



FOSTER PROGRAM



Changing lives one Tail at a time.

Welcome to the foster team!

Thank you for choosing to donate your time, home, and love to animals of St. Joseph Bay Humane Society. By becoming a foster volunteer with us you provide a vital lifeline for cats and dogs who are not ready for adoption 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 dozens of animals each year, and the program 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 St. Joseph Bay Humane 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.sjbhumanesociety.org

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

The Foster Support Team
Taylor Smith
(931) 691-8546
Foster Coordinator

FOSTERING

St. Joseph Bay Humane 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 hours to a couple of months, but the impact on the person and pet lasts a lifetime.

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 webpage](#), 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 provided with all the necessary supplies needed to provide for their care. We are proud to offer our foster tool-kit so that fostering can be absolutely free to all families. We only ask that you provide the tender love and care an animal needs to become ready for their adoptive home. Whether you'll be fostering a nursing mother, bottle babies, under socialized, recovering, or long-term animal, you have the opportunity to make a lasting impact in the life of each pet you bring home.

Foster Toolkit

All fosters will be provided with the following items at no cost:

- Age appropriate food (Hill's Science Diet)
- Kennel/carrier
- Two sets of bedding
- Toys
- Leash/collar/harness as appropriate
- SJBHS collar tag
- Litter boxes and litter
- Medical care and preventative medication to be administered by SJBHS staff

Fosters are encouraged to provide extra items to their foster pet !

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 St. Joseph Bay Humane 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) Wait to be contacted by our foster coordinator
- 4) Read our Foster Program Manual
- 5) Be matched with a foster pet!

FOSTER PROCEDURES

Selecting Your Foster

Once your foster training is complete you will be ready to schedule your first foster pick-up. Check the [Foster Candidates web page](#) on St. Joseph Bay Humane Society website to find an animal best suited to your lifestyle. Once selected, call us at (850) 227-1103 to schedule a pick-up. Upon pick-up you will be given your Foster Tool-Kit, an animal-specific contract, and medication (if needed).

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.

Reasons animals may need foster include:

- **MOM(s):** This program is reserved for experienced fosters who can provide a place for birthing/nursing mothers or serve as a mother for puppies and kittens under 8 weeks of age who need to be bottle fed
- **General Medical:** Some animals may need foster while a broken limb heals or for general medical rehabilitation of non-transmissible disease or illness.
- **Heartworm Treatment:** Our high positive heartworm dogs need a quiet, calm place to rest throughout their treatment to prevent complications that can be caused by stress in the shelter.
- **Socialization:** These are shy, shutdown animals who would benefit from additional exposure to human socialization. This program also includes puppies under 6 months of age who could benefit from socialization and early training.
- **Behavioral:** Some pets need that extra boost to be highly adoptable. This can range from learning leash manners, basic obedience, to potty training. Some pets need experienced fosters to help with more difficult behavioral modifications. Only volunteer for pets you feel you have the skill set to tackle!
- **Adoption Ambassadors:** In this unique 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. 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.

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.

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. Although all pets receive age-appropriate vaccinations and are inspected by our medical team before leaving the shelter, all fosters 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.

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 12:00-5:00 Tuesday-Friday and 10:00-5:00 Saturdays. When you arrive at the shelter, check-in with the receptionist. A staff member will ask for your name and will confirm the animal(s) 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, along with this manual.

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 an SJBHS tag. When picking up litters it is important to keep these collars on the animals to ensure proper identification during clinic visits and returns. You will receive a copy of the animal(s) kennel card which indicates their name, estimated age, and medical record. Please note that you may NOT change their name, as it creates confusion for the advertising of your foster pet and our medical team. If you choose to create social media posts, be sure to only use the name indicated on their kennel card.

The staff member will place smaller animals in a carrier, or if the animal is walkable, will provide you with a leash. You will also be sent home with the Foster Tool-Kit which includes all necessary supplies for your foster pet, as well as any medications they might currently be taking.

Foster Returns

Before returning a foster animal verify that they are ready to return. Were they sent out to nurse or be bottle fed? Ensure all kittens/puppies are weaned and are at least 3 months old and 3 pounds in weight to be passed for adoption. Were they fostered for medical reasons? Contact the medical team to ensure it is safe for them to return to the shelter. 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 to submit our [Foster Survey](#).

