



We Are Columbia

Columbia Animal Services (CAS) Foster Care Guide

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Want to connect with other fosters and staff?

Join us on Facebook:

Columbia Animal Services Foster Family*

*This group is open to current fosters and staff members only

Columbia Animal Services Foster Program FAQ

What are the requirements?

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Be willing to abide by policies and procedures in this manual and foster agreement
- Be able to access our Facebook group regularly
- Be able to provide transport to and from CAS
- Spend time with foster animals and love them like your own

Do I need to have any special training or skills to be a foster parent?

Foster care providers should be compassionate and patient. You will be informed of their foster animal's known history and any special needs before placement in your care. The foster coordinator will also be available to help answer questions and provide resources as needed.

What kind of animals need foster homes?

- Puppies or kittens too young to be in the shelter
- Mommas with puppies and kittens
- Ringworm animals
- Abused dog or cat that need socialization and TLC
- A dog or cat recovering from a treatable medical condition

How long do pets need to be in foster care?

Every situation is different! Foster needs range from a couple of day to several months or until the pet is adopted.

How much time do foster parents have to devote to the pet(s) in their care?

It depends on the situation. Foster animals need all of the same things that owned pets do, and may require even more attention if they are recovering from an illness/injury or need behavior modification.

Will my own dog or cat (or my own health) be jeopardized by fostering?

It is always a health risk to expose your animals to other animals with unknown origins and medical histories. The animals that come in can be strays and little is known about them. If the

foster parent's own animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young with compromised immune systems, then the health risk is minimal.

If you or someone in your home are immune compromised, check with your doctor first before fostering. Working with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonoses—a disease that can be transmitted from animals to human and also from humans to animals. There are about 200 of these diseases. Proper hygiene, preventative measures, and an understanding of zoonotic diseases and how they are transmitted can significantly reduce the risk of disease. (Examples include ringworm, scabies (sarcoptic mange), & some bacteria's)

Are fosters ever euthanized?

We know that much love, time and energy is devoted to animals in foster care. We are committed to finding homes for foster animals. At times, though, a foster animal may come back and become seriously ill or at-risk. A staff veterinarian may decide a foster animal is suffering and in these situations, shelter staff will humanely euthanize the animal.

Can foster parents adopt their foster companion animals?

Yes! Foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster animal unless otherwise instructed at the time the foster agreement is made between the shelter and foster parent.

Where do I keep my foster animals while at my home?

Cats/Kittens

Indoors! A large crate or a separate room (a bathroom or laundry room) is best for kittens. A warm garage or a separated room with time out when you can supervise is best for cats. If the cats or kittens are left in the bathroom, please make sure the toilet seat is always down! Unweaned, neonatal kittens are best kept in a smaller crate/carrier with warm towels and a warm rice sock at one end.

Dogs

Indoors is best. A large crate or a warm, dry garage is fine. Dogs should be on a leash at all times when left outdoors, or in a fenced area. Do not take contagious dogs off-leash. You are responsible for the safety and well-being of your foster dog. Foster dogs should not be put in a position of possibly fighting with a strange dog.

Puppies

Indoors please! Kitchen with baby gates, a bathroom, a warm garage with nothing to get into, or a large crate in a separated room is best. If the puppies are left in the bathroom, please make sure the toilet seat is always down! Puppies under 4 months should never go into off-leash areas (dog park) or walk on public ground (pet stores, around your neighborhood, at parks) because they are not fully vaccinated. This means they are more susceptible to getting PARVO, which can make them very sick and possibly die.

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Legal Guardianship

All pets in foster care are the property of Columbia Animal Services and are subject to all applicable Columbia Animal Services policies, rules and restrictions.

Foster care providers must return foster animals at any time upon the request of the foster coordinator or other Columbia Animal Services staff. Columbia Animal Services staff may request the return of a foster animal for many reasons, including but not limited to: the opportunity to be reclaimed by a previous owner or the opportunity to be transferred to a partner organization.

If a foster care provider is found to have improperly transferred a pet to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and Columbia Animal Services may initiate appropriate legal action in order to secure the return of the pet.

Columbia Animal Services reserves the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.

Housing and Care Requirements

- Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster animals, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster animals must be kept in climate controlled homes where the temperature is kept between 60 and 80° F.
- Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster animals with medications and supplements prescribed by Columbia Animal Services veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.

