



# TULSA SPCA BRINGING YOUR FOSTER PET HOME

Once approved as a foster home, you will sign a Foster Care Agreement, receive foster care instructions, and pick up your foster pet, along with any supplies. You will receive a copy of your agreement. A date is set for returning the animal(s) to the shelter. You will be supplied with the following items:

- Medical history sheet
- Medical directions, syringes and medicines as needed
- Prescription food, if needed
- ID tags and rabies tags (if applicable)

## YOUNG CHILDREN

*Always introduce children slowly* to the new animal to determine the compatibility and the attitude of the foster pet toward youngsters. Even after the initial introduction, ALWAYS have an adult supervisor around when your child is with the foster pet.

## FOSTER KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Be certain your pets are up to date on their vaccinations.

*Direct interaction between older foster babies and your healthy, vaccinated pets is totally at your own risk.* There is always a chance that the babies could transmit illness to your pets or that your pets could get the babies sick. The same is true with a mama critter and your pets. We recommend keeping your foster pets separate from your own pets for 7 – 10 days.

## THE FOSTER DOG AND YOUR CAT

*If possible, ask the shelter to cat-test your new foster dog at the shelter before bringing it home.* If the dog is known to be aggressive toward cats, it will be better for all parties if you do not take him or her home. Once you've brought the dog home, let him or her settle down and get comfortable with the new surroundings before you introduce your cat. Keep them in separate rooms until then. Have the dog on a leash when you bring the cat into the room. The dog will be curious about this new animal and want to sniff. Keep both parties calm and separate them at the first sign of stress. Indifference is good. Remember: a cat sitting still in your arms is not as entertaining as a cat bolting away from the dog. It is normal for a dog to attempt to chase any animal if it runs; this can be discouraged with training.

**Good signs:** upright ears, tail is relaxed and mobile, face is relaxed.

**Play bow:** front feet set far forward, ears pricked, and head held with eyes forward, mouth slightly open in a "grin." Puppies especially will shift weight to their back legs and paw at the air. These are both ways of saying, "We're just playing, not too rough now."

**Bad signs:** ears are down/back, tail is tucked down or stiff, face is stiff or lips are pulled back.

## **THE FOSTER DOG AND YOUR DOG**

*Take your dog to the shelter and introduce him to your new foster there.* The shelter is a neutral meeting place, this makes it easier to establish a rapport between your dog and the new foster. Once you bring the foster home, keep both dogs on a leash until you have seen how they will interact in this new setting. The key is to go slowly and supervise until both animals are comfortable with each other.

## **THE FOSTER CAT AND YOUR CAT**

Cats are territorial, and they need to be introduced to other animals very slowly. Moving ***slowly*** during the introduction process increases your chances for success. Some cats will always be more social than others. A slow method can prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. Confine your foster cat to one room with a litter box, food, water and bed until he or she is comfortable. After several days, you may leave the door open a crack so the foster kitty can interact with the resident pets under your supervision. You can also try feeding your current pets on the other side of the door from the new kitty. Doing this will create positive associations with the new cat's smells. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your pets can eat calmly while standing directly on either side of the door. If either animal becomes fearful or aggressive, separate them and start the introduction process once again with a series of very small, gradual steps, as outlined above.