

Life-Saving Orphan Kitten Foster Care Guide



Dear Foster Family,

You are about to embark on a memorable live-saving adventure! Thank you for opening your home and heart to orphan kittens. Kittens younger than eight weeks old are the most at-risk population in our shelter.

Fostering orphaned kittens is a rewarding process that saves thousands of lives in our community each year, and we could not do it without you! In this manual, you will find helpful tips to ensure success. Orphaned kittens usually require consistent love and attention that is difficult to provide in a shelter environment. These kittens are typically only placed in foster homes until they are big enough to undergo spay/neuter surgery. We encourage fosters to take more than one kitten at a time to help promote socialization and normal behavioral growth. When kittens are unable to have appropriate social interaction with other kittens, it can stunt proper socialization and lead to behavioral problems. Multiple kittens are not only fun, they can also self entertain!

There are several recommendations to be the perfect foster for certain pets. If the recommendations included in the following section do not work well with your current schedule, please let us know. We can help you find a foster situation that will work best for you!

Sincerely,

El Paso Animal Services



Contact Information

FOSTER COORDINATOR

Valentin Garcia

Office: (915) 212-8732

Cell: (915) 478-7527

AnimalServicesFoster@elpasotexas.gov

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY

After hours: On call between 7 pm & 11 am

Adoption/Foster Counselor

Crystal Herrera

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Rescue Coordinator

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Community Programs Manager

Esty Molina

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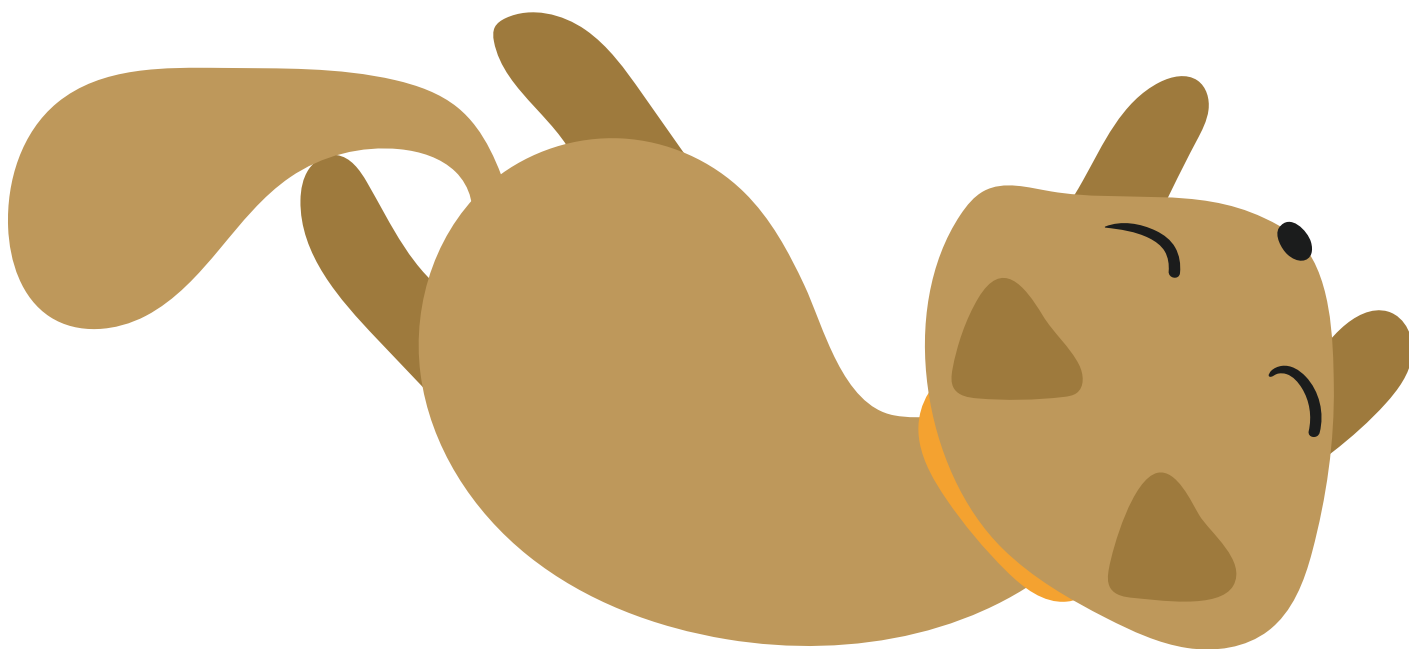
molinaex@elpasotexas.gov

Vet Appointments:

Monday- Sunday

****May Vary on Holidays or Special Events****

Contact us to schedule
an appointment.





