

KITTEN FOSTER INFORMATION PACK



Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners
Public Safety Department
Animal Care and Control Division



PALM BEACH COUNTY ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL
KITTEN FOSTER PROGRAM



Welcome to our Kitten Foster Program.

We're so excited for you to join us and we're extremely grateful for your help!

Every year, we receive countless kittens who need our help. Due to the extra care that they need, these kittens are of some the most at-risk pets in our shelter. This information pack has been designed to answer some of the more common questions you may have about fostering such as:

- 🐾 What is a foster parent?
- 🐾 What is the fostering process like?
- 🐾 How do I set up my kittens safely?
- 🐾 What are my responsibilities?
- 🐾 How do I keep my kittens healthy?
- 🐾 What symptoms should be watched?
- 🐾 How do I care for kittens?
- 🐾 How do I socialize and handle my kittens?
- 🐾 What if I want to adopt?
- 🐾 How can I help my kittens get adopted quickly?
- 🐾 How do I contact someone if I need help?



Fostering kittens can be a lot of work. However, it is also extremely rewarding and our staff are here to support you whenever you need it. By fostering kittens, you are saving their lives and helping them find their forever homes.

**Thank you so much for fostering with
Palm Beach County Animal Care & Control!**

**What is a
foster parent?**

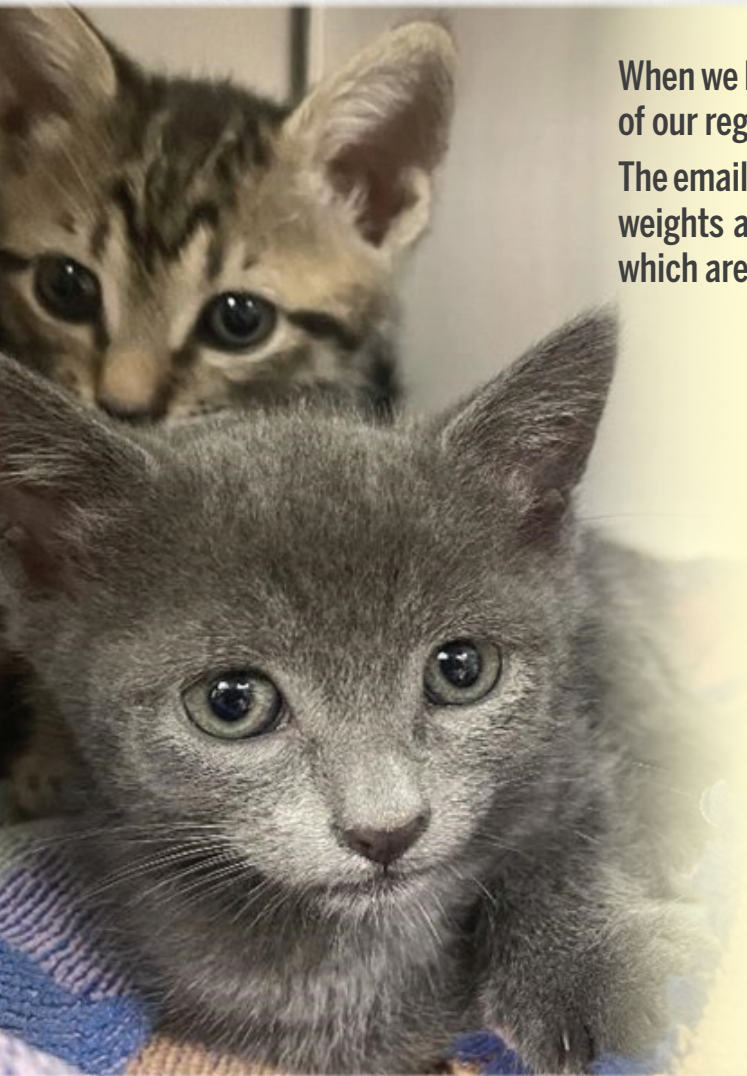
Foster parents provide a temporary home for kittens for up to several weeks, until they are ready for adoption. Typically, this means reaching 2lbs, being healthy enough to be adopted, and getting a new name!



Foster parents are incredibly important because they care for kittens who are not in our adoption program due to being underweight, sick, or in need of socialization. Foster parents are a direct extension of the shelter and that is why it is such an important job in our community. Additionally, foster parents help us save more lives by freeing up space and resources at the shelter to help other needy animals.



What is the fostering process like?



When we have kittens in need of foster, we will send out an email to all of our registered Feline Fosterers.

The email will state the approximate ages of the kittens, their genders, weights and litter sizes. It will also include their Animal ID numbers which are unique to each kitten.

