re eating. Everyone deserves to eat in peace. Dogs behave differently in different environments, so be cautious in the beginning, especially around food.

## Dog Behavior Concerns

### House-soiling

House-training can be difficult to achieve during the brevity of a foster period. However, you can get an animal well on its way to an "accident" free life. What is first and foremost is establishing a routine. Once a schedule has been set, be consistent! Dogs and puppies need to eliminate after a nap, after exercise or play, and after eating and/or drinking.

Additional tips for house-training include:

- Keep a consistent walking and feeding schedule and remove left-over food between meals.
- Adult dogs should be taken outside early in the morning, before going to bed, and before being confined or left alone for periods of time. Fully house-trained adult dogs usually go out at least 3 times a day.
- Puppies should be taken out more frequently. In addition to first thing in the morning, and before bedtime, they should go out after meals, play, and waking from naps.
- Pace back and forth with your foster dog in an area rather than standing still. The movement will help stimulate the need to eliminate.
- If you see signs that he or she needs to eliminate, such as pacing, whining, circling, sniffing, or leaving the room, take your foster dog outside as quickly as possible to prevent an accident.
- Reward your foster with praise, treats, or play whenever they eliminate in the appropriate area.
- If you catch your foster dog in the act of eliminating inside the house, interrupt the behavior with a verbal cue like "not here" or clap loudly enough to startle but not scare. Immediately, quickly, and gently lead or carry your dog outside. Allow your foster dog to finish eliminating outside and then reward him or her.
- Do not punish or even acknowledge an accident. Your foster dog cannot connect punishment with something that happened even minutes ago. Punishment may make a dog fearful and worsen the house-training problems. Puppies will make mistakes, and it may be that you did not recognize the signs or take them out enough.



### Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety affects both dogs and puppies. Separation anxiety leads to destructive behaviors such as chewing, scratching, barking, howling, and "accidents" in the house. Boredom and anxiety are the biggest reason for destructive behavior. Keep your dog occupied with chew toys. Filling a Kong with peanut butter or soft treats will keep a dog busy for a long time. Make sure you give the animal a lot of exercise time and mental stimulation. Don't "baby" them by lavishing them with too much attention as this can create over-dependence. If your foster dog is showing increasing signs of separation anxiety over the foster period, please contact the behavior or foster support team.

### Poor Impulse Control

Some dogs who lack previous basic training, and are young in age or have high energy, may have difficulty navigating their natural impulses, which leads to play-biting, leash grabbing, jumping and other nuisance behaviors. Teaching your foster dog to wait, even when faced with various stimuli, will help

them in gaining impulse control which will lead to easier adoption placement.

Utilize the techniques below to teach your foster impulse control:

- Have the dog wait or “sit” until given permission to take a toy, a treat from a hand, or food bowl.
- Ask the dog to “wait” at doors until told ‘let’s go”
- Waiting for calm behavior before exiting their kennel (if crate training)
- Ask the dog to “look” and make eye contact with you when in the face of stimuli
- Teach the dog to sit before greeting people
- Work on “sit” hold and “down” hold by rewarding a dog consistently as he maintains the sit or down position for longer periods of time (with increasing distraction)
- Clicking/rewarding for brief (and eventually, sustained) calm behavior in or out of kennel
- Desensitizing/rewarding for calm behavior in the presence of triggers like leashes, passing dogs, or manipulating kennel latch, etc.

If a dog does not respond to your re-direction and becomes overly mouthy or jumpy, it’s time to walk away or give them a time out. By allowing a dog who is “acting out” to continue their inappropriate behavior we may actually be doing them unintentional harm. By helping a dog learn to consistently control their own impulses (and then holding them accountable for doing so at all times), you can help curb a lot of jumpy, mouthy, hyper, over-reactive behavior which can discourage adopters

## Dog Health Concerns

### Kennel Cough

Bordetella, otherwise known as kennel cough, is an infection of the respiratory passages that is very common among shelter dogs. It is a viral infection that may be accompanied by a secondary bacterial infection. The disease is spread by close contact. In spite of strict sanitary measures, it is sometimes difficult to control the disease in hospitals, kennels, and shelters.

Like URI, kennel cough has a long incubation period, anywhere from 5 to 15 days, so it is not always diagnosed prior to foster placement. If you have your own dogs at home, ensure that they are up-to-date on their Bordetella vaccine to ensure they are protected against one of the causative agents.

