

Humane Society of Bay County Foster Manual



Table of Contents

Welcome.....	3
Do You Have Time?	3
Do you have adequate space?.....	3
Emotional considerations	4
How do foster animals find permanent adoptive homes?	4
Housing Your Foster Animal	4
Basic Supplies You Will Need for Fostering:	5
Kitten Proofing Your Home.....	5
Protecting Our Animals: Health Considerations.....	6
Cats:.....	6
Protecting Your Resident Pets	6
Diseases that are transmissible from animal to animal.....	7
Diseases that may be transmitted from animals to humans:	8
Information to Keep You Healthy	9
What Should I do if my Foster Animal Becomes Sick?.....	9
Emergency Situations May Include:.....	9
Questions?.....	10
Contacts:.....	10
CATS & KITTENS (over 8 weeks).....	11
BEHAVIORAL ISSUES	11
Cleaning Procedures	12
Safety.....	13
NEWBORN KITTENS (under 8 weeks)	13
NEEDED SUPPLIES	13
THE FIRST 8 WEEKS OF LIFE.....	14
ORPHANED KITTENS.....	15
Kitten Feeding.....	16
Week of life Amount to feed.....	16
Fading Kitten Syndrome	16
Finally...a word of caution.	16
Kitten Socialization	17
Weaning.....	17
Litter Box Training	17
What You Need: Getting Started.....	18
Transport Carriers, Crates, or Cages	18
Confinement Area.....	18
Food.....	18

Food and Water Dishes 18

Cat Litter Boxes and Cat Litter 18

Toys and Other Playthings 18

Additional Care Suggestions: 19

 Cleanliness..... 19

Socialization..... 19

Ready For a Forever Home..... 20

The Foster Care Provider Agreement..... 22



Welcome

If you have never cared for a foster animal before, you are about to experience the joys of being a pet owner without the lifetime responsibility. The following guidelines will help you with the care of your foster animal(s) and to understand the policies and procedures of the Humane Society of Bay County (HSBC).

The HSBC's Foster Care Program allows animals that are too young for adoption, are recovering from surgery or illness, or are in need of other special care to stay in private homes until they are ready for adoption.

Volunteer foster homes provide a safe place for foster animals to stay, nutritious food, socialization and health care to their animal guests. Fosters are in a unique position to help abused and neglected animals how to learn to love and trust again. By teaching or re-teaching an animal how to live in a home setting, foster homes help increase the odds for a smooth transition into a permanent adoptive home. This important program allows us to save the lives of animals that might otherwise have to be euthanized. Before taking on the responsibility and commitment of being a foster care volunteer, please take the following into consideration:

Do You Have Time?

The time commitment for foster care can range from a few days to a few months depending on the animals need for foster care. Common foster situations and durations are as follows;

Kittens under 8 weeks of age that are very susceptible to disease in If not placed in a safe foster homes until old enough to be adopted. Care can be a month or months depending on the kitten's age.

Newborn kittens with or without their mother need quiet foster homes until the puppies/kittens are old enough to be placed for adoption. The foster period could last as much as 8 weeks with newborns and require bottle feeding.

Adult cats old enough to be placed that had been sick or injured, needs a quiet, healthy environment to recover. Foster period could be as short as a week or two or as long several months depending on the illness or injury.

Foster parents for special needs animals may require a significant time commitment and experience with caring and medicating sick animals.

Adults old enough to be placed but has a minor behavioral issue or is unsocialized that needs a socialization and behavioral rehabilitation for a successful adoption.

In addition to time spent caring for and socializing your foster animal(s) in your home, you must consider the possibility of additional time for vet checks and/or emergency care and transporting to and from the appointments.

The need for foster homes varies according to the season of the year, the number of animals currently being fostered, and the number of foster homes available.

Do you have adequate space?

We ask that you only take the number of animals that you can house comfortably, keep adequately clean and fed, and provide adequate socialization for. Always keep you're the needs of your personal pets in mind when you consider fostering. Your pets need to be fully vaccinated before you begin fostering.

Emotional considerations

Caring for puppies, kittens, and animals requiring medical attention and socialization is fun, but it is also a lot of work. You will also develop an emotional attachment to your fosters, and face the reality that despite your best efforts, not all foster animals will thrive. While we will do as much as possible to assure that foster animals are placed, we cannot guarantee the time frame that each and every animal will find a permanent home.

We do everything in our power to treat illnesses or other health problems that may befall foster animals, but you must be prepared that some illnesses, health problems, or injuries may not be treatable because they are life-threatening, cost prohibitive, or not in the best interest of the animal in the long run. The possibility of death or euthanasia of one or more of your fosters, though remote, is a reality that must be considered.

How do foster animals find permanent adoptive homes?

HSBC takes full responsibility for finding permanent adoptive homes for foster animals. Foster volunteers are encouraged to let people know that their foster animals are available for adoption, but if a foster volunteer finds any person interested in an adoptive home for their foster, please contact one of the Foster Members. We will ask for a completed adoption application and meet with them for potential permanent placement. We believe that the foster volunteers will screen potential adopters and use good judgment when placing their foster animals into a permanent home.

Housing Your Foster Animal

Considering where to house your foster animals is a key factor in the overall success of your foster experience. This section will provide some guidelines for housing your foster animals and proper cleaning and disinfecting the areas you choose to keep them in. Remember fostering is meant to be a fun, fulfilling experience, so please keep in mind that your home life can be greatly enhanced or disrupted based on how you implement our suggestions.

Our foster members can also offer suggestions to assist you in setting up the most appropriate environment for the animals in your care and for your lifestyle. Please feel free to consult with them about housing questions, issues, or ideas you have.

