

Foster Program FAQ's

How do I become a foster parent?

Each potential foster should fill out a foster application located online at www.heschatt.org/foster. The foster coordinator will be in touch about scheduling a phone interview. We encourage you to go over all the resources and manual before taking home an animal. You will fill out the foster availability form when you are ready located at www.heschatt.org/activefoster

What is required of me as a kitten 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 kittens receive any scheduled medical treatments on time, are healthy, and well socialized.

I found a stray animal. Can I foster them through your program?

With approval and intake appointment if they are in our jurisdiction, we will try to allow you to foster the animal. If you cannot foster this litter, it may take us some time to find a foster home. We will do our best to work with you.

What are the requirements for a kitten foster room?

The foster room needs to be a designated place for your foster kittens to spend the bulk of their time. HES 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. If you do not have an extra room, we can provide a playpen or other type of containment cage.

Do foster animals require a lot of space?

Your space will depend on what type of animal you have chosen to foster. Kittens only need a bathroom or extra room. They can also be housed in pop up playpens. If they were at the shelter, they would be in a small cage, so your bathroom is huge to them! Puppies may need a larger area so you can set up a pen with an area to potty and sleep. Adults animals do not need too much space either. We can work with you on what would be a good fit!

What supplies do I need to provide myself?

HES will provide you with supplies relevant to the animals you are fostering. We also provide medical care for your fosters. Some items we provide: dry food, wet food, litter, litter box, dog kennel, pet taxi, newspaper, puppy pads, towels, blankets, formula, bottles, and more! Foster parents are welcome to buy supplies on their own. You may

want to buy some things to keep on hand like a gram scale, pop up pen, scratch post, in case we do not have them available.

How do I get my foster animals?

After you have completed foster training you will fill out the foster availability form. When we get something that fits your foster preference, we will text or call you about the potential foster situation. As foster kittens become available, the foster coordinator may also post in the Facebook group. Whoever responds first, and is the best match for the foster kittens, will get the group. The foster coordinator will then send further information with specifics on arrival and pick-up information.

How much do I need to supervise my foster group of puppies and kittens?

You need to do welfare checks on your foster group three times per day (more frequently if you have neonatal fosters). 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 they become well socialized. We recommend weighing your kittens daily and around the same time.

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

You must keep your foster kittens separate from your resident pets for at least two weeks. After the two-week period, you may allow supervised interactions as long as your kittens have received one vaccine more than five days prior. Kittens who have not received any vaccines may not meet any resident pets until five days after their second vaccine. If your foster kittens or resident animals are sick, they may not interact. Kittens under 6 months are too small to be tested for FIV/FelV as the results are not accurate. All interactions must be directly supervised. Caution should also be taken when introducing a mother cat to resident animals as her protective instincts may result in aggressive or unfriendly behavior.

Can my children interact with the foster kittens?

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

Is training required to become a foster?

Please read all material sent to you before taking home a foster animal. We want to make sure you are prepared for the animal you will be taking home. We have many resources located online at www.heschatt.org/activefoster. Webinars and training videos are also available. We will go over protocol and rules during the phone interview and when you pick up your foster pet.

Do you allow people to bottle feed?

HES may receive neonatal kittens/puppies that will need to be bottle-fed. If this is the case, we will place the kittens with a foster parent who is experienced at bottle-feeding. There are times, however, when you may need to provide supplemental bottle-feeding to a nursing kitten who is not getting enough to eat. Bottle-feeding is a tricky process, so we ask that you work with your mentor and attend online training before attempting to bottle feed if you have no experience. We cannot house kittens who need to be bottle fed at the shelter so a foster home is critical for round the clock care.

Do I have to have potential adopters come to my home?

We encourage you to have appointments at the shelter unless you feel comfortable with potential adopters coming to your home. If you are fostering an adult dog and the potential adopter has a dog, please schedule a meet and greet at the shelter.

Who do I call for help?

You will be assigned a mentor who will be your first point of contact for questions or concerns if we have one available to take on new mentees. Otherwise, the foster coordinator will be there for you if you need anything. The foster cell phone is a google voice number that is shared by multiple staff members so someone is always available. 423-290-2908.

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

All veterinary care will be provided through the Humane Educational Society. You will let the foster coordinator know what is going on and then schedule online through www.heschatt.org/activefoster. You are **not** permitted to seek veterinary care from outside clinics. Any visits to outside veterinarians that are not pre-approved will be your financial responsibility!

What do I do if my own pets get sick?

Your kittens/puppies should be housed separately from your resident animals. However, we do recognize that cross contamination can happen. If your pet(s) 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 all residents in the home to be current on vaccinations.

Do my resident pets have to be up to date on their vaccines?

For everyone's protection and safety, your resident pets are required to be current on vaccines. You should contact your veterinarian to find out if your animals are current on vaccines when fostering. Some veterinarians will recommend annual vaccines and others may recommend longer. It is best to check before you bring new animals home.

What if I have to leave out of town unexpectedly?

Contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible so that we can find alternate placement for your foster(s). You can also fill out the foster relief form at www.heschatt.org/activefoster so we can keep track of the dates!

What if I have an emergency after hours?

We have a foster team member on call 24/7 so please call right away in the event of an emergency. We have emergency clinic that we collaborate with and can send you to with your foster pet.

What is the time commitment for becoming a foster? Are breaks offered if needed?

We know that everyone's schedules are different. We try to be flexible with your fostering so just be up front about what works for you! Most foster situations need at least a two-week commitment, but we are open to short term. You may find that fostering for someone else while they are out of town is a better fit. Kittens are ready for adoption at 8 weeks usually. If you have 5-week-old kittens, you may have those 3 weeks, and so on. If you are feeling overwhelmed and need a break, let the foster coordinator know so we can arrange other placement. Some adult animals may stay in foster longer than two weeks depending on what works for you.