The major symptom of kennel cough is a dry, harsh cough that is worsened with exercise or excitement. Dogs usually do not run a fever. Other symptoms include sneezing, snorting, gagging and a discharge from the nose or eyes. Retching or gagging might follow the cough. Severe cough may occur for 5 days but a mild cough may persist for 10 – 20 days.

### FOSTER TIP

Kennel cough is usually self-limiting. Most of the time no treatment is necessary in otherwise healthy adult dogs. If you have a healthy adult foster dog who comes down with symptoms make sure they are comfortable, rested, and drink plenty of fluids. Wipe their nose with a warm, damp cloth to remove any discharge. If the cough is severe, contact the Society clinic for directions on how to administer an over-the-counter cough suppressant.

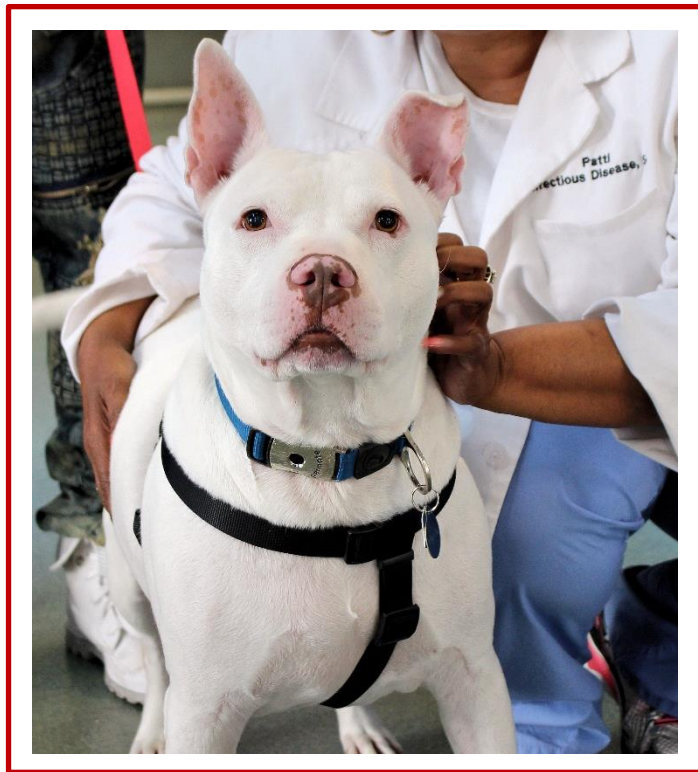
If the cough is severe our veterinarians may recommend the use of specific over-the-counter cough preparations. It is imperative that you use only the particular formulations given. Others formulations may contain harmful ingredients. Contact the clinic if the dog is not showing any signs of improvement after 7 days, or if there is any deterioration in condition.

**If you are caring for a puppy who begins to show symptoms, please contact the Society clinic. If an adult dog loses their appetite, becomes listless, if discharge becomes discolored, if the dog feels warmer to the touch than normal, or is experiencing breathing difficulty contact the clinic.** A veterinarian will be in touch with you to determine the course of treatment which may sometimes include a physical examination, medication or, in extreme cases, hospitalization.

### **Canine Distemper**

Canine distemper is a highly contagious viral disease acquired by dogs. Puppies younger than 4 months old and unvaccinated dogs are at a high risk for becoming infected. The virus attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems. Distemper can also infect foxes, wolves, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, and ferrets. It does not infect people or domestic cats. All dogs are vaccinated against distemper immediately upon arrival at the Society and thanks to this practice, is a rare occurrence in the shelter. If there is ever an outbreak of distemper at the Society foster parents will be notified.

The virus may be shed in all body secretions. Early distemper symptoms may look similar to those of kennel cough but progress into neurological issues. Transmission usually occurs through inhalation of airborne virus or direct contact between susceptible and infected dogs. It can also be spread through fomites (inanimate objects, such as clothing, that become contaminated) or the environment, but the virus does not remain infectious outside the body for more than a few days in a perfect environment, and for only a few hours in other condition.



### **Canine Parvovirus**

Canine parvovirus is a serious and highly contagious disease caused by a parvovirus. It is transmitted by direct dog-to-dog contact or contact with contaminated feces, environments, or people. The disease affects dogs, foxes, wolves, and coyotes but does not infect humans.

Signs of the disease include lethargy, loss of appetite, fever, vomiting, and severe, often bloody, diarrhea. Vomiting and diarrhea can cause rapid dehydration and can quickly lead to death (usually within 48-72 hours after the first clinical signs appear). If your foster puppy or dog is showing any of these signs, contact the Society clinic immediately.

