



## The Highs and Lows of Fostering

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. We couldn't save as many lives as we do without the dedication of our foster families. When you think of fostering, what are you interested in taking home? Will you want a mom with her kittens, or older kittens that are not at weight yet?

**Is fostering right for you and your family? Please go over this with your whole family.**

- Do you live in the Raleigh metro area? We accept foster homes that are roughly 30 minutes from our shelter. Due to the regular medical checkups our kittens will receive.
- Are you aware that there is a great deal of time and clean-up that goes into caring for kittens? Mother cats and kittens can be very messy with the litter box, their food bowls, water dishes, etc. Because they can be messy, we recommend foster parents use old supplies, not best linens.
- Are you able to separate the foster animals from your own animals? Foster cats/kittens must have their own room – even if you do not have other pets. Our cats/kittens come to you as healthy as we know about, but can harbor illness for up to 2 weeks so it is very important for you to keep your pets separated from foster kittens.

If you choose to introduce foster cats/kittens to your personal pets (instead of keeping them separate) as SAFE Haven recommends, you assume all medical risks for both the owned and fostered cat(s) associated with that introduction. Possible medical conditions may include, but are not limited to, ringworm, distemper, feline upper respiratory infection, and parasites. Any medical expenses incurred as a result of this introduction will be the responsibility of the foster parent.

- It is important to keep your foster room clutter free – no special knickknacks. We recommend using a bathroom for the first couple of days to observe bathroom habits then move to a bedroom that allows more space if you have it available.
- Are you and your family emotionally prepared for the loss of animal? Sometimes cats and kittens get sick and we have a great medical team to nurse them back to health but unfortunately sometimes the kittens are too weak to survive. There are congenital birth defects and diseases we are unaware of when the cat/kittens come to us. Because you will feed high-quality food, have them in a warm safe place, and they are receiving medical care their chances of survival are much greater. If a



kitten is failing in a foster home, we request the kitten be returned to SAFE Haven for around the clock care to give them the best chance of survival.

- Will you and your family be able to give up your foster cat/kittens at the end of the foster period? Foster families can become very attached to their foster kittens, and sometimes find it difficult to give them to their permanent families, or to the shelter.

If the foster parent is interested in adopting their foster cat(s), our standard adoption policies apply, this includes completing an adoption application, as well as paying an adoption fee.

Please remember you help save more lives by continuing to foster. Our turnaround time for you to get another litter of kittens or a cat is one week.

- Will you and your family be able to spend quality time with your foster cats/kittens? Socialization is as important as feeding and keeping them clean. We ask that you spend quality time with your foster kittens. Playing with them, teaching them proper play etiquette, and picking them up and snuggle them. Socialization is a big part of fostering. You are training these kittens to be super cats when they grow up. Kittens that run to the front of the cage will get adopted first.
- Are you prepared to work with our veterinarian team? Will you be able to bring your kittens to the SAFE Care Clinic every two weeks for checkup appointments or when they are sick? Our on-staff veterinarian provides all the medical care for our cats/kittens. You do not own these cats and legally cannot seek treatment for them.
- Do you feel comfortable telling people that these are not your animals and can only be adopted through SAFE Haven's adoption procedures? You can inform potential adopters that you are a volunteer for SAFE Haven and cannot take these kittens out of your home and are not otherized to adopt them to anyone.
- Foster animals are your responsibility. We ask that you go in 3 times a day at a minimum to check on them - once in the morning, again after work, and then before bed. Please remember kittens 10 weeks and younger will need more time and attention and will need to be checked on 4-5 times a day. Kittens can fail quickly and must be closely monitored regarding overall health, intake of food etc.
- All cats and kittens must be kept strictly indoors. If your own cats go outdoors, the foster cats must be strictly isolated from your cats to avoid the transmission of disease. Your foster kittens cannot go outdoors unless they are in a carrier and going to SAFE Haven or SAFE Care Clinic.



- All foster cats/kittens are to be strictly supervised by an adult when around children of any age. Please use your best judgment when allowing your child to interact with the kittens. When kittens play, children can easily be scratched by accident.
- Your own animals must be current on vaccinations and veterinary care including spay/neuter. If you cannot meet these requirements let us know and we can give you resources to get it taken care of before you become a foster. We do this to help stop the pet-overpopulation problem in our area.
- Are you interested in fostering to adopt? SAFE Haven's staff and medical team put a tremendous amount of time and effort into training and supporting our foster families. We are looking for foster families who are committed to helping us save lives year after year. For this reason, we currently do not have any foster to adopt opportunities.

#### **Rewards of foster care – Saving lives!**

- You are saving the lives of the cat/kitten(s) you are fostering and you have cleared a space for another cat/kitten(s) to come into the shelter.
- Fostering is a great way to help children understand the responsibility of caring for an animal.
- It is fulfilling to watch your kittens grow up to become super cats. There is nothing like kitten snuggles and the joy of watching them play.

We hope that this has given you a better understanding of what it's like to be a foster parent. Fostering is a very rewarding experience and we want to make sure that you and your family are prepared for the short-term commitment. If you are ready to take the next step to become a foster parent please fill out a foster application. Thank you for helping us change the lives of so many cats/kitten(s)!