The following guidelines are just a suggestion:

- We recommend an area that is separate from your household pets
- A spare bedroom, bathroom, or utility room can be ideal if uncluttered and kitten proof.
- Garages and screened in porches can also transform into a wonderfully, efficient foster areas in good weather and the foster animals are safe and secure.
- Cat/kitten foster volunteers should consider noise/activity levels in the area when fostering felines as they are less stressed in a quiet environment.

Think smart, safe, and creatively when considering where to house your foster animals.

Wherever you decide to house your fosters, you must keep in mind that the area must be easy to clean and disinfect. Flooring is a major consideration in your ability to properly disinfect the area where you foster an animals. Good flooring options are;

- Cement
- Linoleum
- Sealed wood
- Tile

Basic Supplies You Will Need for Fostering:

Cat and Kitten Supplies

Newspaper
 Bleach
 Litter
 Litterboxes & Scoops
 Cat Condo
 Water and Food Bowls
 Toys
 Towels
 Nutritious Food
 Formula and
 Formula and bottles

Kitten Proofing Your Home

- Kittens and Cats are by their nature VERY curious about their surroundings, so you will need to make sure there are no hidden escape routes that can lead outdoors for your indoor only kitty. If you have young children, or any concerns about the cat getting out, you can make and post small signs at each doorway
- Keeping your toilet bowl closed after use is a must for small kittens.
- Move glass or breakable treasures inside a closed cabinet, or use special anchoring clay to keep them secured from being knocked over by an inquisitive paw.
- Always keep your washing machine and dryer doors closed, and check carefully before and after use to make sure your kitty hasn't somehow gotten inside.
- Kittens seem to love to explore under the refrigerator- make sure they cannot get under there by placing barriers around the bottom.
- Be careful that all cat toys are safe – make sure that sharp objects like pins, safety pins, pieces of glass, string or yarn , etc. are put away. These can be fatal to a cat or kitten if swallowed.
- Twist ties can perforate the bowels if swallowed.
- Aluminum foil balls are fun for the cats to play with. Make sure they are large enough and tight enough for the kitty not to swallow any of the foil.
- Other types of hazards are anything with a loop on them, like plastic bags, litter box liners, etc. Kittens and cats can get them around their neck and twisted up in them and choke or suffocate.

Protecting Our Animals: Health Considerations

Some of our foster cats may have spent at least a small amount of time in a shelter, therefore it is very difficult to ensure that they will be healthy. Many of our animals are strays from a rural environment with no vaccination of previous history available. A cat that appears healthy initially could easily begin to show signs of illness several days later, even after having been vaccinated. For this reason, it is very important that foster homes keep their own cats up to date on vaccinations. Cats are relatively easy to keep separate so we encourage foster home to isolate foster cats in a separate room or large kennel for a period of at least one week, preferable two following the rescue. Most illnesses should be apparent within the two week time frame. We also suggest that foster homes provide foster cats with separate food bowls, water bowls, and litter boxes for the duration of their stay.

Prior to being placed into foster care, all animals old enough will be vaccinated, wormed, and given flea/tick treatment as necessary.

Cats:

- If older than 6 weeks of age and less than 6 months of age, kittens will receive 2 (FVRCP) vaccinations. They will be revaccinated every 3 weeks until they have received two vaccinations.
- If older than 6 months they will receive one vaccination.
- If older than 4 weeks of age, they will be wormed with Nemex.
- If under the age of 6 months, kittens will be wormed every two weeks until they have received 3 treatments.
- Cats and Kittens will be treated for fleas as necessary.
- If over the age of three months, they will be tested for FIV/FeLV

When you pick up your foster animal(s), you will receive instructions on the care of the animal while in your foster home. If it includes dates for follow up care and/or vaccinations, the foster volunteer will agree to transport the animals to the shelter for the care. Please call if you are unable to keep vet appointments, we will provide other arrangements. We have contracts with Veterinarians who care for our animals (listed under contacts), please use one of these vets. Do not use your personal vet.

Protecting Your Resident Pets

When bringing in any new animal, including foster animal(s), into your home, please keep in mind that they may be carrying an illness that could affect your pet's health. We ask that you separate foster animals from your own pets for at least one week. The only way to avoid possible exposure of your pets is to keep them separate from your pets for the entire foster period. We highly recommend that your pets be current on all routine vaccinations.

When fostering kittens, keep in mind they may too young (under 6 months of age) to be tested for FIV/FeLV during the foster period. This means that even when no physical symptoms are present, your pet could be exposed to this virus therefore it is extremely important that your pets are fully vaccinated.

If your foster animal seems healthy and you do choose to introduce them to your resident pets, it is a good idea to prohibit sharing of food and water bowls, litterboxes, and toys. Any introduction should be made with great care and under constant supervision, especially if you are planning to introduce a protective mother cat or dog to your resident pets.

After handling foster animals, it is always a good idea to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling your pet. This will further reduce the likelihood of exposing your pet to illness.

Diseases that are transmissible from animal to animal.

_ Distemper/Upper Respiratory Virus (Cats and Dogs) - These are the basic yearly vaccinations that your pet(s) should be kept current on at all times both for their protection and the protection of the foster.

_ Feline Leukemia (Cats) - Your resident cat(s) must test negative and be kept current on Feline Leukemia vaccinations at all times. Foster cats and kittens over 4 months of age, will be tested and found negative before being sent into the foster home. Feline leukemia is transmitted between cats via fluids. This normally occurs through licking and shared litterboxes.

_ FIV “Feline Aids” (Cats) - To prevent infection of your resident cat(s) and foster animals, your resident cat(s) and foster cats or kittens must also be tested and determined to be free of this disease. The test is given in conjunction with the feline leukemia test. Be aware that there is currently no vaccination against FIV in cats. FIV is normally transmitted by deep bite wounds.

