



Animal Care Sanctuary

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*Foster Program
Kitten Edition*

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Animal Care Sanctuary Thanks You!

Thank you for opening your home and your heart to animals in need. Whether you foster a kitten(s) who needs a safe place to grow, a mother in need of a relaxing and calm place to raise her kittens, or an adult cat who needs a little extra TLC, you make it possible for us to provide the very best care for all our residents at Animal Care Sanctuary (ACS). Your involvement also allows us to have the space to rescue more cats in need of a placement. Fostering can be rewarding, messy, adorable, stinky, and sometimes a heartbreaking job. We certainly could not provide the level of care we do without valuable foster homes like yours and we are here to support you through all of it.

Greetings, Foster Parents!

The guiding mission of the Foster Care Program is to give individualized care where needed, to help socialize and build confidence in cats and kittens, and to help prepare animals for adoption.

Specific goals of the program include:

- Providing a safe, healthy, nurturing, environment for cats.
- Socializing shy or timid cats and kittens.
- Giving our long-term or high stress residents time away from the shelter and in a home setting.
- Allowing cats/kittens to recover from injury, trauma, or birth in a relaxing, uplifting environment.

Kittens are some of the most at-risk cats in shelters for many reasons, one being their susceptible immune system. We greatly appreciate your willingness to step in and help care for these vulnerable kittens. Thank you!

Our Adoptions Counselor will set up a time that works for you to go through the orientation and training session. The orientation and training session is provided for new fosterers to help prepare you for your foster term and is required to participate in our Foster Care Program Kitten Edition.

Overview of Key Responsibilities and Policies: To continue establishing a successful foster program, we ask that you follow our general policy guidelines in addition to the contractual expectations throughout the entire foster term. Please keep the following in mind while ensuring the responsibility of each foster home is to provide a safe interim placement for kittens to grow and explore their new environment:

1. Before bringing a foster into your home, if you have any resident animals, we suggest you first talk with your vet to ensure they are strong, healthy, and up to date on their vaccines. By doing this, you will decrease the chances of your animals and the foster animal(s) potentially coming down with an illness or inducing unnecessary stress. Unfortunately, we cannot provide medical care for your personal pet because of our foster cat(s) and if your vet recommends against you bringing a foster into your home, we strongly suggest adhering to those suggestions.
2. Kittens are very fragile and are susceptible to illness and disease. They can also be carriers of diseases and internal parasites that can be contagious to your resident pets. It's important to keep foster kittens and mother, if there is one, isolated from any residents' pets for at least 3 - 4 weeks to ensure the kittens are healthy before introducing them to your residents' pets.
3. Administer all treatments the cat(s) may need during their foster term with you. Please also bring the cat(s) back for exams, vaccines, treatments, and spay/neuter appointments as needed. Documentation of administered preventatives & treatments can be submitted through your foster portal in ShelterLuv and any appointments will be communicated with you as soon as they are scheduled.
4. Always keep cats inside.
5. Cats should always be in a secure carrier when leaving the house. Please refrain from using cardboard boxes or holding the cat in your arms for transport.
6. Please keep doors/windows closed, unless covered with a screen that is securely in place. If you don't have a screen, the window should be open no more than 1 inch with a support in place so the window cannot be opened any further. Cats can squeeze through the smallest of openings.

7. If you need to leave town unexpectedly during your foster term, please contact the Adoptions Counselor at 570-596-2200 ext. 302 or email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/adoption counselor's direct email. We can plan for the cat(s) to either come back to ACS or enter a different foster home while you are away.

ShelterLuv Foster Portal (Fosterluv): You're an official Foster Parent at Animal Care Sanctuary! We've added an attribute to your account on the ShelterLuv database that says, "Willing Foster". You should have received an email from yourfriends@shelterluv.com with the Subject, "Please Set Your Animal Care Sanctuary Foster Profile".

Please click on the "Click Here" and follow the prompts: https://www.shelterluv.com/public_foster_profile/ACSP/
Save the above link for easy access either on your phone or computer. In Fosterluv you can: Provide daily updates, write biographies, complete the animal's scheduled treatments/preventatives, view medical records, upload photos, and update your contact information, plus more!

Supplies and Expenses: ACS will provide you with food, toys, crates, and any other supplies you may need to successfully foster. However, we greatly appreciate any help you can provide in supplying items for your foster cat(s). Here are some of the essential supplies you will need during your foster term.

- Stainless or ceramic bowls. One for food, and at least one for water. Each cat should have their own food bowl. Water bowls can be shared.
- Kitten milk replacer (KMR) and bottles with nipples
- Hill's Science Diet adult and kitten dry cat food
- Hill's Science Diet kitten wet food
- Litterbox and litter. A couple of low-sided litter boxes for the babies
- Scratching posts or trays, a variety is always good
- A bed or blankets
- A crate large enough for mother cat to be able to stand up and turn around or for all kittens to be comfortable in
- Treats & toys
- Towels and wipes
- Scale
- Thermometer
- Paper ID collars for kittens
- Heat disk(s)
- Journal or a consolidated place to document weights and other medical/behavioral notes
- Rescue disinfectant

ACS covers all medical care expenses for foster cats when performed at ACS on-site veterinary clinic, or at other veterinary clinics approved in advance with records of the visit(s) being submitted to the ACS vet team or staff.