Vaccination and good hygiene are crucial in the prevention of canine parvovirus. All dogs who enter the Society are immediately vaccinated against the disease though puppies need a series of vaccinations to be adequately protected. For this reason puppy fosters

should use caution in exposing their young dogs to other dogs until the vaccination series is complete.

If there is a suspicion that the illness has affected any foster animals the foster caretakers will be notified immediately. To keep your own canines safe, please ensure that they are up-to-date on their vaccinations at all times. If your private veterinarian does not offer the vaccine for your dog contact us.

### **Canine Influenza Virus**

This is an extremely contagious virus that can live on surfaces and on clothing for up to 24 to 48 hours. Most dogs that are infected will show mild or moderate signs of respiratory illness including cough, nasal discharge, and a fever of 103 degrees or more 1-2- days after exposure. A small percentage of dogs will develop more severe clinic signs and could develop pneumonia. If you should suspect your foster dog is showing signs of CIV, please contact the main line of the shelter immediately.

## ALL ABOUT PUPPIES

Fostering puppies is both a delight and an adventure. Besides neonate kittens they are the most time-consuming foster group as they require so much attention, supervision, and clean-up. Providing shelter pups with foster care is, by far, the best way we can get them ready for their forever homes. In addition to following all of the training and care protocols above, here are additional guidelines for fostering puppies.



### Housing Set-Up

Create a safe space for puppies by choosing a quiet room that you can close off from your resident pets, if applicable. It is very important to make sure it is temperature controlled and there are no drafts as puppies body temperatures can drop very quickly. Make sure that there is a designated hiding spot, like a crate, in case the puppy wants to rest in a more private space. Look out for furniture or fixtures where a puppy can hide themselves and then have difficulty being retrieved. The puppy-proofed space should also include some soft bedding, water and food bowls, puppy-safe toys, and a designated potty spot. It is not unusual for some mothers to be territorial about their newborns. If your foster mom is displaying offensive body language it is best to give them their space for a few days.

### Puppy Litters

Foster parents who bring home a litter with mom will be provided with a bag Science Diet puppy kibble for your foster mom. Note that puppy kibble is higher in calories which makes it a great feeding option for nursing moms. This is the same food that the animals are fed in-shelter, and since they'll return this diet post-foster, it's important to keep them on it. Please follow the feeding instructions that are printed on the back of each bag. Foster parents are welcome to supplement with additional wet food as needed. Note that any change in diet – even such a minor one as switching brands of food – may cause diarrhea.

If the puppies are with their mother, and under four weeks of age, the mother should take care of the feeding. Once the puppies are about four weeks of age, you should start to notice them showing interest in their mother's food, this is an indication that they are ready to be weaned. Start mixing up puppy "gruel" and offering it to them when feeding mom. Mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 can of formula (or water) per puppy. OK make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it, but you'll need to warm it up (just a bit!) before serving.

It is important to continue weighing your foster puppies every day until they are past the high risk age of 6 weeks old to ensure they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the puppies to potty pads as they are able to eliminate on their own as of 4 weeks of age. Newspaper makes for a great potty pad substitute.

### **Caring for independent eaters**

By six to seven weeks old, your puppies should be independent eaters. Dry food should be their primary source of food, but offer wet food frequently as well to encourage eating and maximize growth. Replace the water in their water dish twice a day and wipe out the dish if needed.

## **Puppy Socialization**

Puppies raised in an enriched, stimulating environment have a more complex web of neuro- pathways. They are better able to handle changes and stress, have better problem solving abilities and are less nervous/hyperactive. To encourage this level of development – practice each of the following exercises for 3 to 5 seconds once a day.

- **Tactile Stimulation:** Holding the puppy in one hand, gently stimulate (tickle) the puppy between the toes on any one-foot using a Q-tip. It is not necessary to see that the puppy is feeling the tickle.
- **Head Held Erect:** Using both hands, hold the puppy perpendicular to the ground, (straight up), so that its head is directly above its tail. This is an upward position.
- **Supine Position:** Hold the puppy so that its back is resting in the palm of both hands with its muzzle facing the ceiling. While on its back, the puppy is allowed to struggle.



As your puppies grow older you can provide them with added socialization and training by following some of the age-appropriate directives below.