The following are infestations that there is vaccination to prevent, so identifying them and understanding how they are transmitted is important to avoiding the problem.

_ Roundworms -

Round worms are big worms. Typically they are white, about the diameter of a spaghetti strand and about 4 inches in length. They are particularly common in puppies and may produce no symptoms other than diarrhea. However, it is also common for the worms to be visible in the feces or vomited or coughed up. The puppy’s abdomen can be rounded and “fat.” Cats and dogs can be born with roundworms, get them from their mother’s milk, or through the feces of an infected animal. This commonly occurs through shared water and food bowls, bedding material, or even in the yard.

_ Tapeworms - This worm look like rice when they are dead or a short piece of spaghetti noodle when alive. Tapeworms are not as common in puppies as in adult animals. They can be seen in the stool or around the pet’s rear end. Another sign may be diarrhea streaked with mucous. Animals most commonly get this worm from fleas or specifically from eating the flea or intestines of other animals (mouse, rat, bird, etc.) that has fleas.

_ Hookworms - This worm is generally invisible to the unaided human eye. They are about ½ inch long and very, very thin. Kittens or puppies may be born with hookworms, get them while nursing, or ingest a Hookworm larva found in the environment (like on a blade of grass, water or food bowl, or toy). Signs of Hookworms vary, but may include non-specific diarrhea; diarrhea that is tarry looking or bloody, vomiting, poor or no appetite, pale mucous membranes, weakness, and poor growth.

_ Ringworm - Ringworm is a skin infection caused by a fungus, not an actual worm. It is transmitted in a variety of ways, although physical contact with an

infected animal is most common. Dry scaly spots will appear after one to two weeks, and are usually confined to the hairier regions of the scalp, forearms, and face. Hair breaks off at the roots causing a bald spot.

Sarcoptic Mange – The parasite that causes mange is transmitted through physical contact. This animal-to-human form is less serious than the human-to-human form and is usually self-limiting. Infected animals suffer blisters, scabs, and hair loss. Physical contact with the animal, bedding should be avoided.

There are two types of mange, sarcoptic and demodex. Demodex is not transmitted to other animals or humans and most commonly erupts during periods of stress.

Diseases that may be transmitted from animals to humans:

Roundworms – Children are particularly susceptible to roundworms because they often play in the dirt and sand where larvae reside. Once ingested, the roundworms will migrate to the heart, lungs, liver, brain, and eyes, causing severe damage. To prevent infection, avoid public areas where animals might defecate (such as parks) and wash hands often.

Tapeworms – While generally people don't get tapeworms from animals, on very rare occasions, children have been infected with tapeworms by swallowing a flea accidentally and it generally causes tremendous cramping and discomfort.

Giardia – This intestinal disease occurs throughout the world and is common in cats and dogs. Like many zoonotic disease, Giardia is contracted through the fecal-oral route. Symptoms may include weight loss and chronic diarrhea. Giardia can be prevented through proper and thorough hand-washing.

Toxoplasmosis – Cats are the primary cause of toxoplasmosis in humans. The life cycle of this parasite is very complex, but infection usually occurs when an owner comes into contact with the cat's feces. Human symptom's includes headaches, enlarged lymph nodes, and a flu-like illness. This disease can cause serious birth defects if contracted by an expectant mother during early pregnancy. Most humans will be unaffected by its presence, however, an expectant mother can avoid exposure by simply forgoing litterbox duties while pregnant.

Ringworm – Dry scaly spots will appear after one to two weeks, and are usually confined to the hairier regions of the scalp, forearms, and face. Hair breaks off at the roots causing a bald spot. Exposure can be greatly reduced by wearing rubber gloves and thoroughly washing after handling an infected animal.

Sarcoptic Mange (Scabies) - The parasite that causes mange is transmitted through physical contact. This animal-to-human form is less serious than the human-to-human form and is usually self-limiting. Infected animals suffer blisters, scabs, and hair loss. Physical contact with the animal, bedding should be avoided.

Information to Keep You Healthy

You do not need to come into direct contact with an infected animal to contract a disease. Many zoonotic diseases are transmitted via bodily fluids on hands, shoes, clothes, tools, etc.

Make it a habit to always practice good hygiene, including washing your hands thoroughly with hot water and antibacterial soap after handling your foster animal(s).

Be aware that an animal can carry a disease without showing symptoms. Use the same precautions with a healthy looking one as you would with a sickly appearing animal.

What Should I do if my Foster Animal Becomes Sick?

There are many symptoms to indicate an animal is not feeling well. Be observant of your foster animals. Symptoms of illness may include:

- Diarrhea Vomiting
- Loss of Appetite Lethargy
- Weight Loss Runny Eyes or Nose
- Coughing Sneezing

If you have a concern during the day that your foster animal may be getting sick, contact the Foster Members, please don't wait until night time when it becomes an urgent situation.

If a foster animal begins to show symptoms of illness while in your care, please follow these procedures so that your animal receives the care it needs.

Emergency Situations May Include:

- _ Continuous Diarrhea (particularly if it is foul-smelling or liquid)
 - _ Continuous Vomiting
 - _ Active Bleeding from the nose, mouth, or in the urine or stools
 - _ Any trauma
 - _ Difficulty breathing
 - _ Young kittens – significant change in behavior, energy level, or appetite
-

Questions?

