



We speak for those who can not speak for themselves

FOSTER CARE MANUAL



Established: January, 2011
Updated: December, 2011

Contact Names and Numbers

For more information on the Tulsa SPCA Foster Program or with questions, concerns, or to schedule foster animal veterinary or other check-ups please call a Pet Placement Specialist by emailing Foster.Program@TulsaSPCA.org or calling 918-428-7722.

Business Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Closed Sunday and Wednesday

After Hours and when the Pet Placement Specialist is unavailable, a call list of the staff members at the facility from which you picked up your foster animal.

For clinic appointments call or email your Pet Placement Specialist and announce you are a foster parent and need to schedule a clinic appointment. Your Pet Placement Specialist will help set up an appointment for you with the clinic.

Emergency Protocol and Contact Information

On occasion, foster animals have medical emergencies that happen outside of the normal hours of operation. **In the case of an after-hours medical emergency, please contact the emergency person on call.** They will assist you in getting the pet the attention he or she needs. This information will be given to you at the time you come in and pick up your foster. The Pet Placement Specialist will keep you updated of any changes.

*Under no circumstances should they be contacted at their emergency number when the shelter is open. The contact person will direct you to either meet them at the shelter where they will administer the appropriate care, or they will direct you to a veterinary facility. **Please note that if you decide to take the foster animal directly to an emergency veterinary facility without prior approval from Tulsa SPCA, Tulsa SPCA 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 or while in 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, socialization, young age, wound healing, minor injuries, cruelty cases, URI (upper respiratory infection) and other illnesses/injuries/behavior issues at the Organization's discretion. Animal care center management retains discretionary authority for selecting animals for foster care.

Animals will not be considered for foster care if any of the following apply:

- Represent a threat to public health or safety
- Have medical or behavioral problems in which the condition, prognosis or clinical course is unclear
- Have conditions (medical or behavioral) requiring an unreasonable investment of time and expense by the Tulsa SPCA, the foster parent or the potential adopter
- Have prognoses of poor quality of life or chronic pain and suffering

The following guidelines will also be followed:

- An animal fostered for socialization will be at the shelter's discretion.
- No animals under four weeks of age will be fostered without the mother, unless they are orphaned.
- The length of fostering for any animal should not exceed three months for any reason. This may be overturned by the Associate Director/Director on a case by case basis.
- Any animal that shows signs of illness at the time of surrender is not eligible to be fostered. This may be overturned by the Associate Director/Director on a case by case basis.
- If a state of overload (the number of animals in the animal care center exceeds available cage space) is identified by management, animals that are allowed to be fostered must stay in the foster homes until the overload status is removed. This moratorium may be limited to the summer months and/or be applied to only one group of animals (cats, kittens, dogs or puppies). Pet Care Specialist Manager and Associate Director will be evaluating the overload status on a continuous basis.

All handouts and DVD's will be given to foster parents at the time of training.

Suggested Supplies

The number of foster animals the Tulsa SPCA is able to support is limited by the annual resources available to the program. Foster caregivers are encouraged to donate supplies for their own foster animals in order to maximize the number of animals fostered by Tulsa SPCA each year. Some supplies are available to give or loan to foster caregivers who require them in order to foster. The following is a list of supplies recommended for the care and maintenance of your foster animals.

- Blankets and towels
- Paper towels and rags
- Newspaper
- Bowls- ceramic or stainless steel are easiest to sanitize
- Crate- a large crate with a divider is useful for different sized dogs and kittens
- Grooming supplies- brushes, combs and flea combs
- Litter boxes- small, low sided litter boxes for kittens; covered litter boxes work well for adult cats
- Litter- use unscented, non-clumping clay litter for kittens
- Sheets or tarps- to protect floors
- Scratching post for cats
- Stain and odor remover- Nature's Miracle works very well
- Toys that can be cleaned and sanitized (rubber, nylon, etc.)
- Kongs- hard rubber chew toys that can be filled with treats for dogs and puppies
- Bleach
- Disinfectant
- Baby gates
- Collars and leashes
- Kitty Forts

This list is not exhaustive. The above supplies are the basics that will help with dogs, puppies, cats and kittens. Not all of the supplies will be needed if you only foster certain types of animals. The foster caregiver's best judgment should be used when obtaining supplies.

