



# Cat & Kitten Fostering Orientation Guidelines

## Burlington County Animal Shelter and Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday 12 pm - 4pm

Thursday 12pm - 7pm

Closed on County Holidays

(609) 265-5073

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# General Information

Thank you for providing foster care for underage Burlington County Animal Shelter (BCAS) kittens and/or adult cats! The foster program is ran and maintained by Friends of Burlington County Animal Shelter ('Friends'). Kittens need foster care until they are 8-10 weeks old and they weigh 2 lbs. That is the minimum weight at which it's safe to spay or neuter them and they must be altered before we can place them up for adoption at BCAS. Returning BCAS kitten(s) for spay/neuter surgery marks the end of your foster period for that animal and a job well done! Foster periods can last for two to six weeks (depending on the age of the kittens) and foster homes are vital to these kittens. Foster times for adult cats can vary depending on the amount of space BCS has available, or how quickly an adoption can take place for the foster.

BCAS provides medical care for some foster animals. Some of our friends may need more care than foster parents can provide. Since BCAS is the organization responsible for these animals, it's important that our vet or vet techs make all treatment and medical related decisions about them. See below for important Foster Medical Information.

**Please note that if a Foster decides to take a BCAS fostered animal to a private veterinarian, BCAS reserves the right to not reimburse you for any medical costs. Non-BCAS veterinarians should not treat any BCAS animal without first seeking BCAS Management and/or BCAS Veterinarian approval stating a special exception.**

**Off-hours general inquiries for cat foster issues should be directed to the Friends Cat Foster Coordinator, with contact details provided.**

**Fosters who have an acute medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention during off hours should contact the**

**Additionally, the Burlington County Animal Shelter cannot provide you with food, litter and other supplies needed for foster animals.**

# Medical Information

BCAS Vet staff conducts regular medical checks on kittens in order to make sure they appear healthy upon arrival. Most feline illnesses have an incubation period between exposure and the onset of symptoms. Please watch your fosters carefully for any changes in their normal behavior or habits.

## Scheduling Medical Visits with BCAS Vet Staff:

BCAS Vet Services will be provided to foster animals on the following schedule:

- Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday: 10am-1pm
- Monday: 10-11 for emergencies only(no vaccines or routine care)
- Thursday: 4:30 pm-6:30 pm

Fosters seeking medical attention for their animals must first call to schedule an appointment. Scheduling must be conducted in order to reduce high numbers of Sick Kittens/Cats entering the Shelter at one time.

Additionally, Foster Vet Care times can be altered due to BCAS Clinic/Rabies Clinic scheduling. It is important that each Foster call the shelter the day of your scheduled visit to ensure that no changes have been made to the daily format.

## If your foster animal shows these symptoms, please call the shelter

Some animals do not show traditional signs of illness. They may be less active than normal, have a loss of appetite, avoid their litter box, or avoid other animals or people. Please call us if you notice any of these changes.

- Loss of appetite - Can be normal the first day as foster adjusts to a new home. If foster is not eating the second day, call that day.
- Diarrhea - If stools are soft but not watery, monitor for two days. If there is no improvement, call the third day. If stools are watery, call that day.
- Vomiting - If foster throws up food two or more times, call that day. If foster vomits bile, or liquid, or blood call that day. If vomiting is frequent, call immediately.
- Dehydration - Dehydration is generally associated with diarrhea, vomiting, and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, pinch the kitty's skin gently. If the skin springs back slowly (takes more than 1 second), the kitty is dehydrated. Call immediately-dehydration can be fatal to kittens!
- Watery, goopy or red eyes - Call that day.
- Sneezing - More than three times a day - Call that day.

- Runny nose or congested-sounded breathing - Call that day. These are often signs of an Upper Respiratory Infection -BCAS Vet Staff usually treat this condition by prescribing a week of antibiotics.
- Coughing- Call that day.
- Hair loss - Call that day.
- Itchy/dirty ears-Call that day.
- Straining to Urinate - Call that day.
- Distemper - Call Immediately.
- Fleas - Call that day.
- If your foster animal is on medication but their conditions is getting worse or not getting better as expected, please call that day.

Fosters that are seeking medical evaluations or treatment of their foster animals will be able to call and schedule an appointment during the time indicated above. Fosters who arrive at the shelter without a scheduled appointment could be asked to return on a different day.