Contacts:

Foster Care Coordinator:

Cheryl McKenzie 989-893-6199 (evening)
989-777-5500 (daytime/work)

Other Foster Care Contacts:

Mario Guerrero 989-909-2099
Sherrie Felske 989-891-0538 (evening)

Vet 1

Animal Hospital
5890 N Huron, Pinconning
989-879-2223
Hours: M,T,Th,F 9-5 and Every other Sat

Vet 2

Bay Valley Animal Hospital
Westside Saginaw Rd, Bay City
989-686-0703
Hours: M,W,F 9-5 T,Th 9-7:30 Sat 9-12

Vet 3

Veterinary Health Center
305 N Center Rd, Saginaw
989-793-2490
Hours: M-F 8-6

We have accounts with all the above vets. If you can't contact any of the Foster Members, the vets will take calls and appoints for us.

CATS & KITTENS (over 8 weeks)

Many people find cats and kittens the easiest to foster. They don't require a lot of time and still give plenty of love and entertainment in return. Many foster home find that they are even comfortable fostering more than one cat at a time. Whether you are interested in fostering one cat or many cats over time, the information in this chapter will be helpful to familiarize yourself with some of the common needs, behavioral issues and health concerns that are associated with fostering cats and kittens.

NEEDED SUPPLIES

Please check over the following list of items needed to foster a cat/kitten. Check with the Humane Society to see which supplies they are able to provide.

Checklist

- Separate room or large kennel to keep foster kitty separate from personal pets for at least one week.
- Litter Box (the general rule of thumb is one for each cat plus one)
- Litter
- Food and water bowls
- Scratching post and/or toys to help keep your foster kitty busy
- Cat or kitten food (better quality = better health and less shedding)
- Cat bed, blankets, or towels to provide your foster kitty with a comfortable place to sleep.

BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

It is common for a cat to experience some behavioral problems and need a period of adjustment when placed into a new environment. The following is a list of common behavioral problems and the suggested modifications.

Problem 1: Aggression toward other cats

Solution: Prevent aggression before it occurs by introducing cats gradually. For instance, try placing the two cats on opposite sides of a door. (You may need a 2nd person for this) Let them get used to each other's smells and sounds before opening the door. You may even want to try pushing small treats under the door from one cat to another. You may also want to try feeding them on each side of the door. Rub each cat with a towel and then place that towel in the opposite cat's area to get used to the scent. You may also rub cat one cat with the towel, then rub the other cat and back to the first cat.

This makes each cat have a similar smell and seem less threatening. For cats that really seem to have more trouble adjusting you can touch the tip of your finger into a little vanilla and dab behind each cat's neck. You may also choose to allow the new cat to roam the home while the other is kenneled briefly so that they are able to familiarize themselves with the environment first and place their scent on a few things by rubbing against furniture etc.

Upon physical introduction try to make sure that they are away from an area in the home where one cat may feel territorial (i.e. a favorite sleeping or eating place, or a favorite toy). Also be sure that it is in an open area so neither cat feels trapped. Taking these extra steps in the beginning will help to ensure a smooth transition into your home.

Problem 2: Scratching furniture or carpet

Solution: Provide something appropriate for the cat to scratch. All cats scratch whether declawed or not. They have scent glands in their feet and it is a way for them to not only shed nail layers, but to also claim something as theirs. It is very difficult to teach a cat not to scratch at all, it is quite easy to redirect the cat's scratching to a designated scratching post. Cats like to do most of their scratching activity upon waking. Keep this in mind and make sure that the scratching post you provide is near where the cat naps. If the cat insists on scratching in an inappropriate place, try using a squirt bottle to deter them. For

behavior modifications to be successful, do not scold them. Just provide a quick squirt with the bottle. You want the cat to associate the squirt with scratching the inappropriate place, not you. They are after all a cat and not a dog. You can also try to place double-sided tape on the area where the cat likes to scratch. Cats don't like the sticky surfaces and will usually leave the area alone.

From personal experience cats are individuals and prefer different types of surfaces to scratch. There really is no other way to find this out than trial and error. Different types of scratching surfaces are: carpet, cardboard, rope and wood.

Problem 3: Not using the litter box

Solution: There are several common reasons why cats don't use their litter boxes. When introduced to a new environment, a cat may simply not know or remember where the litter box is located. Make sure to confine a new foster cat to a small area (like a laundry room or bathroom) for several days before allowing the cat to have more space. This will help ensure that the cat knows where to find the litter box when needed. It is also very important to keep the litter box clean. In general, cats are extremely clean animals and most will do their business elsewhere if their litter box becomes too soiled or if the litter box is too close to their food and water. If more than one cat is using the same litter box, it may be necessary to provide extra litter boxes to give each cat their own. Remember the rule of thumb: one litter box per cat plus one.

Personal experience suggestions tried and true are: Large cats may not be comfortable in even the largest covered litter boxes so a under bed storage tote may do the trick. Also not all cats are comfortable using a covered litter box so just removing the cover may help. Having the cover on sometimes makes them feel trapped. Having the box next to the furnace or washing machine may startle them and make a cat not want to use the litter box because it's associated with fear. Some cats are particular to a certain type of litter and a simple switch can divert them from the box. If these suggestions aren't helping there could be a medical reason. Have urine tested, if the pH is too high it's time to switch to a food lower in phosphorus like Science Diet Indoor or Purina One Urinary Tract Health. It could also be a urinary tract infection which also needs testing to confirm. Plugged tom cat syndrome is fairly common as well. If you notice your foster cat vocalizing when trying to use the litter box with no results it's time to seek veterinary attention. He could potentially have tiny crystals that have developed and are blocking his urethra.

Problem 4: Chewing on plants or other inappropriate items

Solution: There are a number of taste deterrents available on the market. Some are specially formulated for furniture, plants, etc. You may also try using a spray bottle. Be aware that many plants such as Easter lilies are toxic to cats when ingested. It is very important that these plants are out of the cat's reach or removed completely from the environment. You may visit the following website for a complete list: <http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/plant-list-cats.html?print=t>

NOTE: Cats do not respond to spanking and punishment. This damages their bond with us. Focus on the behavioral modification aspect and remember that cats are independent creatures so some parts of their behavior is just the norm in having a cat.

