



Cat/Kitten Foster Program

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LASCC

Kitten Foster Care Program

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Lafayette Animal Shelter & Care Center THANKS YOU!!!!!!!

Thank you for opening your home and heart to a kitten or cat in need. Whether you foster a kitten that needs some time to grow, or an adult cat that needs a little extra TLC, you make it possible for us to provide the very best care possible for all of our residents at Lafayette Animal Shelter. Fostering is messy, rewarding, stinky, adorable and sometimes a heartbreaking job. We certainly could not provide the level of care we do without valuable foster homes like yours.

From all of our cats and kittens:



THANK YOU!

Greetings, Foster Parents!

Thank you for participating in the LASCC Kitten Foster Care Program. We appreciate your willingness to open your heart and home to homeless mother cats and kittens. Your dedication allows our organization to rescue cats we would otherwise have to euthanize due to limited space in our shelter.

The guiding mission of the Kitten Foster Care Program is to give mother cats and kittens the individualized care and socialization they need to prepare them for adoption. Information gathered during the foster process helps us place cats and kittens in homes and with families who can best meet their needs. Specific goals of the program include:

- Providing a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for mother cats to raise their kittens.
- Socializing shy or timid cats and kittens.
- Giving our long-term residents time away from the shelter in a home setting.
- Allowing mother cats to recover in a relaxing, uplifting environment.

This manual outlines the responsibilities and expectations of LASCC's foster volunteers. This guide should serve as a resource throughout your foster care experience.

Before taking your assigned foster cats/kittens home, please:

- Review the overview of key responsibilities and policies.
- Read and sign the foster care agreement.
- Give the completed Foster Family Information Sheet and signed Foster Care Agreement to the Foster Coordinator. If the Foster Coordinator is not available, give the forms to a LASCC staff person.

Overview of Key Responsibilities and Policies

To ensure a successful foster program, we ask that you follow our general policy guidelines to ensure that each foster home is a responsible wonderful home for these kittens to grow up and explore the world in. To this effect, you will want to keep in mind the following:

- Keep cats/kittens **INSIDE** at all times.
- Cats/kittens should be in a carrier at all times when leaving the house.
- Keep doors/windows **CLOSED** at all times, unless covered with a screen that is securely in place. The window should only be open no more than 1-1/2 inches with a support in place so the window cannot be opened any further. A frightened cat/kitten can escape through the tiniest holes.
- If a cat/kitten does manage to get outside, you **MUST** attempt to get the cat/kitten back inside immediately. If you delay, the cat/kitten may get frightened and run away, decreasing your chances of getting the kitty back inside. Do not chase the cat/kitten as this may make him/her run further away from your home. If you cannot get the kitty yourself within 1-2 hours, call the shelter to determine a strategy to recapture the kitty. LASC has humane traps available for this purpose.
- When fostering a mother cat that has not tested positive for FeLV or FIV, it is important to keep her and the kittens separated from your other animals for at least two weeks to ensure they are healthy. A seemingly fine cat can become ill due to stress from a move.
- Foster kittens must not be introduced to your resident cats unless your resident cats are indoor cats only. Kittens must be vaccinated for and out of the shelter environment for more than 2 weeks before they can meet any of your household pets and these visits should be limited. During visits with your household pets, food dishes and litter boxes must be picked up so they do not use each other's boxes, or they should meet in an area where litter boxes are not present.

Kitty-Proofing Your Foster Home

Cat-proofing and especially kitten-proofing your home is much the same as child-proofing it! That means hiding or removing cords, removing small items that kittens can choke on, etc. Use the following tips as a guide to make your foster room and home safe for cats and kittens:

- Make sure the garbage, cleaning supplies and medicines are secure.
- Make sure to put your kitten bag in a cupboard, closet or another room. Please do not leave it out for your foster kittens to get into.
- Get into the habit of checking your refrigerator, oven, washer, dryer, freezer, dishwasher, etc. before these doors get closed. Kitty may have leaped in. These horrible accidents happen more often than you would expect.
- Watch that hot iron, curling iron or any other hot or heavy items a rambunctious kitty may knock down or pull down itself. You may use a non-toxic product available in office supply stores (a kind of gummy substance) and tack down small knick-knacks and prevent breakage.
- Review the toxic houseplant list at www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants and remove all poisonous and non-poisonous plants from your household. Or, to deter kitties from munching on poisonous and non-poisonous plants, you should spray the plants with a product sold at pet stores for this very purpose.
- Keep all small items like rubber bands, paper clips, needles and fishhooks - anything kitty can swallow - out of reach.
- Never leave knives or razors in the bathroom or tub. Kitties love to play with these things and can cut their paws, tongues or gums.
- Keep plastic bags, which can cause suffocation, out of reach.
- Exposed electrical cords are a very real danger. Kitties might chew them getting an electrical shock. This can cause mouth burns or even death. Encase cords in plastic flexible tubing are on the market for just this purpose. Tubing can be purchased at office supply stores. A product called "Bitter Apple", available at pet stores, can be sprayed at regular intervals on the cords to discourage chewing as well.
- Never leave stove burners on without a pot on them; serious burns can result if kitty gets curious. Also, pipes behind hot water heaters can cause burns if kitty hides there. Wood burning stoves and open fireplaces are also hazardous. The best way to prevent accidents is to house fosters away from these things.