BCAS will supply Fosters with medications for animals that are sick for 7-14 days depending on the medications needed. BCAS Vet Staff will provide the proper guidelines in writing for administering these medications to each animal. Any foster animal that remains sick beyond the 7- to 14 day treatment window should be immediately returned to BCAS for medical follow-up and evaluation by BCAS Vet Staff. Please call BCAS in advance before returning any animal.

If a BCAS Animal is in need of medical attention outside of BCAS operation hours, the Foster should contact Friends emergency contact and seek guidance.

Should a foster decide to take a BCAS animal to an outside Veterinarian for treatment, and prescribed a medication that BCAS carries, they may bring written proof from the Veterinarian of the medications needed. If BCAS carries the medication, and has enough on hand, BCAS Vet Staff may be authorized to supply the prescribed medications with the exception of Tramadol.

The following medications can be supplied by BCAS if needed/required:

1. Clavamox liquid and tablets
2. Azithromycin liquid
3. Doxycyline liquid and tablets
4. Metronidazole
5. Tobramycin Drops and Neo-Poly Ophthalmic
6. Albon liquid

Please note that if a Foster decides to take a BCAS fostered animal to a private veterinarian, BCAS reserves the right to not reimburse you for any medical costs. Non-BCAS veterinarians should not treat any BCAS animal without first attempting to seek BCAS Management and/or BCAS Veterinarian approval stating a special exception. Please contact Mandy, Kim or Theresa

from the Friends to get authorization for after-hours emergency care via the foster Facebook page or [catfoster.fobcas@gmail.com](mailto:catfoster.fobcas@gmail.com)

If you have questions or concerns about your foster animal, please contact us:

<b>BCAS Contacts</b>	<b>Friends Contacts</b>
Lisa Cliver- BCAS Animal Advocate/ Cat Foster Lead 609-265 5073 (Shelter Office) <a href="mailto:lcliver@co.burlington.nj.us">lcliver@co.burlington.nj.us</a>	Mandy DeOrnellas - Cat Foster Coordinator 609-534-3394 (Cell Phone) <a href="mailto:mandy.deornellas@friendsofbcas.org">mandy.deornellas@friendsofbcas.org</a>
Kelly Donnelly - BCAS Animal Advocate 609-265-5073 (Shelter Office) <a href="mailto:kdonnelly@co.burlington.nj.us">kdonnelly@co.burlington.nj.us</a>	Kim Sked – Assistant Cat Foster Coordinator <a href="mailto:catfoster.fobcas@gmail.com">catfoster.fobcas@gmail.com</a>
	Theresa Kopasz, President of Friends <a href="mailto:Friendsofbcas.org@gmail.com">Friendsofbcas.org@gmail.com</a>
<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/485357828336413/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/485357828336413/</a>	

# Things to Consider Before Fostering

Something to be aware of before you begin fostering is knowing and understanding that sometimes foster animals become ill and pass away in foster care. The fatality rate for kittens is high-- 1 in every 5 doesn't make it. This is the hardest thing about fostering and if this is a possibility you don't think you'd ever want to risk encountering, then perhaps volunteering at our shelter and working with the cats there might be a benefit.

We do everything we can for every litter of kittens; most of the time, that's enough for them to become big enough to go up for adoption. Sometimes it's not enough, but at least we gave that kitten a chance and provided the very best care we could. Please return the remains to the shelter should the kitten not survive.

Without foster homes, these kittens would not have survived at all. Our animal shelter is not in a position to care for a kitten(s) under 4 weeks of age for two to four weeks or longer until the kitten could go up for adoption. Although there are some 'foster kittens we cannot save, the important thing is that we try for each and every one of them.

## Letting Go

Kittens need foster care until they are 8 weeks old and/or until they weigh 2 lbs. That is the minimum weight at which it's safe to spay or neuter them and they must be altered before we can place them up for adoption at BCAS. When kittens thrive, sometimes you're faced with another challenge: it can also be hard to let go and return your kitten to the shelter to be spayed or neutered and then go up for adoption. You can always adopt a foster animal (regular adoption requirements and fees apply), but please think about whether or not you'd have difficulty returning a foster kitten before beginning to foster. As much as you may like to, it would probably not be feasible for your household to adopt every single kitten you foster!

## Before You Bring a Kitty Home

Burlington County Animal Shelter (BCAS) cats and kittens must be kept indoors.