Puppies and Dogs

- Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors, and high traffic areas, such as the park, pet stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
- Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. While outdoors, foster dogs must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced yard. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised.
- Foster puppies/dogs that do not have a prior history with each other should not be combined in a foster home unless the foster care provider has sought and been given permission by the foster coordinator.
- Foster puppies/dogs are prohibited from being introduced to and socializing with other pets, except those living in the foster care provider's home. This includes pets owned by other foster care providers and/or potential adopters. Any interest in such

introductions should be discussed with the foster coordinator so that proper arrangements can be made.

- Foster puppies/dogs are prohibited from going to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. They must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- During walks, a minimum 10-feet should be maintained between foster puppies/dogs and other pets, except those also living in the foster care provider's home.

Kittens and Cats

- Kittens and cats in foster care should be kept indoors only. When being transported, cats and kittens must be kept in secure carriers.
- Foster kittens/cats are prohibited from being introduced to and socializing with other pets, except those living in the foster care provider's home. This includes pets owned by other foster care providers and/or potential adopters. Any interest in such introductions should be discussed with the foster coordinator so that proper arrangements can be made.

Additional Requirements

- Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster animals.
- Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster animal bites a person or pet and the bite breaks the skin.
- If injury or illness results from interaction between pets in your home and foster animals, Columbia Animal Services will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster animal. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster animal for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.
- If a foster animal is lost, the foster care provider should contact the foster coordinator immediately. For more details, see the "My foster animal is lost! What should I do?" section.

Supplies CAS will Provide

- Food (this includes formula when needed)
- Any medications, supplements or prescription diets that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff
- Other items (based on availability and need)

Health and Temperament

CAS will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of pets seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any pet. Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster animal's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical treatment, training and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the pet.

How it Works

Getting Started

After your foster application is received and approved, we ask that you join our “Columbia Animal Services Foster Family” Facebook group, which is how we communicate with our foster care providers. Prior to fostering any pets, when possible, you will be required to attend a foster program orientation. If at any time you have questions regarding the foster program, pets that we are pursuing foster placement for, etc., please contact the foster coordinator.

Selecting a Foster Animal

After you have joined the foster program’s Facebook group, you will begin viewing placement pleas for pets in need. If you are interested in fostering any of these pets, please contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible. Once we receive your interest, we will verify that the pet is still available, answer any questions that you may have, and confirm a pick up date and time.

Picking Up a New Foster Animal

Once a pick up date and time has been confirmed, you will arrive at CAS and enter through the lobby. You will need to sign the foster agreement and the foster coordinator will provide you with all necessary supplies.

Returning a Foster Animal

The foster coordinator will work closely with you to schedule your foster animals return. As a guideline, please be aware of the following:

- Have the puppies had 3 DHPP vaccines and are over 2 months old?
- Have the kittens had 3 FVRCP vaccines and weigh over 3 lbs.?
- Are the animals successfully weaned from their mother?
- Is your foster healthy and recovered fully from the illness or injury?
- Is there room on the adoption floor?

My foster animal is lost! What should I do?

1. Notify the foster coordinator immediately at **803-612-0757**.
2. Start searching!
3. Post and search for the lost foster animal on Nextdoor.com and Craigslist.org (in the Community section under Lost & Found and Pets).
4. Create and distribute flyers and post signs in high traffic areas (vet clinics, pet stores, groomers, pet boarding facilities and other local businesses).

Medical Care

Basic Wellness Services (Vaccinations and Parasite Preventatives)

Routine veterinary care is provided by your foster coordinator, shelter vet techs and shelter veterinarian during normal business hours. Shelter animals are vaccinated upon arrival at the shelter in most instances. There are some occasions that a pet cannot be vaccinated (too young, sick on intake, aggressive or unable to handle, etc.). Pets in foster care will get vaccinated every 2 weeks until they have reached 3 vaccines.

We vaccinate dogs and puppies 6 weeks of age and older with DA2PP, Bordetella intranasal (kennel cough), and Rabies 1 year (4 months and older).

We vaccinate cats and kittens 6 weeks of age and older with FVRCP and Rabies 1 year (4 months and older only).

Shelter and foster animals will be de-wormed with Pyrantel (roundworms and hookworms) every 2 weeks until they have reached 3 full doses.

