

ADULT CAT FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES

FEEDING

- We recommend that adult cats be free fed throughout the day.
- We feed our cats dry food only, unless otherwise specified.

CLEANING

- Most cats will clean themselves, so adult cats won't need a bath during their foster period.
- If your foster cat becomes dirty, you are welcome to spot clean him or her with a warm washcloth.
- If at any time the cat growls, flattens his or her ears, twitches his or her tail, swats or hisses, please stop what you are doing, and provide the cat a break from the situation.
- Do not use flea shampoo or administer any flea medicine. If you observe fleas, please notify the foster care coordinator.

PLAY

- Foster pets should be kept separate from your own animals, unless otherwise specified.
- If your own animal has already met your foster pet, and you have permission to have them interact, then supervised play time is welcome.
- No unsupervised alone time is allowed between foster pets and owned animals.
- The area where the pets are interacting should be set up in a way that you can easily separate them in the event of a disagreement.

SOCIALIZATION

- Some cats need time to adjust to their new surroundings; they may hide or prefer to be alone during the adjustment period. Some are overwhelmed; they may hiss or puff up when approached until they are comfortable in their new surroundings.
- The time it takes a pet to become comfortable in a new environment differs among them. It could take a day or several weeks, so we appreciate your patience.
- If a cat is hiding, let him or her come to you.
- Make sure the cat has easy access to food and a litter box (even if this means feeding under the bed).
- Set specific feeding times and have a signal for food (a soft bell, or specific noise you make). The cat will start coming to you at these times for food, and eventually he or she will come when he or she hears the noise you make.
- Give the cat lots of treats, and stay with him or her (but don't touch the cat) during feeding times. This will help the cat associate people with positive things.
- Use wet food (microwave for two to five seconds because warm food is more tempting) or toss treats to entice a cat out of hiding.
- Do not try and pull the cat out from his or her hiding place; this will upset the cat more and could result in the cat defending himself or herself by scratching or biting.
- If the cat twitches his or her tail, flattens his or her ears, or swats at you, leave the cat alone. Give him or her time and generous space to calm down. Try again later.
- Use toys to play with the cat. This way you can keep a respectful distance while still interacting.
- Use loud noise (hand clap or a clicker) or gently spray a water bottle in the cat's direction to deter inappropriate behavior.

HOUSING

- Foster cats may be allowed the run of the house when you are at home to supervise.
- When unsupervised and overnight, we recommend that the foster pet stays in a bathroom, spare room, laundry room, or climate-controlled garage. This will limit the opportunity for valuable or breakable items to become damaged.
- Keep your foster pet in a room that can be easily cleaned, sanitized and/or disinfected after the foster period is over, in case of illness or parasites.
- Clean and comfortable bedding should be kept where the cat is sleeping.
- Inappropriate housing includes: anywhere outdoors, a shed, non-climate controlled garage, a screened-in porch, or a non-child-proofed room.

SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Loss of appetite
- Lack of energy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sneezing
- Snotting
- Nasal or eye discharge
- Limping or favoring a limb
- Fever

This handout provides recommended care guidelines for adult foster cats. These guidelines are subject to modification based upon the specific animal you are fostering. If you have any questions concerning your foster animal, please contact the foster care coordinator at 804-521-1313 or fostercare@richmondspca.org. Thank you for your love of animals and for helping us save lives! You're a hero!