Reply to this email with:

1. How many kittens you can take (single vs litter) so we can pair you with kittens that best fit your care level and preferences.
2. What supplies you need.
3. When you will be at the shelter to pick them up. We need to be able to schedule your arrival so we can put the memos in and get everything ready for you. Fosters are accepted on a first-come first-served basis and they should be picked up from the shelter within 24 hours.

We will provide you with everything needed to care for the foster kitten:

- 🐾 food and bowls
 - 🐾 litter boxes and litter
 - 🐾 toys
 - 🐾 a carrier if needed
 - 🐾 any medications kittens are taking
 - 🐾 scale and weight sheet
 - 🐾 a kitten “warmie”

All we ask from you is that you monitor their health, bring them back to the shelter for rechecks and medical care and let us know right away if you see anything concerning.

How do you setup kittens safely?



For kittens and young cats, we recommend limiting them to one room, such as the bathroom or guestroom. Otherwise it can be overwhelming and stressful for them. We recommend getting the room set up and ready as much as possible before coming to pick kittens up. This helps to ease the stress on everyone!

As with any change, the first day or two can be a little bumpy. Be patient, go slow and give the newcomer(s) time to adjust to their new environment. And remember, if you have any questions or run in to any problems, we are here to support you.

What are my responsibilities?

Your responsibilities as a foster include:

- 🐾 Providing the basics for a healthy and happy kitten - shelter, fresh food and fresh water 2-4x per day, clean litter boxes 1-2x daily, grooming, enrichment, and love daily.
- 🐾 All cats and kittens must be kept indoors and must be kept separate from any resident pets.
- 🐾 Monitor their weight and general health. Use the scale and sheet provided to record their weight every day.
- 🐾 Transporting your foster to and from the shelter for all shelter appointments.
- 🐾 Let us know immediately if you notice any problems or issues. If in doubt, just bring them to the shelter.

How do I keep my kitten healthy?



Kittens are fragile so it's really important that you watch their behavior closely and monitor their health every day. You will be given a form to record your kitten's weight, eating habits and overall health. Please weigh them every day to ensure that they are growing and make a note of their weight on your form. If you notice that your kitten is not gaining weight or is losing weight, please contact the clinic immediately. Even if your kitten is eating well but not gaining weight, they should be seen by the clinic as soon as possible.

Keep your kittens warm. The provided warmy can be microwaved for 4 minutes and placed under bedding in their sleeping area or crate. Warmies should be insulated by blankets, towels or bedding, and be warmed up twice a day. They should be warm, but not too hot to the touch 90°-105°.

What symptoms should be watched?

- 🐾 Generalized depression
- 🐾 Frequent crying
- 🐾 Loss of appetite
- 🐾 High fever
- 🐾 Lethargy
- 🐾 Restlessness
- 🐾 Vomiting
- 🐾 Severe diarrhea
- 🐾 Nasal discharge
- 🐾 Dehydration
- 🐾 Weakness
- 🐾 Shallow or labored breathing
- 🐾 Paleness or blueness in color
- 🐾 Sick cats may sit for long periods of time in front of their water bowls but not drink much

Remember, if you have any concerns at all about the health or well-being of your kitten, please contact the clinic at 561-233-1223

How do I care for kittens?

Your kitten might be bottle or syringe-fed by you, if so please refer to the bottle baby foster information pack.

If your kitten is a more independent eater, offer both dry and wet food to encourage eating and maximize growth, and replace the water in their dish, wiping out the dish if needed. Dry food should be available to them at all times and fresh wet food and water should be offered and refreshed 2 to 3 times per day. If kittens don't seem as interested in plain wet food, you can mix in 25%-50% water to make a wet food "slurry" which can also help increase hydration in your kittens.



Did you know?

- 🐾 Kittens younger than 4 weeks can't regulate their own body temperature. They need their mother or a "warmie" to stay healthy.
- 🐾 Kittens under 4 weeks can't retract their claws. This is to help them knead their mother to help stimulate milk production.

One of your duties will be to socialize the kitten and expose them to new situations and environments. Keep experiences positive by providing lots of cuddles and toys and reward good behavior. Playing with kittens encourages socialization and releases excess energy. You can use a variety of toys and even items such as paper bags with handles removed, or balls of scrunched-up paper can keep them entertained. Also, as cute as it may seem, try to discourage them from rough play and biting your hands and feet. This can easily develop into a habit, which future adopters may not like.

Your kitten should be using the litter box. If they are consistently missing it, please get in touch with us, as they may need some guidance on how to use it or there may even be an underlying medical issue which needs to be treated. Make sure you scoop the litter box twice daily, and monitor the kitten for diarrhea. Any signs of diarrhea should be recorded on the log sheet. If they continue to have diarrhea, please contact the clinic. They may also need a stool sample. Collecting a dime sized amount in a ziplock and noting which kitten it is from (and ID number) is very helpful.