Please keep in mind, shelter staff cannot issue additional medication without seeing the foster animal. Please do not call for refills or come in without your foster animal if it still needs medication, additional vaccines, etc.

NOTE: If you are able and prefer to cover the cost of veterinary care for your foster animal with your own veterinarian, please let the Foster Coordinator know. We ask that you provide any documentation for the veterinary care your foster animal has received so that we may update the shelters medical records.

To schedule an appointment for your foster animals next set of vaccines, please contact the foster coordinator at **803-612-0757**.

Note: Due to the large number of pets in the foster program, it is up to the foster to keep track of their foster animal's booster shot schedule. A reminder sheet will be given at the time you sign the foster agreement.

Sick or Injured Foster animals

If your foster animal becomes ill, injured or is due for a re-check of a specific issue, please contact the foster coordinator at **803-612-0757**. Sick or injured medical needs are as follows:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea for 2 or more days
- Not eating for more than 2 days
- Signs of a URI – Sneezing, draining eyes, runny nose
- Lethargy without fever for more than a day
- Lethargy with fever
- Trauma or injury
- Animals needing bandage changes

- Animals that are due for a re-check for mange or ringworm

When emailing, please use the subject line, "Telemedicine" and we will follow up with you to discuss further.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, "crashes" and begins to fade away. Symptoms include:

- Low body temperature – the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy - not getting up, unable to stand, not responding to touching/petting
- Gasping for breath - Meowing/crying out

Please let the foster coordinator know if you would like more information on fading kitten syndrome. If you are fostering neonatal kittens, you will be given a handout at the time you sign the foster agreement.

Foster Puppies or Kittens with Fleas, Ticks or Other Parasites

If you notice that your foster puppies or kittens have fleas on them, they can be bathed with plain Dawn dish soap and a small comb can be used to remove the fleas. Afterwards, they should be dried thoroughly and steps should be taken to ensure that they stay warm. All bedding used before bathing should be washed with hot water and detergent and carpets should be vacuumed thoroughly. For additional advice on how best to handle fleas/ticks and other parasites, please contact the foster coordinator.

After Hours Emergency Care

After hours, the foster coordinator will take calls when emergencies arise. In the event of an emergency, the foster coordinator will instruct the foster parent on the best course of action, such as whether to bring the foster animal to the shelter immediately or to wait until the following day and come during normal business hours. Please call the foster coordinator at **803-612-0757** if there is an after-hours emergency. Columbia Animal Services will not reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals when taken for veterinary care outside of that which is pre-authorized by the Foster coordinator or shelter veterinarian.

Common Illnesses and Medical Conditions Seen in Foster Animals:

- **URI** - Upper Respiratory Infection can infect dogs and cats. Cats cannot give URI to dogs, nor can dogs give it to cats, but it can be spread within the same species. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature. If the sneezing becomes more frequent, watch for discharge coming from the nose. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be necessary. You can try nebulizing the cat to relieve her discomfort. Nebulizing can be done in two ways: (1) place the cat in the bathroom with a hot shower running (do not place the cat in the shower); (2) put the cat in a carrier, cover it with a towel, and place a nebulizer or humidifier under the towel. If the discharge

becomes colored, contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment because the cat may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the cat's breathing. If the cat starts to breathe with an open mouth or wheeze, call the foster coordinator immediately and follow the emergency protocol. Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the cat's eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating.

- **Eye discharge.** It is normal for cats to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. But if your foster cat has yellow or green discharge, or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment.
- **Loss of appetite.** Your foster animal may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the animal hasn't eaten after 24 hours, please notify the foster coordinator. Also, if the animal has been eating well, but then stops eating for 12 to 24 hours, call the foster coordinator to set up a vet appointment. Please do not change the animal's diet without contacting the foster department. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration.
- **Diarrhea** - Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run. Feed a bland diet of cooked white rice and boiled chicken (3 parts rice to 1-part meat) until the diarrhea subsides.
 - **Coccidia:** An internal parasite, sometimes causing a large, hard belly, diarrhea, or vomiting. A fecal sample is needed to diagnose coccidia. Treatment by a vet is needed, and up to 5 days of medicine is needed to treat. Can be caused by kittens or puppies directly or indirectly coming in contact with feces.
- **Dehydration** - Animals with diarrhea can quickly become dehydrated. To check for dehydration, pull up gently on the skin at the scruff of the neck. If it bounces back quickly when you let go, hydration is fine. If it does not go back or goes back slowly, your foster animal is dehydrated and needs medical attention quickly.
- **Fleas** - Fleas can affect dogs and cats. A foster animal with fleas will be given a general flea treatment called Capstar. If you notice that your puppies or kittens have fleas, they can be bathed in plain Dawn dish soap and a small comb can be used to remove the fleas. Do not use any over the counter flea treatments at all. If you notice fleas within a week of having the animal in your home, contact the Foster Coordinator.
- **Ear Mites** - Ear mites are parasites that live in the ear canal. You may notice a bald spot behind their 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 animals and need to be treated. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any these symptoms.
- **Hair loss.** Please contact the foster department if you notice any hair loss on your foster cat. It is normal for cats to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm or dermatitis. It is important to check your foster cat's coat every day.