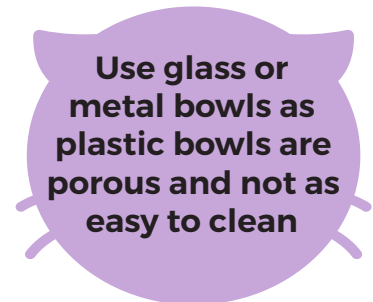
Guide for Cat Foster Homes



Preparing the Kitty Room

Before you bring home your kittens, make sure that you have a suitable place for them to stay. A bathroom often works well. The kitten room should adhere to the following guidelines:

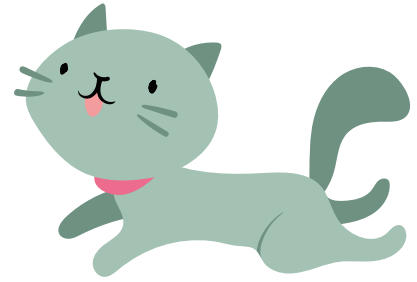
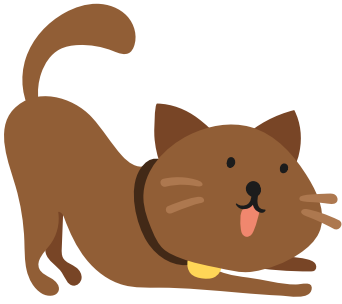
- A space where temperature can be controlled.
- The space has been disinfected by using a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water).
- Separate from other household pets.
- Can withstand kitty messes: litter box accidents, vomit, spilled water, etc.
- No breakable items.
- Electrical outlets and wires are blocked.
- No small items.
- Secured windows (closed or with a secure screen).
- Secured appliances (toilet lids closed).




Kitten Foster Time Commitments


TYPE OF FOSTER	DURATION OF FOSTER	DAILY COMMITMENT
Weaned Kittens	1-3 weeks	2 hours
URI Cats	2-3 weeks	1-2 hours
Kittens with Mom	2-8 weeks	1-2 hours or more
Injured Cat	1 week-2 months	1-2 hours
Neonate Kittens	6-8 weeks	Up to 8 hours


Socialization




The ideal time for socializing kittens is from two to seven weeks of age. As soon as their eyes and ears are opening, socialization opportunities begin. Socialization after this age range is still possible, but becomes more difficult. Attempting socialization after 12 to 14 weeks of age will have more limited success.

 Keep the kitten in a room with no inaccessible hiding spots. Making frequent visits to the room and just sitting gets kitty used to your presence.

 Eye contact should be quickly broken. Staring at a kitten is threatening. When fearful or stimulated, a cat's eye will dilate.

 Try to avoid raising solo kittens. Not only do we want them to socialize with a human, but also they learn how to be a cat, gain a social identity, and are likely to tolerate feline companions later if raised with a sibling or littermates. Only combine solo kittens with shelter approval to ensure the right length of quarantine time is observed.

 When kitty eats, try just laying your hand nearby, progressing to being able to hand feed, and later to touching kitty. At this point, when you are able to touch, use a finger to make small 1 1/4-inch clockwise circles all around kitty's shoulders, head, and upper back. Make the circles small and quick, and leave the body after each time.

Shy kittens need to have many short encounters to encourage them that humans are friendly.

Be aware of the eyes!
Cat's eyes may dilate as a first (fear) reaction, but as the kittens get familiar with you, the pupils will quickly return to a normal size.

TIPS & TAILS

Each cat and kitten will respond differently to socializing techniques. Some cats can be genetically friendly but feral by experience. Not all kittens will grow into cats that love to be cuddled and held. That's okay! Some people want affectionate cats, other prefer independent pets.

Hold shy kittens calmly, stroking them and talking in a calming voice. Put the kitten down before they start squirming. If you repeat this often, shy kittens will begin to love the experience.

Using a stick or dowel with feathers attached to one end can provide visual stimulation and distraction. A second dowel with fabric can be used to touch. As kitty gets comfortable with your presence, try moving closer each time.

 Food is your best socialization tool, so become familiar with these simple techniques:
<http://aspcapro.org/resource/saving-lives-behavior-enrichment/using-food-successful-kitten-socialization>

Allergies

Cats, like people, can have allergic reactions to medication. Most medications are not given first at the vet office. If some sudden, adverse reaction happens after giving a new medication, such as wheezing or eyes being more inflamed, do not give any more medication and call your Coordinator.

Spay/Neuter

Spay and neuter surgeries are generally done at our shelter and your Coordinator will advise as to when to return animal to shelter for procedure.

Vaccination & Worming

FVR - Feline viral rhinotracheitis, a disease that causes sneezing and discharge from eyes and nose (the URI symptoms often seen).

“C” - Calici virus, which causes oral ulcers and symptoms similar to, but less profuse, than FVR. Calici virus sometimes progresses to a type of pneumonia.

“P” - Panleukopenia (aka “feline distemper”); this usually deadly disease attacks rapidly dividing cells and causes loss of appetite, bloody diarrhea and/or vomiting, extreme lethargy, and collapse.

Kittens should be started on vaccines at 4 weeks of age. By this age the maternal antibodies (from the mother’s first milk) are beginning to fade. Boosters need to be given every three weeks until 20 weeks of age. The vaccine will not trigger the desired response until the maternal antibodies have worn off - and it is impossible to tell when exactly that happens.

Panacur® is the wormer given to cats and kittens. The dose is 0.1 cc per lb (an adult of 10 lbs would receive 1 cc, a kitten weighing 1 lb would get 0.1 cc). Worming should start at two weeks of age. Panacur® treats roundworms or Ascarids, also hookworms and whipworms, which are very common in kittens. Different worms/parasites require different medications.

A second dose of wormer must be given two weeks after the first dose.

Since Panacur® does not kill worms in the larval stage, the lifecycle will start over again if the second dose is not timed correctly or missed. If you miss the two-week mark, you must start over with a first dose.

Get complete instructions from your coordinator or shelter veterinarian.

Heating

It is important to keep the kittens warm! However, it is also important that kittens have space to move away from a heat source. Covering a heating pad or snuggle disc with a towel works well. Be sure that the heat source only covers part of the area. Small litters or single kittens need more help staying warm.

