

# Foster Booklet 2008

## Inside this booklet

Foster Care Rules and Regulations

Kitten Care

Medical Care

Behavioral Rehabilitation

Adoptions

Supplies

Contact Information

Application

Animal Rescue League of W. PA  
6620 Hamilton Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
[www.animalrescue.org](http://www.animalrescue.org)  
412-661-6452

## Welcome!

This booklet is intended to serve as a reference guide for ARL Foster Families. From time to time, some of the information contained in this booklet may change and the Foster Coordinator will inform Foster Families of these changes.

Medical care information in this booklet is NOT intended to serve as a diagnostic tool. If the foster animal is ill or injured, you must bring it to the shelter for a diagnosis.

While some animal care is universal, remember each foster animal is unique in its needs.

### Only Take What You Can Handle

For most of us, life is very, very busy. Consider how much time you have to devote to a foster animal or animals. There is the daily upkeep of medicating, cleaning and socializing as well as the scheduled and unscheduled trips to the shelter for medical checkups.

It's important to find enough time to put your hands on each and every one of your fosters at least once a day. This allows you to quickly catch any behavioral or medical concerns.

1,400 cats and kittens passed through the foster program last year. That's an increase of over 400 from 2006. Thank you for your support in helping these animals. You are their guardian angels!

The length of foster care for an animal is dependent upon a number of factors including age and health of the animal as well as space at the shelter. During the peak of kitten season in the summer, the shelter often runs out of available cages on the adoption floor. This may require the foster to hold onto a healthy, adoptable cat or kitten a couple of weeks after the animal is ready for adoption.

### Moving Forward

We have an opportunity to increase the number of animals saved by expanding the types of conditions for which we can care. In years past a simple fungal infection such as ringworm meant the animal was unadoptable and wasn't even given the chance to be placed into foster. We are now being given the opportunity to find foster care for animals with various medical issues. All we need is to cultivate a better understanding of these medical conditions among the foster group. Something as simple as ringworm should not be a death sentence. However I need people to open their minds and homes to these animals. When you see these types of foster pleas, consider inquiring further. You may find that a word that makes you squirm may not be as skin-crawling as you think.

# Rules

Person(s) responsible for the foster care must be at least 18 years of age.

The fostering party and all members in the household agree to treat the animal(s) with kindness and adhere to the anticruelty laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

The fostering party agrees not to remove the animal(s) from the location for which they have been approved without the permission of the Animal Rescue League.

The fostering party agrees to keep an ARL I.D. tag on the animal(s). If the animal grows out of the collar it is given, please bring the old collar with the animal's paperwork back to the shelter, and we will supply you with another collar.

The fostering party agrees not to alter, in any way, the appearance of the animal being fostered. This includes: declawing, cropping of ears, docking of tails, spaying/neutering, microchipping, or tattooing without the permission of the ARL.

The fostering party agrees to keep a female cat that comes into heat separate from any intact male cats. If this is not possible, the animal(s) are to be returned to the Animal Rescue League to prevent the animal from getting pregnant.

If an animal or animals being fostered requires medication, the fostering party agrees to administer the medication as prescribed and directed by the Medical Department of the Animal Rescue League.

The fostering party agrees to handle and continue necessary socialization of the animal(s) they are fostering to continue the normal development of the animal.

The fostering party will not become its own "Adoption Agency". If the

fostering party knows of someone who would like to adopt a particular animal, they should contact the Foster Care Coordinator concerning the adoption process.

If the ARL determines that a foster placement should be terminated, the fostering party must surrender the animal(s) immediately.

If the fostering party were to move or change phone numbers, they agree to provide updated information to the ARL immediately.

If the animal or animals being fostered were to run away or be stolen, the fostering party agrees to contact the ARL immediately.

Food and other supplies used for the Foster Program are donated items, and the ARL will make them available to you if we have them in stock. Otherwise, the foster family will be responsible for the food, bowls, litter boxes, etc. If supplies are needed due to a medical condition, the ARL will supply them.

The fostering party agrees to return the animal(s) to the ARL at the date set by the ARL. This return will be done by appointment with the Foster Care Coordinator.

If a medical problem develops with a fostered animal, the veterinary clinic of the ARL should be called immediately and their advice followed by the caregiver. The caregiver should then give their name and number to the ARL employee on the phone and wait for our veterinarian to call them back. If, while on the phone, the ARL veterinarian determines that the life of the animal may be in danger without immediate care (i.e., the animal needs care before the ARL clinic opens or after it closes), the ARL will provide the caregiver with the name, address, and phone number of an emergency clinic. The ARL will pay for the care given to the animal.