House them in a small room, such as a bathroom, that you can keep closed off from the rest of your house. Cats and kittens acclimate to new locations slowly, and keeping them confined in a small space will make the transition to your house much easier for your foster. Another advantage to keeping them in one small area is that since they'll be set up there with food, water and litter, they will immediately learn where the litter box is and will use it! In addition, housing them in a small room will keep your foster separated from your pets, thereby helping to prevent

the spread .of known or unknown illnesses. The room should have adequate heating or cooling and good ventilation.

Having a warm spot for mama cats and young kittens is particularly important, as kittens under 3 weeks can't regulate their body temperature. Kittens should be kept in a room where they can't hide underneath or behind large furniture.

### **What will you need?**

You will need the following items to set up an appropriate space for your foster kitty:

- Food bowl for dry food
- Food bowl or saucer for canned food, if offered
- Water bowl
- Litter box- For young kittens, regular litter box sides are too high; a disposable baking pan or other low-sided pan will work well. If you have more than one cat, or have a whole litter of kittens, you will probably need multiple litter boxes. **Personal resident cats and foster kitties should not share a litter box.**
- Litter scoop
- Litter - Do not use clumping litter with kittens under 8 weeks. There is a risk that the kitten might ingest the litter. A good brand that does clump (making it easy to scoop), but isn't harmful if ingested is World's Best Cat litter.
- Box or carrier for bedding - You may want to use the carrier in which you took the kitty home. You can also use cardboard boxes cut to an appropriate size. For a mom cat nursing kittens, keeping the plastic carrier in her area is a good idea- that way she can nurse her kittens in there and have some privacy and quiet time with them. Bedding- Old towels, sheets or blankets.
- Flea comb & brush
- Toys (ping pong balls, feather wands, wadded up foil, paper bags, etc.) Scratching post
- Kitchen scale- needed for kittens under 8 weeks old only; should be sensitive to the ounce.

### **For Kittens**

- KMR-First or Second Stage
- Goat Milk is another option for formula
- Nursing Bottle and/or syringe
- Non clumping litter
- Cotton Balls
- Heating Pad



## **Cat proofing**

- Remove any potentially toxic plants, or hang them out of reach. (See attached list of toxic plants)
- Close toilet bowls.
- Check for exposed electrical cords.
- Remove breakable items that could be knocked off shelves.
- Remove small, ingestible items such as rubber bands or pieces of string.

## **Setting up**

Litter box should be as far away as possible from food and water bowls. Place bed on the floor; make sure sides are tucked in for small kittens.

# **Introducing Kitty to Your Home**

## **Introduction to the new space**

When you arrive home with the kitty take it directly to his/her room and close the door. It is best if only one or two people are present in the room when you first arrive home.

Open the door to the carrier, and let the kitty come out on her own. Sit quietly and talk to her.

The kitty may not come out until you leave the room. This is normal. The kitty may hide beneath furniture for a time - maybe even a day or two. If your kitty is hiding and not eating, be sure to call no later than the end of the second day.

## **Foster kitties and your pets**

Be certain your resident pets are up to date on their vaccinations. This is for you own pet(s) protection, as well as for the protection of foster kitties. Besides regular booster shots, an additional vaccine to consider for your resident cat if you plan to foster kittens is a feline leukemia shot. This shot will give your cat(s) additional protection against this illness, but not a must in order to foster. All kittens should be kept completely separate from your resident cats. This is for the safety of your cats. Kittens cannot be tested with high accuracy for feline leukemia or FIV until they are 6 months old. If you have a mother cat, do not let your pets near her when she is with her kittens; she is apt to be very protective.

If your foster kitty is ill, it should be kept completely separate from your resident cats and you should notify BCAS regarding the signs & symptoms of illness being shown by the foster animal.

Wash your hands with an anti-bacterial soap after handling your foster kitty, whether or not she is ill. This will help prevent spreading known or unknown illnesses to your resident pets.

Do not let your resident pets and your foster kitty share toys, eat out of the same dishes or share litter pans.

## Daily Care

### Feeding

#### Monitoring weight gain

It is a good idea to monitor young kittens' weight with a sensitive kitchen scale. Kittens typically weigh between 2 and 4 ounces at birth, and then gain about 4 ounces a week thereafter. You should weigh kittens every few days to ensure weight gain. See the kitten development chart to see weight milestones. Please call us if your foster kittens are not gaining weight.

