

The Cats' Cradle Foster Information Page

Thank you for your interest in joining our team of Foster Parents! If you have never had the opportunity to foster before, you are now being given the chance to experience all the joys of parenting without the lifetime of responsibility. We want this experience to be a positive and rewarding one for you. You will be giving your foster cats a chance to adapt to a normal, warm and loving foster home environment while it waits for a permanent one.

How the Foster Program Works:

Basic Information:

- We do not adopt out cats that have not been spayed or neutered.
- We do not adopt out cats to indoor/outdoor or outdoor homes.
- Cats/kittens entering our system from any other person/group must first be approved – if you agree to take in cats/kittens without approval, then they are financially the foster's responsibility.
- Any medical need or emergency must be first approved – any medical appointment made without approval will be the foster's responsibility. Please try to call before "after-hours" so that we can make an appointment during regular business hours.
- **If you have a medical emergency or think your cats is sick contact Lynda Garbaldi**

Getting a Foster Cat

- You will be contacted and asked if you would like to foster a cat(s).
- Keep fosters separated from animals that you own, at least at first. You need to wash your hands after each contact with the foster(s). This is critical for the well-being of your current pets. Before letting the cat out of the isolation room be sure to have:
 1. Waited at least two weeks to be sure that the cats does not have distemper or ringworm.
 2. Obtained a negative FeLV test (feline leukemia)
- You need to spend time with the foster(s) and socialize them (pick them up, play with them, pet them). Use this time to find out about their personality.
- Feed all cats under 1 year old and pregnant/nursing mothers, kitten food. All other cats can get regular adult food.

Vaccine and Testing Procedure

Common Medical Terms:

FeLV – Feline Leukemia is a serious, often fatal, viral disease which is passed from one cat to another. Testing for leukemia is recommended as part of a routine preventive cat health care program. Vaccination is also available for those cats at risk. Feline leukemia is a preventable disease but is not curable once a cat is infected.

FIV – Feline AIDS is a viral disease which is contagious from cat to cat. It is spread through contact with an infected cat, with wounds sustained while fighting being a common means of infection. It is a serious, often fatal disease. Feline AIDS is a preventable disease but not curable once infected. Cats can live a normal life with feline AIDS.

Feline Distemper – Also known as feline panleukopenia, is a viral disease which is spread from cat to cat through contact with infected animals or through contact with secretions from infected animals. It can be fatal, especially in young kittens.

Rabies – Rabies is a fatal viral disease which affects cats, dogs, people and many other types of animals. Rabies vaccination is an essential part of a preventive cat's health care program and many communities have laws requiring the vaccination of cats against rabies.

Ringworm – Ringworm is a skin disease caused by a fungus. Dermatomycosis is a more formal name for ringworm. It is contagious not only to other cats, but to people as well. It is characterized by a rash and hair loss.

Upper Respiratory Infection – (URI) They are common in cats, especially in young cats. Symptoms of URI include sneezing, coughing, runny eyes, runny nose, lack of appetite, and wheezing.

Intestinal Parasites – Intestinal Parasites include worms and other parasites which live inside of your cat's intestinal tract. These parasites are frequently diagnosed by analyzing the feces microscopically. Common internal parasites seen in cats are roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms.

Common Vaccine Terms:

FVRCP – Vaccine for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (type of URI). Distemper, and Chlamydia (type of URI)

FeLV – Vaccine for Feline Leukemia only

Rabies – Vaccine for Rabies only

Kittens: Contact Lynda to schedule the following medical procedures (most can be done at the same time):

As soon as possible:

- Deworming Pill
- Flea Medication

After 4 months:

- A FeLV test (if the mother tested negative, you do not need to test the kittens)
- Spaying and/or Neutering
- FeLV, FVRCP, and Rabies Vaccines

Adults: As soon as possible:

- Deworming Pill
- Flea Medication

Get these after two weeks

- A FeLV test
- Spaying and/or Neutering
- FeLV, FVRCP, and Rabies vaccines
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Getting a Foster Ready for Adoption

- Kittens can be spayed/neutered at 4 months old. When your cat is ready to be spayed or neutered contact Lynda Garbaldi. It is your responsibility to bring and pick up your foster(s) from the veterinarian.
- Vaccines will be given at the veterinarian or by Lynda

Getting your Foster Adopted

- When the cats are ready to be adopted, contact Lynda. You will be notified when you can bring your cats to one of our adoption events. Please remember that there are many foster cats and they all need to be given equal time at events.
- All adoptions must be approved by an adoption counselor. If you know someone interested in your cat or kitten, please have them come to an adoption event.
- Anyone interested in adopting a cat or kitten must pay the full adoption fee – even if the foster parent would like to adopt the cat or kitten.

Helpful Information

We want this experience to be a positive and rewarding one for you and the foster cat. As with anything that involves change, there may be an adjustment period for you and your foster pet. Please be patient, many of our animals have come from rough situations and are very frightened. Many times, their only way to communicate their fears is through what we humans refer to as abnormal or deviant behavior. Some will hide, while others may exhibit any number of signals: growling, hissing, snapping (also called fear biting), cowering in corners, etc.

When you bring your foster cat or kitten home for the first time, try to confine it in a small room (bathrooms are ideal) that can be shut off from the rest of your family pets. Put out water, food and a litter box for your foster. In addition, consider leaving the carrier out, with the carrier door open for the cat or kitten to crawl into until it feels secure enough to explore the room on its own.

Be sure to remove toilet paper and clear things off of the bathroom counters, and any other surfaces the cat or kitten could jump onto and accidentally knock over. Talk very softly to it anytime you are in the same room. Try to avoid sudden loud noises. Depending on its previous circumstances, it may be ready to explore and let you gently pet it shortly after its arrival, or it may take several hours or days before it trusts you. This is okay. When the cat or kitten decides to go to the next level of friendship, it will let you know. Many times, this occurs as soon as it realizes you are the food giver!

Please keep in mind that although it may appear healthy, we often do not know if it has been exposed to any diseases, infections or parasites, other than what we have already tested or treated it for. This is why, at least initially, it is a good idea to isolate it from your other pets. **We also strongly recommend that you wash your hands after handling it.**