Documentation from the emergency clinic veterinarian will be needed for

reimbursement. This is the only circumstance under which the ARL will pay for services provided outside its own medical facility.

You will need to provide written proof of your own animal(s)' vaccination records. If your animal(s) is/are not up to date, you may make an appointment at the ARL's clinic (at your own expense).

The Foster Coordinator may call your veterinarian for a reference check or conduct a home check at any time.

## Getting a Foster

You will be notified by phone or email when an animal is in need of foster care.

To ensure timely service when picking up or dropping off a foster, please call the foster department at 412-661-6452 x231 to set up a time. We cannot guarantee we will be able to help you if you stop by the shelter without an appointment, although we will always do our best to accommodate you.

All foster transactions, except medical, should go through the foster department. On days when the foster department isn't staffed, please see the Volunteer Coordinator Monica Garcia or the Offsite Adoption Coordinator Carrie Scott. (Contact information at back of packet).

When you come to pick up your foster animal, you will be given all applicable paperwork for the animal including kennel card and treatment sheet if necessary. The ARL will also retain copies. You must bring that paperwork with you every time you need to bring the animals into the ARL.

You must provide a **separate** area in your house for each litter or individual you take in. If your own animal gets sick, the ARL will be unable to provide free medical care.

# Kitten Care

Adorable and playful, kittens can be quite a handful. Good news is you get to give them back in a few weeks.

## The Basics

- A safe place to play.
- A warm place to sleep.
- Unlimited access to food and water.

Kittens under the age of 8 weeks are quite fragile creatures. Their immune systems aren't well developed and their athletic abilities aren't well honed. This makes kittens prone to infections and injuries.

Each day you will need to observe your foster kittens and check for any signs of illness or injury. At the first sign of any issues, you will want to contact the clinic.

## With Mom

Some shelter kittens are lucky enough to come with a nursing mother. This makes everyone's life a little easier – kittens and human foster families alike. If there is a mother with the litter, your job should be somewhat easier for the first couple of weeks. Generally mom will feed, clean, and train the kittens.

A nursing mother will need to eat a lot! She should also be fed kitten food for the extra protein and calories. Offer her canned food as well. It will not only serve to keep mom's fat stores up but it is also a great transitional food for the kittens.

Mom will wean the babies when the time is right. This is generally around 4 weeks of age. Make sure there is **ground** canned food available for the kittens.

## Without Mom

There's nothing like a litter of motherless kittens to pull at your heartstrings. You will be mom for the next few weeks. These kittens will rely on you for all of their needs.



## Bottle Feeding

If they are under 4 weeks of age, you may need to bottle feed. Not everyone can handle this task as you must be available to feed every few hours (even at night). Bottle feeding takes a bit of practice for both the kitten and human. However nature should soon prevail and your kittens will be nursing eagerly from the bottle. Bottle-fed kittens require specialized formula which the shelter provides. **(No Cow's Milk)**

## Keeping Baby Warm

It's best to keep bottle babies in a box or cat carrier. You will line the box or carrier with towels under which you will place a heating pad set on low.

## Older Kittens

Kittens older than 4 weeks of age but younger than 8 weeks of age should be eating solid foods but will still need time in foster to reach surgery weight. At this point in their development, they have two modes: play hard, sleep hard. Make sure they have bottomless bowls of food and water! Keep nails trimmed for the safety of you and the kitten. Since they are extremely active, curious and nimble, they will try to fly through

the air or climb curtains and furniture. Unfortunately they may still be learning how to judge distance and their abilities and will need to be protected from themselves. Make sure your area is kitten proof.

## Litter Training a Kitten

It's natural for cats to bury their waste. So using a litter box isn't such an odd concept. However kittens aren't born knowing how to use a box. Without a mom cat to show them the way, you will need to do this for them.

Oftentimes it is best to confine the kittens to a small space such as a dog crate or bathroom. This gives them less opportunity to find an alternative place to potty. If you see the kitten going potty outside of the box scoop them up and place in the box. Never punish your kitten!

For small kittens, you may want to try an aluminum roasting pan with a low lip (purchased fairly inexpensively at most Wal-Marts, Dollar Stores or Giant Eagles).

## Cleaning Up After Baby

It is very important to thoroughly clean between fosters. While many of us do not appreciate the harsh smell and environmentally unfriendly nature of bleach, it is an effective disinfectant as well as a virus and fungus killer. It is a staple for any foster home. A diluted solution of bleach (10 parts water to 1 part bleach) should be sufficient for cleaning litter boxes, cages, bowls, and toys. If reusing bedding or towels, you should wash those in a diluted bleach solution as well. Do not apply bleach directly to the animal.