#### Water

Fresh water should be available at all times.

#### Under four weeks

If kittens are with their mom, she will take care of feeding them. Observe mom and kittens to ensure that all the kittens are nursing. If these kittens have been separated from their mother, they need to be bottle fed.

#### Four weeks

Kittens with mom will still be nursing at this age, though mom may be beginning the weaning process.

If bottle-feeding, continue feeding formula every 4-6 hours.

Begin introducing solid food. You can use a weaning formula, such as KMR Second Step (which is recommended to be reconstituted with KMR formula). A good (and less expensive) alternative to Second Step formula is offering canned kitten food thinned with water or KMR formula to make a "kitten soup" that will be easier for the kittens to eat. Place the food in a low-sided dish or saucer. If mom is present, the kittens will generally follow her lead in eating the food. If they're on their own, you may want to put a little bit of food onto the roof of their mouths, offer them some off of a spoon and then show them the saucer until they catch on. Make sure water is available in a small bowl.

#### Five to six weeks

Bottle feeding kittens should be weaned from the bottle at this point. For kittens that were bottle fed, offer either KMR Second Step or canned food 3-4 times per day, approximately 1:-2

teaspoons per serving. For kittens that have not been bottle fed, offer 1-2 teaspoons wet food 3-4 times a day. At this age, they should be able to eat both wet and dry food. Make dry kitten food available all day. BCAS does not specifically endorse one brand of kitten food over another, however, Royal Canin Baby cat is a high-quality dry food specially formulated for kittens 4 weeks to 4 months. If they aren't interested in the dry food yet, try soaking it in water to see if that makes it easier for them to eat.

### **Seven to eight weeks**

Feed canned food 2-3 times per day.

Make dry kitten food available all day.

### **Adolescents (2 months to 1 year)**

Feed dry kitten food until at least 8 months of age, preferably to 1 year, after which you can switch to dry adult food.

If your foster is not gaining or maintaining its weight with dry kitten food, supplement with canned kitten food.

### **Nursing mothers**

Make dry kitten food available all day.

Feed 1/2 can (or more) of kitten formulated canned food twice daily if mom is not maintaining weight with dry food only. Mom can have as much food as she wants, since she has to produce so much milk for her kittens!

### **Healthy adult cats**

Feed 1/4 to 1/3 cup quality dry cat food twice daily. Finicky eaters can have access to dry food all day.

### **Potty time**

Kittens under 4 weeks do not go to the bathroom without stimulation from mom. The mom cat will lick the kittens' bottoms, and consume what they produce.

At around 3-4 weeks, mom cats will stop helping their kittens eliminate. Kittens at this time can begin to learn to use a small litter box (for example, a disposable baking pan). Some kittens will just follow mom's lead, others you might need to put in the litter box and encourage to scratch by scratching yourself or holding the kitten's paw and scratching.

To help ensure proper use of the litter box for adults and kittens, you should:

- Place in a quiet area.
- Your foster kitty and your resident cat should each have their own litter box. Some cats don't care for hooded boxes.
- Clean out the box at least once a day.

### **Fleas**

Kittens over 4 weeks and adult cats will be treated with flea meds by the Burlington County Animal Shelter (BCAS), should they have fleas and/or ticks. Foster kitties should not be flea-dipped, flea-powered, or flea-collared. These flea control products are toxic to kittens, and many adult cats have adverse reactions to them as well.

If you have a kitty less than 4 weeks with fleas, use a flea comb a few times a day to remove fleas. You may wash kittens with the original blue Dawn dish soap only. It is safe on cats and kittens and it kills the fleas. Bedding should also be washed daily until fleas are gone. You can also give young kittens a sponge bath to help remove fleas and flea waste. Be very certain kittens are dried thoroughly afterwards.

### **Grooming**

Cats and kittens over 5 weeks appreciate daily brushing with a soft bristle brush. Brushing is especially important for long-haired cats. If you are comfortable doing so, trim your foster kitty's claws (or you can always ask us to do it by making an appointment if the claws are becoming lethal weapons).

### **Medical care**

Many foster kittens and some foster cats will need to come into the shelter at some point during their stay with you for routine medical care, like a vaccination.

Kittens typically get their first combination vaccination at 6 weeks, and then require boosters again at 9 weeks and 12 weeks. Rabies vaccinations are given at 4 months.

