

Role of a Foster Parent

What is your job? Providing a safe place, fresh water and ample food, keeping the litter box clean, and playing with mom and babies! (But *never* disturb a mother who is in the process of birthing.) The mother cat will take care of teaching her kittens to use the litter box. Even if she's a very young cat herself, she knows what to do. Handle the kittens from the time they are about two to three weeks old, or even a little younger if the mother cat is friendly towards you. The more time you spend cuddling and playing with them, the more comfortable and sociable they will be with people.

If you are fostering orphans, you will take the place of the mother cat, and will have to be responsible for cleaning, feeding, and teaching them to eliminate waste. (A thorough meeting with a foster councilor is necessary if you have never hand-reared orphans before.)



Physical and Behavioral Expectations

What to expect from week to week: most kittens open their eyes at about 7-10 days old. By 3 weeks, they are actively playing. Usually, they will start eating (and using the litter box) sometime between 4 and 5 weeks old. This is a good time to make sure a litter box is available with low sides. If one or more kittens are not eating by 5 weeks, don't worry! An occasional holdout for mom's milk or the bottle is normal. Their first teeth come in at 2 to 3 weeks, and ears should be open and stand up at about 3 weeks.

What if My Foster Pet(s) Get Sick?

If your foster pet becomes seriously ill, you will need to bring it to the shelter to be assessed for treatment. If an illness occurs after hours, we ask that you phone our emergency call line and you will be put through to the attendant who is on-call. That attendant can assess the need for any veterinary attention and arrange treatment at one of the local clinics.

Things to Consider:

If your foster pet needed serious medical attention at any time, and our staff concluded that the animal needed to be euthanized, would you be supportive of our decision? (The MJHS is a charitable organization, and sometimes it may be too expensive to treat a serious illness.) Also, there are many times that despite the caregiver's best efforts, kittens (especially orphans) do not survive. Would you be able to emotionally handle this? Can you "let go" when it's time for your foster pets to return to the shelter for adoption?

Typical timetable

If you took home a cat that was extremely pregnant or had very young kittens, she will not have received vaccinations. She can receive her first vaccination when the kittens are about two weeks old. She will then need the second one three to four weeks later. Ideally, kittens receive a first vaccination at eight weeks when they are old enough to return to the shelter for adoption.

We will try to contact you when the time comes for your foster cat/kittens to return to the shelter. However, we may have several litters in foster homes, so we appreciate it if you stay aware of the kittens' ages and dates when they need to come back. If we have not called you already, please call to schedule their return. We may have to delay their return briefly based on our available cage space at the shelter.

Cat Foster Care Program

*Focusing Care on
Pregnant Cats,
Mother Cats With Kittens,
and Orphaned Kittens*



Moose Jaw Humane Society
1755 Stadacona Street West
Box 1658
Moose Jaw SK S6H 7K7
306-692-1517
www.mjhs.ca

Because Every Cat Matters

Why Do Shelter Animals Need Foster Care?

We are looking for some dedicated people to serve as foster parents for special cats. Typically, we need temporary foster homes for expectant mother cats, new mothers with their babies, or orphaned kittens. Although the animals living in the shelter are provided with the best possible care, it is beneficial to the animals to live in a home environment where they can receive individualized care in a less stressful environment.

They are happier in a home with people who have time and love to give. Also, animals living in foster homes are creating space in the shelter so that we can take in more animals in need.

Foster homes are needed for several weeks to a few months, depending on the animal(s) and their condition/age at the time they arrive at the shelter.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please take the time to fill out an application form, which are available at the shelter, or download it from our website at www.mjhs.ca.

Call Karla or Ellen at 692-1517 to learn more!

Some Frequently Asked Questions:

What are the foster parent requirements?

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- All owned pets must be spayed/neutered and have current vaccinations (proof required)
- An extra room to keep the foster animal(s) separate from your own pets
- Transportation for picking up/dropping off the animal(s) from the shelter and/or vet
- A lot of love, time, and patience

How can I apply to the program?

- Applications are available on our website, at the shelter, or mailed or faxed out to you
- If your application is approved, a meeting with a foster care councilor is required to go over the basics of being a foster parent prior to the placement of any pets

Do I have to buy supplies for my foster animal?

- All supplies required for your foster pet(s) are provided by the MJHS, including food, cat litter and pan, kennel, toys, bedding, bottles, milk supplements, vet care, etc.

Can I adopt my foster pet? Can my friends?

- Yes, you and your friends can adopt your foster cat or kittens, but all adoptions must officially go through the MJHS and follow our standard adoption procedure/fees.



If you are fostering a mom and litter, you will certainly need to keep them in a room separate from your resident cats. Mother

cats are rarely friendly to others! Kittens without a mother should be kept in a separate room as well. Apparently healthy kittens may have been exposed to a virus or have an as-yet undiagnosed intestinal parasite. For these reasons, it is critical that you keep your foster kittens separate from your own pets until they can be assessed.



What do you feed your kitties? We will send you home with food, dishes, and/or approved milk supplements and bottles. Both kittens and nursing moms need dry kitten food (but **do not use** the “cat milk” that is available at many grocery stores—it can cause stomach upset and lead to diarrhea). Many foster parents also open canned food (pate style, not shredded meat) once or twice a day. It provides a welcome treat, and is easier for small kittens to eat when they are old enough to have solid food.