

# Foster Care Program



Animal Humane  
NEW MEXICO

## **Animal Humane | New Mexico**

### **Foster Care Program**

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 sincerely appreciate your interest in caring for our animals.

#### **Foster Candidates**

**The Animal Humane Foster Care Program has been established to help with animals who require short term (2-8 weeks) care for recovery to an adoptable status. Reasons for placement include animals less than 8 weeks of age or less than 2 lbs in weight; mildly ill animals requiring general medical care; and animals recovering from an injury.**

#### **Foster Parents**

Our teams of foster parents are dedicated to giving young animals a second chance at life. Without the help of volunteers like you, who open their hearts and homes to animals in need, many would not find their way into a loving permanent home. Your help is invaluable to these animals. Animal Humane is continually seeking new Foster Parents, so if you know someone interested in joining our program, please call 505-255-5523 ext. 119 for more information.

Animal Humane asks you, as Foster Parents, to provide, water, shelter, and lots of socialization and love. Animal Humane provides all the necessary food, supplies, veterinary care and medicine. (Items bought outside the program or vet care not provided by Animal Humane vet staff will not be reimbursed.)

**IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO FOSTER  
FOR ANIMAL HUMANE**

- **Are you able to get to us quickly in an emergency?**
- **Will you be able to spend quality time with the animals?**  
On average it is best to spend at least 1 hour a day with your foster animals. Socialization can be as important as feeding them and keeping them clean.
- **Will you be able to commit to appointments ranging from once a week to every three weeks whether or not they are ill?**
- **Are you aware that there is a great deal of clean-up and even possible damage to your home when you take a foster home?** Foster animals can ruin new drapes, carpeting, clothing...Animal Humane will not be held responsible for any damage incurred while fostering an animal.
- **Are you willing to work with our veterinary care system?**  
Please understand that only our vets can treat foster animals free of charge.
- **Are you able to separate our animals from your own?**  
Foster animals should remain isolated from your resident pets. Can you keep them in an enclosed area away from your animals?
- **Can you commit to spend the entire foster period with the animal?**  
If something unexpected happens you will need to call 505-255-5523, x119 to inform us of an early foster return.
- **Do you feel comfortable explaining to friends that these animals are not yours to adopt out and that they must go through the regular adoption process at Animal Humane?**
- **Will you bring back the animals at the end of the foster period?**  
It can be difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached.
- **Are you emotionally prepared to handle the death of one of your foster animals?**  
This can be very difficult, but the sad truth is that it sometimes happens. In this event, Animal Humane should be contacted immediately.

## Getting Started

- ✓ It is always advisable that you keep your foster animal(s) separate from your own animals. Animal Humane cannot treat your own animal(s) or pay medical bills.
- ✓ Please allow time for a foster animal to adapt to a new environment. Remember to kitten and puppy proof the area the animal(s) will be staying in.

### Animal Humane staff phone list

	Desk		Cell	
Boni Galarneau	255-5523 ext. 119	or	991-0056	Foster Care Coordinator
Diane Day	255-5523 ext. 134	or	991-4263	Adoptions Manager
Main Shelter	255-5523 ext. 105			Receptionist

Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions.

In the event of a real emergency, please call Foster Care Coordinator at (505) 991-0056.

### "Cat Condo" or Cardboard Box

If available, you will be provided with a tall cat condo in which to keep your foster kittens. These are secure, with plenty of room and shelves for cats and kittens to explore and play. They are nice and roomy for mom and kittens, too. Otherwise, if you are fostering a mom and kittens you should set up a little nest for them. A cardboard box lined with newspaper and blankets works well. You can use a shallow box that mom and the kittens will be able to move in and out of easily.

### Litter Pan

It's best to use a small plastic litter pan which will be provided to you when you pick up your fosters. If the kittens are having a difficult time getting into the pan, you can prop something against the pan, such as a small folded towel so they can climb in easier. You may also use a shallow cake pan (round or square) for very small kittens. Cardboard boxes with one side removed work well, allowing easy access for kittens – but they will need to be replaced when they get saturated with urine.

### Cat Litter

Use regular clay litter, and avoid clumping varieties, as clumping litter can be dangerous if ingested by any animal. Normally we will provide the litter to you.

### Water Bowl

Bowl should be heavy, reducing the likelihood of tipping and spilling. Water bowls will usually be provided to you.