Cleaning Procedures

It is important that all items and area used by a sick foster animal be cleaned thoroughly. You can use a 10% bleach solution to reliably kill most viruses and bacteria. Items to be cleaned should be thoroughly wetted with the bleach solution and allowed to stand for several minutes before rinsing.

Foster home that have recently fostered a cat or kitten with panleukopenia (feline distemper) or another extremely contagious disease may be asked to wait several months or more before fostering another unvaccinated cat or kitten.

Safety

To help ensure the health and safety of your foster cat, the Humane Society asks that you adhere to the guidelines set forth, including the following:

- Keep your foster cat indoors at all times. Going outside only on a harness or into a secure cattery.
- Let the Humane Society know if you are no longer able to care for your foster cat. Do not give your foster cat to another person or agency without first receiving permission from the Humane Society.
- Do not keep collars on your foster cat unless they are break-away. They could be something and injure or accidentally hang themselves.

NEWBORN KITTENS (under 8 weeks)

Newborns, regardless of whether or not they are with their mother, have very little chance of surviving in a shelter environment. Foster homes that foster mother cats with newborns provide a safe and healthy place for the kittens to grow and learn until they are old enough to be adopted. Foster homes that work with orphaned newborns provide everything a mothering cat would provide. Orphaned kittens require 24-hour supervision and round-the-clock care. Fostering newborns of any kind is sure to be a challenging yet extremely rewarding experience.

NEEDED SUPPLIES

Please check over the following list of items needed to foster newborn kittens. Check with the Humane Society to see which supplies they are able to provide.

- Separate room or large kennel to keep foster kittens separate from personal pets
- Nest box large enough for mom and kittens. Sides need to be tall enough to keep kittens in, but allow mom easy in and out.
- Blankets and/or towels (lots of them)
- Litter Box you may need to use something with small sides for the kittens when they are old enough and a separate one for mom
- Litter
- Food and water bowls
- Milk replacer (KMR is the best brand)
- Kitten food - a nursing mom needs to eat this (better quality = better health and less shedding)
- Bottles and syringes (for feeding orphaned or rejected kittens)
- Heating pad or water bottle (do not use ones designed for humans as they can cause burns)
- Scale (not completely necessary, but a food or postal scale is helpful in monitoring kittens' growth)
- Toys

THE FIRST 8 WEEKS OF LIFE

Week 1

- A nursing mother cannot be overfed. Food requirements can increase up to 3 times the normal amount. Leave food out for the mother cat at ALL times.
- The floor temperature of the nest box should be between 85-90 degrees.
- The kittens' ear canals open when they are between 5-8 days old.
- Kittens should weigh about 4 ounces and be handled minimally
- Kittens will sleep 90% of the time and nurse from their mother the other 10%. They should nurse vigorously and littermates should compete for food.
- Chilling is very dangerous to newborn kittens, so keep them warm.
- Make sure each kitten is nursing and there is not too much maneuvering for position. When the mother re-enters the nest box, there should be fussing for only a few minutes before the kittens settle down. If it continues this could indicate a problem with milk flow or quality.

Week 2

- Floor temperature of the nest box should now be 80-85 degrees
- The kittens should now weigh about 7 ounces
- The kittens' eyes will open between 8-14 days. They open gradually starting from the nose outward. Short-haired cats' eyes usually open earlier than those with longer hair.
- All newborn kittens have blue eyes and initially no pupils can be distinguished. The eye color is a solid, dark blue.

Week 3

- The mother cat will begin to spend more time out of the nest.
- Floor temperature of the nest box should be 73-80 degrees.
- Kittens should weigh about 10 ounces
- The kittens' ears will begin to stand erect
- The kittens should now be spending only 60-70% of their time sleeping.
- Kittens generally begin to crawl around day 18 and can usually stand by day 21.
- The kittens' milk teeth will begin to cut.
- Kittens will begin to play with each other, learn to sit, and will start trying to touch objects with their paws.
- During week 3, kittens should begin their socialization phase. Start to increase the amount of handling the kittens receive and try to accustom them to human contact.
- Avoid exposing them to anything frightening.

Week 4

- Floor temperature of the nest box should be 70-75 degrees from this point forward.
- The kittens should now weigh about 13 ounces.
- Adult eye he kittens will begin to develop complete sound and sight orientation.
- Kittens will begin to clean themselves, although their mother will continue to do most of the serious cleaning.
- Kittens can begin to eat from a shallow dish and should be weaned gradually from their mother's milk the mother cat will usually begin to discourage her kittens from nursing.
- Sometimes, nursing activity is done just for comfort. Even if the kittens appear to be nursing, they may not be receiving all the nutrition they need. Make sure they are eating and gaining weight.
- At this time, kittens will begin eliminating on their own. Supply a small, low litter box and fill it with clay litter. DO NOT use the clumping variety it is harmful if ingested.

Week 5

- Kittens should now weigh about 1 pound.
- The kittens should be very active and be able to get out of the nest.
- Weaning and litter box training should continue.

Week 6

- Kittens should weigh about 1.25 pounds.
- The kittens should have complete visual abilities. They will imitate their mother, use scratching posts, and explore the world around them.
- Continue the weaning process by thickening the gruel. Begin to introduce solid food.

Week 7

- Kittens should weigh about 1.5 pounds.
- Nursing sessions should be brief and infrequent, if they take place at all.
- The kittens should now eat undiluted kitten food. Continue to encourage the kittens to eat dry food.
- Canned food can be more for a treat in the mornings.

