

Cat and Kitten Foster Manual

Sioux Falls Area Humane Society



Sioux Falls Area Humane Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
3720 E Benson Rd • (605) 338-4441 • www.SFHUMANESOCIETY.com

Thank you for your interest in the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society's foster program! Fostering can be very rewarding and it helps to save the lives of many kittens and cats! The major objective with a foster home is to ensure a nurturing environment in the comfort of your home where the cat or kittens can grow and become a socialized pet. Thank you for taking time to help our precious animals!

FAQ's of fostering cats and/or kittens for the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society

1. What types of cats/kittens would I be fostering? Can I pick and choose?

Yes you can choose what you would like to foster. Animals seeking a foster home will vary on a day to day basis. There may not always be a cat or kittens to fit your situation. We do not want you to feel overwhelmed by taking on more than you are prepared for. We will make sure that your foster animals are a good fit for you, your home and family.

2. How long will I need to foster? How much time does it take on a daily basis?

Length of having fosters will depend on their age and circumstances. It can take as much as 2-5 hours a day depending on the animals circumstance (how much socializing they need, if they are ill).

3. What supplies are needed for fostering? How much will it cost?

The Sioux Falls Area Humane Society will provide all the supplies you need. They can include dry and canned food, litter, litter boxes, toys, blankets, food dishes, and a carrier. Some foster parents like to provide their own supplies and that is fine as well.

4. Do I need to have prior medical knowledge or experience?

No. If you have questions, you can call the humane society at any time to get answers to any questions you have. We want this to be a fun and rewarding experience for you!

5. What if my foster becomes sick?

Please contact the medical staff at the shelter if you feel that your foster(s) have any signs of sickness. Included, but not limited to, upper respiratory infection, diarrhea, vomiting, not eating, or any other concerns that you have. We will then discuss with you the best plan of action, be it medicine or diagnostics. Do not take your foster(s) to a vet. The medical staff at the shelter will decide what needs to be done and proceed accordingly.

6. Can I foster if I have animals of my own?

You certainly can! We do strongly recommend that you do not let your foster(s) and your own animals interact. We get a lot of cats and kittens in as strays and we do not always know if they are carrying a disease that could be given to your pet.

7. Can my foster go outdoors?

No. We do not want any foster cats or kittens going outside as there is too big of a risk of them getting away from you.

8. Can I adopt my foster cat/kitten?

Of course! As foster parents, you have the first chance at adopting any cats or kittens you foster.

9. Can I return my foster cat/kittens if I am no longer able to foster?

Most certainly! We understand situations arise that are unforeseeable. Just keep in mind that moving cats and kittens to your home and back at the shelter before they are ready for adoption is stressful on them. Try to foster when you are fairly certain that you can commit to the entire time that is needed to care for them.

10. Are foster cats/kittens ever euthanized?

We understand how much love, time and energy go into your foster animals. Unfortunately there are times when the cat or kitten may become very ill and cannot be treated.

11. What is the next step after filling out my foster care application?

Your application will be reviewed and you will receive a call or email when there are cats or kittens needing foster care that fit with your home and family. You can always call the shelter as well.

Some tips on being a successful foster parent

1. Give your foster animal lots of attention and affection.

The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. The animal may have lived a difficult life before coming to your home. Your love and attention will help to heal the animal's physical and emotional wounds.

2. Learn as much as you can about pet care.

Before you bring your foster animal home, learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.

3. Make your home pet friendly.

Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure that you "pet proof" your home. For example, remove poisonous plants and protect furnishings. Keep the animal's room warm and comfortable. Also, take steps to prevent the animal from escaping.

4. Keep foster animals away from your own pets.

A foster pet may come into your home harboring contagious diseases. Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution.

5. Recognize your limits.

Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy, both emotional and physical. Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently or you risk burning yourself out.

6. Return the animal to the shelter on time.

The shelter depends on you to make its program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time. If you decide to adopt an animal you foster, go through the shelter's normal adoption process. If a friend or relative wants to adopt the animal you are fostering, that person must go through the shelter's adoption process, not yours.

7. Understand that some foster animals will not survive.

Many animals that arrive at the shelter come from unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts, the animal you foster may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated. Do the best you can to help the animal, but accept the fact that you cannot save them all.

8. Enjoy being a foster parent.

Although fostering takes a great deal of time and commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home environment and helping that animal become more suitable for adoption into a responsible, lifelong home.

Health and Medical Issues

It is important that you keep a close eye on your foster cats/kittens and monitor them for any signs of health problems. Things to watch out for include, but not limited to:

- Sneezing and or coughing
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Gagging /wheezing
- Tiring easily
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Lethargic or depressed
- Breathing heavily

Common Illnesses/Medical Conditions Seen in Foster Animals

Upper Respiratory Infection- Upper Respiratory Infection can cause a lot of sickness in cats. Cats cannot give URI to dogs, nor can dogs give it to cats, but it can be spread within the same species. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature.

Diarrhea- Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool to the shelter so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run.

Worms- If you suspect or see that your foster(s) has worms in their feces, contact the shelter to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti. All cats are dewormed with Pyrantel upon entering the shelter, however Pyrantel does not treat tapeworms.

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Medical Concern Contacts

If you feel that your foster pet(s) has a medical issue, please contact the shelter to talk to one of the veterinary technicians. If it is during shelter hours, you can call (605) 338-4441 or email Laverne at lavernea@sfhumanesociety.com for general medical questions. If it is after hours and an emergency, you may call our Humane Officer at the on-call phone number (605) 254-4058. Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns you have.

Litter Box Training

It is important to know that kittens will not always use the litter box right away. Some kittens never have a problem consistently using the litter box, while other kittens might have issues to start with. Remember to place the litter box in an area easily accessed by the kittens. Some kittens may need to be placed in a smaller area if they are having trouble using the litter box. Make sure the litter box is cleaned on a daily basis.

Socialization

A great deal of time and effort is required to properly socialize kittens between the ages of 4 to 12 weeks. Daily socialization sessions are genuinely important in shaping the kitten's future personality and emotional growth. Many cats/kittens that need the foster program are young or scared, so socializing is vital. It is crucial to introduce kittens to as many experiences as possible at an early age so that they are used to them as an adult.

Thank you for your willingness to help many homeless animals by opening your home to them! We hope this will be a very fulfilling and rewarding experience for both you and the cats/kittens!