



FOSTERING INSTRUCTIONS / TIPS

HOW PROPER FOSTERING PREVENTS ADOPTION RETURNS

General Feeding Guidelines

Approx Ages	Food Type	Amount	Notes
Nursing Moms & Newborns	Dry Kitten Chow	Continuous	Dry Kitten Chow should always be available for moms and kittens. Weigh newborns to ensure continuous weight gain. Supplement with wet food if kittens start losing weight or mom quits nursing / dries up.
	Canned Kitten	1 can 2x / day	
4-6 weeks (no mother)	Canned Kitten	3-4x / day	Can mix w/ formula or chicken baby food
5-7 weeks (no mother)	Canned & Dry Kitten	3/4x / day	Have dry available, start decreasing wet (if applicable) or mix with dry. First FVRCP at 6-7 weeks if motherless..
6-12 weeks (has mom)	Dry Kitten Chow	1/2 cup 2x / day	First FVRCP Vaccine due at 9-10 weeks for kittens with moms. S / N scheduled when kittens reach 13-14 weeks and receive their Annual Rabies Vaccination.
3 - 10 months	Dry Kitten Chow	1/3 - 1/2 cup 2x / day	Begin cutting w/ Cat Chow at 10 mo.
over 1 year	Dry Cat Chow	1/4 cup 2x / day	

Please do not feed foster cats any additional wet food except as noted above. **ALL FOOD WILL BE SUPPLIED BY PAWS-OK.** *Foster cats who are fed wet food in the weeks before adoption can have difficulty adjusting to their owners feeding preferences when adopted causing undue stress on the cat.* After kittens are weaned (approximately at 10-12 weeks) they should NOT be allowed to nurse and be kept separate from mother to allow her milk glands to dry up in preparation for spay surgery.

Behavior and Discipline Guidelines

It is very important that cats and kittens in foster care are not allowed to develop habits that may lead to their return to PAWS after adoption. Please adhere to the following guidelines and help PAWS-OK make the ultimate adoption of your fosters "stick" with no returns.

Disciplining Inappropriate Behavior: We do NOT recommend a spray bottle for discipline. All cats and kittens should be closely supervised when they are out of their crate. When inappropriate behavior is observed, (climbing, scratching) gently remove the cat from the area and redirect their attention to the proper area (scratching post, floor, toy) and reward cat for proper behavior. Do not yell, scream, hit or otherwise scare the cat/kitten. Loud noises could cause unwanted urination and lead to a "skittish" cat.

Examples of some common Inappropriate Behavior include:

1. Scratching on furniture / walls etc. If scratching is an issue let PAWS know EARLY so a scratching post can be supplied for training purposes. Cats who are allowed to scratch inappropriately may temp their adopters to declaw them.
2. Climbing drapes, walls, people (up their shirt etc. - common with cats and kittens who have been bottle fed.)
3. Walking on counter tops, tabletops etc. Basic rule of thumb is "where my butt goes, my cat can go". Most adopters allow cats on the couch, bed, chairs but do not want them on the countertops, tables, on top of the refrigerator etc. ***Don't let your fosters develop these habits which may lead to confusing discipline in their new home, undue stress and possible returns.***

Biting - Inappropriate or Aggressive Use of Claws: Using claws and gentle biting is normal behavior for young kittens when they play with other kittens. This is inappropriate when they claw or bite humans. Do not encourage rough play as it can lead to problems as the cat matures. You can curb this behavior early by "freezing" your hand movements when the claws come out or the teeth come in contact with your hand. Don't pull away because this signals the pounce and

chase behavior. If the hand quits moving, most cats will stop the activity and some will lick it (which is normal). Resume calmer petting and handling after a few seconds of proper behavior and reward with access play directed at cat toys. Repeat as necessary.

Rewarding Appropriate Behavior: PAWS-OK cats have for the most part been rescued from citizens who have had some contact with them and they are used to attention from humans. Their degree of fondness for attention varies by cat with their different personalities. The only positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior most cats want is some gentle scratching, petting and companionship from their foster parents. However there are times when a cat just needs some "time to themselves". Please respect this and do not "force" your attentions on them. Cats are very independent pets and will usually come to you when they need some "human time". Forcing unwanted affection (not NOW Mom!) can stress an independent cat. One way for our foster cats to have that "me time" is in their cages...

"Confining" Advantages in Foster Care: All PAWS-OK Fosters are supplied with a large wire cage for confining their foster cats. Your foster cat must be crated whenever you are not present to directly supervise it, including when you sleep. Their crate will be large enough to hold a litter box, bed, food & water dishes and toys.

We highly recommend the cage be put on a table in a well-travelled room in your home for socialization purposes.

Foster cats should spend the vast majority of their time in the cage.

Contrary to popular (human) belief, most cats adjust quickly to a cage and are very comfortable there. It is also important that YOU lift them in and out of the cage at playtime. **Do not encourage them to jump out of the cage on their own.** This habit causes issues if they get moved to another foster home and when they are in the Adoption Center. Cage training prepares them for what they will experience in the adoption center. If you cannot agree to keep the PAWS foster cats in a cage (except for play time), you will not be allowed to foster for PAWS-OK.

This small "safe" place has all your foster's creature comforts (food, water, litter box etc.) for your foster. It is a familiar place where they can have their "me" time, ignore the stresses of the day (no training occurs) and sleep without interruption (cats sleep 12-15 hours a day!).

Their cage is also a place where you know they are safe from escape through an open door, eating a poisonous house plant or chewing into an electrical cord, etc. Cats and especially kittens can get into mischief really, really fast - it's your job to keep them safe and while they are confined you can take a break from watching them... like a playpen for toddlers!

Their cage is also a place where they can be so your can have your "me time" (necessary for all fosters) when you can really get into that newest recipe you've been wanting to try, watch the latest movie, submerge yourself in Facebook, read a good book without interruption, entertain friends, or clean the garage without worrying about your foster.

The cage advantages for PAWS are also substantial - the more your foster interacts with humans through the cage (their safe place) bars, the more interactive and comfortable they will be in our Adoption Center at PetSmart and at events. Comfortable, friendly cats in cages get adopted much quicker! The more familiar they become (and stay) with being put into the cage the better behaved when they need to go into a crate for transport to events or into their new home. There is nothing like finalizing an adoption of a sweet, calm cat who then turns into a scratching, clawing NIGHTMARE when you attempt to place them in a carrier to go home with their new parents! NOT GOOD! (Practicing this transfer into and out of a carrier is a good habit for all cats - whether a car ride and vet visit is in the future or not).

Thanks again for fostering for PAWS-OK. Remember that you have an important job in the life of this foster - you are responsible for training your foster to be the best cat he/she can be. Their behaviors and attitudes will determine how quickly they leave their fostering life behind for a life with a loving owner and/or family. The sooner the better as far as they are concerned and your efforts can make their dream of a lifelong home come true.