- **Worms** - If you detect worms in your foster's stool, contact the Foster Coordinator to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti. The pictures are not pretty, but for more information on worms you can visit

http://www.petmd.com/dog/generalhealth/evr_dg_intestinal_worms_in_dogs#.UYqOP-BK8vQ

Tips for Taking Care of your Foster Animals

Bringing Your New Foster Animal Home

Ideally, set up the area where your foster animal will be staying before you bring your foster home.

- New foster animals should be kept separate from your existing companion animals of the same species for a period of 7-10 days. This quarantine period is to protect your own animals and should be strictly observed.
- Cats and kittens do very well in a kitty condo, crate, bathroom, or spare bedroom.
- Introduce your foster animal to one room of the house first. Try to have homecoming be a quiet experience for the animal.
- Cats and kittens need a cozy, secure place with a bed to snuggle up in. The bed can simply be a low sided box with a blanket in it.
- Show each cat and kitten where the litter box is located.
- Allow your new foster quiet time to adjust to the new environment.

Introductions with Your Companion Animals

- If you are fostering kittens or puppies less than 6 weeks of age, we recommended not introducing them to your resident animals until they have received their first set of vaccines.
- Use your discretion in deciding whether to introduce your own animals to your foster animals. Some resident animals have difficulty adjusting to fosters and may exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as urine marking.
- If you choose to introduce your own animal to a foster animal, the introductions should be done gradually. Observing the 7-10-day waiting period will greatly facilitate this.
- Place the new foster in a carrier/crate and allow your resident animals to sniff the new foster through the carrier/crate for a few moments throughout the day for the first few days.

Administering Pills to Cats

If the pill can be given with food, try hiding it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, tuna, cream cheese, liverwurst, canned food or semi-moist food like Pounce is often used. If your cat will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

- Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
- Bring the cat to the place you will give the pill, while talking to him or her in a happy, light voice.
- Ask to be shown how to correctly “scruff” a cat.
- Burrito Wrap: Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or a large towel so just his or her head is sticking out.
- Place the cat between your knees or at eye level on a table.
- Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger of your dominant hand.
- Using your other hand, gently but firmly grasp the cat’s head from above with your thumb on one side and your finger on the other.
- Tilt the cat’s head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. The cat’s lower jaw will automatically drop a bit.
- Place one of your free fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
- Quickly place the pill as far back in the cat’s mouth as possible, making sure it is over the hump of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far into the cat’s mouth because it might gag.
- Close the cat’s mouth. Hold it closed, lower his or her head to a normal position and gently rub or blow on the cat’s nose to stimulate swallowing.
- Talk softly to and stroke the cat or give another type of treat.

Administering Liquid Medication to Cats

- Start with the burrito wrap: wrapping the cat’s body and legs tightly in a towel leaving only its head sticking out. Insert the dropper between the cheek and teeth while tilting the chin upward. Slowly dispense the medication, remembering not to give it faster than the cat can swallow. The quicker you do this, the more cooperative the cat will be.
- Refrigerated medication **MUST** be kept in the refrigerator.

Administering Pills to Dogs

If the medication can be given with food; the easiest way to give pills is to hide it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, peanut butter, cream cheese, canned food or liverwurst is often used. If the dog will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

- Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
- Call the dog in a happy, calm voice.

