



## **Animal Fostering Information**

### **Before You Foster-Ask Yourself these Questions!**

#### **Are you able to separate the foster animals from your own?**

Foster animals should be isolated from your own companion animals for a quarantine period. A separate room or enclosed area with NO carpet will work best.

#### **Are you aware that there is a great deal of clean-up and even possible damage to your home when you take a foster animal home?**

Foster animals have ruined drapes, carpeting, clothing, and other valuable items. Preparing your home and the area the animals will stay in can prevent most accidents, but not all of them!

#### **Are you able to monitor the health of the foster animals?**

You will need to pay attention to signs of illness or worsening of symptoms and call the BCHS if you are concerned. Foster home training will cover what to look for and the BCHS volunteers will help you decide if you should bring the animals in for treatment.

#### **Can you get to us quickly in case of an emergency?**

Only the BCHS trained volunteers or contracted veterinarian will treat your foster animals free of charge with approval. If the animals you are fostering need medical attention, you will need to make an appointment with our BCHS medical volunteer for veterinarian care and transport the animal to the designated area for care.

#### **Are you emotionally prepared to return the animal to the BCHS after the foster period is up?**

It can be very difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached to the animals! Be prepared for tears and heartache when the day comes that you must bring your first foster animals back to BCHS. You will be giving love and attention to the animals everyday and know that they are much more likely to find a loving, permanent home because of YOUR care!

#### **Can you place your trust in the BCHS volunteers to decide what is the best for the animal?**

Sometimes adoption is not an option even after the animal has been fostered. Knowing that an animal you have fostered may need to be euthanized can be very hard to deal with. We do not take euthanasia lightly and will only euthanize if the animals behavior is a danger to humans or other animals (certain circumstances) or if it is so ill or injured that the best thing for the animal is to let it cross the rainbow bridge.

**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 through BCHS?**

If you are interested in helping to find homes for your foster animals, refer your friends and family to the BCHS to complete an adoption application.

**Qualifications**

To be a successful foster parent, you will need a compassionate nature, the cooperation of your family or roommates, flexibility, and some knowledge of animal behavior. You also must understand that there is a possibility that the foster animal may or may not be adopted when returned.

The length of time a foster animal may stay in your home varies with the animal's situation. The average stay is three weeks or less.

**Qualifications**

All foster homes must be approved by BCHS.

Complete a short orientation and be a BCHS volunteer for 30 days.

Complete a Foster Application.

Attend a Foster orientation for training.

The BCHS conducts a home visit prior to receiving the first foster animal.

All animals chosen for foster must be approved.

You must not foster for any other organization other than the BCHS.

Our foster animals must be housed in a stress-free environment, preferably in a climate-controlled area.

**Foster Policies and Procedures**

A foster volunteer will identify the type of animal they would like to foster i.e. puppies, large or small dogs, cats, etc. BCHS will make the final decision, which animals are to be placed in foster.

BCHS will contact you when an animal is in need of fostering. If you are able to foster that animal, the animal will be ready for pickup along with necessary supplies at a designated area. The animal must be picked up within the time frame agreed.

Animals placed in foster will not have known life-threatening illnesses. In most cases, they will be in foster for no longer than 3 weeks.

A veterinarian must examine foster animals after 1 week so that it may be spayed / neutered. Please contact BCHS to set up an appointment. If the animal is healthy, the veterinarian will release it. The animal will then be brought to adoption.

If there is an emergency, please contact the BCHS or bring the animal to 13571 County Road 282, Alvin, TX 77511. If the foster chooses to go to a personal vet instead of returning the animal to BCHS, BCHS will not be responsible for any monetary reimbursement.

All foster animals must be returned for adoption. Every effort will be made to adopt all animals; however, if the animal begins to exhibit any aggressive behavior the animal may be euthanized.

Fosters are required to take a mandatory 1-month (or longer if needed) break from fostering after one year. All foster volunteers can take a short break at any time when needed. Please inform BCHS.