Foster Drop-Off

Fosters may only be returned by appointment. Be sure to contact the foster coordinator at SJBHS at (850) 227-1103 to ensure there is a kennel ready for your foster to return to.

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 remove all food and water at midnight or before the night before surgery. Do not feed the foster pet breakfast or allow them to drink more than a few sips the morning of surgery. Medication may be administered normally with a small sip of water to follow. 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.

Veterinary Visits

Occasionally, foster pets may have to attend a vet visit at one of our local vets. You will be notified in advance for routine veterinary visits or clinic visits that take place at the shelter. It will be pre-arranged if you are responsible for taking them to the vet/clinic visit or if you must simply drop them off at the shelter for us to take them. SJBHS staff cannot pick up the pet from your home but will accommodate your schedule to ensure you are able to drop the pet off.

It is your responsibility to report suspected illness to the medical team of SJBHS. Reference the latter parts of the Foster Manual for symptoms that warrant a clinic visit, veterinary visit and emergency vet visit.

ADVERTISING YOUR FOSTER PET

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
- 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. SJBHS reserves the right to moderate comments and posts. Posts may be removed from the page at any time. Any media posted to the page is digital consent for us to use your materials for marketing on our social media platforms and website.

FOSTER POLICIES

Fosters should note that shelter animals remain the legal property of SJBHS until they are adopted.

Supervision

Foster animals should always remain in the care of the licensed foster volunteer. 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.

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 paper collar while neo-nates will not have any collars since they are too small. Any collars and tags that come with your foster should always remain on them 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 St. Joseph Bay Humane Society should any behavior problems arise 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 to address issues as they arise.

Lost Animals

St. Joseph Bay Humane Society should be notified immediately if a foster animal becomes lost. We will then mount a search. Immediately after notifying the shelter 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. We will post information relating to the lost foster pet on appropriate social media sites.

Animal Death

If a foster animal should die in your care, please contact the foster support team as soon as possible. Staff will then come to your home to pick up the foster pet. We will 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

St. Joseph Bay Humane Society provides all foster parents with all medications needed for their foster pet, including prevention medications. 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.

You will be given a medical schedule for all preventative medications, administered medications, and vaccines. It is your responsibility to reach out to SJBHS to schedule an appointment for all vaccines at least 24 hours before they are due. If the due date falls on a Sunday or Monday, all appointments must be scheduled by the previous Saturday. Prevention medication will be given in your Foster Took-Kit, if you foster the pet for longer than 1 month, you must reach out to SJBHS at least 24 hours before the next dose is due and pick it up from SJBHS during business hours.

All prescription medication must be administered as indicated by SJBHS staff and our veterinarian. All adverse reactions and side effects must be reported to SJBHS staff.

If your foster animal indicates a sign of serious illness, please contact St. Joseph Bay Humane 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 the shelter at (850) 227-1103 between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm and ask for a manager or medical tech for assistance. Always identify yourself as a foster parent with a medical emergency when calling. You may utilize the foster coordinator at (931) 691-8546 for after hours emergencies.

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).

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.

Your Pet's Safety

St. Joseph Bay Humane Society requires that all resident pets meet the foster pet on-site at the shelter before going home. This ensures that all pets are compatible and show no aggression towards one another. Cats are not required to attend meet and greets.

Threatening Behavior

If your foster animal's behavior threatens the safety your family or a family pet, please return them to St. Joseph Bay Humane Society immediately. If St. Joseph Bay Humane 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

SJBHS 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/puppy pads: For lining dog kennels or kitten play areas
- Litter Pans & Litter: One per cat, should be size appropriate.
- Water Bowls: We recommend stainless steel
- Crate: Not required but strongly recommended for dog fosters
- Food Bowls: Size appropriate
- Canned Food: To stimulate appetite for certain animals
- 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 Hill's 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 shelter 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 SJBHS, 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 shelter. Details on specific gastrointestinal issues and parasites can be found in the Foster Health section in this manual.

Hygiene & Disinfection

SJBHS 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. 1/2 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.

Never leave foster pets unattended until you feel entirely comfortable that they will not hurt one another.