Housing

You must provide a clean, safe environment for your foster cats/kittens. LASCC recommends that you use a spare bedroom as your "foster room".

If you are fostering a pregnant cat or young kittens, keep the following tips in mind:

-Consider protecting your furniture and carpet with sheets or plastic table covers.

Kittens can be messy, especially when they're learning to use the litter box! Make sure sheets/covers are securely tacked down so kittens can't get under them.

-Until the age of 3-4 weeks, the mother cat will clean the genitals of her young to stimulate the bowels and bladder. As the kittens start showing interest in the litter box, provide them with an easily accessible box - such as a shoebox lid, cookie sheet or cake pan. Once the kittens are more mobile, you should give them a larger litter box. Dollar stores have lots of inexpensive options.



Litter Box

Kittens should be introduced to the litter box when they start eating solid foods. They need a box with shallow sides: a cookie sheet or cake pan is perfect. You can also use a shoebox top. After they have eaten, place them in the box. They will learn to use the litter box very quickly. Sometimes they learn how to use the litter box without any help from us, as they have been watching mom use her box.

Observe how the kittens watch all of Mom's actions; they find her quite fascinating and are learning how to act like cats by observing her!

Orphans may need a little more assistance from you. Simply pick them up and place them on the litter after each meal. When you bring home your foster kittens, show them where you placed their litter box. Keeping the box clean is very important. DAILY cleaning is a must!! No cat or kitten wants to use or smell a dirty litter box. Make sure the litter box is as far away from the food and water as possible. Place the bed near the food, not the litter.

When first learning to use the litter box, kittens do best with store bought recycled paper litter or clay litter. Once the kittens are older (around 8 weeks old) you can give them clumping litter. Please do not use clumping litter with kittens under 8 weeks.



Clumping litter for older kittens



Recycled paper litter for younger kittens

Expenses and Donations

LASCC will cover all medical needs performed by our on-site veterinarian. LASCC will not reimburse any personal expenses incurred by foster parents for unauthorized veterinary care. Seeking veterinary care for your foster cat or kittens at a clinic other than LASCC's on-site clinic is not permitted without explicit approval.

Expenses that you incur during your term as foster parent, whether for supplies or medical care, cannot be applied to adoption fee later. These expenses however, MAY be considered a tax-deductible donation. Foster parents are responsible for tracking these expenses and asking a professional for tax advice.

LASCC will issue a Kitten Diaper Bag to start off; however, the foster parent is responsible for supplying the items once the starter supplies have been depleted. The foster parent is responsible for supplying food, litter and other supplies. Occasionally, LASCC can provide some supplies that have been donated.

How to Pick Up Your Foster Kittens

Once you are assigned a cat, kitten or litter and called ahead to make sure they are ready for you to pick up, please go to the front desk of the shelter. From there, the front desk staff will get the Foster Coordinator.

Make sure that each of these steps is completed while you are at the shelter picking up your kittens:

- You will receive a Kitten Diaper Bag full of supplies, a carrier (if shelter supplies allow) and your kittens
- You will need to sign the Foster Agreement
- Please make sure you take a copy of the medical records home with you for kittens



Naming your kittens

If you are taking home a mom with kittens, when your kittens are 6 weeks old we would like you to name them. Please email the Foster Coordinator once you have given them all friendly, non-offensive and not too difficult to pronounce or spell names. Once you choose names, the kittens will be identified as such.

Never Change a Mom Cat's Name

Quick tips on naming your kittens: theme your kittens' names for easier marketing. The Cheese-Group above could be named Cheddar, Provolone and Gouda.



Maternity Foster Home Guidelines

We hope that this experience will be as rewarding for you as it is beneficial to the health and well-being of mom and her kittens. The majority of births and newborn litters are trouble-free and require only your quiet supervision. The information here will help you prepare for any complications that can, although rarely do, arise. If you have any questions or concerns not addressed in these guidelines, please call. Keep in mind that these are only guidelines and not meant to replace expert advice.

Preparing for Birth

It is imperative that you have a quiet, out-of-the-way place in your home that will be warm, safe and available for the entire time you are fostering. This means that this space will only be used for Mom and her kittens for the time you have them in your care. Inaccessibility from other family pets like dogs, or your resident cats, must strictly enforced. This is absolutely necessary for the health and safety of not only the litter, but for your resident animals as well.

New mother cats have been known to abandon or even resort to cannibalism if they feel that other animals or people threaten the well-being of their babies. This is especially true with mothers who are not well socialized.

New kittens are very susceptible to disease and can pick up illnesses from your seemingly healthy pets. Also, the stress of pregnancy and birth can cause the mom cat to become ill from something that has been dormant in her system, so do not put your resident pets at risk by exposing them..

What to Expect When She's Expecting

A cat can be in heat from 6-10 days. Pregnancy can be diagnosed by a veterinarian between 20-30 days after mating. The typical gestation period for a cat is 63 days. A cat may gain 2-3 pounds during pregnancy, depending on how many kittens she is carrying. She will require more and more food as her pregnancy progresses and we recommend that you feed a high-quality kitten food and provide her with constant to food before, during, and after the birth of her kittens.