For more information on how to effectively disinfect visit <http://www.pandecats.com/x/bleach.htm>

# Medicating Cats and Kittens

## Antibiotics

Many oral antibiotics are liquid and will be dosed using a syringe. It is best to maneuver the syringe into the mouth on the side and toward the back. This ensures that *most* of the medicine makes its way down the cat's throat.

Some antibiotics come in pill form. This can be a little more complicated to get into the cat. You can try buy placing two fingers at the sides of the mouth, opening the mouth, place the pill at the back of the tongue, close the mouth, hold it closed and rub the throat. If the cat swallows, congratulations!

When this doesn't succeed, or I mean *if* this doesn't succeed, you should find out if the pill can be crushed. Then you can place it into a dollop of the cat's favorite canned food.

## Advantage

This is a once-a-month **topical (not ingested)** application to rid the cat or kitten of live fleas and their eggs. Since many cats and kittens are in foster over a month, you will need to come back to the shelter for an Advantage.

## Nemex

All shelter animals receive a dose of nemex when they arrive. Nemex is effective against roundworms and hookworms. Kittens will need to be dewormed every two weeks until they come back to the shelter for adoption.

## Panacur

If your foster is having poop problems, you may be going home with this wormer. Panacur is effective against hookworms, roundworms, whipworms, and certain tapeworms.

## Albon

Oftentimes Albon is prescribed in conjunction with Panacur. It is used for the treatment of coccidiosis (coccidian) as well for a wide range of bacterial infections.

## Trimming Claws

Medicating a cat can be a lot easier if the claws are trimmed. If you are able, sit on the floor with the cat between your legs. This way if the cat backs up, it backs up into you and can't go anywhere. Sometimes wrapping a towel around the cat, leaving the head and front paws out, of course, can be useful as well. Kittens cannot retract their claws until approximately 4 weeks of age. So it is best to keep them trimmed so the kitten doesn't get stuck on you or anything else (possibly causing injury) as well as getting the kitten used to having its nails trimmed.

## Vaccinations

FVRCP is generally given at time of arrival or at 4 weeks of age and twice more 3-4 weeks apart. Total of 3 for kittens.

Rabies is given at 3 months of age.

## FELV/FIV Test

Most cats and kittens will be tested for FIV/FELV before going into foster care.

The number-one exception to this rule is extremely young and small kittens. These kittens will need to come back for testing when they put on a little weight.

## Common Medical Concerns with Kittens

Upper respiratory infections: A cat cold. Signs of URI infection are: sneezing, lethargy, lack of appetite, ocular or nasal discharge. URI is caused by one of several viruses. The virus cannot be treated and must run its course, but secondary infections are treated with antibiotics.

Intestinal Issues: Kittens are prone to bouts of bloated bellies and diarrhea. There can be any number of causes. Common causes are: worms, coccidia, and change in diet. If your kitten has a swollen belly or diarrhea, please bring in a stool sample right away. Diarrhea can quickly lead to dehydration in kittens. To keep worms at bay, make sure you are deworming your kittens at the prescribed intervals. A time table can be found in your Foster Packet. Generally a stool sample and current weight of the foster is all that is needed for us to supply the right medicine.

Ear Mites: Ear mites are highly contagious in a multi-cat setting whether at the shelter or in foster care. If you notice what looks like coffee grounds in your foster's ears, please call the clinic.

Fleas: All fosters are treated with Advantage before going home with you. However Advantage must be reapplied once a month. If you have had your foster over a month, please get an application of Advantage from the clinic.

With any medical concern, it is best to seek advice and care as soon as possible. Issues can develop quickly especially in kittens under two months of age. Most medication is dosed by weight. If you are not bringing the animal with you, you must have an accurate current weight.

## Force Feeding an Anorexic Cat

A cat won't eat what a cat can't smell!

If your foster cat has a stuffy nose and cannot smell its food, it may refuse to eat. If the cat refuses to eat for quite some time, it may become anorexic. At this point, the cat will have to be given fluids and force fed until it begins to eat on its own once again.

Before embarking on force feeding, first try to encourage the cat with some stinky choices such as tuna or prescription A/D. (You can pick up A/D at the shelter).

If the cat won't go for the food, try placing a little on its paw or mouth and see if the cat licks at it.

Still no progress... You may have to experiment with what you are feeding the cat. A list of things to try: The cat's favorite canned food, A/D, tuna, or baby food (Use only the meat purees. Nothing with vegetables please.)

There is also a nutritional supplement called Nutrical that you can pick up from the shelter. It is only a supplement and is not meant to replace real food.