If your foster animal needs to go to the vet, please call the Adoption Counselor at 570-596-2200 ext. 302 or email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email. Please note, seeking veterinary care for your foster cat(s) at a clinic other than ACS is not permitted without explicit ACS staff approval. Please contact the adoption counselor.

Items to keep track of

- Food
- Food/water bowls
- Litter
- Litter box
- Toys
- Scratchers/scratch trees

Expenses such as medical care and supplies not pre-approved by ACS cannot be reimbursed. However, these expenses may be considered a tax-deductible donation. Keep all approved purchase receipts and turn them in at the end of your foster term.

Always consult a tax professional to determine whether your foster expenses are tax-deductible.

Cat/Kitten Proofing Your Home: Cat-proofing your home is much the same as childproofing it; hiding or removing cords, removing small items that cats can choke on, chew on, etc. Even if the cat(s) has previously lived in a home, we don't know how they will respond to a new home like yours.

Your foster cat(s) should have a designated spot in the house that is solely reserved for them. You can call it your foster room. Resident pets should not have access to this area. A bathroom is a good example. Wherever the space may be for your foster cat(s), scan the room and remove access to items the cat(s) may potentially hurt themselves with. Ideally, the space should only consist of necessities (food, water, bedding, litterbox, toys, kitten supplies). Just ensure none of the cats can get into the items such as formula or food. Cats love to bat items around, they like to chew, and can squeeze into the tiniest of spaces! The room should also be relatively warm and draft free. A bathtub or kiddie pool in another room is a perfect place for mother cat and kittens to stay.

Some specific examples of cat-proofing your home:

- Block off any spaces the kittens could crawl into and become stuck
- Keep toilet lids closed
- Ensure any cleaning supplies and toiletries is out of kittens/cats reach
- Cover trash cans and place them inside a closet or space the cat(s) can't get into
- Store people and pet food in a place out of the cat(s) reach or in a closed plastic container
- Ensure all plants are out of reach from the cat(s). Many house plants are toxic to pets
- Keep medications and self-care products in a secure location not accessible by the cat(s)
- Make sure any small animals like hamsters, fish, etc. are out of reach and secure in their enclosures
- Secure cords for cellphones and other electronics, knickknacks, and other valuables from your foster cat. Don't leave hair ties, buttons, string, toothpicks, or anything small enough for your foster cat to ingest laying around. They may eat these objects and it could be harmful.

MOTHER AND KITTENS

Nursing Area: It's so important to provide a clean and safe environment for mother cat and kittens. As stated above, if you can designate a room like a bathroom that can be easily disinfected, this is what ACS highly recommends. Try to eliminate housing foster cats in a room that has carpeting. If your foster(s) come down with a contagious illness, it's nearly impossible to remove the pathogens from carpeting.

We encourage you to have your foster room set up for the mother and kittens before their arrival. This room should be quiet, have low traffic, and be a room where resident pets, kids, and other traffic doesn't interfere. Sometimes, stress can cause a mother cat to become aggressive or to not care for her babies properly.

Wherever your foster room may be, there should be a large enough area for the mother cat to comfortably nurse her kittens. If a bathtub isn't available, a kiddie pool might be a good option. The nursing area should be large enough for the mother cat to lie on her side slightly away from her all her kittens. The mother cat should be able to remove herself from the nursing area with ease, however kittens shouldn't be able to get out on their own. You can line the bottom of the area with puppy pads or newspapers and cover it with soft blankets or towels. Blankets are a good option because they are easy to clean and nice to lay on! Check on the nursing area regularly for moisture and cleanliness. If any of the bedding including puppy pads/newspaper gets wet or dirty, it should be replaced as soon as possible.

When you bring the mother cat and kittens home, put them in their designated area, close the door, and let mom explore the area on her own. Give her at least a couple of hours before going back into the room. Allow her the time to decompress. Each cat is an individual and can take anywhere from 3 days to 3 weeks or more to feel comfortable.

Feeding & Care: Pregnant and nursing mother cats should eat high-quality **kitten food**. We'll provide you with Hill's Science Diet kitten food to get you through your foster term. Always keep the mother's food bowl full and let her eat as much as she wants. Some moms will eat two to three times their normal diet while they're pregnant or nursing. Documenting her appetite in your journal and/or the foster portal is important and recommended!

After the kittens have been weaned from nursing, mom can start transitioning back to her normal adult dry cat food at the normal amount. Your Adoption Counselor can provide you with the transition information.

The mother cat should take care of her kittens on her own for at least 3 – 4 weeks before she starts the weaning process. This includes feeding, bathing, and stimulating to eliminate. There are certain milestones the kittens should hit during the first several weeks of life. They are listed below.

Documenting these milestones in your journal and/or the foster portal is highly recommended. Behavior of mom, appetite of mom and kittens, weights of babies as they grow, etc....