## **Two Food Bowls (minimum)**

One bowl is for eat-at-will dry cat food, the other bowl is for canned food. You can use TV dinner trays, paper plates or whatever you have; any relatively flat plate or saucer will do. The larger the litter of kittens/puppies the more bowls you should have so that no one gets crowded out. Another option if you are fostering young puppies is to use a 12 cup muffin tin. Kibble and warm water or mixed formula can be placed in each of the 10 outside cups so that each puppy has his own little bowl. The pups will circle around forming a puppy pinwheel at meal time.

## **Food**

Animal Humane will provide you with canned food, dry kibble, and/or formula for your foster animals. This food provides the essential nourishment that both the mother and kittens (or puppies) need. Kitten and puppy food comes in cans and dry kibble. You should always have a bowl of dry kibble available and feed the canned kitten/puppy food ¼ can three times daily for kittens.

## **Toys**

Go crazy! Toy mice and balls (remove the plastic eye parts) make kittens happy and safe chew toys and stuffed animals (as long as the puppies aren't eating the stuffing!) will keep your puppies entertained. They can be reused as long as your litters are free of contagious diseases. Kittens can also amuse themselves with empty rolls of toilet paper, crumpled pieces of paper and clean tennis balls. Young kittens don't respond to catnip, but mom may like it! Watch for aggressive response, however, and if seen-don't use catnip.

Again, be sure to "kitten-proof" or "puppy-proof" your home. Kittens and puppies will "play" with anything they can find, drapes, lampshades and expensive crystal ornaments are as much fun to kittens and puppies as any of the toys listed above.

## **Picking Up Fosters**

You should kitten/puppy proof your space and decide where you will keep your foster pet. Animal Humane will provide you with everything you need – food & water dishes, litter, kibble and canned food, towels or blankets, beds (puppies) and a crate for transporting animals to/from the shelter. Wire crates will also be provided so that you can start crate training puppies and begin teaching them proper housetraining.

When a request comes in to send animals out on foster, all appropriate foster parents will be called to see if they are available to take these kittens/puppies.

The kittens/puppies/cats/dogs may need medical care, behavioral care, or socialization; or they may just be too young and small to go into the spay/neuter surgery or adoption.

Kittens/puppies needs to be placed in foster homes as soon as possible, so please respond as soon as you can, even if it's to say "No".

The Foster Care Coordinator will make a decision of who will foster the kittens/puppies. It is necessary to make an appointment for a specific time to pick them up. Please be aware that our scheduling is limited but we will do our best to accommodate you.

Foster kittens/puppies are to be picked up at the main shelter located at 615 Virginia SE, which is one block west of the Wyoming AFB entrance. Go to the front desk in the adoptions building and they will contact the appropriate person.

If you are picking up fosters for the first time, be prepared to carry supplies. We will be giving you formula, canned & dry food, bowls, towels, beds, and litter. The foster program will supply a carrier and towel for the kittens/puppies; use this carrier any time you need to transport the kittens/puppies to Animal Humane.

## **Caring for underage kittens and puppies**

### **Nursing Mom and kittens/pups**

#### **ONE WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES**

**The temperature of the nest box should be warm – approximately 85-90 degrees.**

The mom should always have kitten/puppy dry food available, and be fed wet kitten/puppy food at least twice daily. At one week of age, the kittens/puppies should be handled minimally. Kittens/puppies will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%. They should nurse vigorously and compete for nipples. Chilling is the number one danger of newborn kittens/puppies.

#### **TWO WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES**

**Floor temperature of the nest should be 80-85 degrees.**

Eyes will open between 8-14 days. All kittens/puppies will have blue eyes, and initially no pupils can be distinguished from their irises, their eyes will appear solid blue. Healthy kittens/puppies will be round and warm. When you pick up a kitten/puppy it should wiggle energetically. Healthy kittens/puppies with a mom seldom cry.

#### **THREE WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES**

**Temperature of the nest box should be 75-80 degrees**

The mom will begin to spend longer periods of time out of the nest. The mom will need breaks from her litter the older they get. Make sure she has her own space to retreat to: i.e., a chair to sit on, access to the entire room, etc. The kitten's/puppies' ears will become erect and the kittens/puppies will begin to crawl and stand. Kittens/puppies will begin to play with each other, biting ears, tails and paws. Teeth are erupting. Increase amount of handling and socialization. It is extremely important that a kitten/puppy gets lots of handling and socialization at a young age. You can use a space heater to heat the area your fosters are in. A heating pad can be used to heat the nest box- BUT – please make sure it is always set on LOW. Always make sure the mom and kittens/puppies have enough space to move away from the heating pad.