It's also very important you monitor fluid intake. Chances are if the cat isn't eating, it's not drinking. If your cat is not drinking, it will need to come to the shelter to receive fluids.

What goes in must come out, so check the litter box for signs that your foster is eating and drinking.

A quick test for dehydration is to tent the skin at the shoulder blades (the scruff). If the skin falls quickly, the cat is hydrated. If the skin stays tented for a few seconds, the cat may be dehydrated.

### Clinic and Surgery Appointments

Appointments are made through our clinic. The Foster Department cannot schedule appointments for medical care. Kittens are ready for spay/neuter surgery at 2 months of age or 2 pounds in weight.

When your foster is ready for surgery or needs an appointment, please call the ARL clinic at 412-661-6452 x223 or call the receptionist at 412-661-6452 x210.

If you plan on taking your fosters home for recuperation please make a notation on their paperwork.

### Hello? Hello?

There will come a time when you may not be able to reach a live human being at the shelter. If you are concerned for the health and well-being of your foster animal, do not wait for a return phone call. The shelter is open 7 days a week. Generally someone who can help is in the building from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. most days. We even have staff here during the day on holidays!

### Emergency Care

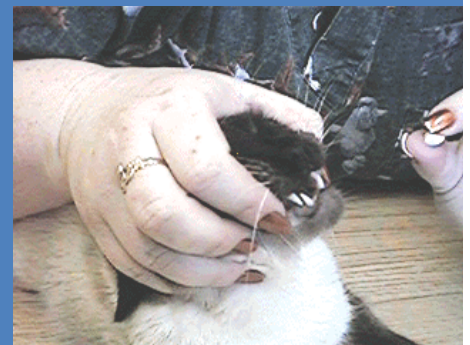
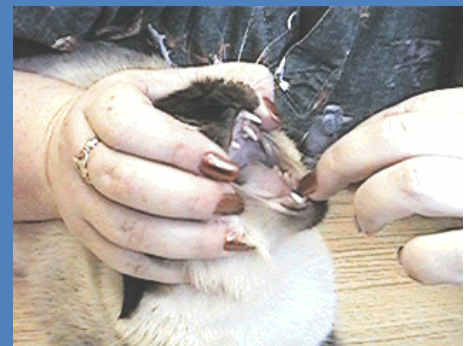
If your foster animal is in desperate need of immediate medical attention, please come to the shelter between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. or 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. on the weekends. Even if a veterinarian is not in the building, Dr. Hughes is on call. If we cannot provide the care Dr. Hughes may authorize a visit to another clinic. Generally the shelter will not cover the cost of an outside vet visit unless pre-approved by Dr. Hughes. If you take the animal to another facility without prior consent from the ARL, you may not be reimbursed.

### Loss of a Foster

It is a sad fact that foster animals, through no fault of your own, sometimes die. Catastrophes don't happen very often, but depending on how long you have cared for the animal and how attached you have become, you will feel something between distress and

devastation. We offer this: Although we sometimes fail to save them all, your participation is vital to this program and the lives of thousands of animals each year. If an animal in your care should pass away please call us. We may need to examine the animal.

## Pilling A Cat (Good Luck!)



Rub the throat to ensure the cat has swallowed the pill.

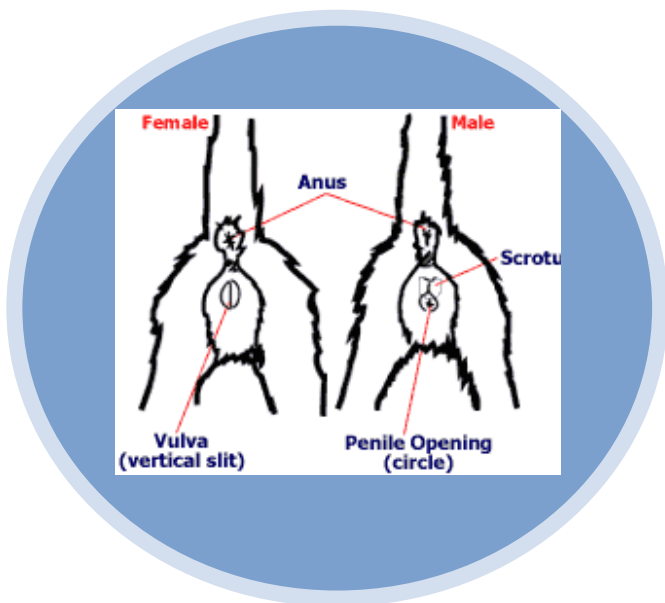
# Medical Timeline

All animals at the shelter receive routine medical care. It is the responsibility of the foster to keep track of what vaccinations and medications your foster needs and when your foster needs them.