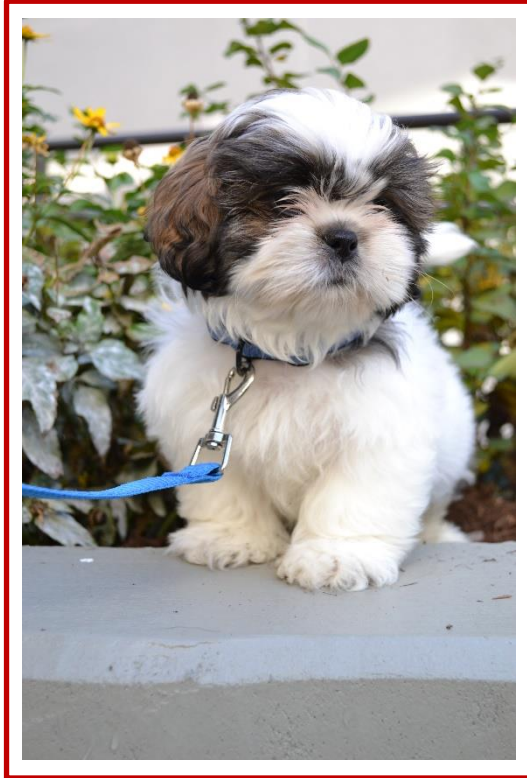
### **Age 3 to 4 weeks:**

- 5 to 10 minutes of individual handling/gentle restraint apart from the litter each day
- Introduce household objects
- Introduce brushing
- Introduce general inspection/restraint
- Introduce new surfaces (rugs, tile, grass, etc.)
- Introduce novel household noises at a distance or low level (vacuum, phone, hair dryer, etc.)
- Introduce safe sensory toys (toys that stimulate multiple senses)
- Begin meeting new people

### **Age 4 to 5 weeks:**

- Begin/continue weaning process (when applicable)
- 10 minutes of individual handling/gentle restraint apart from litter each day
- Continue introducing new household objects for inspection
- Introduce safe chew toys
- Continue brushing/routine inspections
- Introduce short car rides (if you don't drive – walks around the block in a carrier work too!)

- Increase level/proximity of household noises
- Share high valued chew toys with individual puppies
- Begin reinforcing outdoors for elimination
- Continue meeting new people
- Begin meeting safe, friendly dogs, cats and other animals



**Age 5 to 6.5 weeks:**

- 10 minutes of handling & play apart from litter each day
- Continue brushing/routine inspections
- Introduce collars
- Short trips to safe new places (in pairs if fostering multiples)
- Pet/gently handle puppy while it is eating food/chewing high valued chew toys
- Continue meeting new people (don't forget children!)
- Begin teaching positive reinforcement for sitting, jumping, mouthing

**Age 6.5 to 8 weeks:**

- 20 minutes of time apart from litter (time spent handling and allowing puppy to safely entertain itself - independent playing/chewing) each day
- Individually crate puppies for 10 to 15 minutes each day (when applicable)
- Continue brushing/inspecting
- Introduction to leash (supervised dragging at first, then leash in hand - following puppy around)
- Continue petting/gently handling puppy while it is eating food/chewing high valued chew toys
- Continue meeting new people and safe, friendly animals

- Continue teaching positive reinforcement for sitting, jumping, mouthing
- Introduce restraint exercises (short sessions of holding the puppies individually)
- Introduce social remediation (mild, abrupt "ouch" for hard bites while mouthing, chewing wrong items - be sure to substitute with appropriate chew toy)

**Age 8 to 12 weeks:**

- Littermates may need to be completely separated due to social conflicts
- Individually crate puppies at night or when left alone
- Continue petting/handling puppy while it is eating food/chewing high valued chew toys
- Continue meeting new people and animals
- Begin taking individual puppies to new places to combine habituation, socialization and manners
- Begin teaching basic behaviors (sit, down, maintain, come, leash walking)
- Discourage mouthing via abrupt "ouch" that cause the puppy to remediate and choose another behavior (bite inhibition training)

## ALL ABOUT ADOPTION

Foster parents are the best advocates for the animals in their care – and also the best people to help us in securing each pet with a forever home. Whether you promote your foster via social media, an adoption event, or simply with friends and family, you can help us in finding the perfect home for your foster pet. The following are some suggestions and notes regarding recruiting adopters and the adoption process.