The Introduction of Dogs

Dogs will have been introduced in a supervised meet and greet at the shelter before returning home with you. In the coming days, monitor all pets for signs of distress, agitation, or aggression. Be sure to pay close attention during use of high value items such as beds, toys, food, and treats. We strongly encourage dogs to be fed in separate rooms and never to be free-fed. Accessible bowls of food sitting out can stimulate a dog fight. Please remove all toys you know resident dogs will not want to share. It is perfectly normal to reserve playtime with toys to certain periods of the day to be enjoyed separately by dogs. Feed high value treats separately to discourage dogs from fighting over the treat. Talk with the foster coordinator if you experience any resource guarding with either your resident pet or foster pet.

The Introduction of 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.

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 foster coordinator for advice.

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.

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 shelter by referencing the contacts list at the end of this manual.

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 shelter. We may ask you to bring the animal in for an exam or observation or 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 shelter 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 shelter 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 shelter 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 shelter.

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.

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 the shelter for diagnostics and treatment. Please call to schedule a drop off time to ensure the appropriate staff member is available.

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 shelter 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 staffed hours (8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.) please call (850)227-1103. Always indicate that you are a foster and that it's an emergency.

SJBHS 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.

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 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.

Social Media, Photos and more!

Photos: A picture is worth a thousand words. Help get more exposure for your foster animal by sending frequent photos to our foster coordinator at 850-347-8925

Social Media: You are welcome to share photos, videos and updates to the “SJBHS Foster Families” Facebook page. By posting to this page you consent to us using your photos on our website and social media. Keep this in mind and be sure all people in the photos have consented to the photos being used. If you post to your personal Facebook or Instagram pages be sure to mark them as “public” and tag the shelter in them by typing @stjosephbayhumanesociety. If you are unable to tag us, please notify the foster coordinator that you have made a post so we can share it! You are welcome to copy and paste the link to our adoption application from our website so adopters can easily apply to adopt!

Videos: Videos are a great way to show off the new trick your foster has learned, how they interact with people and other pets, or something cute that truly shows off their personality. Please take all videos HORIZONTALLY! Vertical videos cannot be used by our marketing team.

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 “portrait mode” 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 for at least some of the photos. We love photos with people in them too!
- 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.

The shelter has a limited supply of wearable “Adopt Me” harnesses, leashes and collars available for foster pets. If you plan to actively promote the adoption of your foster animal, please request a vest or collar when scheduling your pick-up. All harnesses 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 until they have submitted an adoption application and been contacted by the adoption coordinator. Do not promise an animal to someone as only the adoption coordinator can do this.

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 on our [website](#) or in person at the shelter.

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. Fosters are never required to have potential adopters meet the pet in their home. Please coordinate meet and greets with the adoption coordinator (850) 347-8925 to schedule a meet and greet at the shelter with all members of the family and their current pets.

“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 some families may be approved to foster, but may not be the ideal forever home for a pet. The adoption coordinator will make the final call on which family is approved for adoption. If you are interested in adopting, please notify the adoption coordinator as soon as possible so that we may begin the adoption process. If an outside family has already reserved the animal or is being considered, you will be notified at this time. Fostering an animal does not give you “first dibs” on any animal, but will greatly influence our decision.

If your adoption has been approved, 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 foster pet – 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. The adoption coordinator will contact you if your foster pet is a good candidate for particular events.
- Have family and friends work alongside you to recruit an adopter.
- Fill out a [Personality Profile](#) in detail to help attract an adopter while also making the shift to their new home a bit easier for all.

Assembling their “Going Home” Kit

Having familiar items greatly helps ease the transition of your foster pet to their forever home! Whether your foster pet is returning to the shelter, attending a potential adoption meet and greet, or going straight to their forever home from your home, please pack:

- Remaining food and treats
- Toys provided by the shelter
- Blankets and bedding (one set; having the familiar smell will ease their stress)
- Medication
- Notes on the foster pets’ personality
- The foster schedule chart
- You may choose to add additional items such as photos, special treats, toys, etc.

Please return to the shelter:

- Their kennel/carrier/crate unless arranged for the adopter to keep it (to be determined by shelter staff)
- Bowls
- Full bags of food
- Collars, tags, leashes, adopt me gear.
- Metal litter boxes
- Full containers of litter

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.

Please teach these commands first and use the indicated hand signals. Having all of our foster pets using the same words and signals greatly helps our adoption team inform adoptive families of their new pet’s skills!

Simple Commands

“Sit” (left hand, closed fist)- To start, take a treat in your left hand and slowly lift it above his head. He will most likely sit as he lifts his head to get the treat. When his bottom touches the ground say “sit” and reward your pup. Continue this a couple times and then introduce the hand signal into it. Instead of luring your pup with a treat say sit and close your left hand.