Please follow the medical care timeline for your foster.

If you are picking up kittens ask for extra Nemex to take home.

	1 wk	2 wks	3 wks	1 mo	5 wks	6 wks	7 wks	2 mos	9 wks	10 wks	11 wks	3 mos
Nemex		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Advantage				✓				✓				✓
Fecal	Whenever the foster has diarrhea or bowel issues.											
FeLV/FIV				✓								
FVRCP				✓				✓				✓
Rabies												✓
Spay/Neuter								✓				



## Boy or Girl?

When scheduling a spay/neuter appointment for your foster, you'll need to give its gender. We try to determine that at the shelter, but if you've had a litter of kittens since infancy, they may not have been sexed. It can be difficult to tell before the age of 8 weeks.

In the male kitten, the testicles (scrotum) are located below the anus and above the back of the hind legs. The cat's penis is immediately below the scrotum and is normally not visible. The penis is enclosed in the prepuce.

The female kitten's vulva is located below the anus and above the back legs. The vulva appears more as a slit than the more circular appearance of the prepuce in the male, and is generally located closer to the anus than a male's testicles.

# The Feisty Feline

Have you experienced the shelter through a cat's eye view? Take a moment to mentally place yourself in their paws, and you can quickly determine that shelter life is difficult.

The smells, the noises, the pulling, pushing, grabbing, the new food, the small cage...have you gone crazy yet?

Now consider the fact that a majority of the cats and kittens passing through the shelter do just fine adapting to the situation. Amazing, isn't it?!

They are quite wonderful and that's why we love them.

For a few others, shelter life is unmanageable.

## Undersocialized (feral) Kittens

Many of the adorably loving and playful kittens on the adoption floor were once scaredy cats. It can actually be quite cute when a 10-ounce kitten hisses and swats at you. However you want to break that habit before you've got a four-pound feral Ginsu knife on your hands!

The best way to work with any undersocialized kitten is calmly, quietly and slowly.

Also, since you will have limited time to turn them around (remember you are trying to get them on the adoption floor while they are still tiny and cute), you should confine them to a small space (a dog crate is perfect) in which they will be unable to find a hiding place.

If using a room, start with an area that doesn't include beds, chairs, and couches, walls with holes or access to drop ceilings. If they can't run and hide from you, they'll have to learn to cope with your existence.



Try to make every interaction rewarding instead of frightening. You will be the one that brings only good things – food, water, fresh litter, toys and treats! Don't just go in for the grab and snuggle, wait for the kitten to approach you. Sit on the floor as you will be smaller and less frightening than when you are standing.

You may even place the food bowl near you, or entice them with a toy. Some folks have even placed tasty treats near them.

In time the kittens will likely be climbing all over you!

## The Curmudgeonly Cat

Some cats slowly abandon all hope that there is good in the world. They started off with a positive attitude - allowing lots of strangers to pick them up, cuddle them, clean their cages, vaccinate them – then the day came when enough was enough. Let the hissing, swatting and possibly biting begin. This doesn't make for an adoptable kitty.

It's time for a cage break!

Some of these cats will never be able to be placed back into a cage and have to be adopted from the foster home.

Some may make their way to Tiger Ranch, a local sanctuary for feral cats.

While they are in your home, you can use the same methods as you do with the scaredy kittens.

For many of these cats, once they get out of the cage, their true sparkling personality reappears.



## The Errant Tinkler

The housesoiler. Not top on most adopter's wish lists.

While cats are naturally attracted to eliminating in the grainy, sand-like litter we provide in the box, there are times when they may choose another place to toilet.

There can be many reasons why, and it will take some detective work on your part.

The first step you'll want to take is ruling out any underlying medical causes to this issue.

If a medical issue was the cause, you may still need to retrain the cat after treatment.

Other common causes are: an aversion to the box, such as dislike of a covered box, or dissatisfaction with the depth of the litter, preference for a particular type of litter not provided in the box, or a preference for a particular location where there is no box.

### *The following is from the HSUS:*

#### **Aversion to the Litter Box**

Your cat may have decided the litter box is an unpleasant place to eliminate if:

The box is not clean enough for her.

She has experienced painful urination or defecation in the box due to a medical problem.

She has been startled by a noise while using the box.

She has been "ambushed" while in the box by another cat, a child, a dog, or by you, if you were attempting to catch her for some reason.

She associates the box with punishment. (For example, someone punished her for eliminating outside the box, and then placed her in the box.)

### What You Can Do:

Keep the litter box extremely clean. Scoop at least once a day and change the litter completely every four to five days. If you can smell the box, then you can be pretty sure it's offensive to your cat as well. Add a new box in a different location, and use a different type of litter in the new box.