## FOUR WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES

### **Temperature of the nest box should be 70-75 degrees**

Kittens/puppies should weigh approximately 1 pound. Kittens/puppies begin to see well and their eyes begin to look like adult eyes. Kittens/puppies will start cleaning themselves, though their mother may continue to do the most serious cleaning. At four weeks you should be introducing wet food to the kittens/puppies. You may need to add a very small amount of warm water to the food and mix it into gruel in a shallow saucer. Put it in an easy to clean spot as the kittens/puppies will walk, slide and track it all over! Usually one will begin lapping right away, and will often bite the edge of the plate. Some will prefer to lick the gruel right from your fingers; sometimes it takes 2 to 3 meals before they catch on. If they don't seem interested to even sniff your finger, try gently opening the kittens'/puppies' mouth and rubbing a little food on their teeth. Hopefully they will start licking your finger.

### **IMPORTANT – NEVER GIVE YOUR KITTENS/PUPPIES COW'S MILK!!!!**

## FIVE WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES

Socialize and play with your kittens/puppies daily. Kittens/puppies should weigh approximately 1.2-1.3 pounds. Continue to wean by slowly thickening up the gruel.

## SIX WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES

Kittens should weigh approximately 1.4-1.5 pounds, puppies' weight varies depending on the breed. At this point your fosters should be washing themselves, playing with each other and their toys.

## SEVEN WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES

Kittens should weigh approximately 1.6-1.7 pounds; puppies' weight varies depending on the breed. If you have mom and litter she should be allowing brief nursing sessions. Kittens/puppies should be eating undiluted kitten/puppy food.

## EIGHT WEEK OLD KITTENS/PUPPIES

Kittens should weigh approximately 1.8-2.0 pounds; weight varies depending on the breed. Please refer to the return date on your foster agreement form. This is an **approximate** date for return. Kittens should be returned to AHNM when they are 2 pounds and puppies when they are 8 weeks. **Please refer to the phone list to set up a return appointment when your kittens have reached this weight and puppies this age.**

## ORPHANED KITTENS/PUPPIES

- You are going to be mom to these kittens & puppies! They will rely on you to show them what to eat, how/where to eliminate, how to keep warm, clean and safe. Feed them canned kitten/puppy food three times daily and always have dry food available.

- Kittens/puppies without a mom can get very messy. They tend to get dried food and feces and cat litter on the underside of the tail and on the paws. Most kittens/puppies will need to be cleaned daily. A damp towel and flea comb will usually do the job.
- The kitten/puppy may need to be soaked to get the dried matter off. You can bathe the kitten/puppy with a mild soap and completely dry with a blow dryer on a LOW setting. **Be extremely careful not to burn their skin.**
- Kittens/puppies should be gently flea combed daily to check for ticks and fleas, metal flea combs work best.
- Introduce them to the litter box. Try to keep the litter box in a corner away from the food.
- Spend lots of time playing and socializing with your fosters.

### Common Kitten/Puppy Ailments

Please pay attention to the symptoms listed below. At the first state of any of these symptoms, please call the appropriate number on the phone list and they will help you determine if it is necessary for you to make an appointment to bring the kittens/puppies in.

#### UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION (URI)/KENNEL COUGH

**Upper respiratory infections are fairly common in animal shelters.** These air-borne viruses are contagious and spread very quickly. Your foster kitten/puppy may appear healthy at the shelter but may become symptomatic in your home.

Symptoms of URI to watch for:

- Sneezing and yellow or green discharge from eyes or nose
- Congested breathing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- **Underage kittens/puppies are extremely fragile and can crash very quickly.**

#### COCCIDIA

- Coccidia is a protozoan parasite most prevalent in kittens/puppies but occasionally found in adults.
- The diarrhea associated with Coccidia is seen primarily in kittens/puppies.
- **Continuous diarrhea can dehydrate very quickly and can even be fatal.**
- You will need to bring in a stool sample so the medical staff can determine if parasites are causing the diarrhea.

#### DEHYDRATION

- Kittens/puppies can get dehydration from diarrhea and vomiting very quickly.
- To check for dehydration you can pinch the skin between the shoulder blades – if the skin takes more than a few seconds to snap back down, then the animal is dehydrated at some level.
- Please get into the habit of checking your fosters' hydration level daily.
- **Dehydration is a serious medical issue and can be fatal to underage animals.**

## EAR MITES

- Ear mites are tiny parasites which live in the ear canal, they may cause intense itching noted by scratching behind the ears and violent head shaking.
- Inside the ears you may see a crumbly, dark brown matter which may have a bad odor.
- Ear mites are contagious to both cats and dogs and can be easily treated with a thorough ear cleaning and drops administered by the medical staff.