1. From **birth to 4 days**, the kittens' eyes and ears are closed, they sleep 90% of their time, and should be minimally handled. Within 2 – 3 days, the umbilical cord falls off. They should also begin to purr at around 4 days. Their ideal weight should be around 2 - 4 ounces.
2. At **one to two weeks old**, kittens depend on their mother to initiate feeding; waking her kittens up by licking them. Their eyes and ears should be open and healthy kittens should be round and warm with pink skin and will rarely cry. Their ideal weight should be around 8 ounces.
3. **Two to three weeks**, the kittens begin to explore their nesting area, start crawling and playing with littermates, and interacting with mom. It is during this stage in life they will also start to initiate the nursing process themselves. The mother cat should comply and allow the kittens to nurse. She will also groom her kittens frequently for the first two to four weeks. A big part of her care is to stimulate her babies to eliminate and will most likely consume the fecal matter and urine. As the babies become more mobile and independent, they will likely start eliminating on their own. If mom doesn't clean up their mess, be prepared for some clean up! If mom is not stimulating her babies, see page 12 - stimulation. You should also notice their baby incisors erupting. Regular handling can begin. Ideal weight should be around 12 ounces.
4. Around **four weeks** of age, the kittens baby canine teeth erupt, they should start to walk although might be a bit wobbly. They should begin weaning off nursing and mom should discontinue initiating the kittens to nurse. However, the kittens can and still might want to nurse and it's normal to see mom nursing either standing up or lying down. Four-week-old kittens are ready for gruel – a mixture of formula and kitten wet food. This is also a good time to introduce a litter box to them. The sides of the litter boxes should be low enough for the kittens to easily get in and out of. The kittens will watch mom using her litterbox and should learn from her on how to use it themselves. Ideal weight is around 1 pound. You can offer a plate of Hill's Science Diet kitten dry food around **five weeks** of age.
5. **At six weeks** of age, kittens should be growing their premolars in. They should be running, playing, using the litterbox, and grooming themselves. Kittens should be eating dry kitten food supplemented with canned wet food. Ideal weight should be around 1.5 pounds.
6. **At eight weeks**, the kittens are typically ready for their intake exams, spay/neuter surgeries and can most likely be placed up for adoption! Their ideal weight should be around 2 pounds. The Adoptions Counselor can coordinate a good time that works for you to bring mama and kittens in for their appointments.

Aspcapro.org

If any of the above milestones are not being met, or you are seeing any of the below abnormal signs with kittens, please contact your Adoption Counselor at 570-596-2200 ext. 302, or email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email.

When fostering a mother cat, one of the most important things to do is observe her behavior. Watch her throughout each day and observe how she interacts with her kittens to spot any abnormalities. It is important for newborn kittens to nurse as soon as possible after birth. If they are having a hard time finding mom's nipple on their own, put their mouth close to one and hold them until they begin nursing.

Visually confirm each kitten is latching onto mom's nipple. Logging the kitten's weight each day will help determine appropriate weight gain. A healthy kitten should be gaining a little weight each day. When a kitten is done nursing, their bellies should be round and full of milk.

Kittens should be spending 90% of their time eating and sleeping during their first two weeks of life. If you notice a kitten crying during or after they eat, the kitten may not be receiving adequate milk or may be becoming ill. Because newborn kittens have compromised immune systems and are prone to infections, if you notice excessive crying or any of the abnormal signs below, please contact your adoption counselor immediately.

- Frequent crying/restlessness
- Weakness/loss of weight/shallow or labored breathing
- Coldness/diarrhea/dehydration

Supplemental Feeding for Nursing Kittens with Mom: As mentioned above, sometimes there are issues with kittens receiving the proper amount of milk even when mom is trying her best! Your adoption counselor can determine if supplemental feeding may be appropriate. Animal Care Sanctuary will provide Kitten Milk Replacer for your kittens that may need to be fed 1 – 3 times a day.

Please read the instructions on the KMR container when determining how much to feed. The temperature of the milk replacer shouldn't be any hotter than the temperature of your skin. A drop of milk on the inside of your wrist should feel warm and comfortable. You can place the prepared bottle in a cup or bowl of warm water to heat the mixed KMR.

*****WHEN BOTTLE FEEDING KITTENS, DO NOT HOLD THEM ON THEIR BACKS OR SQUEEZE THE BOTTLE WHILE FEEDING. THIS IS TO AVOID ASPIRATION, CHOKING, OR DEVELOPING PNEUMONIA*****

The amount of KMR you feed to kittens will be determined by if the kittens are still nursing from their mother. Generally, 1/3 to 1/2 of the recommended amount on the KMR container. Keeping recorded daily weights of kittens will help in determining if you're feeding the proper amount as well. Supplemental feeding may continue until the kittens are ready to transition to kitten food (around 5 weeks old).

If your kittens are candidates for a complete KMR diet, the recommended feeding amounts should be followed. Kittens less than two weeks of age should be fed every 2 to 4 hours. Kittens 2 to 4 weeks typically are fine being fed every 4 to 6 hours. If the kittens are sleeping, wait to feed them until they wake up hungry. No need to wake them from sleeping to eat.