Make sure that the litter box isn't near an appliance (such as a furnace) that makes noise, or in an area of the home that your cat doesn't frequent.

If ambushing is a problem, create more than one exit from the litter box, so that if the "ambusher" is waiting by one area, your cat always has an escape route.

If you have multiple cats, provide one litter box for each cat, plus one extra box in a different location.

### Surface Preferences

All animals develop preferences for a particular surface on which they like to eliminate. These preferences may be established early in life, but they may also change overnight for reasons that we don't always understand. Your cat may have a surface preference if:

She consistently eliminates on a particular texture—for example, soft-textured surfaces such as carpeting, bedding, or clothing, or slick-textured surfaces such as tile, cement, bathtubs, or sinks.

She frequently scratches on this same texture after elimination, even if she eliminates in the litter box.

She is or was previously an outdoor cat and prefers to eliminate on grass or soil.

### What You Can Do:

If you recently changed the type or brand of cat litter, go back to providing the litter that your cat had been using.

If your cat is eliminating on soft surfaces, try using a high-quality, scoopable litter.

If your cat is eliminating on slick, smooth surfaces, try putting a very thin layer of litter at one end of the box, leaving the other end bare, and put the box on a hard floor.

If your cat has a history of being outdoors, add some soil or sod to the litter box.

### Location Preferences

Your cat may have a location preference if:

She always eliminates in quiet, protected places, such as under a desk, beneath a staircase, or in a closet.

She eliminates in an area where the litter box was previously kept or where there are urine odors.

She eliminates on a different level of the home from where the litter box is located.

### What You Can Do:

Put at least one litter box on every level of your home.

To make the area where she has been eliminating less appealing to your cat, cover the area with upside-down carpet runner or aluminum foil, place citrus-scented cotton balls over the area, or place water bowls in the area (because cats often don't like to eliminate near where they eat or drink).

*OR*

Put a litter box in the location where your cat has been eliminating. When she has consistently used this box for at least one month, you may gradually move it to a more convenient location at a rate of an inch—seriously!—per day.

### Everyone Makes Mistakes

If you catch your cat in the act of eliminating outside the litter box, do something to interrupt her like making a startling noise, but be careful not to scare her.

Immediately take her to the litter box and set her on the floor

nearby. If she wanders over to the litter box, wait and praise her after she eliminates in the box. If she takes off in another direction, she may want privacy, so watch from afar until she goes back to the litter box and eliminates, then praise her when she does.

Don't ever punish your cat for eliminating outside of the litter box. By the time you find the soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your cat's nose in it, taking her to the spot and scolding her, or inflicting any other type of punishment will only make her afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later, and trying to punish them will often make matters worse.

### Other Types of House Soiling

**Problems: Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your cat is afraid of loud noises, strangers, or other animals, she may soil the home when she is exposed to these stimuli.

### Declawed Cats

While many veterinarians who perform the surgery and proponents of cat declawing will convince you there is no scientific evidence linking onychectomy to behavioral issues including biting and avoidance of the litter box, volunteers, fosters and shelter workers can recount many real-life encounters they have had with this very issue. Declawing is an extremely painful procedure that removes not just the nail but the last bone of each of the ten front toes as well as the tendons, nerves and muscles. In human terms, it would be like cutting off each finger at the last joint. The pain of scratching in the litter box after surgery may create a litter box aversion for some declawed cats. If you have a declawed foster who is avoiding the box, try the softest, finest litter at a depth of only 1 inch.

# Adoptions

There will come a time when your foster is ready for their forever home. You may feel something from relief to anxiety when preparing to bring your foster back to the shelter. It's understandable that you have formed a bond with the cat and want to ensure its lifelong happiness. So does the shelter!

Understand that the shelter is charged with finding homes for thousands of animals each and every year.

## Kittens

Kittens are generally ready for adoption at 2 months of age. At this point, most are big enough to safely undergo surgery and small enough to meet the public's cuteness requirements. (Keep in mind your kitten will need to be 2 pounds to undergo surgery.)

## Adults

Many of our adult cats are in foster due to upper respiratory illness (URI). It can be somewhat difficult to determine when the foster has actually recovered enough to return to the shelter. Your first clue may be the completion of the course of treatment.

However your investigation will not end there. Many a foster cat needs a bit more post-medication care before being fully ready to come back to the shelter. You'll need to make sure the eyes are clear, the appetite is healthy, the poo is formed AND the sneeze is **dry**. Many cats will continue to sneeze post-medication. If the sneeze doesn't

produce noticeably wet discharge, which usually lands on you or the food you were preparing to consume, this is called a dry sneeze. A cat with an infrequent dry sneeze is considered adoptable. If there is discharge, you'll need to schedule an exam with the clinic.