Picking Up a New Foster Animal

- The Pet Placement Specialist and/or Adoption Manager 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.
- Foster assignments are generally made for two week intervals, with the option of extending your assignment if needed. A one week break between foster assignments is generally enforced for reasons of sanitation and mental health.
- **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 where the animal is located. Bring a transport crate for cats and small animals, and a leash for adult dogs, if at all possible. If you do not have a crate, let the either the Foster Care Coordinator or Adoptions know, so we can loan one to you.**
- Tulsa SPCA 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.
- You will be provided with the foster animal's medical evaluation form. Cats will have been tested for feline leukemia and the test results listed on the medical evaluation form.
- Foster animals will be provided with collars and Tulsa SPCA ID tags. Please make sure the collar stays on at all times.

DOG and CAT PROOFING YOUR HOME

It is important to ensure that your home and foster room are safe; animals can do the most unlikely things.

- Refer to "Preparing To Foster" handout.
- 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 animals outside (**see Tulsa SPCA handout – Precautions For Poisonous Food & Plants**).
- Make sure your foster dog 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 (i.e., eyes, ribbons, yarn, feathers, etc.). Also avoid soft rubber toys that can be chewed apart and squeaky toys.

Protect your home from being damaged by using sheets, tarps and newspaper to protect carpet and floors. ANY unprotected surface can potentially be damaged.

Bringing 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 animals of the same species for a period of 7-10 days**, unless notified otherwise. This quarantine period is to protect your own animals and should be strictly observed.
- Cats and kittens do very well in a kitty condo, crate, 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.
- Cats and kittens need a cozy, secure place with a bed to snuggle up in. The bed can simply be a low box with a blanket in it.
- Show each cat and kitten where the litter box is located.
- Dogs and puppies should have a crate.
- Allow your new foster quiet time to adjust to the new environment.

Introductions With Your Companion Animals

Cats:

- Use your discretion in deciding whether to introduce your adult cats to your foster cats and kittens. Some resident cats have difficulty adjusting to fosters and may exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as urine marking.
- If you choose to introduce your adult cat to a foster cat or kitten, the introductions should be done gradually. Observing the 7-10 day waiting period will greatly facilitate this (see – **Bringing Your Foster Pet Home**).

Dogs:

- Introductions between a foster dog and the resident dogs should be done in neutral territory if possible.
- If introductions are done at your home, take the foster dog to the backyard to sniff and eliminate first. Then put the foster dog inside and let the resident dogs out into the yard to investigate the smells left by the new dog. At that point, introductions can be made preferably outside.
- It may be helpful to keep your new foster on a leash so you can easily break up any altercations.
- Some growling and/or posturing is completely normal and to be expected. Watch for signs of unusual aggression in your foster animal.
- If there are multiple dogs in the residence, introductions should be made with the new foster one-on-one.
- Baby gates are ideal for gradually introducing animals inside.
- Crate when you are not home to ensure that playtime does not get out of hand.
- Always supervise your foster's interactions with your companion animals (see – **Bringing Your Foster Pet Home**).

Health and Medical Issues

Even if your foster animals appear healthy when you pick them up from the Animal Care Center, they may be incubating a disease. This is why it is important to observe the 7-10 day quarantine period when you first bring your foster home.

It is very important that your companion animals of the same species be current on all vaccines for their own protection and well-being, Tulsa SPCA has a low-cost vaccination clinic for your personal pet to get updated on their shots. You may wish to discuss the fact that you are fostering with your veterinarian. Due to the increased chance of exposure to animals with diseases, your veterinarian might recommend vaccines that are not routinely given.