Unfortunately, some kittens may die no matter how well you or their mother takes care of them. Always keep a close eye on mom and kittens and document details. Contact the adoption counselor as soon as possible in the event a kitten passes away and remember, you tried your best. If a kitten passes away, please place them in a plastic bag and set them in your freezer until you can bring them to ACS.

Important Things to Keep in Mind:

- Please give the mother cat and her kittens privacy throughout the nursing process. There should be only one to two people designated to check on her. This can be a stressful process and keeping external stress levels to a minimum is important to the care she provides for her young. Keeping additional stress to a minimum also minimizes the chances of the kittens becoming sick.
- It's a good idea to take mom's temperature daily during the first two weeks after delivering her litter. Temperatures 103.5 degrees F or over are concerning, and mom should be seen by a vet.
- If mom will let you handle her kittens, weigh each one daily to make sure they are gaining weight. Identify the kittens from one another by putting a paper ID collar on each one. Give them names or numbers to help identify each kitten if the collars are white.
- The kitten's best chance of survival is to stay with their mom. Please DO NOT separate the kittens from their mom for any reason and DO NOT supplement the mother's milk with formula, unless specified by the Adoptions

Counselor. If you have concerns about mom not feeding her kittens enough, please call or email your Adoption Counselor.

- Sometimes, nursing mothers can develop mastitis, which is where the mammary glands become inflamed and harden causing a very painful infection for the mama. Watch for a fever and abnormal inactivity. This typically happens after the kittens have been weaned and are eating on their own. Although this is not an emergency, if you are seeing signs of mastitis, please contact your adoption counselor.

Maternal Aggression Towards Other Animals and People: As stated previously, please do NOT introduce your foster mom or kittens to any other animals in the home. They should have a room to themselves that's private, quiet, and has no traffic. Mother cats have a maternal instinct to protect their babies and seeing another animal may make her feel threatened. With or without the presence of another animal, a mom cat might growl, swat, hiss, or even bite at people. Take this seriously but not personally. Mom is just trying to protect her babies. DO NOT try to correct these behaviors with any sort of punishment. She is not wrong in expressing these behaviors and is only acting out of instinct. Correcting her could potentially cause her aggression to escalate. Give mom time to decompress after any spike in stress. Do not try to comfort her and leave her alone for at least 30 minutes.

Maternal Neglect: Neglect can and may happen with the mother cat towards her kittens. It's important to keep a close eye on mom and babies ensuring she is taking care of each one of them. There are several reasons why mom might neglect her babies: might be due to a birth defect or weakness in the kitten, inexperience to being a mom, or being in a stressful environment are a few examples.

Please contact your adoption counselor at 570-596-2200 ext. 302, email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email if any of the above situations take place or you have concerns.

KITTENS WITHOUT A MOM – ORPHANED KITTENS

Please remember, kittens are very fragile and can die regardless of how well we take care of them. Even if they have their mom to do the best job, they still may not make it. All you can do is try your best. In the unfortunate event that a kitten passes away, please contact the Adoptions Counselor by calling 570-596-2200 ext. 302 or by emailing adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email.

Housing: A clean and safe environment for your foster kittens is essential. ACS recommends keeping them in a large cat or dog crate, a kiddie pool, or bathtub that can be easily disinfected, inside of a room you can close the door. Try to eliminate housing foster cats in a room that has carpeting. If your foster(s) come down with a contagious illness, it's nearly impossible to remove the pathogens from carpeting. The kittens should have a quiet, low traffic, and private room to themselves where resident pets, kids, and other traffic doesn't frequent.

It's not a bad idea to have everything in one spot that is close, if not in the same room, where the kitten(s) will be staying. If you're keeping supplies in the same room, please ensure the kittens cannot access them. In the event you are bottle feeding kittens, consider what supplies you will be using frequently and consider locating the supplies in a convenient spot for quick access to reduce the amount of foot traffic into the foster room. Just ensure they do not have access to the items.

Kitten Care & Feeding: Kittens should be spending 90% of their time eating and sleeping during their first two weeks of life. If you notice a kitten crying during or after they eat, the kitten may not be receiving adequate nutrition or may be becoming ill. Because newborn kittens have compromised immune systems and are prone to infections, if you notice excessive crying or any of the abnormal signs below, please contact your adoption counselor immediately.

- Frequent crying/restlessness
- Weakness/loss of weight/shallow or labored breathing
- Coldness/diarrhea/dehydration

We highly encourage documenting as much data as possible in your journal and/or the foster portal. Accurate data is vital in relaying information to ACS staff, catching potential problems, and identifying when positive progress is being made. Some important data to keep track of:

- Daily AM/PM weights
- Feeding schedule
- Amount of food offered vs. how much was eaten
- Activity/temperament of kittens
- Daily temperatures
- Condition of urine and feces

Identify kittens from one another by putting a paper ID collar on each one. Give them names or numbers to help identify each kitten if the collars are white.

Kitten Development: The following is general information about what to expect at each stage of development. Remember that these are averages. Please weigh your kittens regularly to keep an eye on their development. Daily is best for the first 3 weeks or at any time if the kittens get sick. Otherwise, every 2-3 days is fine. Kittens should gain about four ounces per week, on average.