## Shelter Adoptions

Any foster cat ready for adoption can come back to the shelter. Always inform the Foster Department before returning your foster cat. We want to ensure, especially in the summer, that we have cage space on the adoption floor for your foster cat.

## Adopting Your Foster

So you've had the little furball in your house for a month or two and you've grown attached. You just can't imagine letting this special one go. Welcome to the club we call "Foster Failure." (We really don't believe you're a failure.)

Opening your heart on a more permanent basis leads to something called "The Adoption Process." Don't be afraid, it's actually quite simple.

When your foster is ready for adoption, fill out the necessary paperwork with an Adoption Counselor and go home and snuggle with your new friend.

As a foster parent, you receive a reduced adoption rate. The current rates are: \$30 for an adult (over 6 months of age) and \$50 for a kitten (6 months and under). Prices may change, so it's best to always ask.

## PetCo Adoptions

We place thousands of adoptable cats and kittens through our partnership with local PetCo retailers. For a cat to be considered for adoption through PetCo, it must be good with other cats, friendly and easy to handle. There are also other considerations depending on the PetCo store and the time of year.

If you think your foster may be a PetCo candidate, contact Carrie Scott at [cscott@animalrescue.org](mailto:cscott@animalrescue.org) or 412-661-6452 x222.

## Adoptions from the Foster Home

If you are fostering a cat for behavioral reasons, you may choose to promote the cat on PetFinder and keep the cat in foster until the day it is adopted.

Any person interested in adopting a cat or kitten in foster care should come to the ARL **immediately** and go through the adoption process.

**Never, ever give the foster cat or kitten to a potential adopter for a test drive! Until the animal is adopted, it must remain at your home.**

## Checking up on Your Foster Cat

Shelter privacy policies disallow us to give out an adopter's contact information to foster parents. If you are interested in connecting with your foster's new mom or dad, fill out a Foster Comment sheet and include your contact information. The shelter does follow-up calls on adoptions and tries to handle any issues the adopter may be having with their new charge. If an adopter does contact you, please remember the following: Do not give out medical advice, instead have them call the ARL Clinic or their own veterinarian; If you are stumped by a behavioral question, have them call the Adoption Department at the shelter. It is also wise to stay away from implying that we may give refunds or exchanges if they are not satisfied.

# Foster Supplies

What will you need to take care of your foster cats or kittens?

*Litter box, towels, newspaper, paper towels, bowls, toys, nail clippers, litter, litter scoop, dry food, canned food (for young kittens and sick adults), bleach, lots of bags for litter disposal.*

Great places to get supplies inexpensively:

*Wal-Mart, Dollar General, Family Dollar (or any variation on the Dollar Store theme), the ARL shelter gift shop.*

You don't need to be a math professor to know that housing five kittens that eat and poop will end up costing a lot in food and litter over the course of their foster time.

Oftentimes the shelter is able to give food (dry and canned) and litter to foster families. Thankfully generous folks donate food and litter to the shelter for just this purpose. When our donated supplies run out, we have access (albeit limited) to shelter food and litter.

Supplies of food and litter are kept upstairs by the Foster Offices. You may help yourself to the **DONATED** food and litter kept in the foster closets. If you are in need of shelter food (Science Diet brand) or shelter litter (Tidy Cats Clay), you **MUST** get this from me. I try to keep shelter food and litter along with canned food (all highly valuable

items to our program) in my locked office. It is extremely important for me to properly account for all shelter food and litter used by the Foster Program. Without proper accounting, the Foster Program will lose the ability to use shelter food and litter.

Even though I beg for donated kitten food and litter, these two items tend to be in short supply. While it is best to feed kittens a food formulated especially for kittens, many a kitten has survived on adult cat food.

Most canned adult cat food is fine for kittens as well. Very young kittens just transitioning to solid food may need A/D (which is a very finely ground canned food you can pick up at the shelter). Otherwise you may try any brand ground canned cat food (no flakes or strips or chunks). If purchasing food on your own, it's not always necessary to buy the expensive and small cans of kitten food as some canned foods are labeled for both adults and kittens.

If you are not a coupon clipper, you may want to start. For those who do clip coupons and do not use them, drop them off to me and I will make them available to the other foster families.

## Crates

The shelter may also be able to provide dog crates. If you have borrowed a crate and are finished using it, please return it to the shelter immediately. An available crate can make all the difference in finding foster care for a particular cat or litter of kittens.