A whelping kittening or nesting box must be provided for the expectant mother. This can usually be a cardboard box without a lid with a hole cut out of the side for the mom cat to enter and exit. Fill it with clean towels or old cloth diapers and let her make her own nest. Change this bedding immediately after the birth and then on a frequent basis because it will become soiled - so don't use the "good" towels.

After the birthing is over, remove the towels and replace them with fleece blankets, fleece beds, or cloth diapers. Some kittens cannot retract their claws and get caught in the loops of towels, making it difficult for

them to crawl around. You can also put several layers of bedding in the nest prior to the birth; after the birth, you can roll the dirty upper layers off and gently move the kittens onto the clean layer underneath.

Provide a litter box, food and water. During the last week or so of pregnancy and during the nursing weeks, dry and wet canned food should be fed to the Mom cat. Kitten food is recommended for lactating females, as it has extra calories and nutrients and will help support Mom cat during this very exhausting time in her life. Let Mom eat as much as she wants - after all, she is feeding a brood herself.

The Birth

A week or less before the event, Mom cat may start to move about furtively, root about in the nest and may possibly attempt to escape the room you have designated for her in hopes of finding a linen closet or soft bedspread for her delivery. Be sure to keep your eye on her to ensure she stays in her room!

About 24 hours before delivery, you may notice her belly drop to form a "pear" shape and her nipples start to swell with milk. A small amount of discharge from the vagina is also normal. This is usually the first sign of labor and can last several hours. Mom will start to breathe heavily, pant or purr during this time. Some moms-to-be will give you clues that it is time - others will not. Some will not eat until the deliveries are finished and some will snack in between. Some will be vocal while delivering and some will be silent. Some will want you in the room, others will not. Let mom tell you what she needs. After all, having kittens is a natural and normal experience and cats have been doing it for thousands of years.

Most feline births are routine and trouble free, so try not to disturb her during her process. Make sure she has access to food and water and replace her regular litter with shredded paper in the litter box before delivery begins. She will start the second stage of labor, straining a few hours before the first kitten is born. If, however, she has been heavily straining, for an hour or so, without producing a kitten, or three or more hours pass between kittens, call TPAS.

Occasionally, first time moms will not quite "get it". If this is the case and she delivers a kitten and just walks away, she might not realize that it is alive and needs her care. The membrane covering the kitten's face must be removed immediately so it can breathe. If mom doesn't do this, gently tear open the sac covering its head so it can breathe. After the first kitten, mom usually figures it out and carries on as she should. Most moms will eat the afterbirth as it contains nutrients and hormones she will need to recover from the birth. She will also bite through the umbilical cord and clean the babies. After she has cleaned the kitten, she will take a rest. This rest could last 30-60 minutes before she starts labor again to give birth to the next kitten.

Signs of a Difficult Delivery

Most births proceed without incident and your role as a foster parent is to quietly monitor the birthing process.

- The mother cat seems to be straining or having strong contractions for a period of 1 hour without delivering a kitten. If this occurs call our organization.
- There is unusual discharge from the vulva under the tail. Normal discharge is green; abnormal can be black, cloudy or foul-smelling.
- The mother is not cleaning the kittens after delivery. If this occurs, use a piece of sterile gauze and remove any fluid from the nose and mouth. Then dry the kitten using a clean towel and a gentle rubbing action.
- A kitten is not breathing. If this occurs, turn the kitten on its back and cradle it in your cupped hands with its heat at your fingertips. Raise your arms and swing the kitten downward in arc several times to force the liquid from the lungs. Then, rub him vigorously with a towel for several minutes all over his body to stimulate breathing.
- Occasionally the umbilical cord will not separate from the mother and kitten. If this occurs, take a thread and tie a knot 1/2 inch from the kitten's bell and another knot 1 inch towards mom and then cut the cord with a pair of scissors between the two knots. This will prevent bleeding if the cord tears. Don't be surprised if he cord retracts back inside the mom during a contraction. The cord and placenta will be delivered in time. Never pull on the cord to try and get it out.
- You observe any excessive bleeding (more than approximately two teaspoons) call LASCC.

Post-Delivery

After the delivery of the litter is finished, try to observe the family to make sure that the kittens are nursing and that mom is not bleeding excessively from the vagina. If things are not as they should be, call LASCC. Once the event is concluded and mom and kittens are resting comfortably, replace the soiled towels with clean fleece or cloth and let the new family rest in peace and quiet. Empty the paper out of the litter box and replace with regular kitty litter.

Handle newborns gently, but make sure to check on them at least twice a day. Are they nursing? Hanging out with mom? Crying a lot (this could be an indication that they are cold or not getting enough milk). Make sure to count each time you check on them. Sometimes a mother cat will take a kitten out of the nest and leave it somewhere else in the room. If this happens, put the kitten back and observe.



BE CAREFUL! Mother cats can be very protective of their young and become overly aggressive toward resident pets. This means watchful attention when entering or leaving the area you have set aside for mom and her babies.

Post-Natal Signs of Trouble

If all kittens and mom seem well, your only obligation to the mom and new kittens for the first week or so is watchful supervision. Mom will need kitten kibble and water at all times. Contact LASCSC immediately if you observe any of the following in the mother cat:

- Acts lethargic or as if she is in pain or continues to strain.
- Ignores her kittens
- Continues bleeding from the vulva for more than two days.
- Has painful, hard or swollen mammary glands.

