



Cat and Kitten Foster Guide

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Thank you for expressing interest in SPCA Westchester's foster program. Every year, the SPCA places hundreds of cats and kittens into foster homes. We rely greatly on foster families to assist with the growth and socialization of homeless kittens as well as providing temporary homes to stressed, injured, and sick cats that are not thriving in our rescue environment. Not every cat and kitten admitted to SPCA Westchester needs a foster home. Healthy kittens and cats of age are placed up for adoption once fully examined by our veterinarian. Below is a list of cats and kittens that require foster care, along with a small description of what each foster entails.

- **Pregnant and Nursing Cat Mothers:**

A Rescue Center can be a stressful environment for mother cats, sometimes delaying labor. Mother cats should be housed in a non-stressful, quiet room. Momma cats normally provide all care for kittens. Kittens can be handled at a young age for socialization. Newborn kittens are delicate and must be handled with care. Kittens can be separated from mom once they start eating on their own (approximately 5 weeks of age). Kittens are either kept in a separate room from mom or dispersed to other homes until 8 weeks of age. The commitment time can be up to 8 weeks. **Prior to pick up, you will meet with either a foster coordinator or medical staff to discuss the care involved.**

- **Bottle and Syringe Fed Babies:**

These babies do not eat or eliminate on their own, and they will need your help. Depending on their age, they will need to be fed every 2-5 hours. Nighttime feedings are a must. Stimulation to defecate and urinate will be required before each meal. Young kittens are delicate and should be handled with care. Bottle babies will learn to eat on their own at about 5 weeks of age. Kittens are to be returned at 8 weeks of age. The commitment time can be up to 8 weeks. **Before bringing a bottle baby home, you will meet with either a foster coordinator or medical staff to discuss all necessary steps. A bottle-feeding guide will be provided.**

- **Halfway Kittens:**

These kittens are old enough to eat and eliminate on their own, but too young to be vaccinated and housed in a shelter. Kittens of this age are playful, curious, and enjoy

interacting with people. Kittens are to be returned at 8 weeks of age. The commitment time can be 1-4 weeks depending on the age of the kitten.

- **Semi Feral and Shy Kittens:**

These are halfway kittens, but instead of acting playful and curious, they are timid and frightened. These kittens require lots of handling and human socialization. Some kittens are too frightened to be handled by children. These kittens will often hide due to their shy nature. They should be housed in a small room where they cannot hide beneath or behind furniture. A large dog crate can be provided as a housing option. They are typically a 2-3-week commitment.

- **Sick and Recovering Cats and Kittens:**

Cats and kittens who are sick or recovering from a procedure do not recover as quickly in the shelter as they would in a home. Medication or therapy may be required a few times a day. Sick cats and kittens must be kept isolated from household cats. Hands should be washed after handling sick cats. The commitment time will vary case by case. At least a 2-week commitment should be expected. **All medical fosters will require an appointment to meet with medical staff to discuss medical conditions, medicines, and special requirements if any.**

- **Senior cats:**

Senior cats can become sickly in a stressful shelter environment. As a permanent foster parent, you will provide an end-of-life home for the foster pet while the SPCA covers most, but not all medical expenses. **Please ask to read a permanent contract for a list of responsibilities both parties are accountable for.**

Supplies: SPCA Westchester is a not-for-profit organization with limited resources. Any donations of supplies are appreciated. The SPCA will supply all necessities if you cannot. The following is a list of supplies you will need to foster:

- Food and water dishes
- Kibble and canned Food
- Cat litter (**kittens must have non-clumping litter**)
- Litter pan
- Bedding
- Pet Carrier
- Toys (suggested, but not mandatory)

Housing: A room should be prepared prior to picking up your foster pet(s) to ensure safety. It should be an area that can be easily disinfected. Below are suggestions to cat proof a room.

- Block off small areas and hiding spaces
- Wires should be out of reach
- All material that can cause choking should be out of reach

- Keep all plants out of reach (some plants are poisonous to animals)
- Do not leave small children and household pets with foster pets unsupervised to prevent accidental injuries

Medical: Foster parents must be available, to transport foster pet(s) for re-check appointments to the SPCA's Cody's Clinic Monday-Friday between 9-3:30 pm. The clinic is closed on the weekends. Appointments will be scheduled as needed, according to the SPCA vet, and type of foster. If the foster pet is sick, frequent appointments may be necessary.

- The first appointment must be scheduled during foster pick up.
- All foster animals should be kept separate from all household pets; animals can harbor contagious diseases without showing any symptoms prior to being placed in foster.
- Introducing household pets to foster pets will be done at your own risk. The SPCA will not be medically or financially responsible for illnesses transferred from foster to owned pets.
- All medications must be given as directed. Please do not self-medicate.
- Please do not make any medical decisions based on outside advice. (e.g. internet, non SPCA vet, friends, etc.).

Please note: All foster animals are the property of SPCA Westchester including any puppies or kittens that may be born while in a foster home. Foster animals including any puppies/kittens born while the mother is in foster care may not be offered for any reason to anyone. Potential adopters must go through the adoption process at the SPCA.

All foster parents are required to foster at least once a year to remain in the foster program.

All medical care must be carried out at Cody's Clinic, located at SPCA Westchester. The SPCA will NOT be financially responsible for any outside veterinary services performed, without prior permission. SPCA Westchester will not be responsible for injuries acquired at the foster's home not relating to pre-existing conditions.

****In case of medical emergencies, SPCA Westchester is available Monday through Sunday between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm at (914) 941-2896 ext: 111. After hours, please contact our Veterinary Technician or Veterinarian at (914) 261-6881.****