Feeding

Follow the feeding schedule provided in the Feeding section.

Elimination

Young kittens (3 weeks or less) often need help urinating and defecating. To do so, gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the anus and genital areas immediately after a feeding. This will stimulate kittens to urinate and/or defecate into the cloth or cotton pad. If a mother cat is present she will stimulate the kittens.

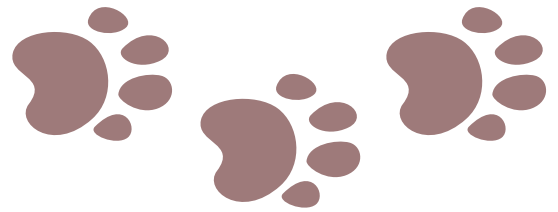
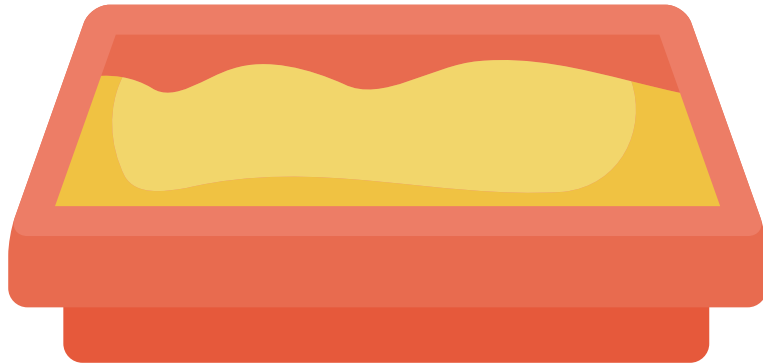
Cleaning

Kittens are usually groomed by their mother. In the absence of the mother, you must work hard to keep the kittens clean.

- Dried feces in the fur can be removed by using a flea comb.
- Use a warm, damp cloth to stroke the kittens' fur. This simulates how a mother cat would groom her kittens.
- A small amount of dawn soap on the warm, damp cloth will help to remove any lingering dirt/fleas that may be present. This is only to be done once weekly at most.
- Dipping dirty feet or tails in warm water is also helpful.
- Be aware that some kittens may not enjoy being wet, so they may protest. Be careful of escapees and their sharp claws!
- Dry kittens well so that they do not get chilled.

TIPS & TAILS

- Play with your kitten with toys instead of your hand, this will prevent your kitten from thinking you are a toy and scratching and biting you.
- Heat Rice Socks in microwave for 1 minute maximum. This will provide up to 30 minutes of warmth.
- If your kitten is having issues using their litter-box try having more than one litter box in the room.
- Do not give dairy products such as cow's milk to your foster.



Litter Box Training

Use the low box provided, with one inch of non-clumping kitty litter (pellets) or shredded newspaper. (Clumping kitty litter can be dangerous if it is ingested.) After feeding, place the kitten in the litter box. Take their paw and gently scratch the litter. Give lots of praise when they are successful. Be patient! Keep the litter box clean and away from the food area. **Note: Litter box will not be used for neonates.**

Foster Rechecks

Call your foster coordinator every 2 weeks to schedule an appointment. Fosters will need to come in every 2 weeks for weight check, deworming, and booster vaccinations.

Kitty Development

In the first few weeks of life, kittens are helpless and vulnerable. They are still developing basic reflexes, their hearing and vision are still not fully developed, and they are unable to properly control their body temperatures. They should therefore be confined to a nursery area. Kittens should not be allowed to mingle with your own pets.

During the first 1-3 weeks of life kittens do not urinate or defecate on their own and require stimulation for elimination. Gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the kitten's genital area and anus. This should be done before or after feeding.

Keeping the kittens clean from food and feces is vital for his or her health. If you notice your kitten has food, urine or feces on him or her gently wipe the kitten down with a warm damp cloth or baby wipe. Be sure to dry the kitten well afterwards so that they do not become chilled.

**Kittens sleep
up to 18-20
hours a day.**

**Neonate kittens
are kittens that
are under 4 weeks
of age with or
without a nursing
mom cat**

**Playtime with
your kitten is a
must for kitten
development**



Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens – Based on Weight

5g of food per 100g of body weight

Weight Before Feeding	Weight After Feeding	Amount of Food Consumed
60	63	3
80	84	4
100	105	5
120	126	6
140	147	7
160	168	8
180	189	9
200	210	10
220	231	11
240	252	12
260	273	13
280	294	14
300	315	15
320	336	16
340	357	17
360	378	18
380	399	19
400	420	20
420	441	21
440	462	22
460	483	23
480	504	24
500	525	25
520	546	26
540	567	27
560	588	28
580	609	29
600	630	30
620	651	31
640	672	32
660	693	33
680	714	34
700	735	35

Feed bottle babies as much as they will take on their own from the bottle; syringe feed when they do not eat enough on their own.

When bottle babies have been syringe fed previously, try to bottle feed them first, the syringe feed if they won't eat from the bottle.

When gruel (mixture of wet food and formula) kittens have been syringe fed previously, see if they will eat on their own from a bowl/tray/bin. If not, then syringe feed them. Be sure to chart their weights accurately.

If gruel kittens lose weight from previous feedings, but have been eating on their own, syringe feed the required amount. Be sure to accurately record beginning and ending weights.

If the kitten eats on its own from a bowl/bin/tray, be sure to record the beginning and ending weights accurately.