How do I socialize and handle my kittens?



Introducing your kitten to new experiences and environments will set them up for success to find their forever home. You can follow these guidelines to positively expose them:

New people: ensure all interactions with people are positive. This will help them to become well-adjusted adult cats. New people can give them gentle pets, maybe interactive play with toys. Children should always be supervised.

New noises: exposure to normal household noise can also be helpful, but as always, it must be done in a positive way. Playing music at a low volume and gradually increasing the volume, is one way of doing this. Running the vacuum in a different room is another example. Over the course of a few days, you can move the vacuum noise closer to the kitten's room. Some kittens are naturally fearful, so just go even slower with the really timid ones!

If your kitten is not socialized at all when you bring them home, you can follow these guidelines, remembering at all times that every experience should be a positive one:

Days 1-7: Your foster kitten may be hissing, swatting, spitting and/or growling.
Activities to engage in:

- 🐾 “Burrito-wrapping” the kitten in a blanket or towel: Use gloves and a towel to handle the kitten if needed.
- 🐾 Feeding: Feed the kittens dabs of food from a dish in your hand
- 🐾 Picking up and returning: repeatedly pick up the kitten and return them to their safe space.
- 🐾 Playing: Try engaging the kitten in play with interactive toys

Days 7-14: The kitten may hiss when you approach, but responds to touching and petting.
Activities to engage in:

- 🐾 Handling: Continue handling and petting the kitten. If improvement is shown, try to move to handling other body parts, but don't go too fast.
- 🐾 More playing: Start standing and walking around while playing with the kittens, to get them used to normal human movement.
- 🐾 Cat behavior: soft eye contact, slow blinking, and talking softly to kittens are all well received social behaviors that cats like.

After 14 days: Your kitten may still be shy, but should be more comfortable with you approaching them and should no longer display defensive behaviors. If your kitten does not show improvement at all after two weeks of attempts at socialization, please email us.

What if I want to adopt?



If you fall in love with your foster, as a foster parent, you are given the first option to adopt. Each kitten needs to have sterilization surgery prior to adoption. Once your foster reaches 2 lbs., just let us know that you want to adopt and schedule them for their surgery. You will then pick up your new feline family member the next day.



How can I help my kittens get adopted quickly?

At this point, no one knows your foster kittens like you do. Tell us about their personalities, traits, likes, and dislikes. The more information we have about them, the easier it is for us to find them their perfect forever home.

- ❑ Take photos and videos of your foster pet which can be sent to us or used on your social media to help share their story.
- ❑ Write short bios for them which can be used to help promote them once they are in the adoption program.
- ❑ Connect with other Feline Fosters, share stories and ideas on our private Feline Foster group Facebook page.
- ❑ Finally, one of the most fun parts of fostering..giving them a name! Pick something fun that suits them, think about their features, their personality, etc.

How do I contact someone if I need help?

Business-Hours Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about your foster during our regular business hours, please see the contacts list on the following page. Staff can be reached Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday 8am to 5pm and Sunday 8am to 4pm.

After-Hours Emergencies
Call 561-233-1200 ext. 0

PBCACC
IMPORTANT FOSTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you so much for fostering with us. We know you’re going to have a wonderful experience and you will be saving lives! We are truly grateful for your help and we are here to support you whenever you need.

For recheck appointments or medical questions, please call:
(561) 233-1223

For urgent, after hours, medical emergencies only
(561) 233-1200, extension 0

Please explain to the dispatcher that you have a medical emergency regarding your ACC foster pet and you need to speak with a veterinary technician.

For additional foster supplies and general foster questions, email: ACCFoster@pbc.gov

PBCACC FOSTER KITTEN CARE NOTES

Foster Parent Name: _____ Animal ID: _____

Kitten Foster Name: _____ Colors: _____

Weigh your foster(s) everyday, ideally at the same time each day, before feeding (BF) or after feeding (AF)

DATE & TIME	WEIGHT	APPETITE (Poor, Fair, Good)	STOOL	ENERGY, COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS <small>*Note any changes in stool, appetite, behavior, signs of illness, etc.</small>
	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			
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	BF/AF			
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	BF/AF			
	BF/AF			

Please contact our clinic team if your foster(s) is showing any of the following: runny nose, sneezing, yellow or green eye discharge, loose or bloody stool, worms, lethargy, hair loss, not eating or drinking, or any other health concerns.

PLEASE BRING THIS FORM WITH YOU TO ALL FOSTER APPOINTMENTS



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