Kittens should be nursing up to 3 times an hour. The mother cat should be grooming each kitten after feeding and licking their bottoms to stimulate elimination. Contact LASCSC if you observe any of the following in the kittens:

- Constant crying and failure to stay at the nipple.
- Refusal to nurse.
- Feels cold to the touch
- Withdrawing from the other kittens
- Rejected or ignored by the mother.



Socializing Your Foster Cats and Kittens

First and foremost, we ask that you treat your foster cats/kittens with the same love and care that you give to your own companion animals. Daily attention (at least one full hour a day) from you and your other family members or friends makes them more people-oriented and more adoptable. This includes petting, playing, cuddling, trimming nails and grooming.

Special Care

Semi-feral kittens are a special challenge. These kittens can be socialized but only with daily handling. Sometimes they will hiss and spit when you attempt to pick them up. Gently pick them up and hold them close to your body, giving them a sense of security. Speak softly as you pet them. These kittens need plenty of reassurance and attention. **Do NOT give them room in which they can hide from you.** They need a box or crate in which to feel secure but you must have access to them at all times. They will not become socialized unless they are handled many times each day. They need to become accustomed to the sights and sound of people and a working home. This should be done gradually but consistently.

By spending time with your foster cats on a regular basis, you will not only increase their chances of being adopted quickly, but you will also be able to determine their likes and dislikes - this helps us place them in homes with families that best meet their needs.

You should also monitor your foster cats for behavior problems, such as inappropriate urination or scratching furniture. If problems arise, contact LASCC to discuss behavior modification strategies. LASCC is not responsible for damages that might occur to yourself, others in your household, or your personal property as a result of problems while in foster care. If you have "cat-friendly" dogs in your household, please consult with LASCC about proper introductions with your foster cats/kittens. Felines who have been raised with dogs, and adult cats who enjoy (or at least tolerate) the company of canines, often have an advantage on adoption days.

Be careful! Children love to play with kittens, but they may not understand how to properly handle them. Please keep in mind that **children should not handle kittens under three weeks of age and you must not allow unsupervised handling of any kitten by children under the age of 10.**

Feeding and Growth

Kittens with Mom:

The recommended diet for pregnant or nursing cats and their kittens is a premium diet of canned and dry kitten food. Kittens generally start showing interest in "real" food around 4 or 5 weeks of age. Canned food should be fed 3-4 times a day in small amounts (about 1 tablespoon per kitten). Dry food should be left out all day for them.

Kittens without Mom:

Newborn to four weeks (un-weaned kittens) are brought to LASCSC without their mother. As a foster parent you will have the double responsibility of bottle-feeding and socializing.

Material needed:

- Cotton balls or cut up wash clothes
- Heating pad or sock with rice (heated 2 minutes in microwave)
- Kitten bottle, kitten formula and 3 ml syringe
- Thermometer

Use a pet nurser, or kitten bottle to feed the kittens. The hole in the bottle nipple should leak milk slowly from the bottle without pressure. The best way to create this hole is by heating a needle and then poking it through the nipple in a turning motion. Be careful not to burn your fingers when heating the needle.

Never feed a chilled kitten. Make sure it is warm prior to feeding. Body temperature should not be lower than 98 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure formula is just warm, not hot or cold (98 - 100 degrees Fahrenheit). The weight and age of the kittens will dictate how much to give at each feeding time. Two-Three ccs per feeding with gradual increase as they age.



Dietary Habits with Growth

*At **4 weeks**: you can start introducing canned food (they usually start showing interest in what Mom is eating). Mixing a little warm water with the canned food and placing it in a container with low sides (plate, cake pan, etc.) will usually do the trick. Expect them to walk through it too. No one ever said kittens were neat. After a few attempts, they will get the idea. Feed them their last meal just before bedtime. They usually eat and then go straight to sleep. You can warm the food in the microwave for about 6 seconds. Make sure to stir the food and test it with your finger. Do not give hot food to kittens.

*At **5-6 weeks**: four small (approximately a level tablespoon) meals or canned food per day per kitten. Always leave plenty of dry food out for them to eat during the day.

*At **6-8 weeks old**: three meals a day (about one eighth of a can) per kitten, and free feed dry food. Always keep dry kibble out at all times for the kittens to eat.

Overfeeding can cause digestive problems. Frequent small meals are preferred to large meals.

All cats and kittens need fresh water at all times.



Supplies

LASCC wants you to know how much we appreciate you and we want you to feel supported. To that end, we loan you some supplies with each foster group to use during your fostering experience and we want to be sure you have the following information to answer frequently asked questions.



The Kitten Bag

This holds all your supplies and is a good place to keep your medical records so everything is together. A laminated card on the outside tells gives LASCC's phone number, which will usually get you a person during normal shelter hours

You should find these supplies inside:

*Baby shampoo

*Washcloths

*Syringes

*Thermometer

*Paper collars

*Baby bottles

*Formula

*Cotton balls

The following sections will provide more information on each of these supplies including their intended use and when to use each item.

Baby Shampoo and Washcloths

If you have to bathe your kitten, be aware that water temperature is really important! A cat's normal body temperature is between 100-102.6 degrees F, so the water needs to be pretty warm, like your bath water. Try not to do full immersion baths unless you have to. If you can get away with just a bottom or a face or a leg, do that. Imitating as best you can the firm licking motion of a mom cat's tongue will help the kitten feel more comfortable about the whole thing. Remember a little shampoo goes a long way! A general rule of thumb is once you have rinsed them off really well, rinse once more. Make sure they have a place to dry off that is toasty warm and not drafty. Keep them there until they are completely dry.