Newborn	Completely dependent on mother. Eyelids closed, ears folded forward – cannot see, or hear. Sense of smell is the first to develop completely and is the most developed sense of birth.
2-3 Days	Umbilical cord falls off.
One Week	Eyes begin to open – all kittens have blue eyes. Kittens huddle together for security and warmth.
10 Days	Ears unfold, hearing will develop. Can move along with belly on the ground, “paddling” limbs for movement.
Two Weeks	Being to play with littermates, learning how to socialize. Can stand and balance, but cannot walk easily. Teething begins. Eyes are fully open.
16-18 Days	Incisors (tiny front teeth) break through.
20-24 Days	Canine teeth break through.
Three Weeks	Mobile and eager to explore, making mock-aggressive rushes and stalking littermates. Cannot retract claws. Weigh the kittens regularly to keep an eye on development. Should be played with and handled at least 1 hour every day for good socialization.
24-28 Days	Molars begin to break through.
Four Weeks	Introduce solid food in 3-4 small meals per day. Begin litter box training. Will begin wrestling with littermates. Will receive first deworming (Strongid). Ask the Adoption Counselor for help with dosing and administration.
Five Weeks	Learning to hunt by pouncing on toys and each other.
Six Weeks	Adult eye color begins to appear. First vaccination for kittens. Kittens are vaccinated against common viruses that cause upper respiratory infection and feline distemper (FVRCP). Receive second deworming.
Eight Weeks and Older	Mom and kittens need to be brought to the shelter for their scheduled surgery appointment. The exam will include: FeLV and FIV testing if not previously done, deworming if needed, spay or neuter (if weight is at least 2 pounds and kitten is healthy), microchip, treatment for fleas and ear mites as directed by the veterinarian, and possibly another vaccine. Second vaccination occurs 21 days after the first.

Keeping Warm: Kittens cannot regulate their own body temperature. As their caretaker, please ensure they stay at an appropriate body temperature. A heat disk or two will be provided for your kittens to help them maintain their body

temperature. Depending on the wattage of your microwave, the heat time will vary. Check the back of the heat disk. Typically, the heat disk should last 6 – 8 hours. Keep heat disks covered (a cover is provided) before the kittens use them. Their sensitive skin is prone to thermal burning. Below is a temperature guide for your kittens.

Age of Kitten	Rectal Temperature	Surrounding Nest Temperature	Room Humidity
0-1 Week	95-99 F	85-90 F	55 – 60%
2-3 Weeks	97-100 F	79-84 F	55-60%
4 Weeks	99-101 F	73.5-79 F	55-60%

www.maddiesfund.org

If the kitten is outside of their ideal temperature range according to the chart above, call your adoptions counselor at 570-596-2200 ext. 302 or email them at adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email.

Feeding: Young kittens need to be fed every 2 – 4 hours throughout the day and night. Kittens should be eager to eat, however might feel like skipping a meal. If any of the kittens don't eat for two consecutive meals, contact the adoptions counselor right away by calling 570-596-2200 or by emailing adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email.

Animal Care Sanctuary will provide Kitten Milk Replacer (KMR) for your kittens. Please read the instructions on the KMR container when determining how much to feed.

Making Formula

To make formula, you'll want to mix two parts water with one part formula. Mixing the powder and water until all clumps are gone is the goal. An electric whisk works best; however, a shaker bottle also works. Using a fork or spoon to break up clumps is also a good tactic.

Pre-Mixing Formula: You can pre-mix formula 24 hours in advance, however that formula is only good for that 24-hour period and should not be warmed up until it's ready to be used. The pre-mixed formula and kitten milk replacement (once opened) should always be refrigerated. Try to only heat as much formula as you need for each feeding. You cannot re-heat formula as harmful bacteria can develop. Leftover formula from feedings should also be thrown away. There's a feeding chart below that can help you figure out how much formula to prep.

Bottle feeding can be challenging! Below are some tips to help make it smooth and successful:

- Gently wrap the kitten you are feeding in a towel or blanket, instead of just using your hands. This helps the kittens feel safe and comfortable while they are eating. Be mindful that the kitten's belly is towards the floor to decrease the chances of the kitten aspirating. When wrapping the kitten, leave the front legs out and free to allow them the opportunity to kneed. Kneading helps the kitten develop necessary muscles and aids in a healthy digestive system.
- Before offering the formula to the kitten, warm it by placing the bottle in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. The temperature of the milk replacer shouldn't be any hotter than the temperature of your skin. A drop of milk on the inside of your wrist should feel warm and comfortable. You can place the prepared bottle in a cup or bowl of warm water to heat the mixed KMR. If the kitten is resistant to eating, there could be the need to make the formula warmer or cooler. It's better to air on the side of caution to see what the kitten is comfortable with.
- For the first couple of feedings, you may increase the amount of water slightly to dilute the formula to help with digestive upset.
- Check your bottle's nipple to see if formula drips from its tip. If it doesn't, you'll need to widen the hole. You can do this by using a hot needle to poke a larger hole or use a razor blade to make a small "x" in the top. Do not make it too wide – you only want the formula to drip slowly, not pour, out of the nipple. Kittens can aspirate (fluid into the lungs) very easily by ingesting too much too soon.