“Stay” (pointer and middle finger on your left hand held out in front of you) - With this command you will essentially work backwards in training, you will first teach the release word of your choice. Words such as “OK” or “free”. Stand with your pup by your side in a sit position, toss a treat in front of them on the floor, and say the release word as he takes his first step towards the treat. They will associate this word with moving out of the sit position.

Once your pup has their release word down pat, put him or her in a sit position, turn and face them and give a treat. Wait a moment and reward them for staying in a “sit”. Gradually increase your time in between treats. If your dog starts to get antsy and gets up before the time between treats, that’s okay, it just means that your dog isn’t comfortable waiting that long and that you go back to a shorter time.

If you feel like your dog is comfortable and able to wait for a longer time, gradually increase the distance between you both. Put your dog in a “sit” and say “stay”, take a step back and then back

to your dog, reward, and give them the release word. Practice makes perfect with this command. Train both facing him and walking away with your back turned towards him.

When your dog is confident in the “stay” command introduce the hand signal. This signal is your pointer and middle finger on your left hand held out in front of you.

“Down”(Pointer and middle finger on the left hand pointed to the ground)- This command is very similar to how you trained “sit”. Start out in a “sit” position, hold a high valued reward in your left hand right under your dog’s nose and slowly move it down to the floor. Reward your dog once their elbows touch the floor. After a couple training sessions of this command, begin bringing an empty hand to the floor and give the treat after they lie down. Start introducing the hand signal very last.

“Come”(Closed left handed fist brought into chest)- Start by getting your pup associated with the word “Come/name”. Begin in a quiet and calm area indoors, every time you say “come/name” give him or her a treat. They do not have to do anything right now, just continue to repeat the word and give a treat.

Once you feel that your dog is familiar with that word, start moving away and drop the treat next to you. As your pup gobbles the treat up, say their name. When he looks up to you, reward him again. Repeat this a couple times until you feel like your pup has it down. When he does have it down, start tossing your treat a little farther away from you to where your pup will turn around to face you when you say his name. Do not say his name over and over when he doesn't respond, this can cause confusion and he may start ignoring you. If you have to repeat his name, move closer to him and then take a step back and he can be successful by responding to his name the first time.

Begin adding movement and distance once your puppy can turn and face you. Make the training more of a game than a training session. Toss a treat on the ground and take quick steps away while calling them. Once they catch you give them lots of praise and rewards. Continue building these games with longer distances and in different areas. When you start training outside, it is smart to start on a long leash.

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. 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. Please call the shelter if you are unable to bathe your foster dog or trim their nails and they are in need. We can set up an appointment for a quick grooming session. Please try to bathe your foster at home if you can!

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.

You can set the foundation for a crate being a positive place for dogs to rest by: creating it to be a cozy place with blankets, have certain favorite toys that are reserved for crate time only, creating positive association using a treat every time they enter the crate, and using kongs stuffed with kibble, peanut butter, and plain yogurt.

We recommend the following tips so that the dog associates the crate with peaceful rest rather than, "the human is about to leave for a long time."

- Crate the dog periodically throughout the day, even if you are home. Work up from 5 minutes to a few hours.
- Leave the crate dog open so that the dog can use it anytime they would like some alone time. Give your dog a treat and reward them for going in on their own but try not to get them riled up and leave the crate. Just drop it in quietly and move on.
- Crate the dog 30 minutes before you plan to leave the house, during your get ready routine.
- Don't immediately release them from the crate the second you get home. Dogs are creatures of habit and will quickly learn the crate is an okay place to be even if the humans are home! Do something else in the home for 15 minutes before releasing them.
- Always let the dog go potty before putting them in the crate and after they leave the crate.
- NEVER use the crate as punishment or time out!
- Use the same command "kennel" every time they enter the crate.

Call the shelter if the dog shows extreme aversion to being in the crate such as whining or barking for longer than 30 minutes, showing signs of self-mutilation like chewing on their feet or tail, or destroying the crate. Watch for signs that the dog is eating their bedding or toys.

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. The shelter will provide you with approved toys and you are welcome to supplement these.

