



**FRIENDS OF OCONEE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES
FOSTER PROGRAM MANUAL
FOR CATS**

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Welcome to our family.

Since its inception in March 2014, Friends of Oconee County Animal Shelter has found foster homes for hundreds of stray and abandoned animals in need. It is proven that we save lives, and we are committed to providing safe, secure, and happy temporary homes for these fur babies. We could not do this without you. Thank you so much for opening your home and your heart to this cause. In accordance with the Department of Agriculture, a home visit is required before any animal can go into foster care, either regular foster or foster-to-adopt. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the foster program. Please contact us immediately if you have any others.



Q. How long do I foster?

A. Fostering is a commitment to keep the cat or kitten until it gets adopted. This can be as soon as a few days after placement, or a few weeks. Often, this depends on how proactive you are in promoting your cat. However, some animals are in foster due to medical needs, and may require recovery time before they are available for adoption. These needs will be made clear to you before you agree to foster the animal.

PetSmart's Cat Room has become our adoption center. Fosters can be placed there once they are well socialized and after approval by the Shelter staff.

Q. How should I promote my foster?

A. The best way to promote your foster cat is to tell everyone about him/her! We will do our best to promote your animal on our social media pages and at events. Here are some easy, effective ways for **you** to get the word out.

1. Utilize your own personal **social media** pages
2. Complete the "Cat Foster Survey" under the Foster Information tab on www.friendsofocasga.org to let us know more about your foster pet!
2. Tell friends and family about the animal
3. Make flyers to post at your workplace, gym, or other locations
4. Always have a **photo** of your foster and show people you encounter throughout the day such as cashiers, clerks, etc.



Q. What do I have to buy?

A. The simple answer is **nothing!** We will do our best to always provide the basic needs for your foster-: blanket, food, food bowls, litter box and scoop, litter, baby wipes and antiseptic wipes. Many foster homes *choose* to purchase additional items, such as treats, toys, bedding, etc. and we love that our fosters care enough to buy

these gifts for their fosters! Please understand, however, the Shelter cannot reimburse you for these items.

Q. How should I introduce my foster to my personal pets?

A. This can be tricky. It probably depends on your foster kitty and whether or not it has been around other dogs and cats. Either way, it is suggested that you keep your new kitty in a separate “safe” room for the first week. Allow him to leave his cat carrier on his own to explore the new “safe” room. He should have a litter box, food and water in this room. Let him explore at his own pace. Animals that are coming from a shelter may be scared or shy or just stressed. He may not want to be held or petted right away, but it is comforting to have your presence in the room with him. It helps him trust you. If you have other cats, they may already be showing interest in what is in the room you won't let them into. You can help the process along by brushing your cat then using the same brush to groom the new cat. It shares some of their scents and makes it a little more interesting when they meet. After the week of adjustment is over you can open the door, but let the foster cat make the decision to exit the “safe” room. It's a good idea to keep separate litter boxes for a while until your cats are getting along really well. If you are trying to introduce your foster cat to your family dog, the foster cat still needs time to get used to his surroundings. Let him have his “safe” space again. When he is ready to venture out, introduce him to your dog by keeping the dog on a leash until you are sure that no harm will come to the foster cat. They don't have to love each other. They just have to be able to live safely with each other.



Q. What should I expect the first few days of fostering?

A. Your kitty has probably been through a stressful time lately. It is a good time to let him rest and get used to his new environment. He will get over this fairly quickly. If he seems unhealthy, i.e. sneezing, watery eyes, diarrhea, call the Shelter and speak to the Medical Officer. Keep fresh water available at all times. **Remember, your fostered cat must be an indoor cat.**

Q. How do I litter train my cat?

A. Fortunately, cats are very clean animals. If you provide a clean litter box with clean litter for them, they will know what to do. If you are fostering kittens who have not been taught by their mothers, it is necessary to use either a cotton ball or baby wipe to wipe their bottoms after every feeding and then put them in a litter box. The wiping stimulates their urination, etc., and putting them directly in the box seems to make the connection for them to “do their business.”

Q. What and how often should I feed my foster?

A. This will be explained in detail when you receive your foster.



Q. What are some common medical problems I should look out for?

A. Parasites such as tapeworm, whipworm, and long-worms are sometimes found in shelter animals. Fleas, ear mites, and sneezing are also possible issues. If you

think your foster cat has any medical problems, please contact the Shelter. If necessary, you will be directed to either take the animal to one of the vets utilized by the Shelter or bring the animal to the Shelter.

Understand that any medical services you seek without prior approval will be your financial responsibility.

Q. What do I do if I need to go out of town?

A. Please let us know as far in advance as possible, and we will make arrangements.

Q. What if I am fostering with the intention of adopting?

A. Sometimes people choose to foster a cat to see if it is a good fit for their home before they commit to adoption. Yay! The same rules and guidelines apply to foster-to-adopt homes. Although foster parents are provided with all the needed supplies, foster-to-adopt families do not receive supplies. In nearly all foster-to-adopt situations, the kitty will be adopted and the adopter will provide the necessary supplies. You will have two weeks to decide if you are going to adopt the cat or kitten. If, at the end of these two weeks, you decide the animal is not the right fit, the animal will be returned to the Shelter. Hopefully, the animal can go to the Cat Room, if there is space. Otherwise, the animal will remain at the Shelter until another foster home becomes available.



Q. How do I know if my foster animal goes to a good home?

A. We encourage foster homes to meet potential adopters! If there is a reason you don't want a certain person adopting the animal, let the Shelter know and they will always take it into consideration.

Q. What if I change my mind and decide to adopt my foster cat?

A. **All foster homes have Right of First Refusal.** This means that we will never complete an adoption without first asking you if you are interested in keeping the animal.

If you have any further questions, please contact one of the Foster Coordinators.

Thank you so much for fostering with us!

You are truly saving a life.

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