Some foster kitties may be on medication when you take them home. Please follow medication directions that will be issued by BCAS Vet Staff very carefully. Most medications BCAS Vets prescribe for kittens are liquid antibiotics given orally.

If you are required to give your kitty pills, the easiest way to administer pills is to hold the kitty securely, open her jaws, and then place the pill as far back in her mouth as possible. After you have placed the pill in her mouth, you may want to tilt her head back slightly and hold her jaw shut for a few moments to prevent her from spitting out the pill. If your kitty has an upper respiratory infection, it is often beneficial to take the kitty in the bathroom with you while you

take a shower. The steam helps ease congestion. You can also put a humidifier in the room where the kitty is being housed.

## **BCAS Foster Animal Medical Policy**

### **Expectations of Basic Medical Care**

BCAS is responsible for providing a level of treatment and medical care to foster animals that is at minimum equal to the level of treatment and medical care that would be provided to the animals while still at the shelter.

### **Providing Treatment and Medical Care**

ONLY a qualified member of BCAS or Veterinary staff is responsible for determining a treatment plan or other course of action for a sick or injured animal while in the shelter or a foster home. For foster animals requiring continual medication or medical supplies, BCAS may require that the foster animal be brought back to the shelter for a re-assessment of the animal's condition and a review or alteration of the treatment plan before more medication or supplies are dispensed to the foster home.

BCAS may provide fosters with medications prescribed by outside veterinarians so long as the medication is in adequate supply at the shelter, and with the exception that the medication is not defined as a 'controlled substance'.

### **Availability of Services**

BCAS or Veterinary staff will only be expected to accommodate the needs of foster animals and volunteers during each employee's scheduled work hours.

BCAS Vet Services will be provided to foster animals on the following schedule:

- Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday: 11am -12pm
- Monday: No Foster Hours
- Thursday: Call for Availability

Off-hours general inquiries for cat foster issues should be directed to the Friends Cat Foster Coordinator, with contact details provided on page 5. Foster who have a medical emergency during off hours should contact BCAS Shelter Management at 609-265-5501 for further guidance.

Non-BCAS veterinarians should not treat any BCAS animal without first attempting to seek BCAS Management and/or BCAS Veterinarian approval stating a special exception.

## **Right to Humanely Euthanize**

In the case of extremely ill or injured animals, BCAS reserves the right to determine if it is in the best interest of the animal to continue medical treatment, transfer the animal to another facility's care, or if the animal should be humanely euthanized

## **Additional Veterinary Care**

In the case that additional veterinary services are desired beyond those that the shelter is able to provide, the cost of such services would fall under the direct responsibility of the individual foster. Please note that if a Foster decides to take a BCAS fostered animal to a private veterinarian, BCAS reserves the right to not reimburse you for any medical costs.

# **Socialization**

## **Socialization / Playtime**

Spend as much time as you can with your foster kitty each day. Speak softly to her, petting her and grooming her as she comes to accept you. Handle un-weaned kittens for a few minutes each day to get them accustomed to being handled by people. Handle your kitty's paws, look at their teeth and touch their ears. This will help them be comfortable with trips to the vet. For younger cats and kittens that want to play, a feather toy on a stick is popular. Avoid using your hands as toys. This can confuse your kitten about appropriate use of teeth and claws-and it can hurt when they have more teeth and sharper claws! If the cat or kitten bites or scratches you, say "Ouch" loudly, and stop moving your hand or arm. If the cat or kitten is over-stimulated, they may need a time-out. Expose kittens to different sights, sounds and people. · Introduce potentially scary experiences in small doses.

## **Training**

Cats don't respond well to punishment. For other behaviors that you want to discourage such as scratching or climbing on counters, use a spray bottle filled with water, shake a can with coins or pebbles inside, or clap your hands sharply to startle the kitty. You can also discourage scratching by spraying citrus smelling sprays or inexpensive perfumes on off-limits items.

## **How to Prepare For Your Next Litter**

After returning one litter of foster kittens, please wash bowls and litter box thoroughly to prevent spread of infection from one litter to the next. It's also important to clean the floor of foster kitten room. Friends recommends disinfecting it with a mixture of 1 part bleach 32 parts water or other cleanser with bleach and allow time for drying and airing out. The shelter uses ACCEL for disinfecting. It is not available from the shelter but you can purchase it on Amazon.