Week 8

- By the end of week 8, the kittens should weigh 2 pounds and be ready to be adopted.

Kitten Weight Chart

Age Weight

At birth 3.0 - 3.7 oz. (90 - 1010 g)

2 weeks old 7.0 - 11.0 oz. (200 - 300 g)

3-4 weeks old 11.7 - 15.0 (450 - 700 g) 1 - 1.5 lbs (450 - 700 g)

8 weeks old 1.7 - 2 lbs. (800 - 900 g)

ORPHANED KITTENS

Newborn kittens are sometimes orphaned. Success raising these newborns is based on how you follow the basic procedures and keep the important elements in mind. Successful rearing of orphaned kittens requires providing them with a suitable environment, the correct quantities of nutrients for different stages of growth, and a regular schedule of feeding, sleeping, grooming and exercise.

You must also provide the stimulus for urination and defecation during the first 18-21 days of life. Do this by massaging the abdomen and peri-anal area after each feeding with a cotton ball, very soft washcloth or paper towel. Whichever you decide to use first dampen with warm water (otherwise you will irritate the area). Kittens can usually eliminate without assistance after 4 weeks of age.

You must also maintain their body warmth, since they are unable to regulate and control their body temperature on their own. Keep them out of drafts. If you use a heating pad, place it in front of their sleeping area, at the opening of the crate and cover it with several layers of dry towels. The key to a heating pad is that any animal needs to be able to get away from the heat source if they choose.

Kitten bedding must be changed daily, usually multiple times a day. Wash dirty bedding with a little bleach to disinfect.

Kittens need exercise to promote muscular and circulatory development. However, care should be taken in the first 2 weeks of life because their internal organs and limbs are extremely fragile. Play with and handle them prior to feeding. At least twice a week, and more often if possible or needed, the babies need to be groomed with a soft, warm, moist cloth, wiping gently in imitation of the mother's grooming licks.

You may purchase kitten milk replacer at most area retail stores (KMR is best and found at Fleet Farm. Hartz also makes a good one and can be purchased at Wal-Mart). DO NOT feed them cow's milk, cats are actually lactose intolerant and there are not enough nutrients for kittens, they will slowly starve to death. Test the temperature of the milk replacer before feeding. It should be warm, but not hot. Don't boil or microwave, this will destroy the nutritional value. You can warm the bottle by placing it in hot water for a few minutes.

If constipation occurs, add 1 drop of vegetable oil to each kitten's feeding no more than once daily until the problem ceases. Don't over feed, since it can cause diarrhea and other problems.

Hand-feeding can be challenging and very rewarding at the same time. Once you've done it you will develop a method that works best for you. Keep the kitten in a position similar to what mom would - NEVER turn them and feed on their backs. Keep the bottle or syringe at a 45-degree angle to reduce the amount of air consumed.

Kitten Feeding

Feeding equipment needs to be washed before and after feedings. Wash your hands also. Feedings should occur every 2 hours until week 3; after that, do feeding every 4 hours a night (for your sanity). Below are general guidelines for how much and when to feed:

Week of life Amount to feed

1 st week	3.7 cc's per ounce of body weight
2 nd week	4.9 cc's per ounce of body weight
3 rd week	6.3 cc's per ounce of body weight

As long as the kittens do not cry excessively, gain weight, and feels firm to the touch, the diet is meeting their nutritional needs.

After each feeding session, you should give each kitten a full-body once over with a barely damp washcloth, using short strokes like mom would use. This activity keeps the kittens' hair clean, teaches them how to groom, and gives them the attention and mothering they crave and need.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Once in a while, one or more kittens will begin to "fade" after several weeks of life despite having been vigorous at birth. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing and crawling. They may be pushed out of the nest. Kittens fade very quickly. Most will not recover without intensive nursing care. This has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress, and infectious disease. Even with all of the care available many of these kittens will die.

Finally...a word of caution.

It is a sad fact that kittens, through no fault of your own, sometimes die. The mother cat may reject them or even kill them. Your own pet may fatally injure or kill one of them, or one might simply die for an unknown reason.

If an animal in your care should happen to die, please be sure to contact the one of the Foster Members as soon as possible. It is imperative that we have an opportunity to examine the animal to determine a cause of death. Some conditions may be contagious and we want to protect any other foster animals in your care, as well as your own pets. We will handle the disposal of the remains for you.

Catastrophes don't happen often, but depending on how long you have cared for the animal and how attached you have become, you may experience something between distress and devastation. We also offer the thought that, although we fail to save each and every animal placed in foster care, your participation is vital to our mission, and saves lives of many animals every year.

Kitten Socialization

It is your job to help convince the kittens that humans are kind and loving. Some kittens will adjust to you and their new environment quickly, while others will be frightened and intimidated. To help them get used to you sit in the middle of the room while making phone calls. They will hear your voice, but will not be threatened by it. Familiarize them with the sound of the television and radio.

When the kittens are nearly 4 weeks old, they are ready to socialize with you and each other. Try to play with them daily. Outgoing and friendly kittens will be easy to play with. Some may need encouragement. If they are afraid and run away when you approach, try sitting or lying on the floor near them and allow them to approach you. When you pick a kitten up, stroke gently and speak in a soft tone. You want this to be a positive and pleasant experience.