It is important to observe your foster animal for any signs of illness. **Please keep a daily chart of signs of illness for use at veterinary re-checks.** Warning signs to watch for include:

- Sneezing and or coughing
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Gagging
- Wheezing
- Tiring easily
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Twitching abnormally
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Lethargic or depressed
- Breathing heavily
- Rectal temperature over 102.5 degrees

If your foster animal develops severe or bloody diarrhea, severe vomiting or is very lethargic, contact the clinic or the Pet Placement Specialist immediately; after hours contact the emergency contacts.

Common Illnesses/Medical Conditions Seen in Foster Animals:

- URI- Upper Respiratory Infection can infect dogs and cats. Cats cannot give URI to dogs, nor can dogs give it to cats, but it can be spread within the same species. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature.
- Diarrhea- Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool into the Tulsa SPCA Clinic so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run. Feed a bland diet of cooked white rice and boiled chicken (3 parts rice to 1 part meat) until the diarrhea subsides.
- Dehydration- Animals with diarrhea can quickly become dehydrated. To check for dehydration, pull up gently on the skin at the scruff of the neck. If it bounces back quickly when you let go, hydration is fine. If it does not go back or goes back slowly, your foster animal is dehydrated and needs medical attention quickly.
- Fleas- Fleas can affect dogs and cats. A foster animal with fleas will be given a general flea treatment called Revolution or a flea bath depending on the severity

of the fleas and the age of the animal. **Do not use any over the counter flea treatments at all.** If you notice fleas within a week of having the animal in your home, call the clinic or the Pet Placement Specialist. We don't want to mix medications and cause negative reactions for the pets.

- Worms- Your foster will be tested and, if necessary, treated for worms before coming to your home. If you detect worms in your foster's stool, contact the clinic or the Pet Placement Specialist to make arrangements for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti.
- Parvo – Parvo affects mostly puppies that have not had all their puppy shots, but can affect adult dogs too. Symptoms of the parvo virus are:
 - **Lethargic.** If your dog normally likes to play and has high energy, this is the clearest sign that something is wrong. You could say they act depressed.
 - **Lack of Appetite.** The more common strains attack the digestive system.
 - **Vomiting with no change in diet.** It usually looks clear and foamy.
 - **Bloody Diarrhea.**
 - **Stronger Feces Odor.** It's unmistakable and you will never forget it.

Administering Medications

Administering Pills to Cats- If the pill can be given with food, try hiding it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, tuna, cream cheese, liverwurst, canned food or semi-moist food like Pounce is often used. This method rarely works with cats. If your cat will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

- Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
- Bring the cat to the place you will give the pill, while talking to him or her in a happy, light voice.
- Ask to be shown how to correctly “scruff” a cat.
- **Burrito Wrap:** Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or a large towel so just his or her head is sticking out.
- Place the cat between your knees or at eye level on a table.
- Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger of your dominant hand.
- Using your other hand, gently but firmly grasp the cat's head from above with your thumb on one side and your finger on the other.
- Tilt the cat's head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. The cat's lower jaw will automatically drop a bit.
- Place one of your free fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
- Quickly place the pill as far back in the cat's mouth as possible, making sure it is over the hump of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far into the cat's mouth because it might gag.
- Close the cat's mouth. Hold it closed, lower his or her head to a normal position and gently rub or blow on the cat's nose to stimulate swallowing.
- Talk softly to and stroke the cat or give another type of treat.

Liquid Medication to Cats-

- Start with the burrito wrap: wrapping the cat's body and legs tightly in a towel leaving only its head sticking out. Insert the dropper between the cheek and teeth while tilting the chin upward. Slowly dispense the medication, remembering not to give it faster than the cat can swallow. The quicker you do this, the more cooperative the cat will be.
- Refrigerated medication **MUST** be kept in the refrigerator.

Administering Pills to Dogs- If the medication can be given with food; the easiest way to give pills is to hide it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, peanut butter, cream cheese, canned food or liverwurst is often used. If the dog will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

- Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
- Call the dog in a happy, calm voice.
- Take the dog to a spot where he or she is backed up against something and cannot get away from you. Sometimes putting the dog on a surface off the floor is best, but this requires assistance.
- Squeeze behind the upper canine teeth and tilt the animal's head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. His or her jaw will automatically drop a bit.
- Place one of the fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
- Quickly place the pill as far back as possible inside the dog's mouth being sure to get it over the hump in the tongue. Do not place your hand in the dog's mouth too far because it might gag.
- Close the dog's mouth and hold it closed while you gently blow or rub his or her nose. This will stimulate swallowing.