WEIGH ~ FEED ~ WEIGH

Neonatal Kitten Feeding Log

Example of Neonate Kitten Daily Weight and Feeding Record

NAME/ID	KITTEN 1	KITTEN 2	KITTEN 3	KITTEN 4	KITTEN 5	KITTEN 6
Date						
Weight						
Attitude						
FEEDING 1						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 2						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 3						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 4						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 5						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 6						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						

NOTES:

Kitty Care & Expectations by Age

WEEKS	FEEDING	DEVELOPMENT
0-1	Bottle feed 5g per every 100 grams of body weight. Refer to the Minimum Feeding Requirements table for more information. If there is a Mom cat, make sure that all kittens are nursing. Kittens can nurse from mom for up to 45 minutes at a time. A lot of crying or activity could indicate a problem with Mom's milk supply.	Kittens will weigh about 4 oz. Kittens will sleep 90% of the time, and eat the rest of the time. Handle the kittens minimally. Newborns are deaf and blind, and are unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
1-2	Bottle feed 5g per every 100 grams of body weight. Refer to the Minimum Feeding Requirements table for more information. Kittens will need to be fed every 2-4 hours.	Kittens will weigh about 7 oz. Ear canals open between 5-8 days old. Eyes will open between 8-14 days old. Healthy kittens will be round and warm and have pink skin. Healthy kittens seldom cry. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
2-3	Bottle feed 5g per every 100 grams of body weight. Refer to the Minimum Feeding Requirements table for more information. Kittens will need to be fed every 2-4 hours.	Kittens will weigh about 10 oz. and will begin to crawl and stand between 18-21 days old. They begin to play with each other. Increase handling of kittens to get them used to human contact. Ensure that all interactions are gentle and positive. They are still unable to maintain their body temp. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
3-4	Bottle feed 5g per every 100 grams of body weight. Refer to the Minimum Feeding Requirements table for more information. Kittens will need to be fed every 3-4 hours. Kittens may start lapping from a bowl.	Kittens will weigh about 13 oz. Kittens begin to see well. They may start cleaning themselves but will still need help for serious cleaning. Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks. They are still unable to maintain body temp. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
4-5	Kittens will begin to eat gruel—refer to the Weaning section for more information. Feed gruel 4 times a day.	Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks of age. Refer to Litter Box Training section.
5-6	Feed gruel 4 times a day. Introduce dry food and water. Some kittens do not like canned food—try mixing any meat flavored human baby food with water. Be sure the meat flavor does NOT have onion powder as this is hazardous to kittens.	Kittens can start to wander around the room, under supervision. Play with your kittens often! (See Socialization section.)
6-7	Feed canned and dry food at least 3 meals daily. If any kittens are territorial with food, provide a second bowl so that everyone gets fed.	Kittens will start to act like actual cats: playing and washing themselves. Be sure to show them the litter box after meals, play sessions and naps.
7-8	Each kitten will be eating over one can of food per day. Offer wet food 3-4 times daily. Leave a bowl of dry food and water for kittens to use at will. DO NOT feed kittens table scraps.	Continue playing and socializing with the kittens.
8+	Feed wet food 2 times per day. Leave a bowl of dry food and water for kittens to use at will. DO NOT feed kittens table scraps.	Kittens should weigh about 2 pounds! When they reach this point, they are ready for adoption and for spay/neuter. Fill out a pet bio and submit pictures and videos to help them get adopted. Refer to Help Them Find A Home for more info.

Neonate Feeding

Type of Food

Never give a neonate kitten anything other than their specified formula! (No cow's milk!) Kittens who are less than three weeks old are fed liquid or powder formula.

The powder formula must be mixed for feedings. It is important to closely follow mixing directions, one part powder into two parts warm water, as it can cause diarrhea or constipation if not done correctly. When mixing do not use a blender.

Any reconstituted powder formula can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. After that point, it must be discarded.

Feeding Etiquette

- Only use clean nipples and bottles!
- Feed kittens one at a time. Place them on a counter top and allow them to feed with four paws on the counter and with a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom.
- Do not feed a kitten while she is on her back. This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in the lungs.
- Gently open the kitten's mouth with your finger and place the nipple on the tongue.
- Stroking kittens can help them to eat.
- Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the kitten from inhaling too much air.
- Do not squeeze the bottle to force formula into the kitten's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- After feeding, burp your kitten by gently massaging their back.
- After feeding stimulate the kittens to urinate and/or defecate. Stimulate them with a warm cloth if necessary.

Please, watch these videos for clarification:

www.maddiesfund.org/orphaned-kitten-care-how-to.htm

TIPS & TAILS

To warm nursing bottles, fill a coffee mug half way with hot water and place the bottle of formula into mug. After a minute or two, test formula by sprinkling a few drops on the back of your hand. Formula should be warm to the touch, but not hot.