Thermometer and Rubbing alcohol

****Quick tips on temperature taking:**

Thoroughly clean the end of the thermometer off with alcohol. Scruff the kitten or have a friend hold the kitten for you. To scruff a cat you will firmly grasp the loose skin high up on the neck. Support the hind end while the thermometer is in. Insert the thermometer 1 inch into the kitten's rectum: for big kittens, 1-1/4 inches. Yes, it does have to be in that far if you want to get an accurate reading. Keep the thermometer in until it starts beeping, then remove and clean with alcohol. A normal kitten temp is generally between 100-102.6 degrees F.

Use distraction - kittens will almost always struggle while their temperature is taken.

-Use a sock to cover their head and front legs.

-Bob their heads

-Blow on their heads or faces

-Tap on a glass or metal object

Syringes

There should be two 1 ml syringes and one 3 ml syringe in your kitten bag. These are for mixing and administering medications if needed and for syringe feeding if required.

Paper Collars

The collars need to be put on the kittens the day they come in for surgery with their full name on them. Collars should be put on tight enough so the kittens don't get the collar stuck in their mouth, which can happen, but loose enough so the kittens can still breathe easily. If you can still fit two fingers between the collar and the kitten then it's the right fit. Also, please remember to cut off any of the excess collars as kittens will chew on them.

Medical Records

When you pick up your kittens, you should also receive copies of their medical records. These records give you an approximate date of birth, weight at time of intake, what medical services have been done, and what things your mom cat and kittens still need to have done, such as **vaccines, deworming, etc., and when these things are due**. We need your help to make sure these things get done on time and that the records get updated.

LASCC does its best to track this, but there are usually several animals in foster care at any given time during kitten season. Stuff happens. Things get missed. **It is YOUR responsibility as a foster parent to help us make sure that your foster cat and kittens are vaccinated and de-wormed when they are due.** LASCC will be the one administering vaccines and de-wormer. Please call and set up a time to come in and have these services performed.

Kittens and Vaccinations

When a kitten is born and first nurses on the mother, the kitten gets a dose of colostrum from the mother. This colostrum is filled with good immune cells, also known as Maternity Derived Antibodies (MDA), to protect from common feline illnesses. MDA will interfere with the kitten's ability to make their own protective immune cells. This dose of colostrum starts to disappear from the body of the kitten between 4-8 weeks of age, but can last in the kitten up to 16 weeks, and we cannot predict the exact timing in the loss of the protection they receive from the MDA.

The idea of using a Modified Live vaccine is to stimulate the kitten's own immune system into making more protective immune cells, as the MDA disappears. By giving the dose of vaccine every 2-4 weeks, we are able to minimize that "window of susceptibility", which is the time when the MDA disappears and when the kitten is able to make their own immune cells to fight infectious disease. When we vaccinate kitten at 6 weeks of age that did not get any colostrum, the vaccine may be effective immediately. Kittens that received a large dose of colostrum, or MDA, may not be able to have a response to the vaccine until they are 16 weeks old. The best strategy then is to give the dose of vaccine every 2-3 weeks until the kitten is 16 weeks old.

Vaccine Reactions

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to:

- Limping
- Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for 1-2 days
- Lethargy
- Pain at the sight of injection
- Unwillingness to play
- Low-grade fever

If any of these symptoms do not improve by 48 hours after the injection, please contact LASCC.

Kitten Development and Vaccine Schedule

The following is some general information about what to expect at each stage of development. Remember that these are averages. Please weigh your kittens regularly to keep an eye on development. Daily is best for the first 3 weeks or at any time if the kittens get sick, otherwise every 2-3 days is fine.

Newborn- completely dependent on mother. Eyelids closed, ears folded forward - cannot see, or hear. Sense of smell is the first to develop completely and is the most developed sense of birth.

2-3 days- umbilical cord falls off the kitten

One week- eyes begin to open - all kittens have blue eyes. Kittens huddle together for security and warmth.

10 days- ears unfold, hearing will develop. Can move along with belly on the ground, "paddling" limbs for movement.

Two weeks- beginning to play with littermates, learning how to socialize. Can stand and balance, but cannot walk easily. Teething begins. Eyes are fully open.

16-18 days- incisors (tiny front teeth) break through

20-24 days- canine teeth break through

Three weeks- mobile and eager to explore, making mock-aggressive rushes and stalking littermates. Cannot retract claws. Weigh the kittens regularly to keep an eye on development. Should be played with and handled at least 1 hour every day for good socialization

24-28 days- molars begin to break through

Four weeks- introduce solid food in 4 small meals per day. Begin litter box training. Will begin wrestling with littermates. Will receive first deworming (Strongid). LASC will administer dewormer

Five weeks- learning to hunt by pouncing on toys and each other

Six weeks- adult eye color begins to appear. **First vaccination for kittens.** Kittens are vaccinated against common agents that cause upper respiratory infection and feline distemper (FVRCP). Receive second deworming.