Liquid Medication to Dogs-

- Insert the dropper between the upper and lower teeth in the back and tilt the chin upward. Slowly administer the medication while being careful not to go faster than the dog can swallow. Always remember to praise the dog and even offer a treat after the medication. This will make administering medication easier in the future.

Applying Eye Drops and Ointments-

- Before administering eye medication, be sure the eye is clear of discharge. You can use warm water on a cotton ball to gently clean around the eyes. Use your thumb and forefinger to open the eyelid. With your other hand, place 1-2 drops (as directed) or a small amount of ointment on the eye or the pink tissue around the eye. The foster animal will blink and the medication will cover the entire eye. When applying medication to the eye, try to avoid the animal's direct line of vision when approaching and **avoid touching the eye with the container of medication.**

Care of Puppies and Kittens

Please let the Pet Placement Specialist know if your foster animal is developing behavior problems.

General Information:

- Puppies and kittens younger than 4 weeks are usually not fostered without their mother. Most mothers do a very good job of feeding, cleaning and caring for their newborns. However, it is important that you be observant to ensure that no problems arise. A puppy or kitten's condition can change very quickly.
- If you have a litter of puppies or kittens, it is important that you are able to identify them. Make a list of their names, and any distinguishing markings so you can keep a record of their progress. Remove all paper collars before they become too snug.
- Puppies and kittens fostered for age will have their follow up appointment at about 6 weeks of age, if no problems have arisen. Although in most cases they can be approved to go up for adoption at this time, kittens and puppies must be at least 2 lbs. to be sterilized. If they are less than 2 lbs. at the time of their recheck, you might be asked to continue fostering them until they weigh enough for sterilization. Because it is beneficial for puppies and kittens to remain with their littermates until they are 8 weeks of age, you might be asked to continue fostering the animals for an additional two weeks if foster homes are not in high demand. When the shelter is experiencing problems with diseases such as parvo, puppies should not be returned to the shelter until 2 weeks after their second vaccination.
- Once puppies have had their first vaccination and are in their foster home (not at the shelter), they can be walked in areas where there is not much dog traffic. Avoid dog parks and pet stores with puppies who are less than 4 months old.
- The area where you keep your foster puppies and kittens must be clean, dry, warm and free of drafts. Puppies and kittens younger than 2-3 weeks cannot maintain their own body temperature and can die if they become chilled.
- Puppies and kittens with mothers should be kept separate from other animals in the house. The mother may be protective and can attack other animals or people if she feels threatened.
- Use towels or blankets for bedding. Bedding should be changed daily (or more frequently if necessary). The mother will try to keep the area clean, but that can be a difficult chore, especially with a large litter.
- The mother will take care of the babies' elimination needs by frequently cleaning/licking them. Puppies and kittens begin eliminating on their own without stimulation from their mother at about 3 weeks of age.
- Fading puppy or kitten: Rarely, one or more puppies or kittens in a litter will begin to "fade" after a week or two of life. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing and stop crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. There is no clear cause for the condition. Puppies and kittens fade very quickly and often do not recover, even with intensive care.

Contact the Pet Placement Specialist immediately if you suspect a problem. If after hours, contact the emergency contacts.