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 at least 24 hours if possible. The shelter will bathe the dog if necessary before going home with you!
- 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. Particularly mischievous dogs may need extra supervision; try tying their leash to you so that they can be in your view at all times.
- Allow rough housing or chase games of any kind between children and the foster dog.
- Pester the dog while they're eating. 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. Even dogs that may have been housetrained before arriving at the shelter, likely need a refresher since they have been living in a kennel, where they eat, sleep and potty all in the same place.

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. We have attached a schedule chart to ensure all members of the household adhere to the same schedule for the foster pup! This is also helpful for the future adoptive family to follow!

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.
- 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.

*some dogs will drink excessively, leading to increased chances of accidents. Follow the weight chart to make sure your foster dog is not suffering from an underlying medical or behavioral condition. Water requirements will vary with outdoor temperature and activity level of the dog.

Weight (lbs.)	Cups per Day
10	1.0
20	2.1
30	3.1
40	4.2
50	5.2
60	6.2
70	7.3
80	8.3
90	9.4
100	10.4

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 foster support team. See the tips on crate training, as this is often a major source of separation anxiety.

The best way to stop separation anxiety is to prevent it! It is tempting to want to spend 24/7 with your new foster when you first bring them home. Start your "work day" schedule from day one! If a normal day means they will be alone for at least 4 hours at a time, then start that on day one! They are used to being in a kennel alone for about 20 hours a day at the shelter, so do not feel bad for "ignoring" them in their crate, even if you are home. This will help them learn being alone is fine and I don't need to be stressed if I am away from people. Preventing separation anxiety is key in ensuring our dogs are not returned by their adopters. This is perhaps the most important thing our fosters can teach their foster pup! Try to keep in mind to give the dog rewards for being calm and self-soothing. It is all a balance between granting freedom and trust for positive behavior and replacing negative behavior with something else! See the following chart for tips on what to do in several separation anxiety scenarios.

Scenario	Recommended Solution(s)
Dog is crying in crate more than 30 minutes	See crate tips; work up to being alone in crate in 5 minutes increments; give kong toy in crate; cover crate with thin blanket; play music or TV for dog
Dog is all over me non-stop	Reward dog for being alone; gently toss a treat to them if they are being quiet next to you or on their bed/crate/etc.
Dog cries all night	Make sure they have had enough exercise during the day; a potty break; evaluate where the dog is sleeping and try different methods (let them sleep with you, in their crate in the same room, in their crate in a different room, etc.); try putting a floor fan in the same room as a soothing noise
Dog barks when I leave	Work up to being left alone; treat leaving as a normal thing, no big deal; leave the house over and over throughout the day for varying times (30 seconds, 5 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour, etc.) do not make a fuss over saying goodbye or hello. Pair this when crate training. Leave the dog a kong or treat everytime you leave so they associate you leaving with a positive reward
Dog chews things when alone	Be sure to have plenty of toys, remove all items from the floor that are not to be chewed, crate the dog when alone or in a safe room

*one tip that applies to nearly all these scenarios is making sure exercise and mental stimulation are being met. A tired pup is a happy pup!

*remember that dogs do not always know how to self-regulate. If you are wanting the dog to be calm, you have to encourage it! Some dogs will crash and sleep after a long walk and others will want to go, go, go! It doesn't always mean that they need more exercise. Try introducing a calming activity after an exciting one.

Exciting/exercise activities (try to do 2 a day): run, walk, swim, outing, fetch, tug of war, playing with other dogs, etc.

Calming/soothing activities (try before leaving alone): lick mat, kong, watching tv, cuddles on couch, naptime, quiet training time for a few minutes,

Brain games (great for timid or low-energy dogs as well as rainy days): puzzle feeders, interactive toys, training session, scatter feed in yard, snuffle mat, hang vegetables on a string, hide and go seek (teach stay first)

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.

A great way to teach dogs to ignore a stimulus (person they don't like, barking at mailman, other dogs on walk, cat running across road, etc.)

-start at home with no distractions

-hold a treat out to the side with your arm extended, while dog is sitting (you may have to teach sit and not to jump first)

-wait for the dog to look at you, then give the treat (eventually extend time they have to look at you but never longer than 10 seconds)

-eventually the dog will immediately look at you when they want something!

-you can extend this to them wanting to go outside, eat their dinner, get a toy, go meet a person on a walk, 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

Bordatella, 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. All shelter pets are up to date on Bordatella vaccines, but there is a small risk for any animal you take home to have the virus and it not be showing symptoms yet.