### Before & After Photos

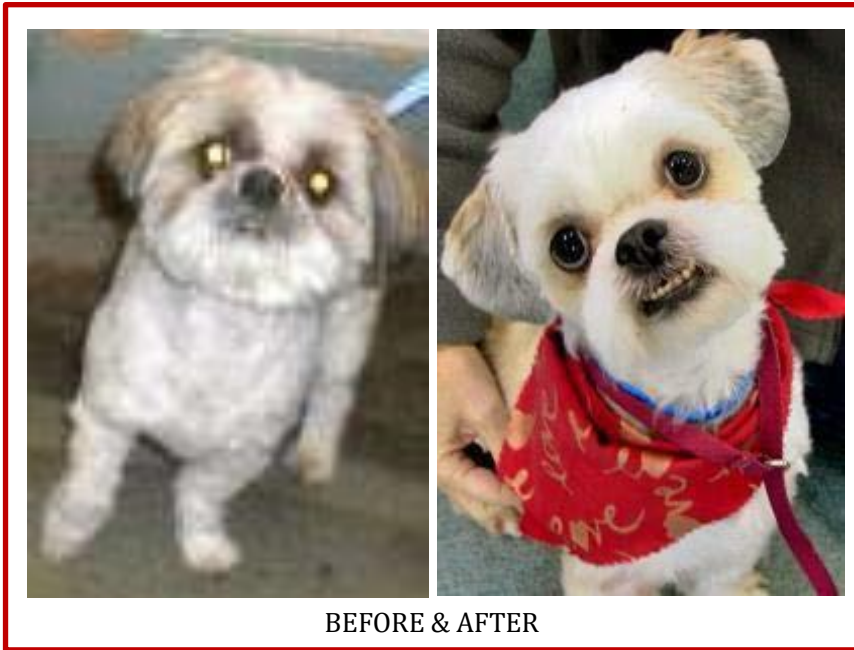
A picture is worth a thousand words. Help get more exposure for your foster animal, your work and the Society by snapping a photo the first and final day of each foster's stay with you. Once the foster has returned to the shelter, send your photos to the foster support team who will forward them on to our marketing department for placement on our website or social media pages.

Taking a high quality picture of your foster animal in a home environment, and sending them in to the foster support team, can help speed up their adoption. Here are some tips to follow when shooting photographs of your foster cat or dog:

- Turn the camera so that you take the photo vertically, or as a portrait, rather than a landscape.
- Squat while taking the picture so the photo is captured from the animal's level.
- Avoid taking photos where an animal looks 'choked' by a leash or hand. Try to capture photos of the animal showing off their personality. Whether that's lounging on a windowsill, or playing fetch in your backyard, snap a picture that represents who they are as a pet.
- Turn the flash 'off' for better picture quality.



- Use the 'macro' (flower) setting to take more textured close-ups. Note – this will only work well with animals who are standing relatively still.
- Do your best to take the photo against a plain backdrop, with no people in the shot.
- Arm yourself with a squeaky toy, clicker, and treats to help get the dogs attention when snapping the photo.
- Review the pictures after you take them to ensure sharpness, light, and overall quality. If you do not like the photos, take more.



BEFORE & AFTER

### Foster Videos

We live in a digital age where many adopters go online to view an animal's profile before coming in to the shelter to meet them. Give your foster animal an advantage by filming a video of them playing or snuggling and posting it to YouTube. Once you've listed the video, send the foster support team the link, and they'll embed it to connect with that pet's profile. You can also post videos to the Foster Facebook page and mark them as "public" so we can share them directly through the platform.

### Adopt Me Vests & Collars

The Anti-Cruelty Society has a supply of wearable "Adopt Me" vests available for dogs and "Adopt Me" cat collars for fosters to use with their current charges. If you plan to actively promote the adoption of your foster animal, please request a vest or collar when scheduling your pick-up. All vests and collars will need to be returned for reuse.

### Referred Adopters

Please follow the steps below if you have recruited a family or friend to adopt your foster. Please note that the adoption is not approved unless you're a trained Adoption Ambassador.

- 1) **Keep the foster animal.** Do not bring them back to the shelter for check-ups or surgery until we've given you directions to do so.
- 2) **Have the potential adopter complete an adoption application** for the specific animal and email it to [foster@anticruelty.org](mailto:foster@anticruelty.org). Adoption forms, as well as adoption requirements, details and fees, can be found [here](#).
- 3) **Application review:** Once an application is received staff will review the applicant's adoption candidacy and will remain in contact with all parties regarding the application's status. It is important that fosters do not promise an applicant the animal since, in some circumstances, the application may not be approved.
- 4) **Scheduling adoption:** Once an application has been approved we will reach out to both you and the adopters to set-up a day and time for the animal's adoption

## “Foster Failures”

Though we all understand that “goodbye is the goal” when fostering, there may be that one special animal who touches your heart in such a surprising way that you can’t bear to let them go. Congratulations – you’ve joined the “foster failure” club. From time to time a foster parent may make the decision to keep their foster animal.