Feeding:

- Nursing mothers should be fed dry puppy or kitten food mixed with some wet food. They need to be fed more often and in larger quantities than usual.
- Starting at about 3-4 weeks of age, most puppies and kittens will begin trying to eat on their own from their mother's dish. At this time, make sure the dish is large enough for the litter to gather around or use multiple dishes. A baking sheet makes a good bowl for several puppies to use.
- Mix ground dry puppy or kitten food with water and a small amount of canned food to make a semi-solid mixture.
- Some puppies and kittens may need to be introduced to the food. Place a small amount on your finger and allow the puppy or kitten to lick it off or place a small amount on their lips. Slightly warming the food makes it more palatable.
- Feedings should be done at least 2 times a day. Several feedings throughout the day will ensure that your puppies and kittens do not overeat. Overeating can cause vomiting or diarrhea. Follow the Tulsa SPCA feeding recommendations for the specific puppy or kitten you foster.
- It is important to make sure that each puppy and kitten is eating. If it appears that one or more puppy or kitten is not making its way to the dish or is getting squeezed out, set up another dish away from the first and closely monitor that puppy or kitten's intake.
- **Do not feed cow's milk to a puppy or kitten.**
- Remove the mother during puppy and kitten feeding times so she will not eat their food. It is also helpful to remove the mother 1-2 hours prior to feeding time to stimulate the puppies and kittens' appetites.
- Puppies and kittens will continue to occasionally nurse during this time.
- Make sure that the bowl of water is shallow, to prevent potential drowning, and that it is spill proof.

Litter Box Training:

- By about 4 weeks of age, kittens are ready to begin using the litter box.
- Make sure you have a low sided litter box for the kittens to get in and out of easily.
- Start them off by putting them in the litter box and scratching the litter with their paw. The kittens will pick this up very quickly. While they are learning to use the litter box, put them in it several times a day for a couple days if necessary.
- Kittens who are unfamiliar with the litter box will taste the litter. Use unscented, non-clumping clay litter for young kittens. Ingested clumping litter will cause illness.
- Several litter boxes may be necessary depending on the size of the litter.
- Litter boxes must be kept clean.
- Make sure the kittens can easily locate their litter box by keeping them in a small room or bathroom.

- Kittens are very messy when first learning to use a litter box. They will step in their excrement and track it through the room. At this time, it is especially important to keep all surfaces clean and covered.

Kitten Behavior:

- Kittens are very curious and like to run, jump and climb. Remove all breakable and dangerous items from their reach.
- Kittens love to play with toys of any kind. Even a crumpled piece of paper can provide amusement.
- A single kitten will likely cry a lot the first couple of nights. Make the kitten's area as cozy as possible by providing a blanket and stuffed animal.
- Kittens should not be allowed outside.

Houstraining:

- Puppies will start to eliminate on their own at about 3 weeks of age. Puppies need to eliminate when they first wake up, about 20 minutes after eating and after playing vigorously.
- Once puppies have begun to eliminate on their own, outdoor houstraining should begin. If it is necessary to use an indoor elimination location, it should be as small as possible. Keep it consistently covered with something like newspaper or puppy pads. This will help puppies learn to keep elimination in one area and ease houstraining in the new home (**Watch DVD on Houstraining**).

Puppy Behavior:

- Nipping is a common behavior in puppies. A loud shriek will usually get their attention so you can give them a proper toy to chew (**Watch DVD on Puppy Mouthing or Play Biting**).
- Try to start your foster puppies off on the right foot by keeping them off of the furniture, not letting them jump, etc. This will make their transition to a new home easier.
- Puppies should never be left unsupervised outside of their crate.
- A single puppy will cry a lot the first couple of nights. Make the crate as comfortable as possible by providing a blanket and stuffed animal.

Socialization of Puppies and Kittens:

- Beginning at 3 weeks of age, it is important to begin handling puppies and kittens frequently. Make sure each puppy and kitten is handled and played with regularly.
- Gradual exposure to new and different things and people; sights and normal household sounds is important to ensure that your foster animal is well adjusted.
- Puppies and kittens learn to play by wrestling with their littermates.
- If introducing kittens to dogs or other cats in the house, it is useful to put them in a crate in a common area so they can observe each other prior to interacting.
- Please refer to our handouts on introducing companion animals to others.

CARE OF CATS

Feeding Cats:

- Dry food in an appropriate amount (2/3 of a cup for a cat up to 10 lbs.) should be available at all times.
- A serving of canned food can be given once or twice a day.
- Milk should **NEVER** be given to cats.
- Fresh water should always be available.
- Cats should be fed away from their litter box.