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.

If you are caring for a puppy who begins to show symptoms, please contact the shelter. 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. Our staff 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.

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 shelter clinic for directions on how to administer an over-the-counter cough suppressant.

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 shelter 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 (under 12 weeks)

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, especially from other pets and children.

Puppy Litters

Foster parents who bring home a litter with mom will be provided with a bag of Hill's 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. The shelter will provide all foods unless otherwise discussed; call the shelter if you need refills on anything!

Most nursing mothers and pups will be provided with puppy mousse and weaning formula to encourage weight gain and these products are denser in nutrients.

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 per puppy. It is okay to 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 before every meal and after as it is likely to have little puppy feed and dirty mouths in it!

Caring for bottle puppies

Puppies who were found without their mother, whose mother has passed away, or mothers who do not produce enough milk due to malnourishment or disease may need human's help to eat.

The first few days of a mother's milk is known as **colostrum**. Colostrum is very high in protein and transfers important immune system elements. Whenever possible, newborn puppies should receive their mother's milk as it sets the stage for normal immune system function and protection from disease.

If the mother is incapable of raising her puppies herself, the puppies are considered orphans and some important needs must be met in order to ensure their survival.

Fortunately, most orphaned puppies can be raised successfully with a bit of care and attention to detail. Using a logbook to track their development is a good place to start.

What should I track in a logbook?

Maintaining a logbook about the orphaned puppies does not need to be complicated. The intent is to simply keep track of how they are doing so you can identify if there are any potential concerns with their development.

Tracking their weights, milestones, and routines are key, so be sure to record details of when their eyes open, when their teeth begin to erupt, their food intake, and stool consistency.

TIP: Individual puppies must be identified in some way, the shelter will provide you with paper collars to tell them apart. Please check these daily to ensure they are not too tight or too loose.

How often should puppies be weighed, and how much should they weigh?

The birth weight of each puppy should be recorded, and weight should be taken every day or two for the first four weeks of life. Starting in their fifth week, you can switch to weekly weigh-ins. A digital food scale with capacity up to 5 pounds works best for these measurements.

Puppies should gain about 5% of their current body weight per day during the first 4 weeks. This means that body weight may double by 8-10 days after birth and triple by the third week of life.

What do orphaned puppies need for proper nutrition?

Water is a critical nutrient for orphaned puppies, just as it is for all other stages of their life.

Normal water intake is relatively high for puppies, needing 130-220 milliliters (mL) of fluid per kilogram (kg) of body weight each day.

On average, the total fluid volume fed per day (including milk replacers) should be approximately 180mL/kg of puppy body weight. Mother's milk is highly digestible and very calorie dense.

Compared to cow's milk, milk from a puppy's mother contains more than twice as much protein, which helps to explain why cow's milk is not ideal for feeding orphaned puppies.

Commercial puppy milk replacers are recommended as they are superior to cow's milk and home-made mixtures. The milk replacer you choose should meet several key nutritional factors.

For every 100g of milk replacer fed (on a dry matter basis), there should be:

- 33g crude protein
- 42g fat
- 14.5g lactose

How do I feed orphaned puppies?

Most puppies will suckle on small pet nursing bottles, also known as pet nursers. When bottle fed, puppies will nurse until they are full and then reject the bottle.

Be sure the opening in the nipple restricts the outflow of fluid to one drop at a time in order to avoid a flow rate that is too rapid for the puppy. When the flow rate is too rapid, it can lead to aspiration, pneumonia, and/or death; and when the flow is too slow they have to work too hard to nurse.

When feeding, hold the puppy in a horizontal, head-neutral position as it would be when feeding from its mother. If the puppy is too weak to suckle, your veterinarian can show you alternative feeding methods and assist in tube feeding if needed.

TIP: Handling puppies during feeding contributes to critical socialization.

How much and how often should I feed orphaned puppies?

Orphaned puppies should be fed on a strict schedule, preferably every 2-4 hours. Puppies up to two weeks old can generally consume their daily intake in 4-5 meals per day. Small breed puppies should be limited to 10-15mL per feeding during the first week of life in order to prevent diarrhea.

Commercial milk replacers are labeled to help you calculate the total volume to be fed per day. To calculate the amount for each feeding:

- dilute the total daily volume of milk replacer to a final volume of about 180mL/kg of puppy body weight, and
- divide that total into the desired number of meals per day.

