

FOSTER CARE MANUAL



Contact Name and Numbers

Please call the Animal Care Coordinator Monday through Friday between 8 am and 5 pm with questions, concerns, or to schedule a foster for a check-up.

- Christina Davidson, Office: (828) 465-8228

Emergency Protocol and Contact Information

On occasion, animals that are in foster care will have medical emergencies outside normal business hours. **In case of an after-hour emergency, please contact the Foster Coordinator at (980) 241-8553.**

Please note that if you decide to take the foster animal directly to an emergency veterinary facility without prior approval from Catawba County Animal Services, Animal Services will not be responsible for any of the costs incurred.

Choosing Foster Candidates

Not every animal is eligible for the foster program. Animals available for foster care are those who are expected to be deemed adoptable upon completion of a term of foster care. Animals with severe health or behavior problems that would prevent their being adopted even after specialized care are not placed into the foster program.

Reasons animals are placed in foster care include, but are not limited to:

- Weight gain
- Mothers with litters
- Cruelty cases
- Upper respiratory infections
- Surgery recovery
- Animal selected for off-site adoption events
- Animals claimed by out of state rescue organizations

The following guidelines will also be followed:

- No animal under four weeks of age will be fostered without the mother
- The length of fostering for any animal should not exceed three months for any reason. This may only be overturned in the event of a cruelty case and at the discretion of the Animal Services Manager.
- Animals that are earmarked for a rescue organization will not be made for adoption to the general public or to the foster home

Suggested Supplies

Animal Services will supply to each foster home:

- Food
- Medications (if applicable)
- Flea/tick prevention
- Age appropriate food

Suggested supplies for each foster home to have on hand:

- Blankets and towels
- Paper towels and rags
- Newspaper
- Bowls: ceramic or stainless steel are easiest to sanitize
- Crate
- Grooming supplies – brushes, combs, etc.
- Litter boxes – small, low sided litter boxes for kittens, covered litter boxes work well for adult cats
- Litter – unscented, non-clumping clay litter for kittens
- Scratching post for cats
- Toys that can be cleaned and sanitized (rubber, nylon, etc.)
- Disinfectant
- Baby gates
- Collars and leashes

The above supplies are the basics that will help with fostering. The foster caregiver's best judgment should be used when obtaining supplies.

Picking Up a New Foster Animal

- The Animal Care Coordinator will contact a list of potential foster parents by phone or email when an animal is in need of foster care. The first foster caregiver who responds to the request and accepts the foster assignment will receive the animal. You always have the option to decline a foster assignment for any reason.
- Once you agree to foster an animal, you are responsible for arranging a pick-up time within 24 to 48 hours and driving to the facility.
- Animal Services will provide you with any supplies you are unable to donate or supply.
- You will get a foster animal fact sheet, which will indicate the reason for fostering, any medications the foster animal is taking, and the date of the foster's recheck.
- You will leave with any necessary medications, dispensers, instructions, and the medication log sheet if applicable.
- Foster animals will be provided with collars and Animal Services ID tags. Please make sure the collar stays on at all times.

DOG and CAT PROOFING YOUR HOME

- All cleaning supplies and medications should be kept out of the reach of jumping and climbing cats and dogs, locking cabinets preferred.
- Place all small chewable items out of reach.
- Put all socks, shoes etc. away – they are tempting to chew.
- Block off all small areas and hiding places.
- Trash cans should be kept covered.
- Wires and mini blind cords should be placed out of reach.
- Drapery and shower curtains should be placed out of reach.
- Count your foster animals when opening and closing closet doors.
- Many house and garden plants are poisonous, keep household plants out of reach and supervise your foster animals outside.
- Make sure your foster dogs will not jump the fence before leaving him or her unsupervised in the yard.
- Toys must be safe! Avoid any toys that have small parts attached to them.

Binging Your New Foster Animal Home

- Ideally, set up the area where your foster animal will be staying before you bring your foster home.
- New foster animals should be kept separate from your existing companion animal of the same species for a period of 7-10 days. This quarantine period is to protect your own animals and should be strictly observed.
- Cats and kittens do very well in a kitty condo, bathroom or spare bedroom.
- Introduce your foster animal to one room of the house at first. Try to have homecoming be a quiet experience for the animal.
- Puppies and adult dogs should be kept to one area of the house at first. This will help to increase ease of house breaking.
- Show each cat or kitten where the litter box is located.
- Dogs and puppies should have a crate.
- Allow personal pets to first see the new animal either on a leash or behind a gate or in a crate.
- Only allow the new dog or puppy to eliminate in certain areas. Shelter animals may have been exposed to different viruses that can be shed in the urine or feces.

Health and Medical Issues

Even if your foster animal appears healthy when you pick it up, they may be incubating a disease.

It is very important that your companion animals of the same species be current on all vaccines for their own protection.

Please refer any questions to either the Animal Services Animal Care Coordinator or your own veterinarian. Your veterinarian may recommend additional vaccines that are not routinely given.

Please observe your foster animal for any signs of illness. Some of the symptoms that need to be reported to the Animal Care Coordinator are:

- Sneezing or coughing
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Wheezing
- Diarrhea
- Blood in the stool
- Tiring easily
- Depressed
- Loss of appetite

If your foster animal develops severe or bloody diarrhea, severe vomiting or is very lethargic, contact the Foster Program Coordinator immediately.

Administering Medications

All animals that are foster care needing medications will be dispensed through the Animal Shelter. **No other medications are to be given to any foster animal while in foster care.**

Animals will be sent home with a medicine sheet with instructions on how and when to give the medication and a log for the foster caregiver to document when the medication was given.

All medications in the form of pills, capsules, or tablets must stay in their approved child proof containers. All liquid medication must be refrigerated.

If you are having trouble giving medications or have missed a medication, please call the Animal Care Coordinator during regular business hours (8-5) at 828-465-8228

Sanitizing Your Home between Foster Animals

In order to prevent disease and parasite infestations in your home; thoroughly clean areas where the foster animal has stayed.

- Wash bedding in hot water, detergent and bleach
- Discard non-washable surface toys
- Disinfect all washable surfaces with a mild bleach and water solution (bleach/water ratio of 1:32 or 4oz of bleach per gallon of water is recommended) **Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective.**
- Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes and scrub and bleach crates, carriers, scoops, food bowls and litter boxes
- Regularly clean up all waste in the yard to decrease the risk of spreading disease