## RINGWORM

- Ringworm is a fungal skin infection it is contagious to cats, dogs, and people.
- In cats, ringworm often appears as irregularly shaped spots of hair loss usually in face, ears and paws. Sometimes the spots will be more regular rings with scaly circle and a visible red ring at the outside edge.
- On people and dogs, ringworm is most often shaped in a regular ring. The dog's fur will fall out leaving a round bare spot with a visible ring.
- Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency but is highly contagious.
- If your foster kittens/puppies are diagnosed with ringworm your house will need to be quarantined for a month. If you and/or your pets get ringworm you will need to seek treatment from your vet and doctor. You will be asked not to foster until 4 weeks after the treatment is over.

## ECTOPARASITES

- Due to our arid climate we do not have a significant problem with fleas and lice.
- It is a good idea to keep your kittens & puppies groomed daily.
- If this becomes an issue, it is best to bathe your foster in mild soap (we recommend Ivory or baby shampoo), comb through with a flea comb and completely dry using a hair dryer set on LOW, be very cautious not to burn their VERY delicate skin!
- If ticks become a problem, please call the appropriate number on the phone list for possible treatment.
- DO NOT use store bough flea/tick products on young animals, these could be very harmful and potentially lethal.

## FELV

- The feline leukemia virus can be easily transmitted by direct contact, through grooming, sharing food dishes, fighting, through the mother's milk or in utero.
- FELV suppresses the kitten's immune system and allows other diseases to develop.
- Most positive underage kittens appear to be healthy, but still test positive for the virus.
- A blood test is required to diagnose FELV.

**FELV is a deadly disease and can easily be transmitted to your resident animals.**

## FIV

- Feline Immunodeficiency virus is similar to the Human Immune Deficiency virus (HIV)
- It is transmitted through an exchange of bodily fluids (through fighting, in utero, or through the mother's milk).
- A blood test is required to diagnose FIV.

- FIV is a deadly disease.

## FIP

- Feline infectious peritonitis is a fatal disease.
- It is responsible for a small percentage of kitten mortality.
- Early signs of FIP (listlessness, loss of appetite, weight loss, depression, and mild upper respiratory infection) mimic other diseases.
- There is no sure test for FIP.

**Most underage kittens are not tested for FELV until they come back from foster. So avoid the risk of spreading deadly disease to your own pets – please be advised keep your fosters separate from your own animals.**

## **ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER HANDLING YOUR FOSTERS!**

## PARVO

- Symptoms usually begin with a high fever, lethargy, depression, and loss of appetite.
- Secondary symptoms appear as severe gastrointestinal distress, such as vomiting and bloody diarrhea. In many cases, dehydrations, shock, and death follow.
- Canine parvovirus is carried by dogs. Dogs with the typical diarrhea that parvovirus causes shed the virus as well. It can last a long time in the environment, perhaps as long as 9 months or longer.
- Generally, it takes 7-10 days from the time of exposure for dogs and puppies to start showing symptoms and to test positive for parvo.
- Parvovirus, despite what you might hear, is NOT an airborne virus. It is excreted in the feces of infected dogs, and if someone – human, dog, bird, etc. – steps in (or otherwise comes in contact with) the excrement, the possibility for contamination is great.
- Parvovirus is specific to dogs alone and cannot be transmitted to humans or other pets of a different species, such as cats.

## **Kitten/Puppy Mortality**

Many factors play a part in kitten/puppy mortality. Kittens/puppies born on the streets are subjected to influences that can significantly reduce their chances of survival. When they are born to malnourished or ill mothers, their risk of congenital or inherited defects is heightened. Poorly nourished kittens/puppies or orphaned kittens/puppies without the antibodies from the mother's milk have very little defense against disease and infection. The fading kitten/puppy syndrome plays a large role in kitten/puppy mortality. Occasionally one or more kittens/puppies in a litter that were healthy and vigorous at birth will begin to "fade". They will stop growing; begin to lose weight, stop nursing, or eating. Kittens/puppies fade very quickly; there is no clear cause or reason for this condition. It has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress or infectious disease. If you notice your kitten/puppy fading, please contact us right away!