It is recommended that you warm puppy milk replacer to approximately 100°F (38°C) before feeding, but be careful not to overheat it. Cold formula, overly rapid feeding rates, and overfeeding can lead to regurgitation, aspiration, bloating, and diarrhea.

If the orphaned puppy develops diarrhea, reduce the formula volume. It is better to slightly underfeed than to overfeed neonatal orphaned puppies. Puppy milk replacer should be the sole source of nutrition until 3-4 weeks of age at which time the weaning process may begin.

The transition from formula to solid food is a gradual process, so be patient. Use a high-quality food formulated to support growth and reproduction. Introduce small amounts of semi-solid or solid food to supplement formula, and transition to solid food by 5-6 weeks of age.

What's my role in helping a puppy to eliminate?

Puppies cannot eliminate (urinate or defecate) on their own until about 3 weeks of age. They rely on their mother to stimulate their reflex to initiate elimination. Orphaned puppies, on the other hand, rely on their caretakers to stimulate them to eliminate.

After feeding, you can stimulate their reflex to eliminate by gently stroking the area between the anus and vulva or penis with a warm, moistened cotton ball or soft cloth. Your veterinarian can help teach you this technique.

What are some best practices for proper puppy hygiene?

Orphaned puppies require you to pay strict attention to their hygiene for optimal health and development. Follow these best practices for proper puppy hygiene:

- Bottles and nipples should be cleaned and then boiled in water to sterilize them between uses.
- Never prepare more milk replacer than can be used within 24 hours and always keep it refrigerated.
- Discard formula after 1 hour if left at room temperature.
- Once or twice each week, gently wash the puppies with a moist cloth.

By paying attention to the details of feeding and hygiene, you can help orphaned puppies thrive

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)

Dog Health Concerns

Kennel Cough

Bordatella, 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. All shelter pets are up to date on Bordatella vaccines, but there is a small risk for any animal you take home to have the virus and it not be showing symptoms yet.

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.

If you are caring for a puppy who begins to show symptoms, please contact the shelter. 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. Our staff 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.

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.

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 shelter and thanks to this practice, is a rare occurrence in the shelter. If there is ever an outbreak of distemper at the shelter 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 shelter 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 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 shelter 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 the shelter 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 shelter, 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 shelter 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. Be sure to thoroughly rinse all cleaner from the litter box before offering it to the cat again.

Inappropriate litterbox use may arise from physical or behavioral problems. Always rule out medical conditions first by contacting the shelter. 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 shelter 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.

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.

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 (under 3 months)

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

Use your best judgement; if a kitten is eating less than recommended per feeding, you may need to increase the frequency of the feedings.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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 shelter to schedule a time to bring the kitten in. 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, 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

Emergency Protocol: Fading Kittens

Open Hours (8:30 am-5:00 pm) 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.

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.

THANK YOU

St. Joseph Bay Humane Society's foster team is dedicated to giving animals from all walks of life a second chance, donating thousands of volunteer hours to care dozens of pets annually.

With the help of foster volunteers like you, the companion animals of Gulf County 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.

SJBHS is helping an average of 2,000 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 and to do the life-saving work of fostering a shelter pet.

Your efforts make a significant difference in St. Joseph Bay Humane Society's work and our mission to find pets new forever homes.

We welcome all feedback for how we can improve our foster program! Please reach out if you have any ideas, tips, or feedback on how we can make this experience more pleasant and place more animals in foster homes!

Sincerely,

SJBHS Staff



FOSTER PET SCHEDULE

Foster Pet Name: _____ Foster Human Name: _____

Dates Fostered: _____ to _____

Wake up time: _____

Breakfast time: _____

Play time/exercise: _____

Hours spent alone: _____

Method (circle one): crate loose in house in specific room _____

Dinner time: _____

Bed time: _____

Sleeping place: bed with foster crate in room with foster crate in room alone
dog bed in room with foster dog bed in room alone
Couch/chair other: _____

Potty Schedule: please list all the times the foster pet went out to potty

*We recommend a minimum of first thing in the morning, after every meal, before bed, and before being left alone for more than 10 minutes

Time	Before/After a certain activity?	Pee/poop or both?

*If the foster dog continues to have accidents outside of set potty times, consider adding more opportunities to go out, see the foster manual for more tips!

Notes: _____