Do note that if we’ve been working to recruit an adopter, and already have someone pre-approved for the foster pet, we’ll have to defer to the outside adopter. But if that has fallen through, or if your foster was not available for public adoption, they’re as good as yours! Now that you’ve chosen to keep your foster you’ll need to do the following:

- 1) **Keep your foster animal.** Do not bring them back to the shelter for check-ups or surgery until we’ve given you directions to do so.
- 2) **Contact us** to let us know of your adoption intent. That way we can make a note on the animal’s profile that you’ll be keeping them.
- 3) **Schedule the adoption.** We’ll work with you to fill in any medical gaps, and once the animal is ready, will schedule a day and time for you to come in. The final adoption process includes an adoption counseling session, signing of the adoption contract, and payment of the adoption fee.

### Saying Goodbye

By far the most difficult aspect of fostering is saying goodbye to your current charge – especially the first time around. Remember that by returning your

foster pet you’re making space in your home to help yet another shelter animal. Here are some tried and true tips on how to make the separation between you and your foster pet a bit more bearable.

- Bring your foster animal to on-site adoption events for the chance to meet their new owner in person and share tips on how to best care for them.
- Have family and friends work alongside you to recruit an adopter.
- Fill out a Cat or Dog Personality Profile in detail to help attract an adopter while also making the shift to their new home a bit easier for all.
- Check the weekly Foster Newsletter for updates on where your foster is on their way to the adoption room.
- Print out your favorite photos of your foster and make a scrapbook album.
- Create a virtual photo \ album on your Facebook page where you collect photos from each foster.
- Assemble an adoption goody bag for us to gift to the adopter.

Thanks to your efforts as a foster parent your foster graduate will have had the very best start to their new life and that is something to celebrate!

## THANK YOU

The Anti-Cruelty Society's foster team is dedicated to giving animals from all walks of life a second chance, donating thousands of volunteer hours to care for an average of 300 foster pets annually.



With the help of foster volunteers like you, the companion animals of Chicago have a second chance. Foster advocates stand at the ready to provide pets with the love, care, and attention they need to flourish in their future home.

The Anti-Cruelty Society is helping an average of 20,000 pets each year through our wide variety of programming and services. Thanks to our collective efforts, a tremendous amount of progress has been achieved, and yet, there are still so many pets in need. And that's exactly where fosters come in. The awe inspiring work that is being done through this program is only possible because of people who devote time, energy, and many a sleepless night time and time again for shelter pets in need.

We thank you again for your decision to become a foster volunteer with us. Thank you for taking the time to read this manual. Thank you for training

up and preparing so you can provide the best experience possible to our animals. Your efforts make a significant difference in The Anti-Cruelty Society's work and our mission to find pets new forever homes..

# FOSTER PHONE DIRECTORY

## **Main Phone Number: (312)644-8338**

In the event of an emergency call the General Operator and ask to speak directly with a manager

General Operator (9 a.m. – 7 p.m.): ext. 8220

Veterinary Clinic (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.): ext. 8051

Behavior Helpline (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.): ext. 8253

### **Foster Support Team:** [foster@anticruelty.org](mailto:foster@anticruelty.org)

Eric Tostado (Tues – Sat 9-5): ext. 8092

Clare Hamilton (Sun – Thu 8:30-4:30): ext. 8096

Lydia Krupinski (Mon – Fri 7:30-3:30): ext. 8094

### **Veterinarians:**

Dr. Primiano: ext. 8240

[mprimiano@anticruelty.org](mailto:mprimiano@anticruelty.org)

Dr. Dent: ext. 8243

Dr. Shudell: ext. 8244

Dr. Belding: ext. 8245

Dr. Hampton: ext. 8241

### **Behavior Specialists:**

Melissa Klett: ext. 8251

[mklett@anticruelty.org](mailto:mklett@anticruelty.org)

Stephanie Margvardt ext. 8252

[smargvardt@anticruelty.org](mailto:smargvardt@anticruelty.org)

Anna Lininger-Pniewska ext. 8097

[alininger@anticruelty.org](mailto:alininger@anticruelty.org)

### **Shelter Managers:**

Amber Pazdzioch: ext. 8073

Dave Pinto: ext. 8076

Sarah Hayes ext. 8077

Lane Anderson ext. 8072

# FOSTER ORIENTATION NOTES

Use this page to jot down notes from your Foster Orientation.