

FAQs about the CASPCA foster program

Below are the most commonly asked questions regarding our Foster Program. If you still have questions after reading this FAQ section, please [email foster@caszca.org](mailto:foster@caszca.org) or call (434) 964-3310. Thank you.



Why does the shelter have a Foster Program?

Many animals arrive at the shelter but are not ready for adoption. Foster homes provide a temporary and loving place for them to be until they can enter the shelter and prepare them for their forever homes.

What types of animals need fostering?

Kittens and puppies too young to be spayed or neutered

Orphaned kittens and puppies that need to be bottle-fed (under 4 weeks old)

Moms with nursing kittens or puppies

Animals with special medical needs (i.e. dogs undergoing heartworm treatment, injured animals recovery from surgery)

Kittens that require more socialization than the shelter environment is able to provide

Cats and dogs suffering from “shelter stress” and in need of a respite

Senior or “hospice” animals

What are the requirements to be a foster parent?

Be able to provide a safe, loving and stable environment throughout the foster period

Be committed to bringing your foster animal to the shelter for regularly scheduled check-ups and at the first sign of any illness

Be able to follow our rules for handling the foster animals, since they are in our care

Be financially able to provide some of the basics for your foster animal

Have all pets in your home spayed/neutered and up-to-date on vaccinations

How do I know what animals need to be fostered?

The Foster Coordinator sends out an email whenever the shelter has animals in need of a foster home. When we have emergencies (bottle baby kittens, young puppies, etc.), we will call. You are welcome to check with us.

Can I just go to the shelter and pick out an animal that I would like to foster?

Only during Foster for the Holidays. Otherwise, please let the Foster Coordinator know which animal you want to foster from the email you received; she will notify the front desk about which animal you will be fostering and when you will be picking up the animal. All other animals at the shelter need to stay at the shelter so that they have an opportunity to be adopted.

Can you split up large litters of animals?

Yes, larger litters can usually be split up (i.e. 8 kittens into smaller litters of 4 each). While we prefer that all littermates remain together, we understand that is not always possible. **Please do not ask to foster just one animal from a litter as socialization with their littermates is an important part of their early development.**

What if I only want to foster a particular kind of animal, such as kittens?

Foster parents typically do foster a particular type of animal, such as kittens or puppies, special needs animals, etc. When you receive the email, only respond to those that you are interested in.

What do I do when I get to the shelter?

Tell the staff at the front desk your name, that you are a foster parent there to pick up and the name of your foster animal, if you know it.

Complete and sign the Foster Agreement for your animal and receive a copy of the agreement; it contains important information such as your foster animal's name, scheduled dates for check-up visits and an emergency contact phone number.

Make sure your foster animal has had all its vaccinations, worming and flea treatment prior to leaving the shelter; some animals may also be micro-chipped.

What should I bring to the shelter with me?

Driver's license or other form of generally accepted identification (first time only)

For cats and kittens - a cat carrier, if you have one (cats and kittens can only leave the shelter in a carrier)

For dogs and puppies - leash or dog crate, if you have one

What are the foster parent's responsibilities?

Transport the animal to the shelter for check-ups as scheduled (this is very important as young animals need to receive their vaccinations on time)

Transport the animal to the shelter if it becomes sick

Return the animal as scheduled for spay/neuter surgery

Respond to communications from shelter staff or Foster Coordinator promptly

How long do I keep foster animals?

Kittens are fostered until they are 8 weeks old and at least 2 lbs.; they may also need to spend more time in foster care if they are sick.

Puppies are fostered until they are 8 weeks old and healthy; they may also need to spend more time in foster care if they are sick.

All other animals would stay in foster care according to the situation.

What supplies do I need to foster and who pays for them?

The shelter tries to provide as many supplies as we can for our foster parents, but if you can purchase your own supplies, that is appreciated.

Dry food

Canned food

Puppy pee pads

Kitten milk replacer and bottles, if bottle-fed

Litter box and pooper-scooper

Kitty litter (non-scoopable, clay type only; also less expensive)

Food and water bowls

Bedding

Scratching post or similar item for cats and kittens to exercise their claws (carpet remnants work well)

Toys

Crate (sometimes can be borrowed from shelter)

Baby gate, optional

What kind of food do you recommend?

We feed Science Diet here at the shelter which is donated. We will send you home with some and you can purchase more at most pet stores.

Why should I not use scoopable litter?

This type of litter is designed to form a hard, insoluble mass when it gets wet. When kittens use the litter box, they lick themselves clean and anything their tongues encounter gets ingested. The kitten's digestive system is unable to handle this type of litter.

Where do I keep my foster animals?

Your foster animal needs to be kept separate from your own pets (if you do not have pets of your own, this is not an issue). A separate room or enclosed area with no carpet works best such as a bathroom or laundry room. A large crate is also very useful to confine the animal when it is not being supervised.

Will I have to administer any medication?