- Kittens should always stay warm with supplemental heat until they can regulate their own body temperature. This is especially important for feeding time. Feeding a “cold” kitten can have serious health consequences.

The digestive system of kittens is fragile. Do not offer the kittens any treats or human food. Only feed them the food provided by Animal Care Sanctuary. It is important not to overfeed or underfeed your kittens. Overfeeding can cause serious health problems that begin with diarrhea, and end with dehydration. One way to tell whether you’re consistently feeding too much is the appearance of grayish stool. On the other hand, a kitten who is not fed enough will cry continuously, appear restless, and then listless.

Aspiration: Aspirating can happen if the kitten takes down too much formula at once and the formula enters the kitten’s lungs. Be mindful to have the kittens in the right position (belly on or facing the floor) while feeding and to monitor the amount of formula they are ingesting. You’ll know when a kitten aspirates if liquid bubbles come out of their nose or they start coughing. Immediately stop feeding and hold the kitten’s head facing down, tail up, and gently but firmly pat the kitten’s back to get the liquid out of their lungs. They should cough or sneeze. Do not feed again until the kitten has completely cleared the fluid from their lungs, usually by sneezing. Please inform the Adoption Counselor as soon as possible if aspiration happens by calling 570-596-2200 ext. 302, emailing them directly, or emailing adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org. We can then determine if the kitten needs medical attention.

Watch this video on how to bottle feed kittens:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebDPivG16HE&t=692s>

Estimated Kitten Age (Weeks)	Kitten Weight (lbs, oz)	Amount Per Feeding (ml)	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day
< 1 Week	2 oz	2 ml	7
	3 oz	3 ml	7
	4 oz	5 ml	7
1 week	5 oz	6 ml	7
	6 oz	7 ml	7
	7 oz	8 ml	7
2 weeks	8 oz	9 ml	7
	9 oz	10 ml	7
	10 oz	11 ml	7
3 weeks	11 oz	12 ml	6-7
	12 oz	14 ml	6-7
	13 oz	15 ml	6
4 weeks	14 oz	16 ml	5
	15 oz	17 ml	5
	16 oz (1 lb)	18 ml	5
5 weeks	1 lb, 1 oz	19 ml	4
	1 lb, 2 oz	20 ml	4
	1 lb, 3 oz	22 ml	4
	1 lb, 4 oz	23 ml	4

Stimulation: During the first 1 – 3 weeks of life, kittens do not urinate or defecate on their own and require stimulation to eliminate. When a mother cat is not present or is neglecting to stimulate, the kitten’s caretaker steps in. Gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the kitten’s genital area and anus. This should be done after each feeding. Make sure to wipe up any elimination off the kitten’s fur. Each kitten should urinate with each stimulation and pass a bowel movement at least once each day.

Keeping the kittens clean from food and feces is vital for good health. If you notice your kitten(s) has food, urine, or feces on them, gently wipe the kitten down with a warm damp cloth or baby wipe. Be sure to dry the kitten completely afterwards so they don’t become chilled. Document the color and consistency of the poo in your journal/foster portal. You’re looking for a mustard-y coloring and consistency and when the kitten is first introduced to formula.

Cleaning Equipment: Keeping the kittens' nursing bottles and supplies clean is vital as this will prevent diarrhea, vomiting, or infection. Cleaning the bottles and nursing nipples is quite easy. Using hot soapy water, clean the bottle with a bottle brush. If you do not have a bottle brush, you may wash the bottle and nipples in a dishwasher or soak them in hot soapy water before scrubbing and rinsing. Just ensure there is no leftover residue from previous feedings.

Weaning with Gruel: Weaning kittens typically begins anywhere around 3 – 5 weeks of age. You can start offering a gruel mixture – mixing two parts kitten wet food and one part KMR or water. The consistency should resemble pudding. Gruel should be offered every 4 – 6 hours and supplemental bottle feeding may be necessary if they are not eating the gruel. As they continue to eat the gruel, the mixture should gradually be offered at a thicker consistency to help them prepare for solid food. Do not save leftover gruel mixture – throw it away and prepare fresh for each feeding. Watch the kittens with the gruel to ensure they don't "drown" themselves. Spreading the mixture out on a plate for them is helpful. If the kittens need encouragement to eat the gruel, place a small amount on your finger and then on the kitten's tongue or lips. Always have a shallow bowl of water accessible to all transitioning kittens.

Continuing to weigh kittens daily will help you determine if they may need supplemental feeding. Be prepared to offer a bottle every 8 hours at this stage.

Litter Box: As the kittens are transitioning to gruel, this is a good time to offer a litterbox. One with shallow sides to help them get in and out easily. After the kittens are done eating, place them in the litter box. They should learn how to use the litter box very quickly. If the kittens defecate outside of the box, place the feces in the litter box. If you notice the kittens haven't been eliminated either in or out of the box, you will most likely need to continue stimulating them until they start to go on their own. Once the kittens are using the litter box consistently, please clean it daily or more to keep it clean.