## **Returning your foster to BCAS**

Returning your foster to find his/her "forever" home is one of the hardest- but also one of the most rewarding- aspects of being a foster parent. Your foster kitty is ready to come back when she is at least 8 weeks and 2 pounds, if she was underage; or healthy, if she was sick; or more sociable, if he/she was shy. The veterinary technician should have given you an estimated date of return when you picked up your foster kitty. You may call the shelter and speak with a veterinary technician (during the specific hours listed on pg. 2) about your return date the closer to the estimated return date.

If you decide you just can't part with your foster kitty and you want to adopt her, please inform the foster coordinator before your scheduled return date. Your foster will still need to go to our spay/neuter clinic to be altered, and all normal adoption fees and adoption counseling will apply.

It is normal to feel sad when you return your foster kitty. You need to remember what a wonderful thing you did for your little foster. You gave him/her your time, your attention, and your love, and you made it possible for him/her to go to a new loving home with a family of his/her own. You are a special person to have done all that for the little stranger who came to your door.

## Kitten Development Timeline

Age	Development Milestones
Newborn	Weigh between 2 and 4 ounces (kittens gain approximately 1/4 pound, or 4 ounces, per week) Eyes and ears are closed Ears folded over
2 to 3 days	Umbilical cord drops off
4 days	Begin to purr
5 to 8 days	Ears open
7 to 10 days	Eyes open, all kittens' eyes are blue Ears begin to uncurl around day 8
10 to 14 days	Weigh approximately 8 ounces Ears and eyes open Still no teeth
2 to 3 weeks	Weigh approximately 12 ounces Baby incisors (front teeth) come in Crawling Can begin to eliminate without help from mom (around 3 weeks)
3 to 4 weeks	Weigh approximately 1 pound Baby canine teeth come in Beginning to walk but back legs are tentative and tails are held straight out behind them for balance
4 to 6 weeks	Start cleaning themselves Can begin to run Can begin to use litter box Baby premolars erupt Can begin to eat some solid food
6 to 8 weeks	Need first vaccination
8 to 10 weeks	Weigh approximately 2 pounds Ready to be spayed or neutered Ready to be adopted



# Supply List

Carrier

Towels/Blankets

Food Bowls

Litter Box/Litter

Flea Comb/Brush

Scratching Post

Nail Clippers

Q-Tips

Cleaner Toys

## **BOTTLE BABIES**

Formula/goats milk

Bottles/syringes

Cotton balls

Heating pad/rice sock

Scale

Baby wipes

Buttpaste

Dawn dish soap

# Single Kitten Syndrome

*It is the-policy of Animal Talk Rescue that kittens 5 months old or younger are adopted out in pairs/multiples unless another suitable kitten or young cat is already in the home*

*This is the healthiest for you and your kittens.*

If you've ever raised a litter of kittens or adopted a pair of them, you know how much they play together. Some of this play is painful, as confirmed by the yowling and complaining that occurs. The kittens bite and scratch each other, sometimes quite hard. All the while they are learning from one another that this behavior is not the best way to make friends! If they're lucky enough to have a mom cat around and she hears the ruckus, she will often give a warning "that's enough of that" to the kittens and they settle down.

In order to become well-socialized cats, kittens need to learn appropriate behavior from one another. A human is not a substitute or a feline companion. You can provide attention and love but there is simply no way you can replicate the play behavior of the species. If they don't learn limits in their play as youngsters, they often develop inappropriate playful aggression. In other words, it may be cute when a kitten attacks your ankles when you walk by or playfully nips at your fingers while you're playing. It will be much less cute, not to mention annoying and painful, when your cat is full grown.

Single kittens adopted into homes without other young cats frequently develop behavioral problems. Kittens are often returned to shelters because of litter box problems. Litter box habits are learned at an early age and kittens actually play a large part in teaching each other how to faithfully go to the proper place when nature calls.

Kittens are also returned because of aggressive play biting. Cat behaviorists now believe that kittens raised without kitty companionship transfer the playful biting behavior, which is so important in developing proper manners, to their humans.

Two kittens playing together is one of the most entertaining activities in the world, both for you and for the kittens. Having two cats will also ensure that they are not lonely when you are away from home. A lonely cat can become neurotic and will sometimes let his/her owner know about their unhappiness by destructive behavior or inappropriate urination. This is not something most people would like to risk.