Eight weeks and older- mom and kittens need to be brought to the shelter for their scheduled medical services. The exam will include: FeLV and FIV testing (if not previously done), deworming if needed, spay or neuter (if weight is at least 2 pounds and kitten is healthy), microchip, treatment for fleas and possibly another vaccine. It is expected that you will notify the Foster Coordinator as soon as your kittens weigh 2 pounds so they can be scheduled for surgery as quickly as possible.

Vaccines and Worming Treatments

Vaccines:

FVRCP is the vaccine for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calici Virus and Panleukopenia (URI and Distemper)

FVRCP is given at 6 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake

2nd FVRCP is given at 14 days after the first FVRCP.

3rd FVRCP is given 14 days after the second FVRCP

4th FVRCP is given 14 days after the third FVRCP

FeLV is the vaccine for the Feline Leukemia

FeLV is given at 9 weeks of age or with the next FVRCP. It is never given alone but is always combined with the FVRCP

2nd FeLV is given with the next FVRCP 14 days after the first FeLV

Worming:

Strongid is for Roundworms and Hookworms. You might see Roundworms and they will look like spaghetti.

Strongid is given at 4 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake

2nd dose of Strongid is given 14 days after the first dose. This series is repeated every 2 weeks until the kittens have returned for adoption.

Droncit is for Tape Worms. You will see rice-looking segments in their stools.

Droncit is given at surgery time if needed (noted by the foster parent). Tapeworms usually do not cause significant problems and may be treated at time of altering.

Health Concerns

The following is a list of common medical issues you may encounter as a foster parent with your mother cat and/or kittens. This information is not meant to be extensive and simply just to give you an idea of what common ailments may look like and how they might be resolved. This is not a substitute for the expert advice of a trained medical professional.

If your foster kitten displays any of these symptoms, call LASCC:

- Sneezing and/or congestion with green or yellow discharge from the nose and/or eyes
- Coughing, wheezing or heavy breathing

- Diarrhea or vomiting- this can be life threatening to kittens
- Straining to urinate or defecate - this can be life threatening, especially for male cats
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Lethargy
- Paralysis
- Extreme change in attitude or behavior
- Not eating or drinking regularly
- Temperature too low (below 98 degrees F) or too high (104 degrees F)

****Please have specifics ready to give when contacting the shelter. You will also need to take your kitten's temperature before you call.**



Common Ailments

Upper Respiratory Infection

An occasional sneeze is expected. Lots of sneezing, yellow or green nasal discharge, and congestion is cause for concern. Please contact LASCC if you suspect your kitten(s) of having an Upper Respiratory Infection.

Creating a steamy environment with a humidifier or running the shower can also be beneficial to URI kittens. Nothing should ever be added to the water like Vic's Vapor Rub or similar products.

A product called "Little Noses" can also be used on URI kittens. Dosing is different depending on whether the product does or does not contain decongestant. For Little Noses with decongestant, one drop can be applied to a single nostril twice a day for three days. Rotate nostrils so they do not get irritated. Little Noses without decongestant (saline-only solution) can be used as long as needed and can be used in both nostrils up to three times a day.

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is characterized by swelling and/or yellow or green discharge around the eyes. An eye ointment or drops are typically prescribed to treat the infection. **DO NOT ADMINISTER WITHOUT BEING ADVISED TO DO SO.** To administer the ointment hold the kitten's eye open and squeeze the ointment into the eye moving across the eye without touching the top of the tube to the eye. To administer drops hold the kitten's eye open and let them let the drop fall into the inside corner of the eye near the tear duct. Open and close the eye a few times to get ointment or drops worked in well.

To clean the kitten's eyes, use a cotton ball or gauze that is clean with warm water. If the eye is sealed shut you will need to use the warm cotton ball as a compress and let it sit there for a few minutes. This will soften the crusted material around the eye. Once it is soft and pliable you can wipe it from the eye. Start at the area closest to the nose and wipe outward. Don't force the material off of the eye. You may need to continue to let the cotton ball set on the eyelid to soften the material longer. Once everything has been cleaned around the eye you can administer eye medications. It will be helpful to the kitten if you can gently wipe the eye clean multiple times a day. If you do not have a cotton ball or gauze square you can use a soft washcloth. Make sure that you use a clean washcloth each time. **NEVER** share between kittens either. You should always wash your hands in between kittens as well.

Vomiting

Vomiting can be very dangerous for kittens because they dehydrate so quickly. Vomiting is not as common as diarrhea, so it's especially troubling, especially if they kitten is vomiting repeatedly. Call LASCC if this occurs.

Dehydration

Dehydration can kill a small kitten quickly. With smaller kittens you can test their dehydration level by feeling the gums. If they are sticky instead of slippery, the kitten is dehydrated. Also look at the color of the gums. If it is white with no color, please report this when you call.

Diarrhea

A few things to keep in mind when examining your kitten's poop:

- A little bit of bright red blood on a poop is ok. So is a little bit of bright red blood on a kitten's bottom. It's usually a reaction to something that they ate, new food, stress, new location, etc.

- A lot of blood is not ok

Diarrhea is probably the most common problem with kittens. Runny poop seems to be a kitten's preferred response to almost all stress or illness. It can be dangerous for kittens because the water lost in the stool tends to dehydrate them rapidly.