**If any animal should pass away, please call us immediately. It is imperative that the medical staff have the opportunity to examine the animal.**

## What should I do if my animal becomes ill?

If your foster animal becomes ill while you are caring for it with symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, loss of appetite, weight loss, runny eyes or nose or anything that concerns you, please follow these procedures so that your animal will receive the care it needs:

- Contact the Foster Care Coordinator or the Adoptions Manager and describe the symptoms you are noticing. They may advise you to bring the animal in to be looked at. Plan to bring your fosters in and drop them off with the Foster Care Coordinator or Adoptions Manager. They will be taken to the clinic for the veterinarian to examine. The staff veterinarian has surgeries and appointments daily and will examine your fosters as time permits. You will be called and advised when they can be picked up. If medications are to be given, you will be provided with instructions.
- Please do not just "drop-in" without calling to make arrangements first.

If you notice that your foster animal is starting to become ill, please try to call during the day. If you notice, for example, that your kitten/puppy has a runny eye on Monday morning, please call at that time instead of waiting.



Thank you for your interest in fostering an orphaned pet. Your offer to temporarily care for a pet will allow Animal Humane to find more loving homes for adoptable pets. Pets add fun, companionship and love to our lives, but they're also a big responsibility. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions so we can help you make a decision as to whether you and your family are ready for the responsibility. (Please fill out all forms and return them to Animal Humane.)

Why do you want to foster an animal?

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- |     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 1.  | Are you 18 years or older?   | Yes | No |
| 2.  | Will your landlord approve a temporary foster pet to be housed with you?   | Yes | No |
| 3.  | Do you have allergies to cats?   | Yes | No |
| 4.  | Do you have allergies to dogs?   | Yes | No |
| 5.  | Do you have transportation in case of emergencies or for scheduled Animal Humane clinic visits?<br>_____ Car _____ Neighbor/relative _____ Other | Yes | No |
| 6.  | Have you fostered a dog before?  | Yes | No |
| 7.  | Have you fostered a cat before?  | Yes | No |
| 8.  | Do you have a vacation planned in the near future?<br>When _____   | Yes | No |
| 9.  | Will your job allow you to bring a foster pet to work?   | Yes | No |
| 10. | Will family members be involved in caring for the foster pet?  | Yes | No |
| 11. | Are you willing to housetrain a pet?   | Yes | No |
| 12. | Will your house/furniture allow accidents or minor destruction?  | Yes | No |
| 13. | Does your current dog get along with other dogs?   | Yes | No |
| 14. | Does your current dog get along with other cats?   | Yes | No |
| 15. | Does your current cat get along with other dogs?   | Yes | No |
| 16. | Does your current cat get along with other cats?   | Yes | No |
| 17. | Do you understand that fostering animals is a temporary situation and you will be asked to return the pet to Animal Humane for placement?        | Yes | No |

If you have any questions, please contact:

Boni Galarneau, Foster Care Coordinator 255-5523 ext. 119 or 505-991-0056 (cell)



**The Animal Humane | New Mexico Foster Program  
Foster Parent Waiver Form**

I understand the Animal Humane | New Mexico runs a Foster Care Program for animal(s) that are not adoptable because of age, medical condition or behavior. I fully understand that this animal(s) is only temporarily in my home and belongs exclusively to the Animal Humane | New Mexico. I further understand that the purpose of this foster relationship is solely to provide care and socialization for this pet. I understand that the designated Foster Care Coordinator must approve any determination made concerning this pet.

I understand and agree that I will return the pet(s) on the scheduled date or on demand, whichever is sooner. I understand that any and all placements will only be made through the regular Animal Humane adoption process and are subject to the same guidelines as any other adoption(s).

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, fully understood and fully agree to all parts of the Animal Humane | New Mexico Foster Care Manual. This waiver shall serve as a binding agreement between Animal Humane | New Mexico's Foster Program and myself, the foster parent.

Signature of Foster Care Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Foster Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of Foster Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Pet ID Number (A#) \_\_\_\_\_

Pet Name \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sample form)*



# Pet Foster Care Agreement

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_

Person ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Pet A#/Name \_\_\_\_\_

Check up dates (animal must be brought to the Foster Coordinator):

## CATS/KITTENS

FeLV Result \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

RCP Given \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Booster \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> Booster \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Weigh In \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Weigh In \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## DOGS/PUPPIES

Parvo Result if Taken \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

DA2P+CPV+IT2 Given \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Booster \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> Booster \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Weigh In \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Weigh In \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this agreement, I am re-affirming my commitment to:

1. Follow the foster care policies, procedures, and guidelines.
2. Bring the animals to the Foster Coordinator on each of the dates listed above, or by arrangement with the Foster Coordinator.

Signature of Foster Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Foster Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of Foster Parent \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sample form)*