If you feel you are unable to care for two kittens, we strongly encourage you to consider one of the wonderful adult cats needing a home. Many of these are young mothers and scarcely more than kittens themselves. They're still very playful and entertaining and have learned good kitty manners from being around other cats.

Remember, the difference between a cat and a kitten is only about six months. A happy cat can bring you joy and companionship for twenty years or more. It's well worth laying a good foundation in their early months. The payback is tremendous.

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# Fading Kitten Protocol

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometime one that was previously healthy, "crashes" and begins to fade away. If not dealt with immediately, it can result in death.

Symptoms:

- Low Body Temperature -the kitten feels cooler or cold to the touch
- Extreme Lethargy- not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/Crying out

When this happens, it is vital that you take these immediate steps! It is caused by 2 things:

Hypothermia {being too cold) and Hypoglycemia {not enough blood sugar).

Step 1- Get them warm:

- Create the "burrito" towel. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving their face exposed only. Their whole body, tail, ears, and paws should be in the towel, only nose and mouth exposed. Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust them, check on them, etc.- this is very important! Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.
- Wrap a HEATING PAD turned onto \*low\* around the burrito towel {to avoid burns) as an EXTRA source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place.

Step 2-Get their blood sugar up:

Once you get the heat on them,

- Get a bowl or Tupperware and a few tablespoons sugar in hot water.
- Stir it up so you get a sugar water solution -as strong as possible while still pretty runny. Using a syringe or your finger give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth.
- If they aren't swallowing, try not to get it down the throat, try to get it on the tongue or gums.
- Set an egg timer or use the stop watch on your cell phone to make sure you are doing it at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 minutes or 10 minutes will not work, it must be every 3 minutes.

Sometimes it can take hours for them to come out of it. Once they do come out of it, make sure you contact Mandy, Kim or another foster team member.

Keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved by volunteering in the Nursery. Any kitten you've ever taken care of was given a second chance at life BECAUSE of YOU! The Survival Rate with our care FAR surpasses their survival rate in nature.

# Distemper Notice for Cat Foster Volunteers

This is a general notice for all BCAS cat fosters, particularly kitten fosters. This notice must be read thoroughly and completely. Any questions about the contents of this notice should be directed to a BCAS Foster Coordinator or Vet Tech.

## About Feline Distemper

Feline Distemper is a problem every year for every shelter, especially at shelters such as ours because we intake animals from all 40 townships in Burlington County and are thus exposed to every disease stray cats have in our county. There is no way for us to predict which kittens do and do not have distemper, and there is no way to accurately test for distemper except with kittens who are already showing symptoms of the illness. Distemper has an incubation period of 7-10 days, meaning a kitten can be positive for distemper but not show it for up to 7-10 days later.

## Some Distemper Symptoms

If you suspect distemper or have any questions about the health of your foster cats, contact a BCAS Foster Coordinator or Vet Tech.

- loss of appetite
- lethargic, "depressed", lack of energy, drooping head, hovering over water but not drinking
- diarrhea or vomiting
- fever

## Quarantine Periods in the Foster Home

- Even if they appear healthy, cats and kittens must be quarantined for:
  - 14 days from the first day in the foster home, AND
  - 14 days after the last day of any possible symptom of illness that is suspicious to a BCAS Foster Coordinator or Vet Tech.
- During quarantine, do NOT mix litters of kittens together and do NOT allow your quarantined fosters to be in contact with other cats. Foster cats that are presumed healthy may ONLY mix when out of their quarantine period.
- During quarantine, be especially aware of cross-contamination. Wash your hands before and after handling your fosters. Do not share supplies (bowls, beds, etc) between litters unless the supplies are thoroughly sanitized.

## Protecting Your Pets at Home

All cats in a household, including your own pets, must be up to date on their distemper vaccinations. Adult cats are much less susceptible to contacting distemper than a kitten, but unvaccinated adults are still at moderately high risk. Distemper is highly contagious and has a very high mortality rate for kittens and unvaccinated cats. Always advise your veterinarian of your volunteering activities and heed their advice regarding the health of your pets.

## Houseplants Toxic to Cats

Many cats like to chew on plants. The following is a list of houseplants toxic to cats and kittens. Please make sure your foster kitty does not have access to any of these plants. Also ensure that your foster kitty is not drinking water out of plant saucers.