Diarrhea Protocol

Drop off a fecal sample to the shelter veterinarian. You do not need to call ahead but be advised that results may not be available until later in the day. The veterinarian staff will call you if any parasites are found. If it will be impossible for you to return for necessary medication in the next few days then we will need to arrange a plan of action.

The veterinarian staff will call you with the results of the fecal test and will discuss the next step and dispense appropriate medications if necessary.

If there are no parasites found and still no improvement in 3 days then:

Call our organization to discuss further treatment or whether an appointment should be scheduled for the kitten(s).

If kittens are eating well and gaining weight, the diarrhea may not need treatment and may be something the kittens just need to outgrow. Please note that if the kittens are vomiting, refusing to eat for more than 24 hours or acting lethargic you should immediately alert LASCC.

We hope that this protocol will make things simple and less frustrating for the foster parents, as well as allowing the medical staff to treat kittens as efficiently as possible.

General and Emergency Veterinary Care

LASCC is responsible for all approved medical expenses for cats and kittens in the shelter's foster program. General medical care for LASCC foster cats is provided at the discretion of the veterinarian and veterinary technician at LASCC.

Once a foster cat or kitten is in your care, you are responsible for transporting him or her to the shelter veterinarian for necessary medical care. Always use a secure carrier, designated specially for companion animals, when transporting cats/kittens.

Foster parents must not medicate or shave any cats in their care without prior approval.

If the on-site veterinarian is not available then you may be able to seek emergency care. Emergency care must be approved **PRIOR** to the vet visit. Call your organization for guidance and approval. Otherwise, LASCC will not reimburse the veterinary expenses. On approval, you will be directed to one of our local emergency clinics. If this scenario should occur the foster is responsible for obtaining medical records from the emergency visit.

Adoption Procedures for Cats/Kittens in Foster Care

Kittens are available for adoption after 8 weeks of age as long as they are 2 pounds, healthy and spayed/neutered.

The Adoption Coordinator will approve adoptions. Foster parents may inquire with the coordinator as to how their former foster cat(s)/kitten(s) are doing in their new homes; however, they are not allowed to contact adopters directly.

Foster parents who wish to adopt their foster cats are required to pay the adoption fee and go through the adoption process.

Pre-adoption kittens: Kittens must all be AT LEAST 6 WEEKS old before they can be viewed by potential adopters and be placed on Petfinder. Adopters must visit the shelter to complete the adoption paperwork and pay the adoption fee. A kitten is not considered adopted until the paperwork is complete and the fee has been paid. This is a first-come, first-serve basis. If two potential adopters view a kitten the same day, the applications are processed in the order in which they are received.

ALL CATS/KITTENS MUST BE SPAYED OR NEUTERED BEFORE THEY GO HOME! NO EXCEPTIONS!!!!

LASCC Adoption Fees: \$25/felines

All adoptions include:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| *Brief exam | *De-worming | *flea preventative |
| *Spay/neuter | *FeLV & FIV testing | |
| *Microchipping | *FeLV vaccination | |
| *FVCRP vaccination | *Rabies vaccination | |

A "FREE" Kitty is NEVER Free!!!!

Petfinder

Petfinder is an online gallery of pets that are available for adoption. Users can search by location, age of pet, breed, etc. It's handy tool for adopters and it is estimated that 1 out of 3 visitors have already browsed Petfinder before visiting the shelter or off-site locations. LASCC's Petfinder list pulls into LASCC's website adoption page.

Kittens posted on Petfinder have the highest rate of pre-adoption simply because adopters are able to view them prior to their arrival at the shelter. Why is this important? If a kitten can be adopted directly from your home or on the day of their spay/neuter surgery, the time spent in close contact with other kittens is greatly diminished. Less contact equals less exposure to germs equals fewer kitty colds (URI).

How do you get your foster kittens posted on **Petfinder**?

Send us all pertinent information and pictures.

Pictures are not posted until kittens are 6 weeks old.

Pictures need to be clear and of each single kitten.

We recommend at least one head/face shot and one body shot.

Petfinder Info

Full Name: Cally and Animal ID #

Bio: Tell us about your kitten. What does he like or not like? Is he dog friendly? Kid friendly? Other cats friendly? Highlight the best and most unique aspects of your kitten's personality.

Photos: photos can be emailed to the shelter @ LASCC@lafayettega.gov for posting

We cannot post kittens without ALL of the information above.



Face shot



Body shot



Sibling shot

What kind of pictures?

Digital only in JPG formats. Pictures should be less than 250KB. Try to crop just around the cat itself. If you are unable to provide us with pictures we may be able to help. Our volunteer photographer will be at the shelter on certain days and may be able to assist in getting those photos taken. Foster parents are responsible for getting their cat/kittens to the shelter and waiting for them to be completed.

Bringing Them in for Surgery

*Make your spay/neuter appointment by calling the Foster Coordinator. Please allow 1 week advance notice during the heaviest part of kitten season. When scheduling the appointment, use the kitten's full name (Cally and ID#). If you need to cancel an appointment, please email the Foster Coordinator with as much notice as possible.

*Put collars on your mom and/or kittens at home. This will help us if we have 2 of the same kittens in our care. If you do not have collars with you, then you will need to put them on once you reach the shelter.