- Take the dog to a spot where he or she is backed up against something and cannot get away from you. Sometimes putting the dog on a surface off the floor is best, but this requires assistance.
- Squeeze behind the upper canine teeth and tilt the animal's head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. His or her jaw will automatically drop a bit.
- Place one of the fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
- Quickly place the pill as far back as possible inside the dog's mouth being sure to get it over the hump in the tongue. Do not place your hand in the dog's mouth too far because it might gag.
- Close the dog's mouth and hold it closed while you gently blow or rub his or her nose. This will stimulate swallowing.

Administering Liquid Medication to Dogs

- Insert the dropper between the upper and lower teeth in the back and tilt the chin upward. Slowly administer the medication while being careful not to go faster than the dog can swallow. Always remember to praise the dog and even offer a treat after the medication. This will make administering medication easier in the future.

Applying Eye Drops and Ointments

- Before administering eye medication, be sure the eye is clear of discharge. You can use warm water on a cotton ball to gently clean around the eyes. Use your thumb and forefinger to open the eyelid. With your other hand, place 1-2 drops (as directed) or a small amount of ointment on the eye or the pink tissue around the eye. The foster animal will blink and the medication will cover the entire eye. When applying medication to the eye, try to avoid the animal's direct line of vision when approaching and avoid touching the eye with the container of medication. Make sure you wash your hands before and after administering the medication.

Care of Puppies & Kittens

- Puppies and kittens younger than 4 weeks are usually not fostered without their mother. Most mothers do a very good job of feeding, cleaning and caring for their newborns. However, it is important that you be observant to ensure that no problems arise. A puppy or kitten's condition can change very quickly.
- If you have a litter of puppies or kittens, it is important that you are able to identify them. Make a list of their names, and any distinguishing markings so you can keep a record of their progress. Remove all paper collars before they become too snug.
- Puppies and kittens fostered for age will have their follow up appointment at about 6 weeks of age, if no problems have arisen.
- The area where you keep your foster puppies and kittens must be clean, dry, warm and free of drafts. Puppies and kittens younger than 2-3 weeks cannot maintain their own body temperature and can die if they become chilled.

- Puppies and kittens with mothers should be kept separate from other animals in the house. The mother may be protective and can attack other animals or people if she feels threatened.
- Use towels or blankets for bedding. Bedding should be changed daily (or more frequently if necessary). The mother will try to keep the area clean, but that can be a difficult chore, especially with a large litter.
- The mother will take care of the babies' elimination needs by frequently cleaning/licking them. Puppies and kittens begin eliminating on their own without stimulation from their mother at about 3 weeks of age.
- Fading puppy or kitten: Rarely, one or more puppies or kittens in a litter will begin to "fade" after a week or two of life. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing and stop crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. There is no clear cause for the condition. Puppies and kittens fade very quickly and often do not recover, even with intensive care. Contact the Foster Program Coordinator immediately if you suspect a problem.

Stimulating kittens less than 3 weeks for urination/defecation:

- If there is no mother, you will need to stimulate the kittens to urinate and defecate. Cotton balls work well for this. Gently rub every few hours to stimulate them to urinate and defecate. Kittens begin eliminating on their own without stimulation from their mother at about 3 weeks.
- If you have newborn kittens, it is not uncommon for them to defecate every 24-36 hours.

Feeding

- Nursing mothers should be fed dry puppy or kitten food mixed with some wet food. They need to be fed more often and in larger quantities than usual.
- Starting at about 3-4 weeks of age, most puppies and kittens will begin trying to eat on their own from their mother's dish. At this time, make sure the dish is large enough for the litter to gather around or use multiple dishes.
- Mix ground dry puppy or kitten food with water and a small amount of canned food to make a semi-solid mixture.
- Some puppies and kittens may need to be introduced to the food. Place a small amount on your finger and allow the puppy or kitten to lick it off or place a small amount on their lips. Slightly warming the food makes it more palatable.
- Feedings should be done at least 2-3 times a day. Several feedings throughout the day will ensure that your puppies and kittens do not overeat. Overeating can cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- It is important to make sure that each puppy and kitten is eating. If it appears that one or more puppy or kitten is not making its way to the dish or is getting squeezed out, set up another dish away from the first and closely monitor that puppy or kitten's intake.
- Do not feed cow's milk to a puppy or kitten.

- Remove the mother during puppy and kitten feeding times so she will not eat their food. It is also helpful to remove the mother 1-2 hours prior to feeding time to stimulate the puppies and kittens' appetites.
- Puppies and kittens will continue to occasionally nurse during this time.