Alfalfa	Buttercup Cactus,	Deadly Nightshade	Golden Pothos	Kalanchoe	Peace Lily	Satin Pothos
Almond (Pits of)	Candelabra	Death Camas	Gopher Purge	Lacy Tree	Peach (pits and wilting leaves)	Schefflera
Aloe Vera	Caladium	Devil's Ivy	Hahn's Self-	Philodendron	Pencil Cactus	Scotch Broom
Alocasia	Calla Lily	Delphinium	Branching Ivy	Lantana	Peony	Silver Pothos
Amaryllis	Castor Bean	Decentrea	Heartland	Larkspur	Periwinkle	Skunk Cabbage
Apple (seeds)	Ceriman	Dieffenbachia	Philodendron	Laurel	Philodendron	Snowdrops
Apple Leaf	Charming Dieffenbachia	Dracaena Palm	Hellebore	Lily	Pimpernel	Snow on the Mountain
Croton	Cherry (pits, seeds & wilting leaves)	Dragon Tree	Hemlock, Poison	Lily Spider	Plumosa Fern	Spotted Dumb Cane
Apricot (Pits of)	Cherry, most wild	Dumb Cane	Hemlock, Water	Lily of the Valley	Poinciana	Staggerweed
Arrowgrass	varieties	Eggplant	Henbane	Locoweed	Poinsettia (low toxicity)	Star of Bethlehem
Asparagus Fern	Cherry, ground	Elaine	Holly	Lupine Madagascar	Poison Hemlock	String of Pearls
Autumn Crocus	Cherry, Laurel	Elderberry	Honeysuckle	Dragon Tree	Poison Ivy	Striped Dracaena
Avacado (fruit and pit)	Chinaberry	Elephant Ear	Horsebeans	Marble Queen	Poison Oak	Sweetheart Ivy
Azalea	Chinese Evergreen	Emerald Feather	Horsebrush	Marigold	Pokeweed	Sweetpea
Baby's Breath	Christmas Rose	English Ivy	Horse Chestnuts	Marijuana	Poppy	Swiss Cheese plant
Baneberry	Chrysanthemum	Eucalyptus	Hurricane Plant	Mescal Bean	Potato	Tansy Mustard
Bayonet	Cineria	Euonymus	Hyacinth	Mexican Breadfruit	Pothos	Taro Vine
Beargrass	Clematis	Evergreen	Hydrangea	Miniature Croton	Precatory Bean	Tiger Lily *
Beech	Cordatum	Ferns	Indian Rubber Plant	Mistletoe	Primrose	Tobacco
Belladonna	Coriaria	Fiddle-leaf fig	Indian Tobacco	Mock Orange	Privet, Common	Tomato Plant (green fruit, stem and leaves)
Bird of Paradise	Cornflower	Florida Beauty	Iris	Monkshood	Red Emerald	Tree Philodendron
Bittersweet	Corn Plant	Flax	Iris Ivy	Moonseed	Red Princess	Tropic Snow Dieffenbachia
Black-eyed Susan	Cornstalk Plant	Four O'Clock	Jack in the Pulpit	Morning Glory	Red-Margined	Tulip
Black Locust	Croton	Foxglove	Janet Craig	Mother-in Law's	Dracaena	Tung Tree
Bleeding Heart	Corydalis	Fruit Salad Plant	Dracaena	Tongue	Rhododendron	Virginia Creeper
Bloodroot	Crocus, Autumn	Geranium	Japanese Show Lily	Morning Glory	Rhubarb	Water Hemlock
Bluebonnet	Crown of Thorns	German Ivy	Java Beans	Mountain Laurel	Ribbon Plant	Weeping Fig
Boxwood	Cuban Laurel	Giant Dumb Cane	Jessamine	Mushrooms Narcissus	Rosemary Pea	Wild Call
Branching Ivy	Cutleaf Philodendron	Glacier Ivy Golden	Jerusalem Cherry	Needlepoint Ivy	Rubber Plant	Wisteria
Buckeyes	Cycads	Chain	Jerusalem Cherry	Nephytis	Saddle Leaf	Yews -e.g.,
Buddist Pine	Cyclamen	Gold Dieffenbachia	Jimson Weed	Nightshade Oleander	Philodendron	Japanese Yew
Burning Bush	Daffodil	Gold Dust Dracaena	Jonquil	Onion	Sago Palm	English Yew
	Daphne	Golden Glow	Jungle Trumpets	Oriental Lily		Western Yew
	Datura					American Yew