## Kitten Milk Replacer

Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR) is a staple here at the shelter. This is powdered milk for kittens under four weeks of age.

If you are fostering kittens that require KMR, you may get this from the Foster or Medical Department.

The shelter generally supplies syringes instead of bottles. If you prefer bottles, those may be purchased at Wal-Mart or a pet supply store such as PetCo.

## Toys

Many of our generous donors understand the intense need kittens and cats have for play and supply us with toys.

Some of the feather wands and jingle balls end up occupying our shelter cats in one of the viewing rooms.

Others are available for use in foster homes.

Great toy ideas for little money: rolled up scraps of paper, paper bags, cardboard boxes, toilet paper or paper towel rolls (the cardboard inside) cut into small circles, shoestring, a flashlight projected on the wall.

Always supervise your foster when he or she is playing. Never leave your foster cat or kitten alone with a shoestring.

If you are taking home a litter of kittens and don't have toys, please ask if there are any. Oftentimes the best toy is a sibling!

## Rarely donated items (but still worth asking about)

Beds or snugglers – On the cheap, you can use old rags or towels stuffed into a cardboard box. Many cats prefer this to an expensive bed anyway.

Litter boxes - Don't have an extra litter box at home and looking for a cheap alternative? An aluminum foil roasting pan can sometimes work.

Bowls – As long as a cat can access the food and water, any bowl is fine. Bowls don't need to be fancy.



# FOSTER CARE APPLICATION

## Personal Information:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: (Include City and Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_

Borough: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:

Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

List all people in the house (including children): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently own any animals?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

List all animal residents in house  
(Include Name, Age and Species):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are they compatible with other animals?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Are they spayed/neutered?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Current Vaccinations?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Who is your veterinarian?

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever fostered an animal before?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently fostering any other animals?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, please list how many and what types.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some possible reasons you might return a fostered animal before it is ready for adoption?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Facilities Available:

Do you:

\_\_\_\_\_ Own Your Home?

\_\_\_\_\_ Rent Your Home?

Renting? Provide Landlord's Name, Address and Phone:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a yard?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Is the yard private?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Is the yard fenced?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Completely? \_\_\_\_\_

Partially? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have space available indoors to house the animal apart from your own pets?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

## Animals You Would Be Willing to Foster:

(Please check all that apply)

### Medical Foster Homes:

\_\_\_\_\_ Puppy \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Dog

\_\_\_\_\_ Kitten \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Cat

\_\_\_\_\_ Rabbit \_\_\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_\_\_ Unweaned /Bottle Babies

\_\_\_\_\_ Kittens with Mothers

\_\_\_\_\_ Puppies with Mothers

\_\_\_\_\_ Pregnant Cats

\_\_\_\_\_ Pregnant Dogs

\_\_\_\_\_ Sick

\_\_\_\_\_ Injured

\_\_\_\_\_ Malnourished

With training on how to do so, would you be willing to give medications to an animal you were fostering?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No, not comfortable with that.

### Behavioral Foster Homes:

\_\_\_\_\_ Undersocialized animals (shy, needs desensitized to noise, housebreaking issues)

\_\_\_\_\_ Animals needing

“Social Skills” work

(come/sit/stay/off commands; leash training; housebreaking issues)

### Emergency Foster Homes:

(Short-term; most often needed spring/summer)

\_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Fosters

(Kennel is filled; need to free up cage space for incoming animals).

**ARL FOSTER PROGRAM  
AGREEMENT OF  
UNDERSTANDING**

I hereby accept a volunteer position with the Animal Rescue League. In doing so I agree to comply with the rules and regulations, instructions and mandates given me by the League and I understand that failure to do so may result in my immediate termination as a volunteer.

I acknowledge that my services are provided strictly on a volunteer basis without any pay or compensation of any kind and without liability of any nature on behalf of the ARL; all services to be performed by me are at my own risk.

I recognize that in handling animals there exists a risk of injury, infection, disease, including physical harm caused by animals. On behalf of myself, my heirs, personal

representatives, and executors, I hereby release, discharge, indemnify, and hold harmless the ARL, its agents, servants and employees from any and all claims, causes of actions, or demands and any nature of cause, including costs and attorney's fees incurred or sustained by me in any way connected with my services to the ARL but not limited to: animal bites, accidents, injuries, property damage, and veterinary fees.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster Name (printed)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Foster Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

Foster Coordinator Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Required Documents**

\_\_\_\_\_ Homeowner's/ Renters  
Insurance

\_\_\_\_\_ Lease/Letter from  
Landlord (if renting)

\_\_\_\_\_ Proof of personal  
Health Insurance