Litter Box Training

By about 4 weeks of age, kittens are ready to begin using the litter box.

- Make sure you have a low sided litter box for the kittens to get in and out of easily.
- Start them off by putting them in the litter box and scratching the litter with their paw. The kittens will pick this up very quickly. While they are learning to use the litter box, put them in it several times a day for a couple days if necessary.
- Kittens who are unfamiliar with the litter box will taste the litter. Use unscented, non-clumping clay litter for young kittens. **DO NOT USE CLUMPING LITTER!** Ingested clumping litter will cause illness.
- Several litter boxes may be necessary depending on the size of the litter.
- Litter boxes must be kept clean.
- Make sure the kittens can easily locate their litter box by keeping them in a small room or bathroom.
- Kittens are very messy when first learning to use a litter box. They will step in their excrement and track it through the room. At this time, it is especially important to keep all surfaces clean and covered.

Puppy Housetraining

- Puppies will start to eliminate on their own at about 3 weeks of age. Puppies need to eliminate when they first wake up, about 20 minutes after eating and after playing vigorously.
- Once puppies have begun to eliminate on their own, outdoor housetraining should begin. If it is necessary to use an indoor elimination location, it should be as small as possible. Keep it consistently covered with something like newspaper or puppy pads. This will help puppies learn to keep elimination in one area and ease housetraining in the new home.

Puppy Behavior

- Nipping is a common behavior in puppies. A loud shriek will usually get their attention so you can give them a proper toy to chew.
- Try to start your foster puppies off on the right foot by keeping them off of the furniture, not letting them jump, etc. This will make their transition to a new home easier.
- Puppies should never be left unsupervised outside of their crate.
- A single puppy will cry a lot the first couple of nights. Make the crate as comfortable as possible by providing a blanket and stuffed animal.

Feeding Cats

- Dry food in an appropriate amount (2/3 of a cup for a cat up to 10 lbs.) should be available at all times.
- A serving of canned food can be given once or twice a day.
- Milk should NEVER be given to cats
- Fresh water should always be available.
- Cats should be fed away from their litter box.

Feeding Dogs

- Dogs should be fed twice daily at the same time every day.
- The amount of food depends on the dog's age and weight. As a general rule, adult dogs get 1 cup per 20 lbs., and puppies get 3 cups daily (divided throughout the day).
- Give the dog 15-20 minutes to eat the food and then remove it.
- If your foster dog is unwilling to eat plain, dry food, you can mix in some warm water or a SMALL amount of canned food.
- Fresh water should always be available.

Sanitizing your Home Between Foster Animals

- Wash bedding in hot water, detergent and bleach.
- Discard toys with non-washable surfaces.
- Disinfect all washable surfaces with a mild bleach and water solution (bleach/water ratio of 1:32 or 4oz of bleach per gallon of water is recommended). Bleach solutions should be prepared as needed, because they lose their strength after 4 hours. Bleach is inactive in the presence of organic matter so clean up dirt, hair, feces, etc. before using bleach to disinfect. Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective.
- Vacuum all carpeted areas.
- Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes and scrub and bleach crates, carriers, scoops, food bowls and litter boxes.
- Clean any urine or feces soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner immediately to avoid residual odor (Nature's Miracle Stain and Odor Remover works well).
- Regularly clean up all waste in the yard to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

If you are planning to foster bottle baby kittens, we recommend having these additional supplies on hand:

- A food scale (to weigh the kittens)
- A rectal thermometer
- Lubrication for thermometer
- Dawn Dish Soap (to bathe the kittens in)
- Flea Comb

- Tweezers (to get fleas the flea comb will not get)
- Karo Syrup (for fading kitten syndrome)
- Q-tips
- Pedialyte (for dehydrated animals when you don't have access to sub-q fluids)
- Nasal Saline Drops
- Snuggle safe warming disk or extra rice socks
- Tiny but Mighty: The kitten lady's guide to saving the most vulnerable felines book

More Questions?

We hope that you have a wonderful experience fostering a pet for Columbia Animal Services. Fostering is not easy and at times it can be overwhelming. Please know that you are not alone!

There are experienced foster parents and shelter staff that can help you. Please call/text the foster coordinator at **803-612-0757**. You can also email the foster coordinator at Meghan.Tillotson@columbiaSC.gov. Please understand that our foster program is large and it is being run by one individual. We continue to ask for your patience with general communication and requests.