Cat Behavior:

- Cats should be provided with a scratching post or other suitable surface to scratch (**Watch DVD on Cats**).
- Give your foster cat a variety of toys to play with. Rotate them periodically so they do not lose their novelty. You can try hiding your cat's favorite toys before leaving in the morning and create a sort of "treasure hunt" for him or her (make sure he or she sees you hiding at least a few of the toys).
- Cats should **never** be allowed outside.
- Contact the Pet Placement Specialist for suggestions and advice about specific behavior issues.

CARE OF DOGS

Feeding Dogs:

- Dogs should be fed twice daily at the same time every day.
- The amount of food depends on the dog's age and weight. As a general rule, adult dogs get 1 cup per 20 lbs., and puppies get 3 cups daily (divided throughout the day). You will be given written instructions for your foster dog provided by Tulsa SPCA.
- Give the dog 15-20 minutes to eat the food and then remove it.
- If your foster dog is unwilling to eat plain, dry food, you can mix in some warm water or a **SMALL** amount of canned food.
- Fresh water should always be available.

Dog Behavior:

- If your foster dog exhibits fearful behavior, do not give in to the temptation to comfort him or her. It is only natural to try to make him or her feel better, but what you are doing is reinforcing the message that being afraid is

okay. Ignore the fearful behaviors and be alert for indications of curiosity or interest so you can praise him or her enthusiastically (**see– Open Paw information for developing positive behaviors**).

- Dog should be crated when you are unable to supervise them. (**See DVD for Crate Training**).
- Providing chew toys helps to relieve boredom and alleviate stress (**see DVD for Chewing and Destructive Behavior in Dogs**).
- Teaching your foster dog basic manners will help your dog become more adoptable (**Watch DVD for Pet Care**).
- Dogs should not be left outside for long periods of time.
- Even if a dog is housetrained, an accident upon arriving at your home is not uncommon.
- Contact the Pet Placement Specialist for suggestions and advice on specific behavior issues.

When to Call for Behavioral Help

- Growling or snarling at humans
- Snapping or biting
- Fearful/hiding that does not improve
- Rough play; such as ripping clothing
- Panic and destructiveness when left alone
- Jumping up
- House training concerns
- Crate training concerns

Call the Pet Placement Specialist for guidance; identify yourself as a Foster Caregiver and your phone call will be returned within a 24 hour period. Emergency foster behavior issues need to be referred to the Pet Placement Specialist, if the behavior is severe enough, she may refer you to our Pet Care Specialist Manager.

Follow up Recheck Exams

- **You must call the clinic or the Pet Placement Specialist during weekdays to schedule routine follow up exams at the Tulsa SPCA.** Exams will need to be scheduled with the clinic. Animals fostered for URI that are symptom-free can be rechecked by the clinic. Animals fostered for age are generally rechecked by the clinic as well.
- Puppies and kittens will have their follow up visit requirements on your foster information sheet – please follow it. Although in many cases they can be approved to go up for adoption at that time, kittens and puppies must weigh 2 lbs. to be sterilized. If they weigh less than 2 lbs. at the time of their exam, you might be asked to keep them until they weigh enough for sterilization.
- There are a limited number of clinic appointments available for foster caregivers each day. It is critical that you keep any appointment you make. You will, in most cases, be able to speak with the vet about your foster animal. Please limit your conversation to only that animal, and not other fosters or your personal pets. Not all vet exams will take place in exam rooms. Please be respectful if you are in a staff-only area of the clinic for your foster exam. If you have concerns or questions about the medical advice from the clinic, please contact either the clinic or the Pet Placement Specialist, she will make sure you get a call back later in the day.
- Please be prepared with the following information when you bring your foster animal to the clinic:
 - Is the animal eating regularly?
 - Is the animal drinking regularly?
 - Any diarrhea?
 - Activity level
 - Date of last medications given
 - When were the last signs of illness observed?
- NOTE: If you take the foster dog to your own veterinarian without the approval of Tulsa SPCA, you will be responsible for the cost of that veterinary visit, please let the Pet Placement Specialist know.