Weaning

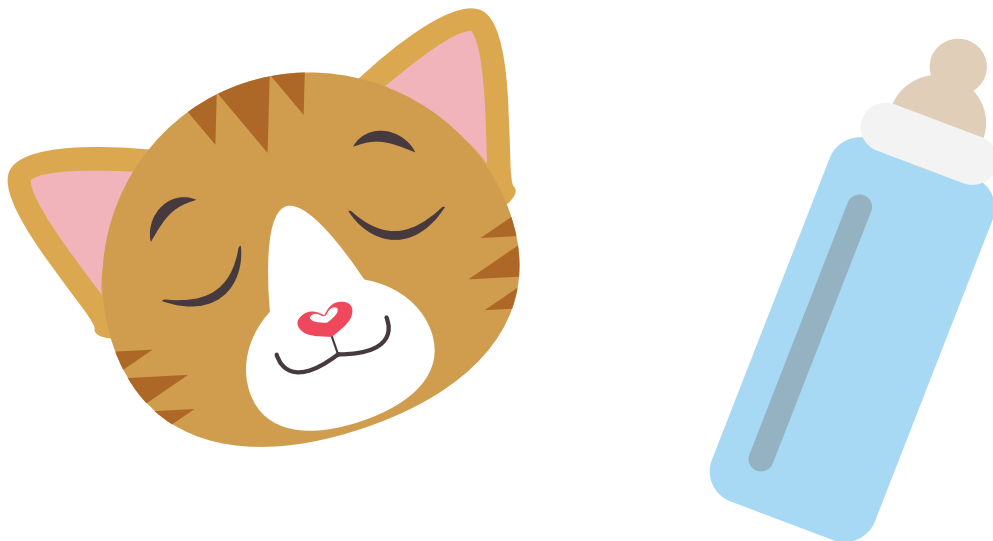
Weaning can occur at 4 weeks and should be conducted gradually. Create a gruel by mixing warmed canned food with water. It may take a few tries for kittens to understand. If they are not interested, wait a few days and then try again. After they have accepted the gruel, gradually thicken it by adding less water. Begin to also offer dry food on a free feeding basis.

Amount of Food

Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding. Feed kittens until they are full but not bloated.

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 nursing nipple in the dishwasher. You may place them in the silverware rack or in a dishwasher basket.



Fostering Moms

In some cases, moms are fostered together with their litters. There are a few things to keep in mind for this type of foster situation. Moms require a calm setting with privacy and minimal activity. Stress can cause moms to stop taking care of their kittens.

Bringing Mom Home

You will need a separate space for a mom with her litter. When you first bring them home, leave them alone in their new space. Mom will need some time, up to a few days, to adjust to her new space. Be sure to provide mom with fresh food, water and a clean litter box.

Socialization

Even adult cats need socialization; however, proceed slowly with any adult cat that you do not know. Create situations for socialization but let her come to you. Stop the session if you notice any negative signs, such as swishing tail, ears laid back, head jerk towards you, tensing up, cranky meow, moving away, hissing or growling.

Mom and Her Kittens

For the first few weeks, mom will do everything necessary to take care of her kittens. Kittens start nursing very soon after birth. Mom will also groom her kittens. Cats should be left alone for the first two weeks except to feed, clean and check on the kittens a few times a day.

Possible Issues with Mom Cats

Maternal neglect – In some cases, about 8% of the time, kittens die from poor maternal care. There are a few causes of this. Some cats lack maternal instincts and, in other cases, it is nature's way of handling sick or weak kittens. Environmental stress is an important factor, which is why it is important to create a calm environment for mom and the litter. As the foster parent, watch for signs of maternal neglect. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice the mom avoids feeding and grooming her kittens and ignores their cries.

Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her kittens, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your household pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. If aggression becomes severe, call the Foster Coordinator.

TIPS & TAILS

Be sure to keep mom and kittens separated from other pets in the home. Mother cats need a quiet area to raise their kittens.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes ones that were previously sick, “crashes” and begins to fade away. If not dealt with by a foster parent immediately, it can result in death. If you are fostering kittens 12 weeks or younger, it is a very good idea to familiarize yourself with this handout so you know what to do if it happens.

SYMPTOMS

- 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!**

FKS is caused by 2 things: Hypothermia (being too cold) and Hypoglycemia (not enough blood sugar). You must combat both of these things or the kitten will die.

TREATMENT

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.

You must apply an extra source of heat (listed below). The kitten’s body can’t warm itself up with just a towel alone, you have to apply extra heat. Also, your body temperature is much lower than what a kitten should be, so trying to warm them up with your body heat won’t work either.

If you have a heating pad - Then wrap a heating pad *turned onto low* around the towel - duct tape it or secure it around the towel so it stays wrapped around them. Don’t let the heating pad touch them directly, it can cause burns, make sure the ‘burrito’ towel is between their skin and the heating pad.

If you don’t have a heating pad - you can either

a) keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap this new hot towel around the “burrito” towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don’t remove the “burrito” towel.

b) Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends of them so it doesn’t spill out. Throw them in the microwave for 3 minutes. Keep them next to the kitten on the outside of the burrito towel. Every 30 minutes reheat one sock and leave the other next to the kitten so she doesn’t cool off.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

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 some hot water. Stir it up so you get a sugar water solution- you don't want it super syrupy like pancake syrup, but you do want it to be 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.

Step 3 - Call the Foster Coordinator:

Call the foster coordinator or emergency person on duty. Don't leave your kitten to make this call or forget to do your sugar every 3 minutes. They won't have any extra advice for you that isn't in this handout, but they will need to be made aware of what is going on. Starting on an antibiotic is usually necessary as even subtle changes in gut bacteria can cause FKS

PROGNOSIS

We generally have very good success with these kittens if you follow the above steps. We DO NOT recommend you rush them to the vet for many reasons:

You have the motivation to sit right there with them and make them your top priority. A vet clinic has many patients it is helping and can't give your kitten the 100% undivided attention you can give them.

Your kitten will continue to be cold/hypoglycemic on the way to the vet, in the waiting room, in the hospital while they try to determine what is wrong, etc. Most kittens won't last long enough for them to start the treatments there.