Weaning

At about 4 weeks of age, the kittens will probably start showing interest in their mom's food. Introduce the kittens to solid food by offering warmed canned food mixed into a thin gruel with a little bit of milk replacer. Place food in a shallow dish. Some kittens will begin lapping right away, while others will prefer to lick it from your fingers. Allow them to do so and slowly lower your finger to the dish. The kittens may bite the edge of the plate or walk in the gruel. Sometimes it takes 2-3 meals or more before they really catch on. If a kitten doesn't seem interested in the gruel at all, gently open its mouth and place a tiny amount on the tongue. Be patient; the weaning process takes time. As the kittens catch on, thicken the gruel. Remember that as you thicken the gruel, you will need to make sure the kittens always have access to fresh water in a low spill-resistant bowl.

By about 6 weeks of age, the kittens should be getting most of their nutrition from the food you are providing. They should be fed at least 3 meals a day. Their stomachs are small (roughly the size of an acorn) and so they may not eat much at a single sitting. They need small, frequent feedings to receive adequate nutrition. Gradually introduce the kittens to dry food by mixing it in with their gruel. By the end of week 8 they need to be content to eat dry food alone.

Litter Box Training

When the kittens reach about 4 weeks of age, they will begin to eliminate on their own. You can create a small litter box out of a drawer organizer, old cake pan, Tupperware, just be sure it is something you won't be using for humans again. Avoid exposing kittens to clumping litter this early because it's dangerous if ingested and they may try to eat it. Most kittens learn from watching mom and will use the litter box right away.

You can encourage kittens by showing them the litter box several times a day, especially after naps and meals. Gently take a paw and scratch at the litter. Be sure to praise the kittens when they start using the litter box. It is, of course, common for them to make mistakes. If you find feces outside of the litter box, pick up and place inside the litter box. It is a good idea to confine them to a relatively small area because they may forget where the litter box is located if they have too much room. Make sure to always keep the litter box cleaned and away from their food and water.

What You Need: Getting Started

Transport Carriers, Crates, or Cages

We will provide you an animal transport carrier cage or crate for your foster animal(s) that you will return to the shelter when you are finished fostering the animal(s). If you become a regular foster, you may choose to purchase your own crate or cage. It should be safe, secure and an appropriate size for the animal you are fostering.

Confinement Area

A large box or other enclosure such as a playpen or folding exercise pen might be desirable if you are fostering a litter of kittens. This type of enclosure will allow you to see in, keep your animals confined, as well as provide plenty of room for a mother and her growing litter. A child's plastic pool is great for a dog with newborn puppies until they start moving around.

Food

HSBC will provide the food or formula as needed for your foster animal(s) if you cannot. Please provide Purina Cat and Kitten Chow. You are welcome to talk to the Foster Care Members about the food you want to feed.

To avoid causing potentially harmful digestive problems, do not feed cow's milk, human formulas, table scraps, more than a small amount of canned food, or generic pet food. Canned food should only be fed to puppies or kittens during 4 – 6 weeks of age, or malnourished, nursing or sick animals to stimulate their appetite. Puppies and kittens should be able to eat dry food by 7 weeks of age, even if it has to be soaked in warm water.

Food and Water Dishes

Feel free to experiment with dishes you have on hand – flat saucers will be adequate for kittens. We recommend heavy flat bottom dishes or pans for water for the kittens to keep the water from being easily tipped over. Be sure to clean the food and water bowls daily to avoid bacterial growth.

Cat Litter Boxes and Cat Litter

Litter boxes should be available in any area in which you are housing your cat and/or kittens. The average litter box may be too high for kittens to crawl into so you can try aluminum baking pans or the flat boxes soda comes on. Avoid using the clumping or scoopable litter for kittens as these litters can easily be ingested by kittens and can result in intestinal blockage and death.

Toys and Other Playthings

Part of the fun of sharing your home with young animals is playtime. Toy mice and balls make kittens happy and can be laundered and reused. You are welcome to use any safe toys of your choice.

As with children, puppies and kittens will play with anything they can find. Drapes, lampshades, electrical cords and glass ornaments may look like as much fun as the toys listed above. Take special care "kitten-proof your home before allowing fosters free run of an area. As your fosters grow, so will their reach, so anything irreplaceable should be kept well out of reach.

Additional Care Suggestions:

Cleanliness

Puppies and kittens without a mother can get pretty messy! It is important that you do your best to keep them as clean as possible. One way to accomplish this is to stroke the puppy or kitten with a warm, damp cloth to mimic the mother licking them. This also encourages them to eliminate naturally. A flea comb may be used to remove dried feces or food from the fur. Be sure to dry the puppy or kitten well so they do not chill. Dried feces can become caked on the underside of the tail or between the toes. Dried feces can be softened and removed by dipping the puppies or kittens rear end into a basin of warm water and then carefully combing through the hair with a flea comb. Many puppies and kittens will not even notice they are partially wet, but some will protest and scamper to escape, so beware of sharp little claws.

Socialization

One of the most important part of your job as a foster parent is to convince your foster animal(s) that humans are kind and loving. Some kittens will adjust to you and their new environment without any problems, but to some, you may seem like a strange and frightening giant. To make their transition into your home an easy one, you will need to give your foster animal(s) a day or so to accustom themselves to their new surroundings.

The principles of socializing are the same for all animals, puppies, kittens, cats and dogs – love them and they will respond. An outgoing, friendly kitten or puppy can be cuddled and played with freely. The less social animals need some encouragement and patience. Try sitting on the floor with the puppy or kitten held against your chest, supported underneath and facing outward, so he can't see how big and scary you are. Stroke him and speak gently, telling him how cute and brave and fabulous he is. Continue this until he starts squirming and put him down. You want this to be a pleasant experience. Sometimes holding a pair together helps- they seem to reassure each other. If your kittens are fearful and run a way from you when you approach, try sitting on the floor near them and let them come to you. Being at their level is a lot less intimidating to them then towering over them.