Cleared for Adoption!

- Once your foster animal is approved to go up for adoption he or she may still be shedding a virus (common with URI) and cannot be returned to the Adoption Center yet, even if they have been approved to go up for adoption. These animals can be posted on the web site while you continue fostering them.
- A fostered animal that is on the web site might be able to be spay/neuter when cleared by the veterinarian. This can ease the adoption process

because your foster will be ready to go home immediately upon adoption. Spays/neuters are arranged by the clinic.

- Once your foster is cleared by the veterinarian, your foster can be taken on MAC (Mobile Adoption Center) outings. This will occur 2 weeks after the second set of vaccinations. All pets must get their rabies shot at 4 months of age, unless advised otherwise by the veterinarian.
- Once your foster is posted on the web site, you may receive phone calls and/or e-mails directly from the Pet Placement Specialist or adoptions.
- You can arrange to meet prospective adopters at the Tulsa SPCA where the adoption will be completed, on the MAC, or in a public place for viewing. **Please do not to conduct meetings with prospective adopters in your home.** You will be asked by adoptions how the visit went and how well the animal responded to the entire family. If the animal's application is approved the adopter will pick the animal up at the Tulsa SPCA after the vet exit is completed.

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. The one week "break" period between foster assignments is a good time to do this.

- 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 solutions should be prepared as needed, because they lose their strength after 24 hours. Bleach is inactive in the presence of organic matter so clean up dirt, hair, feces, etc. **before** using bleach to disinfect. **Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective.**
- Vacuum all carpeted areas.
- Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes and scrub and bleach crates, carriers, scoops, food bowls and litter boxes.
- Clean any urine or feces soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner immediately to avoid residual odor (Nature's Miracle Stain and Odor Remover works well).
- Regularly clean up all waste in the yard to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

Quarantine Periods:

Sometimes an animal is sent into a home before evidence of a serious disease has manifested. Quarantine periods are used to allow infectious diseases to die off in the environment. This protects future foster animals from being infected with the virus or disease. Specific quarantine periods are as follows:

- Feline Leukemia/FIV 3 days
- Sarcoptic Mange 1 week
- FIP (not contagious) or Canine Distemper 3 weeks
- Ringworm 3 months
- Panleukopenia or Parvovirus 6 months
(Not needed for adult dogs)

If a foster animal is infected with one of the above illnesses, the foster parent will not be allowed to bring another foster into the home for the designated quarantine period.

Foster Volunteer Timesheets

One of your volunteer obligations includes recording your foster hours. Every foster parent is responsible for recording the number of hours they volunteer each month. Volunteer hours are calculated by counting four hours per day.

Foster volunteer timesheets are available from the Pet Placement Specialist and/or the Volunteer Manager and should be turned in at the end of every month.

Adopting a Foster Animal

While it is tempting to adopt your first or subsequent foster animals, you will be more valuable to the program if you continue to foster new animals rather than adopting and then ceasing to foster. Foster caregivers are special volunteers with advanced training. We never seem to have enough trained foster caregivers. Losing even one reduces the resources available to animals in our care.

Learning to bond with a foster animal, see the animal grow and thrive under your care, and then passing the animal on to an adoptive home is immensely rewarding. It is also sad to see a foster animal leave. Give yourself time to grieve the loss, but also think about the animal's new life ahead. Please think very carefully before requesting to adopt a foster animal. Would you have been interested in adopting if you hadn't fostered?

Emergency/Disaster Preparedness

An important part of providing foster care is ensuring that foster animals are safe in times of emergency or disaster. Oklahoma is vulnerable to a variety of types of severe weather, including tornadoes, thunderstorms, flash floods, snowstorms and ice storms. Technological concerns for Oklahoma residents include hazardous material spills, fires, explosions and terrorist attacks. Emergencies become disasters when they overwhelm local resources and require outside assistance. Emergencies may require anything from sheltering in place to a brief evacuation from your home to permanent evacuation. You may even be away from home when an emergency situation happens and be unable to return to retrieve your animals. Simple advance preparations can make the difference in whether your animals survive a crisis. The Tulsa SPCA recommends that each foster caregiver follow the steps below in order to ensure the safety of foster animals.