Keep in mind, it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of it and start acting normally again. Once they do come out of it, make sure you contact the foster coordinator to discuss what could have possibly caused them to fade in the first place and make sure we have the kitten on all the right medical treatments for any illnesses they have that may have caused it. An exam may be necessary.

Also keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Cats get pregnant very easily, and have A LOT of kittens, specifically because they are so fragile and die so easily. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved by opening your home to foster kittens. Remember, if it wasn't for you, every kitten you've ever fostered would have been killed at the shelter and never given a chance at life.

YOUR FOSTER COORDINATOR:

Valentin Garcia | (915) 478-7527

For other emergency on-call team members, check the Contact page of this guide.

Maintaining Kitten Health



Hard Stool



Soft Stool



Diarrhea

Diarrhea

There are three types of cat stool: normal, soft and diarrhea. Normal stool is firm and has a definite shape. Soft stool is not firm but still has some shape. Diarrhea is liquid, with or without color to it. Diarrhea is common in kittens and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, overfeeding and other issues. Diarrhea must be monitored as it can quickly lead to dehydration. If the kitten is active, mild diarrhea that occurs for 24 hours is not a concern. Feed the kitten less at a time but more often. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3-4 feedings or contains blood/ parasites, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

Parasites

Kittens can sometimes get tapeworms either in their feces or on their anus. These look like grains of rice. Roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in the litter box or in vomit. Parasites are commonly found in the stool of kittens. If you notice worms, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

Vomiting

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens continuously. It can lead to dehydration. If vomiting occurs 2-3 times in a row, call the Foster Coordinator right away.

Eye Discharge

It is normal for kittens to have little pieces of crust in their eyes after waking up. If you see continuous yellow or green discharge, swollen or closed eyes call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck. You can use a warm, damp towel to wipe the affected eye(s).

Ear Mites

Ear mites are parasites that live in the ear canal. You may notice a bald spot behind ears due to continuous scratching. They may also violently shake their head. The ears may smell bad and you may see brown discharge that resembles coffee grounds. Ear mites are contagious to other cats and need to be treated. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any of these symptoms.

Fleas

Kittens that have fleas will scratch themselves often. Topical and oral flea prevention are given to kittens over 4 weeks of age. Flea prevention for kittens under 4 weeks includes daily brushing with the flea comb and daily bedding changes. If you still notice signs of fleas, you can wash the kitten in a small amount of Dawn dish soap followed by using a flea comb to remove any remaining fleas. Be sure to thoroughly dry following a bath. Baths should not be given more than once every 1-2 weeks. If you still notice signs of fleas, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a contagious fungus that can spread to other animals and humans. A sign of ringworm is thinning hair or patches of hair loss. Ringworm is difficult to remove from your house. To help with prevention and to prevent spreading, maintain cleaning protocols and a good hand washing routine. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any hair loss.

Mange

Mange is caused by parasites that infect the skin of kittens. Some forms of mange are contagious to other animals and humans. The symptoms include itching, hair loss and sores. Mange needs to be treated. If you notice these symptoms, call the Foster Coordinator.



Ear Mites



Ringworm

Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URI)

URIs are common and are caused by contagious viruses and bacteria. Signs to look for:

Sneezing
and discharge
from the
eyes/nose

Congested
breathing

Lethargy
(a lack of
energy)

Dehydration

Loss
of
appetite

A humidifier in
the kitten's room
will help with
congestion.

If you notice any of these signs, please contact the Foster Coordinator to schedule a recheck.

Fading Kittens

Occasionally, a kitten that appeared healthy will suddenly stop thriving. They will stop growing, socializing and crawling. They will begin to lose weight and may cry continuously. When this happens, they fade quickly and, even with medical intervention, may not survive 48 hours.

There is no understood cause for this condition.

Refer to the **Fading Kitten Syndrome** section for next steps.

Panleukopenia FAQ for Fosters

What is Panleukopenia?

Panleuk is most often referred to as “feline parvo”. It is a virus that is transmittable through fluids and feces. Feces being the most significant. Panleuk can live and be transmitted on most all surfaces. The incubation period is 3-5 days but can incubate as long as 14 days. Panleuk is made worse when other viruses are present (URI).

When does it affect kittens?

Panleuk affects unvaccinated cats and kittens. Kittens are most susceptible between the ages of 3-12 weeks of age when their mothers antibodies are still “interfering” with the vaccine and they are either too young to be vaccinated or recently vaccinated.

What do I watch for?

The most common symptoms of Panleuk are: vomiting, anorexia, diarrhea, lethargy, sudden death. **Isolated symptoms are not always indicative of Panleuk. Many other illness can cause these same symptoms and almost all kittens have diarrhea that is not Panleuk! Normally we see a combination of the above.

What do I do if I see signs?

Contact the medical team as soon as possible. A clear medical history of the animal is extremely important. Often times the “trend” of the kittens health is just as important as the current symptoms. Treatment should start within 12 hours of first symptom so please act fast!

What does treatment consist of and how long does it last?

Panleuk is treated using injectable antibiotics, anti-diarrheals, anti nausea drugs, and fluids as well as force feedings. Treatments/feedings are done 2-6 times a day for approx 3-7 days.

Why can't I bring my sick kittens back to the shelter?