Eating Independently: As your kittens reach 5 – 8 weeks old, they should be eating on their own. At this stage, the kittens should be offered wet food 3 times throughout the day. Dry kitten food and water should always be provided as well. Because kittens are messy, you may need to replace their water several times a day. Keep all bowls, food, and living quarters always clean.

You want to continue weighing the kittens at least once a day, if you can, around the same time each day. Having a consistent routine will drastically help with the growth and development of the kittens, as well as precise data. Monitor their energy levels, appetite, elimination, and overall health.

Socializing Your Foster Kittens: Now that the kittens are fully independent and active, it's very important to socialize with them and enrich their little brains! Exposing them to new situations and environments is essential to their personality development.

- Since the kittens are bigger now, you may want to keep them in a larger dog crate while you're not there to supervise them. Keep the crate inside of the cat proof room that is covered with a blanket to help them feel more comfortable. Placing a couple of hidey boxes (cardboard is perfect) will also help them feel more secure. Make sure the kittens continue to eat well and seem comfortable through the socialization period.
- At 8 weeks of age, the kittens should have received their first set of vaccines. They can explore the cat proof room under supervision; keeping them confined when not.
- Using mealtime to help socialize the kittens will make the process much more pleasant for everyone. You can offer them food from your hand or place it in between each other so they are encouraged to step towards you to eat. Eventually, you want the kittens to eat while in your lap. Once they are at this stage, you can pet them while they're eating. Start with their head and shoulders, eventually getting them comfortable with you by touching their body and then being able to pick them up.
- Keep socialization periods short. Somewhere around 3 – 5 minutes a session is better than one or two longer sessions. Once the kittens are confident and comfortable with you, others can join in on the fun. Have other people go through the same process with the kittens. You can also use this time to play with them using cat toys.

- As they progress, you can begin introducing them to other objects, noises, and surroundings. Just don't allow or encourage play biting or scratching your hands, feet, or any other part of your body. This will continue as they age and become painful when they are grown.
- Please do not underestimate the importance of washing your hands before and after handling kittens.

Semi-Feral Socialization

Semi-feral kittens are a special challenge. These kittens can be socialized, but only with daily handling. Sometimes they will hiss and spit when you attempt to pick them up. Gently pick them up and hold them close to your body, giving them a sense of security. Speak softly as you pet them. These kittens need plenty of reassurance and attention. Do not give them a room in which they can hide from you. They need a box or crate in which to feel secure, but you must always have access to them. They will not become socialized unless they are handled many times each day. They need to become accustomed to the sights and sound of people and a working home. This should be done gradually but consistently.

The Adoptions Counselor will schedule the following vaccines and treatments with you as they are due:

Vaccines: FVRCP – Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia (URI and Distemper) is given every 3 weeks starting at 6 weeks of age, until 16 weeks of age, and then annually. Adult mother cats will receive their FVRCP upon intake with a booster 3 weeks later. Rabies is given at 12 weeks of age by a vet, and then annually. The mother cat should already be vaccinated for Rabies before she goes into your care.

We will let you know when your foster cat is due for their next vaccines! Thank you for bringing them in for these.

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to: Limping, Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for 1-2 days, Lethargy, Pain at the sight of injection, Unwillingness to play, Low-grade fever. If any of these symptoms do not improve 48 hours after the injection, please contact the adoptions counselor. A more serious reaction happens instantaneously and includes severe vomiting, diarrhea, facial swelling, and difficulty breathing. The kitten(s) will need to be seen by a vet immediately.

Treatments: Flea and Tick Prevention is given when kittens reach 2 pounds. Dewormer is given at 4 weeks of age every 10 days for 40 days. Please let us know when the cats receive these treatments through your foster portal.

Health Concerns: The following is a list of common medical issues you may encounter as a foster parent with your cat. This information is not meant to be extensive, just to give you an idea of what common ailments you may come across. Please refer to the Foster Emergency Protocol for additional details.

If your foster cat displays any of the following symptoms, please email the Adoptions Counselor at adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken/bleeding nails • Adverse reaction to medication • Incidence of aggression • Limping • Noticeable hair loss • Dirty/Stinky ears | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watery/Gunky Eyes • Normal/Congested Cough • Normal/Congested Sneezing • Nasal or Ocular Discharge (Note Color) • Straining to Eliminate/Blood in Urine • Worms in feces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open surgical site/Picking at sutures • 1 or multiple incidences of vomiting • 1 or multiple incidents of diarrhea • Low appetite for multiple meals • Wound (open/exposed) • Itchiness/Skin irritation |
|--|---|--|

The following situations we consider to be an emergency, please contact:

570-596-2200 (ACS main line, available 7:30 – 6:00 Monday – Saturday, 7:30 – 4:00 Sunday)

Email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org

- Lost animal
- Animal bite (broken skin)
- Profuse bleeding
- Unresponsive
- Ingestion of something toxic/Foreign object
- Seizure/disorientation
- Extreme lethargy/Laying lateral
- Heavy/Labored breathing
- Continuous vomiting/Diarrhea
- Can't stand/Walk
- Severe injury
- Aggressive behavior/feeling unsafe

Please have the following specifics ready to give when reporting any of the above:

- Energy level
- Eating frequency
- Drinking frequency
- Defecation Frequency
- Urination Frequency
- Start date of symptoms
- Anything else unusual
- Current medications (if applicable)
- Interaction with other animals (if applicable)
- What was happening before the incident, how it happened, and who witnessed it
- Include Picture (if applicable)

ACS covers all approved medical expenses for the cats and kittens in the shelter's foster program. General medical care for ACS foster cats is provided by the ACS community clinic. Once a foster cat or kitten is in your care, you are responsible for transporting him or her to the shelter veterinarian for necessary medical care. Always use a secure carrier, designed specifically for companion animals, when transporting cats. Should foster cats require services from a full-service veterinary practice, ACS will arrange appointments with approved veterinarians in the East Smithfield Area. Foster parents must not medicate or shave any cats in their care without prior approval from their mentor.

Advertising Fosters on Social Media: If you're on Facebook, we would love for you to post your foster cats as soon as 6 weeks of age to help find them homes as soon as possible. When posting on social media we ask that you keep all posts clean, upbeat and with clear pictures as well as a link for people to adopt at <https://animalcaresanctuary.org/adopt/>. We also ask that you do not use stop language when posting about your foster because that can often make it harder to find their forever home. Stop language is when you post that your foster must go to this type of home or can only have that type of family. Language like that tends to make people question if they would be the right fit for the foster animal and they tend to move on to the next adoptee with less needs.

Facebook Group: We have a Facebook group called "ACS Foster Today". It's a public group that anyone can join and share on their personal page. It is for foster parents to post pictures and updates of their current foster fur babies to help find them their homes. We ask that you post very clear pictures and fun updates weekly at a minimum. This will help us reach a wider range of adopters to see your foster animal and how well they do in your home.

Picture Tips: Making high pitched sounds will often get the cats' attention, having a treat or toy in hand to get the cats' attention also captures a great photo! Cats being goofy, snuggling with other critters, or just being cute are all great ways to get their personality out there as well. Some great examples below:



Sibling shot



Face shot



Body shot

If you're not on Facebook, please be sure to e-mail photos to the adoptions counselor's direct email or to adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org so we are able to transfer them to our ShelterLuv database. And keep updating us on their personalities for us to write their biographies.

Adoption from Foster: The adoption process is very simple! Any interested adopter should start by filling out the adoption form on our website www.animalcaresanctuary.org/adopt/. From there, our adoption counselor will reach out and have a conversation with the potential adopter and ensure the cat is a good match for them and vice versa.

Once everyone is good to go, we'll connect you with the potential adopter and between the two of you, you can decide where the best meeting place can be. Please let your adoption counselor know the day and time of the meeting. During the meet and greet, if the adopter would like to take the cat home with them, we'll just have you go over the Adoption Contract and other paperwork prepared for you in the blue adoption bag.

The adoption counselor will also follow up with the adopter to ensure they understand the contract, medical history, and other paperwork included in the adoption process.

Once the paperwork is complete, the adoption counselor can text a link to the adopter's cell phone to finalize the adoption through our ShelterLuv database. It's that simple!

As always, we are more than happy to conduct all adoption processes on site if you prefer. Just let us know!

Refer to the Adoption from Foster sheet sent to you in the welcome email for further information.

Adoption Fees:

Kitten \$85 (6 months and under) + 2 Fur Deal (second adoption fee waived when adopting two kittens)

Adult Cats (over 6 months old) \$70

Senior Cats (over 7 years old) \$25

Some adoption fees have also been sponsored. We will let you know if your foster animal has been sponsored!

Bringing Cats Back to the Shelter:

- The Adoptions Counselor will coordinate with you when your fosters should come back to ACS or you can email adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org/direct email of your adoption counselor or call 570-596-2200 ext. 302 to make an appointment for your cat to return to the shelter. This will ensure there is a communal space ready for their arrival.

- Bring in any medical records, old or new, and other paperwork sent with you at time of pick up.
- Please bring the completed Foster Home Report for your foster cat(s) – we will ask you additional questions once you arrive back at ACS. Please allow at least 30 minutes for this appointment upon returning to ACS with the cat.
- Please bring all supplies that you have borrowed from the shelter for the duration of your foster term.

Cleaning and Disinfecting During and After Foster Groups: Common diseases you might run into when fostering animals are viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi. Keeping the foster room and space thoroughly clean and disinfected is important to mitigate potential spread of diseases. Anything the fosters had contact with should be disinfected daily as well. A deep clean of foster spaces and items should be done when your fosters leave.

To further help decrease the chances of spreading infectious diseases during and after your foster terms, set up an isolation area for foster animals, practicing good hand hygiene before and after handling animals and objects, cleaning, and disinfecting items in the foster space.

Please refer to the Rescue Disinfection Protocol for Foster Care for details on proper disinfection. Found as an attachment in the welcome email as well as in your foster take home folder.



Emergency Contacts:

570-596-2200 (ACS main line, available 7:30 – 6:00 Monday – Sunday)

Feline Adoption Counselor direct line: 570-596-2200 ext. 302
adoptions@animalcaresanctuary.org