More often than not, you will need to give oral (liquid) or eye medication. Many times kittens and puppies develop upper respiratory infections or “colds” from being exposed to other animals in the shelter. If you are not able to administer simple medication, you may want to reconsider fostering. This is a very common and normal part of fostering. It is not in the best interest of the animal to be continually moved when they get sick.

How can I help make my foster animal more adoptable?

Provide lots of love and socialization to bring out the best in their personality; friendly, outgoing animals that enjoy being around people are the first to get adopted.

Provide positive, reward based basic training on litter box use, housebreaking, obedience.

Provide basic grooming such as brushing, bathing, nail clipping.

Can I post my foster animal on Craigslist, Facebook, etc.?

Yes, you may promote your foster animal but all prospective adopters must put in an adoption application at the shelter, be approved by the shelter staff and picked up from the shelter after spay/neuter surgery.

Who is responsible for veterinary care?

The shelter has a veterinarian and vet technicians who provide all veterinary care and medication. You must bring your foster animal to the shelter for all veterinary care. The shelter cannot reimburse you for taking your foster animal to another veterinarian unless pre-approved emergency care.

How often do I need to bring foster animals in for check-ups?

Kittens and puppies must come in every two weeks for vaccinations, worming, weight check and general health assessment; more often if they are sick. All other animals come in based upon the situation.

What are the most common illnesses?

The most common problems in puppies and kittens are an upper respiratory infection (or “cold”), eye infection and diarrhea.

At what point should I seek veterinary care?

At the first sign of anything abnormal, the animal should be brought in to be seen by either the vet or a vet technician. Medical issues in young animals usually only get worse if ignored and will require medication to get better.

What do I do if my foster animal gets sick (non-emergency)?

The shelter is open 7 days a week; you should call the shelter to verify that either the vet or a vet technician is there to see your foster animal.

What do I do if I have an emergency (problems breathing, bleeding, non-responsive)?

Each time you foster an animal, you will be given a Foster Agreement that will have an emergency phone number listed. Please try to anticipate any potential problems and go to the shelter during regular hours; only use the emergency phone number as you would a hospital emergency room.

What happens if my own pets get sick?

If your own pet becomes sick or injured due to interaction with a foster animal, you will be responsible for all veterinary care required for your pet. CASPCA will not reimburse you for veterinary costs that you incur for your own pets even if the source of the illness or injury was your foster animal. To reduce the chance of your own pet getting sick, keep foster animals separated, wash your hands after handling and keep their area as clean as possible.

How do I know when to return my foster animal?

You will be given a schedule to return animals for checkups and vaccinations. At the point the animal is able to return to the shelter, you will be given a date for spay/neuter surgery. Please make sure that kittens are at least 2 lbs. and healthy before dropping them off; if they are not, they will have to go back into a foster home. Animals under 2 lbs. or with health issues cannot have anesthesia.

Will I have to find a home for my foster animal?

Although we encourage you to promote your foster animal to family, friends, neighbors and co-workers, all animals are returned to the shelter to be adopted and the foster parent is in no way responsible for finding the animal a permanent home.

When do I drop off my foster animal for spay/neuter surgery?

You will be given a date for surgery. You can either drop off the night before surgery or on the morning of surgery (you will be given the time). For kittens and puppies, they are not to have food after midnight but may have water. As a reminder, please make sure that kittens and cats are in a secure carrier and that puppies and dogs are leashed or in a carrier when returning to the shelter.

Do I take my foster animal back home after spay/neuter surgery?

No, foster animals remain at the shelter after surgery and are placed in the adoption area.

How can I tell potential adopters some specific things that only I know about my foster animal (such as food likes/dislikes, favorite toys, etc.)?

Although optional, we highly recommended that you email our foster coordinator at Ljones@caspca.org to promote the unique qualities and little personality that only you know. Many times animals do not show well in a shelter environment due to the noise and activity. This information sheet may give the prospective pet parent some insight into the animal's true charm!

What if I can no longer foster my foster animal?

If you cannot foster the animal until the end of the foster period, we ask that you give us as much time as possible to find another foster home. Our Foster Coordinator and foster parents are volunteers and it sometimes takes a day or two to orchestrate a transfer.

Can I adopt my foster animal?

Yes, you absolutely can adopt your foster animal. You just need to return the animal to the shelter for spay/neuter surgery and fill out the adoption paperwork.

What if a friend or relative wants to adopt my foster animal?

Wonderful! Just have your friend or relative go to the shelter and put in an adoption application for your foster animal. If approved, they will pick up the animal after spay/neuter surgery.

How will I feel when I return my foster animal for adoption? Isn't it hard to say goodbye to my foster animals?

Part of the joy of fostering is knowing that YOU were personally responsible for providing a temporary home until the animal could get into the shelter and then into a loving, permanent home. Our foster parents many times kiss their babies goodbye with tears in their eyes. Their love and sacrifice are the reason these animals are able to find their fur-ever homes. And if you get lonesome, there will always be another animal that could benefit from your love and care.