There is no such thing as a bad kitten, even if your foster's don't enjoy being cuddled or held. If they will tolerate being stroked and don't cower under the furniture, they will make someone a wonderful pet. Some of the most aloof kittens grow up to be the most friendly and loving adults.

Some adult animals that need socialization will require even more patience and understanding. Also, do not reinforce behavior such as fear, nervousness, and aggression by touching, talking or cuddling while they are exhibiting these types of behaviors. While it is natural to want to pet or comfort when they are scared or timid, you are encouraging them to continue with this behavior. Rather you should ignore such behavior and act like whatever is causing them to behave in this way is nothing. The more that you demonstrate that it is nothing, the more they will sense this from you and eventually act the same way.

Distract them by trying to get them engaged in an activity. You should remain relaxed, calm but assertive as you interact with them to give them confidence in you. Eventually this will encourage them to relax. When they relax or show any calmness, give them lots of positive attention and praise, and pet them.

Unfortunately, while these animals need and deserve lots of love, it may not fix behavior problems. However, calm assertive leadership will. So show them lots of calm leadership and then show them lots of love when they respond in a calm, relaxed behavior.

Always use positive reinforcement. Yelling, hitting, kicking, etc is NEVER acceptable.

Ready For a Forever Home

You have survived the past few weeks, and that bittersweet day has arrived. Your foster animal is ready to take that next step towards their forever home. Whether they are being adopted or placed in one of our community adoption locations, your job as a foster parent for this lucky animal is almost over. But before they leave your care, there are a few last things you can do for your foster animal.

The first is to make sure they are healthy enough to be placed. If you see any signs of illness, be sure and contact the Foster Care Coordinator immediately even if it is the morning they are to be returned.

Second, make sure your foster has received all the vaccinations and treatments they were due by bringing them back to the vet when scheduled. We want them to be as protected from disease as possible when they are placed in a home or placed in a community adoption location. Bring all the records you have with you.

Next, it is also helpful for the new owner of your foster animal to benefit from what you have learned about the animal during the stay in your care. Please feel free to share your experiences and insights in a letter to the new owner if they have been adopted. Be sure and include your email address so they may correspond with you about the progress after they go home. Know that in some cases, new owners may choose not to correspond after the fact. However your letter can make the transition to their new home easier if you can share with them all you know as their foster parent. You might also send with them their favorite toy. This can make their new home feel more familiar. If the animal is being in a community location for adoption, you can write your experiences and information about the animal on a card and it can be attached to the animal's kennel card.

Lastly, the final step is to remember to pat yourself on the back for having done such a wonderful thing. Your hard work and loving care has paid off and you've quite literally been a life saver. We sincerely thank you for giving the gift of life to those animals who might not have been so lucky without you. All fosters realize a sadness when one of their animals leave their home for the next, but there is also great fulfillment and happiness in knowing what a difference you make in an animal's life. Remember and share that with other foster's.

Foster Parent Application

Please complete this application form if you are interested in becoming a Humane Society of Bay County Foster Parent. Once you complete this form, submit, or mail to HSBC, Cheryl McKenzie/Foster Coordinator, PO Box 215, Bay City, 48707. You must be 21 or over to foster.

Contact Information

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Home _____ Cell _____

Email _____ Birth Date _____

Drivers License Number _____

Family Information

Do you own a home, condo or apartment?

Do you have children? What ages?

Do you rent a home, condo or apartment?

Please list your landlord's name and phone number if you rent

Name _____ Phone _____

Do you work?

Full-time

Part-time

Work from Home

Travel frequently for work

Retired

Please list how many hours you work a week _____

Current Pet Information

I have never owned a cat

Owned or currently own cat(s)

I currently have dog(s)

Owned or currently have a small mammal

Current Pet Health Information

Cats (current on vacc & fixed)

Cats (Not current)

Kittens up to 1yr

Dogs (Current on vacc & fixed)

Dog (Not current)

Puppies up to 1 yr

None

Other _____

The Foster Care Provider Agreement: Remains In Force for the Entire Term of Foster Animal Placement

- Agrees to allow home visits if deemed necessary by shelter staff and agrees to meet with shelter staff when requested.
- Agrees that you are in compliance with landlord restriction and allow the shelter staff to perform a landlord check if needed.
- Agrees that all family members are in agreement about opening the home to fostering, and will follow the guidelines for animal care given by the Foster Care
- Agrees that no other animal from any other organization is fostered at the same time unless prior approval is given.
- Agrees to complete and sign a Foster Application before acceptance as a Foster
- Agrees that cats or kittens will be kept indoors at all times.
- Agrees to keep all household pets fully vaccinated at all times to avoid contracting diseases from the foster animals.
- Agrees to isolate the foster animal(s) from household pets during the first week of care.
- Agrees that HSBC will *not* be responsible for veterinary care of household pets or medical care of humans contracting disease from foster animals.
- Agrees that HSBC is not responsible for any damage to Foster Parent personal property.
- Agrees to feed the foster animals a nutritious diet and obtaining permission to feed a brand other than Purina Cat/Kitten Chow.
- Agrees to comply with medical treatment and appointments set forth by HSBC for the care of the foster animal. HSBC is responsible only for the fees of routine vaccinations and care.
- Agrees to use vets and services approved by HSBC, not personal vets.
- Agrees to contact a Foster Care Member immediately at the first sign of illness or an injury.
- Agrees that all decisions made by the HSBC Foster Care Members are final.
- Agrees that all foster animals are the property on the HSBC, and must be relinquished to the Foster Care Coordinator upon request.
- Agrees to properly care for and socialize the foster animals per the HSBC guidelines to the best of your ability.
- I have received the HSBC Foster Handbook.

Signature _____ Date _____

HSBC Foster Care Member _____ Date _____