If fostering for the BCHS, a volunteer cannot foster for other organizations.

No foster volunteer can foster more than the number of animals that BCHS thinks that you are able to handle at any given time.

All private pets must be up to date on all shot records before a volunteer can foster.

Foster animals are the sole property of BCHS and will not be adopted or given to anyone without the permission of BCHS.

If terminated from the Foster Program and have possession of a foster animal, the animal must be returned to BCHS immediately.

### **Preparing Your Home**

You will need to keep your own companion animals separate from your foster animals. It is always a health risk to expose your animals to other animals, so to be on the safe side, you should keep them separate for the entire foster period if possible if not they should be kept separate for the quarantine period of one week.

If you are fostering kittens or puppies, remember that they will play or chew anything they can find! Drapes, electrical cords, lamp-shades, etc. so be sure to "kitten/puppy-proof" your home.

## **Supplies you will need:**

**Cardboard box:** You can use the carrier in which you took the animal home. It will provide a familiar smelling, dark, quiet home. A bigger box may be desirable to allow you to see in, as well as to provide plenty of room if you have a mother and a litter of kittens or puppies.

**Newspapers:** Keep several layers in the bottom of the box. They will come in handy when the foster litter starts to roam around the room and into their litter box.

**Two food bowls:** One is for the eat-at-will dry cat food, the other for canned food. You can use TV dinner trays, paper plates, or whatever you have any shallow bowl or saucer will do. The larger the litter, the larger the plate should be, so that no one in the litter gets crowded out. Some cats have allergies to plastic, so try to avoid plastic dishes.

**Water bowls:** Provide access to water at all times. Remember, young animals can drown, so make sure the bowl is very shallow.

**Food:** Pet supply store food tends to be more nutritious than grocery store brands. Kittens need a mix of dry and canned food specifically formulated for kittens (it's a good idea to wean them onto dry food). We will tell you if an animal you are fostering needs any other special food.

**Litterbox & non-clumping litter:** Cats will instinctively use a litterbox and mom will begin teaching her kittens how to use a litterbox. You should get a shallow litterbox, or use an old cake pan. Clumping litter can be very messy as it sticks to paws and can cause serious health problems if eaten (which most kittens will do). A cat or kitten can even die if the clumping litter forms a blockage in the intestines, so use only non-clumping type cat litter.

**Heating pad or hot water bottle:** Depending on how warm your room is, these extras will ensure that everyone is comfy and cozy. If you use any of these items, be sure that there is space for the animals to move away from the heat in case they are too hot, and always place heating pads on the lowest setting.

**Toys:** Go crazy if you want! Mice and buzz balls make kittens happy and can be reused as long as animals do not have any contagious diseases. Kittens can amuse themselves with empty rolls of toilet paper. Empty cardboard 12-pack soda boxes are good for a number of different games. Clean tennis balls, old socks stuffed with nylons, caps of liter soda bottles, and paper bags make great toys as well. Young kittens don't respond to catnip, but mom will like it.

**Scale:** Although not critical to success a food or postal scale is very helpful for monitoring small kittens' growth, which averages 4 ounces a week.

**Other considerations:** Bottle of "Nature's Miracle" for accidents, rope or carpet scratching post, and adoption applications to give to people who are interested in your foster care animals.

## **When to bring back your foster animals**

Sometimes it is difficult to predict the exact date for when foster animals will be ready for adoption. Several factors contribute to this decision:

1. Did the puppies/kittens gain enough weight?
2. Are the animals healthy and recovered fully from the illness?
3. Are they successfully weaned from their mother?
4. Have they been successfully socialized?
5. Is there room at adoption?

Because of these variables, the foster animals may not be ready for adoption by the date on your foster home contract. Please call BCHS to make an appointment to have your animals returned. If your foster animals checked out "OK," you will bring the animals to adoption. If not, you will take the animals back home for a specified number of days and have them rechecked. Your flexibility is most appreciated!