*Pick up food plate first thing in the morning preferably by 6am for kittens. Adult cats' (food plate should be picked up by 9pm the night before. Do not feed breakfast. Water is fine for kittens and so is nursing. The anesthesia can make them sick and we don't want the kittens to vomit. They can choke on their own vomit and this can be life-threatening.

Cleaning Between Your Foster Groups

The joy of letting go of one foster group is knowing that they will be going to loving homes while you are able to take another that may not otherwise be able to find shelter to grow in such a loving environment. Please consider the following guidelines when transitioning between groups.

Once all of your kittens are gone it is time to clean and prepare your kitten room for your next foster group. You will need to remove all bedding and wash it in hot water with bleach added. Follow your machines guidelines for adding bleach to the wash load.

You will also need to clean the litter box. Empty all of the contents and wash with hot soapy water. Rinse well and then fill with hot water, add one cup of bleach and let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Rinse and dry well.

For food and water dishes you can run them through the dishwasher and they will be cleaned for your next group.

If you have carpeted floors you will need to vacuum well and spot clean any areas that need it. If you have a carpet cleaner you should use it between groups. If you do not have carpet, sweep and mop the floor. Once the floor is dry mop again with a bleach water solution and let it sit for ten minutes. Afterwards you will want to rinse with clear water and then let it dry.



It is also preferable for you to wipe down all surfaces with a bleach water solution or Clorox Cleanup. You should also wipe the walls down. You do not have to do all of the wall but at least the bottom 3 feet.

If you have a bed in the room, change the covering on it. If you have a chair or couch in the room you will need to vacuum it and spot clean if needed. Ideally your foster room will be void of anything covered in material like a chair or couch unless it is covered with a plastic sheet designed to protect them.

Foster Program FAQ's

How do I become a foster parent?

Contact LASCC by email: LASCC@lafayettega.gov. We will send you all the forms and information you need.

What is required of me as a foster parent?

Providing a safe, "kitten-proofed" room in your home that contains the kittens' necessities; food, water, bedding, litter box, toys, etc. You are responsible for ensuring that your kitten receives any scheduled medical treatments on time, is healthy, and well socialized.

What are the requirements for a foster room?

The foster room needs to be a designated place for your foster kittens to spend the bulk of their time. LASCC recommends a spare bedroom, den, office, or a large bathroom. This room will need to be "kitten-proofed" and have plenty of space for a litter box, food and water dishes, as well as sleep and play areas.

What supplies do I need to provide?

LASCC will provide you with a kitten bag full of basic supplies including the first container of milk replacement for bottle feeding. Foster parents generally supply litter box and litter, food dishes, food, toys, scratching equipment, bedding and other small incidentals.

How do I get a group of foster kittens?

After you have completed your foster training manual and a foster group becomes available your Foster Coordinator will contact you to arrange pickup.

How much do I need to supervise my foster group?

You need to do welfare checks on your foster group three times a day. This is to make sure everyone is healthy, eating, and using the litter box. You need to spend about 1-2 hours per day interacting with your foster group so that they become well socialized.

Can my foster kittens and mom cat interact with my resident pets?

Foster groups in which the kittens have been vaccinated need to be kept separate from resident animals for two weeks. Kittens who have not been vaccinated may not meet any resident pets until 10 days after their first vaccines. If your foster kittens or resident animal are sick they may not interact. If your kittens were too small to be tested for FIV/FelV they should not interact with your resident cat. All interactions must be directly supervised.

Can my children interact with the foster kittens?

We encourage your children to have supervised interaction with foster kittens. Children should not be permitted to handle newborn kittens. Caution and direct supervision is a must!!!!

Do we bottle feed kittens?

LASCC does not intentionally take in young kittens who will need to be bottle fed. However, the situation does arise where kittens need to be bottle fed. If this is the case we will train our foster parents to bottle feed, or place the kittens with a foster parent who is experienced at bottle feeding kittens.

How will people know that I have kittens?

When kittens turn 6 weeks old and have had their surgery and vetting required for adoption, they will be put on our website and Petfinder for public viewing.

Do I have to have people come to my home?

Having prospective adopters to your home is not something we require. Your kittens can be met by potential adopters at the shelter or through our off-site adoption events. The foster parent is responsible for getting their foster to those designated places at a prearranged time.

What is the next step for potential adopters once they meet my foster kittens?

The potential adopters will need to complete an Adoption Application and speak with an Adoption Coordinator.

Do I need to give my own vaccines?

No, LASCC will administer all vaccines. You will need to schedule an appointment to bring them in and have a trained shelter associate administer the appropriate vaccines.

If my foster kittens get sick do I take them to my own vet?

Veterinary care will be provided through LASCC. Foster parents are NOT permitted to seek veterinary care from outside clinics. Any visits to outside veterinarians that are not pre-approved will be the financial responsibility of the foster parent.

What do I do if my own cats get sick?

Your kittens should be kept separately from your resident cats. However, we do recognize that cross contamination can happen. If your own cats get sick it is your responsibility to seek veterinary treatment. Remember there is always an inherent risk of disease when you bring new animals into your home. This is why we require that all animals in the home are current on vaccinations.

Do my resident pets have to be altered before I foster kittens?

**Yes. LASCC can help you set up an appointment with our Low Cost Spay/Neuter program to have this done.

We hope this has answered any of the questions you may have if not please contact us for more information.

From our staff and our four legged furry friends,
WE THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!