Create a Written Personal Disaster Plan (see blank form below):

- Schedule a household meeting to discuss escape routes, location of evacuation supplies and who will be in charge of each animal in an evacuation situation.
- Determine which rooms in your home offer safe havens. They should be away from windows, be easy-to-clean and have access to fresh water. In flooding emergencies, go to the highest location in your house.
- Arrange with a trusted neighbor to temporarily care for or even evacuate your animals in your absence. Provide them with a house key, instructions and emergency contact numbers to reach you and the Tulsa SPCA.
- Since disaster shelters generally do not admit animals, prearrange evacuation destinations for your animals outside of your immediate area such as family and friends' homes and pet-friendly hotels.

Ready Animals and Evacuation Supplies:

- Have a carrier for each foster animal and label them in advance with your name, address and emergency contact numbers. Carriers should be large enough for animals to stand up, lie down and turn around comfortably.
- Prepare an animal evacuation kit that includes a 1-2 week supply of food and water, medications, light-weight bowls, clean-up supplies, a leash and an animal first aid kit. Include an extra copy of foster records in a re-sealable plastic bag along with clear, recent photos of each animal alone and with you. Store the kit in the carrier.
- Apply Tulsa SPCA Pet Rescue stickers on each entry to your home identifying your animals and where they can be found in case you are not home at the time of crisis.
- Make sure that each animal is wearing current, visible identification (collar and i.d. tag) at all times.
- Familiarize foster animals with going in and out of carriers.

When Disaster Strikes:

- Put your personal disaster plan into action.
- Bring companion animals inside at the first sign of possible danger.
- Make sure all animals are wearing visible identification.
- Place animals in individual carriers and ready evacuation supplies.
- Listen to local weather and/or news updates for instructions as to whether to shelter in place or evacuate.

Sheltering in place:

- Close and lock doors and windows.
- Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels and duct tape if told to do so.
- Turn off ventilation systems, water and gas.
- Remain calm. Stay with your foster animals to provide comfort and reassurance.

Evacuating:

- If you evacuate, take your foster animals with you! Leave early, if possible.
- Load animal carriers in your vehicle and take along your evacuation kit.
- Lock your home.
- Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Travel on routes specified by local authorities.
- Keep dogs securely leashed when out of carriers. Use a harness and leash for cats.
- Inform the Tulsa SPCA of your location and contact information.

After the Disaster:

- Let the Tulsa SPCA know you have returned home.
- Inspect your home and yard for dangers before allowing your family or animals in.
- Walk dogs on leash and let cats re-orient room by room in your home.
- Animal behavior may change—confusion and abnormal behavior are common.
- Review, practice and update your plan regularly with your family.

Personal Disaster Plan

Family Emergency Contact Information:

POLICE **DIAL 911 or** _____
FIRE **DIAL 911 or** _____
AMBULANCE **DIAL 911 or** _____

Nearby Alternative Animal Care Provider:

Name _____
Address, City _____
Telephone #: Day _____
 Evening _____
 Cell _____

Out of Area Contact:

Name: _____
Address, City: _____
Telephone #: Day: _____
 Evening: _____
 Cell: _____

Nearest Relative:

Name: _____
Address, City: _____
Telephone #: Day: _____
 Evening: _____
 Cell: _____

Family Work Numbers:

Name: _____ #: _____
Name: _____ #: _____
Name: _____ #: _____

Tulsa SPCA Contact Numbers:

Emergency Contact #: _____
Tulsa SPCA Shelter: 918-428-7722 _____

Family Meeting Places:

Right outside your home: _____
Away from neighborhood: _____

Other Information:

Location of evacuation supplies: _____
Person in charge of animal evacuation: _____
Safe rooms for sheltering at home: _____
 Veterinarian name, #: _____