



# Fostering Responsibilities and Expectations

## What should I expect of this fostering experience?

- Fostering a shelter animal is a wonderful and rewarding experience, but it can also be **time consuming and hard work**. You should expect to have your foster adopted by someone you do not know, but with whom you can form a relationship if both parties are willing!
- Fostering is essentially a volunteer position: You are volunteering your time, resources, attention, and (most of all) your love to an animal in need. This includes paying for food, supplies, grooming, training (both cats and dogs!), and cleaning up after them.
- There are two parts to fostering: 1) Getting the animal medically cleared for adoption and 2) promoting them for adoption, meeting with adopters, and sending them off to their forever home. We recommend you complete both parts your first time fostering, but you do not have to complete both every time if you find you enjoy one part more than the other.
- Fostering lasts on average 3-4 months, but we also have **short-term fostering**...just ask!
- The first few weeks are often the most intensive, so take home a foster animal when **you can devote a large amount of your time** to them and their needs.
- We need you to submit info about the personality of your foster animal and nice photos to our website for adoption **every 3 weeks**; you can find the link on our [foster resource page](#)!
- It is most beneficial to adopt out kittens at the peak age of 2-3 months, right after their spay/neuter surgeries; this allows us to save the most lives and help them find their homes as soon as possible! Older kittens will be transferred to adoption centers for adoption.
- When our onsite adoption locations are sending home lots of animals, **we may ask you to drop off your foster animal** to increase their exposure to adopters and keep our centers full! If you are sad, we can always give you a new foster animal to help “fill the void”. This is so important during peak seasons like summer when lots of kittens are coming in. The sooner we can place them, the more animals we can save!
- You will need to come to our clinic at least once per each foster animal. **You can expect at least one illness** or potty training accident with your foster animal, as these are common in vulnerable animal populations, such as stray, stressed, and sick animals.
- For kittens and puppies, they are too young for flea treatment, and often will have fleas that can be treated by a dish soap bath at home (we can show you how!).
- You can expect for us to treat you **respectfully**, and we expect the same of you! If your fostering experience is less than stellar, please contact our foster care manager.

## What does PAWS expect of foster parents?

**Travel:** We expect you to keep your foster animals indoors at the address you applied with, unless we give you explicit, written permission otherwise. When you travel, the expectation is that you will find a dog walker or cat sitter, and that you will provide us with their name and contact information.

**Cannot keep:** We understand situations arise when you cannot keep your foster animal for some reason. We get it, we are people, too! However, sudden changes in housing are quite frightening and stressful for animals, so we try to limit the amount of home changes our foster animals experience. The more notice you can give us for when you cannot foster anymore, the better we can make the transfer or return experience for everyone involved, including you!

**Other animals:** Your foster animal should be kept separate from other animals, small children, and too many new faces for at least two weeks. Foster and Resident cats must be combo tested for FIV/FelV before being introduced. This “quarantine period” is for the health of both your new foster animal AND the other beings that will interact with them. If your foster animal brought home any illnesses from the shelter, they will often appear in the first two weeks. The first two weeks are also when most animals can struggle in acclimating to a new environment, and when most behavioral issues occur; **patience during these first few weeks is essential!** For more information on introducing a foster pet to your home: <https://phillypaws.org/pet-care-info/>

**Medical:** PAWS specializes in cats and dogs with medical issues; therefore, we expect foster parents to provide the necessary care as prescribed, or let us know if you are unable to complete the necessary treatment so we can help you! **Do not diverge from the care plan prescribed by our veterinarians** without their consent or the consent of a foster coordinator.

→ Can I take my foster animal to my own vet? Yes, if you are comfortable paying for all the costs, you get the OK from your foster coordinator/veterinarians beforehand, and your vet office sends the records directly to [foster@phillypaws.org](mailto:foster@phillypaws.org) to be entered into the official records.

**You should be able to answer the following questions as soon as you receive your foster animal;** if you are not sure, please ask us! :)

1. What their Animal ID# is (A#)
2. When they can be off ‘quarantine’ and eligible for adoption centers
3. When their vaccines, flea treatment, and dewormers are due, or scheduled to be given for the first time
4. Their general medical history, including reading their medical records

When you suspect illness or behavioral issues, please follow our guidelines on reporting the issue appropriately; **the emergency phone is for true emergencies, and should be a last resort.**

## Our Gratitude for Your Hard Work!

*Taking care of foster animals requires a commitment from you to make sure they are happy and healthy. Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to these animals who desperately need your help. By participating in this program, you are saving lives and helping animals find the families they've been longing for. Without you, we could not save as many as we do. Thank you!*