Because panleuk is so contagious bringing them back to the shelter puts every other kitten at risk. Additionally, the kitten has a better chance of survival with one on one care. YOU can provide the daily care needed for the kitten! Being in a home and receiving your care is key to saving lives versus living in a shelter with many other kittens that are all competing for care. We need you but the kitten needs you more! Also, your house has already been exposed to the virus so having the kitten leave will not “decontaminate” your space. It can be scary but we can teach you everything you need to know.

What is the survival rate?

About 50% with early, aggressive treatment

What do I do if a kitten becomes critical?

Notify your foster coordinator ASAP and start Fading Kitten Protocol.

What do I do if a kitten dies?

If a kitten dies notify staff in either the medical clinic or the nursery. Because it is contagious it is best not to bury the body. You can bring it to the medical clinic as soon as possible. Wrap the body in a small towel and plastic bag and label it with either it's name or A#. If you cannot come that day storage is best in a freezer. When you bring it to the clinic let staff know it died of Panleuk and who the kitten is.

Thank you for caring for these kittens!!!!

How To Disinfect A Home After Panleuk

1. Wash all fabrics the cat has touched. Use bleach in the warm-wash cycle to kill any Panleuk that may be present in the fabric. Include any bedding, blankets, towels, pillows, rugs, or clothing the cat has had contact with.
2. Disinfect flooring. Use a solution ratio of 1:31 (water: bleach) to disinfect hard surfaces such as tile, wood, cement, and linoleum. Use a stiff scrub brush to thoroughly clean the entire floor, including corners. Pour the bleach solution down the drain. Mix another bleach solution and repeat the process to ensure that all traces of the virus are killed.
3. Wipe down counters, cabinets and doors using a large spray bottle filled with a solution of two parts bleach to one part warm water. With a sponge, use small circular motions to thoroughly scrub the surfaces with the bleach mixture. Rinse the surfaces with warm water and allow to dry.
4. Remove all feces on your property. Place feces in a plastic trash bag and seal tightly. Remove and dispose of the bag away from the property. Disinfect areas where feces were found with a mix of two parts bleach to one part water.

Guidelines for fostering After PL

If your PL kittens were kept in an isolated, separate area (like cage or hard-scrubbable bathroom), then you can foster unvaccinated kittens once you have decontaminated as per above protocol, and replaced all supplies (litter boxes, scoops, bowls, toys etc). But it is strongly recommended that for a period of 6 months you keep any new kittens in a completely different isolated area than the PL litter had been kept in previously, as an additional measure of caution. Post-PL kittens are a great choice for these homes too, as these kittens have gained immunity and are no longer at any risk from the virus.

If your PL kittens were kept in a non-quarantined area, however, (ie throughout the house / carpeted area unable to be hard-scrubbed), you will need to limit your fostering for a period of 1 year to post-panleuk kittens and/or kittens who are over 4months and have had a minimum of 2 vaccines.

We appreciate your partnering with us to try and keep our kittens as healthy and happy as possible.

Panleuk-Watch Monitoring Chart

Name/Color/A#: _____ Special diet? _____

Date	Eating/ Drinking?		Stool Score (1-7)	Vomit? y/n	PL Test? Result	Other notes (Behavior, meds, general health, progress, etc.)
	AM	PM				

ANY VOMIT = MANDATORY PANLEUK TEST

Veterinary Care

Routine Veterinary Care

Veterinary Care for foster animals is provided by the El Paso Animal Shelter during normal business hours. The foster coordinator will work directly with the shelter veterinarians to manage the health and well-being of each foster pet or litter. After hours, the foster coordinator will take calls when emergencies arise. In the event of an emergency, the foster coordinator will contact the veterinarian on-call as to how to manage each particular case and, should after-hours treatment be needed, the foster coordinator will instruct the foster parent or family on the appropriate steps to take. Animal Services has a policy that we will not reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals when taken for veterinary care outside of that which is pre-authorized by the Animal Services veterinary staff.



Scheduling Rechecks

Foster animal(s) are required to return to the shelter every two weeks for vaccinations, deworming and general exams. All rechecks require an appointment made at the time of pick up or by calling (915) 212-8705.

For extreme emergencies call:

Esty Molina
Office: (915) 212-8729
Cell: (915) 218-8176



Recheck times are as follows:
Seven days a week, 1pm-5pm.

If for any reason you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment please contact the Foster Coordinator to reschedule.

Vaccines

Kittens receive vaccinations every two weeks from the time they are 4 weeks of age until they are 20 weeks or unless otherwise directed by our veterinarians.

Cats and kittens receive FVRCP Vaccine (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia). Animals 12 weeks and older receive a Rabies vaccine.

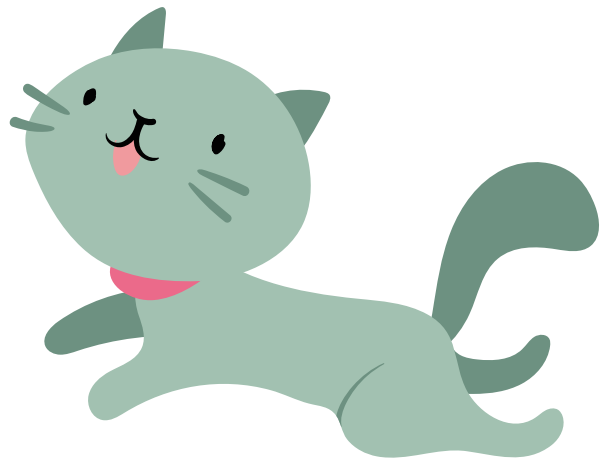
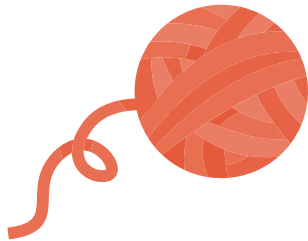


Help Them Find a Home!

You know your foster pet(s) best! Help them find a forever home without them having to come back to the shelter.

Now that you know a little more about your foster pet, please fill out this quick questionnaire about them:

<http://bit.ly/EPASFosterBio>



**Learn how to market
your foster pets**

<http://bit.ly/2SPvOZm>

**Toolkits to promote
your foster pets**

<https://heartsspeak.org/edu/>

Email photos and videos of your foster pet(s) to
EPASContent@elpasotexas.gov

The Finishing Line

Spay/Neuter Surgery

During a scheduled visit, the Foster Coordinator or recheck staff may decide to accept the pet or litter back for adoption. If this is the case, surgery may be scheduled that same day or scheduled for a later day. If scheduled for a later day, you will continue foster care and bring the pet in on the morning of the scheduled surgery. Veterinarians use the following guidelines to determine when the foster animal is ready to be returned for surgery:

- Are the kittens old enough or did they gain enough weight for surgery?
- Are they successfully weaned from their mother?
- Have they been successfully socialized?
- Is your foster healthy and recovered fully from the illness or injury?
- Is there room on the adoption floor?

The Day of Surgery

- Adult cats – no breakfast but may have water
- Kittens – Feed a small breakfast (1-2 tablespoons of canned food) and offer water
- All pets should receive fresh water at all times, even the morning of surgery.

Ready for Adoption!

How do pets in foster care get adopted?

All foster parents are encouraged to promote the adoption of their foster pet to friends, family, and other potential adopters. We also encourage you to advertise your foster around the community to try to find someone to adopt them. We will even invite you out to our off-site adoption events.

This program allows us to have more space available for new animals entering the shelter. Additionally, animals adopted out of foster homes are less likely to be returned, and the animal is able to live in a home environment and never has to come back to the shelter! Please feel free to utilize social media sources to promote the adoption of your foster. Examples would be to make a Facebook page for your foster and to cross-post your foster's story using email and social media.

Photo Taking Tips



Know your pet! Get on their level



Be patient



Use the right lighting and setting



Have fun and be creative!

Can't be an Adoption Ambassador?

If unable to secure an adopter outside of El Paso Animal Services, the foster parent will bring their pet in for rechecks as scheduled.

At each visit, the Foster Coordinator and veterinarian will evaluate the pet or litter's progress and, when fully treated or recovered, will accept the pet or litter back for surgery and adoption.

When your foster is transferred back to the shelter for adoption, we gladly welcome any information, written stories, pictures whether photographs or children's drawings that would describe your foster pet to a potential adopter.

Should you need to discontinue foster care for your foster pet prior to their full recovery, call the Foster Coordinator to schedule a time to bring the foster pet back to the shelter. The foster team at Animal Services will work hard to secure a new foster family for any foster returned.

Can foster parents adopt their foster animal?

You bet! Foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster pet. Adoption fees will apply.



MEOW

Kitten Health Cheat Sheet

NON-EMERGENCIES

First monitor kittens

If worsens, call the Foster Coordinator:

Valentin Garcia

Office: (915) 212-8732

Cell: (915) 478-7527

Fax: (915) 212-0324

AnimalServicesFoster@elpasotexas.gov

- Runny discharge from the eyes or nose
- Lack of appetite
- Lethargy (lack of energy)
- Diarrhea lasting more than 3 or 4 feedings
- Vomiting
- Weightloss
- Coughing and sneezing
- Lack of bowel movement for more than 24-36 hours or straining in litter box
- Swollen eyes or eyes held closed

EMERGENCIES

Require Immediate Veterinary Attention After Business Hours:

Foster Coordinator
Valentin Garcia

Office: (915) 212-8732

Cell: (915) 478-7527

On-Call: 7 pm to 11 am

Rescue Coordinator
Kyla Young

Office: (915) 212-8705

Cell: (915) 478-8876

In Emergencies: 7 pm - 11 am

Adoption / Foster Counselor
Crystal Herrera

Office: (915) 212-8705

Cell: (915) 274-8185

On-Call: 7 pm to 11 am

- Continuous diarrhea longer than 24-36 hours
- Continuous vomiting longer than 12 hours
- Loss of appetite
- Bleeding of any kind (from nose or in urine/stool)
- Any trauma (hit by a car, dropped, limping, unconscious, etc)
- Difficulty breathing
- A kitten that does not respond or has not eaten for more than a day

Emergency Care

If you have questions about the health of your foster animal or if an emergency situation should arise **during regular hours of operation, please call (915) 212-8732**. If you do not speak to the Foster Coordinators, please come directly to the shelter. Our regular hours are 1pm-5pm, seven days a week. If your foster animal has an emergency that occurs **outside of the normal hours of operation, please call the Emergency After- hours phone number at (915) 218-8176**. The Foster Coordinator will contact the veterinarian on-call or the Director of Animal Services for a treatment plan. Should after-hours treatment be needed, the Foster Coordinator will instruct the foster family on the appropriate steps to take. **Animal Services must approve any and all treatments for foster pets.**



**If you have questions about Fostering,
join our Foster Facebook Group!**

Search "Animal Services Foster Partners"



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/278040982617389/>

**Thank you for being
a part of our
Foster Family.**

