



Kitten Foster Manual

A guide for newborn kittens up to 8 weeks old

LOST OUR HOME PET RESCUE

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Introduction:

Thank you for your interest in fostering kittens with Lost Our Home Pet Rescue! By opening your heart and your home to these foster kittens that are desperately in need, you are helping to save lives. Our kitten foster program is crucial for the underage kittens that enter our shelter because kittens are some of the most at-risk pets in shelters. They require so much more care than the shelter staff/hours can offer, which is why we seek out loving foster homes to help us with rescuing kittens less than 8 weeks of age. You can seek out basic information in this foster manual, but please do not hesitate to contact our Foster Coordinator with any further questions – fostering@lostourhome.org.

How much time do I need to spend with the kittens?

As much time as you can. The more time you spend with your foster kittens, the more socialized they will be to people. The amount of time required for feeding will vary depending on the age of the kittens you are fostering. Very young kittens need to be bottle-fed every two to three hours, while older ones may be eating on their own and needing to be fed just a couple times a day. You will only be matched with kittens that are a good fit for your schedule.

How many kittens will I be fostering?

We like to have at least two kittens in a foster home so they can socialize with and learn from each other. Sometimes there are special circumstances in which a kitten goes to a foster home alone, but it's usually for a medical or behavioral reason. The decision is made by the foster coordinator.

How long will the kittens need to be in foster care?

Once a kitten weighs two pounds, he/she can be spayed or neutered and then put up for adoption, so you should expect to have your foster kittens until they are of weight. This typically occurs at around 8 to 9 weeks of age, but keep in mind, it's the weight not the date that matters!

Will I need to give medicine to the foster kittens?

While we do our best to ensure that we are sending out healthy kittens to foster care, most illnesses have incubation periods, meaning that if the kittens picked up something at the shelter, symptoms can arise after you take them home. So, some kittens do not require any

medicine, while others do. If your foster kittens need medication, we can show you how to administer it before you take the animals home.

Can I let my foster kittens play with my personal pets?

Kittens are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch dangerous ailments easily. For this reason, we require that foster parents isolate foster kittens with their own supplies for at least two weeks to try and ensure that the kittens are healthy prior to exposing them to your personal pets. We also advise that you consult with your veterinarian before fostering to ensure that all of your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill while you are fostering a Lost Our Home pet, we cannot provide medical care for your personal pet. Never leave your personal pets unsupervised around the foster kittens.

Important note: If your personal cat is allowed outdoors, he or she cannot interact with your foster kittens. Kittens are very vulnerable to illness and we want to limit their risk by not exposing them to anything from the outdoors.

Will any of my foster kittens die?

Sadly, kittens are fragile, so it is always possible for them to become ill and pass away while in a foster home. This may be the hardest thing about fostering kittens. If it's something you don't want to encounter, then fostering kittens may not be the best fit for you. But please keep in mind that without foster homes, most of these kittens would not stand a chance of survival in a shelter. You're helping to save lives.

Who will take care of my foster kittens if I need to go out of town?

If you have travel plans while you are fostering kittens, you must arrange for the kittens to be brought back to the shelter during the time that you are unavailable. YOU are the registered foster- not a friend, neighbor, or family member. Anyone other than you (the registered foster) is not permitted to provide care for these kittens. Please provide at least one week's notice to ensure that we have another foster set up for your kittens. If your trip is over a holiday, please provide a minimum of two weeks' notice.

What if I want to adopt one of my foster kittens?

If you want to adopt a foster kitten, please contact the Foster Coordinator to discuss the next steps. Please note that kittens cannot be officially adopted until they are fully medically ready (spayed/neutered, microchipped, FeLV/FIV tested, and vaccinated current to what their age allows).

What if I know someone who's interested in adopting one of my foster kittens?

If someone you know is interested in adopting one of your foster kittens, please contact the program manager. Once the kittens are officially placed up for adoption, we cannot hold them for anyone so it is important to communicate this as soon as possible. We do try to accommodate referrals from foster parents if we can, but please note that foster referrals are NOT guaranteed adoption; adopters still must be approved by Lost Our Home.

Will it be difficult for me to say goodbye to my foster kittens?

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering, but remember that we always have more kittens who need wonderful foster homes. Keep in mind that by fostering these vulnerable pets, you are playing a crucial role in helping to save lives.

Preparing for Foster Kittens:

Your foster kittens should be separated from all other animals in your household and kept in a small area, such as a spare room or bathroom, where they have access to their food, water and litter box. And because kittens cannot regulate their body temperature, this area should also be in a warm, draft-free area. It may be a good idea to consider an area that is easy to clean up in terms of spills and litter box accidents, which will happen since the kittens are learning. Please don't put the kittens in a garage or place that has outdoor access; those locations are not safe.

Supplies you'll need

Lost Our Home will supply all needed supplies, however we do greatly appreciate any supplies that you can help with. Please remember that donations (even for kittens that you're fostering) are tax deductible! Just save your receipts and we can write you donation receipts at the shelter. Here is what you will need for your foster kittens:

- At least one bowl for dry food and one for water: If you have a large litter, you will need to provide more than one bowl each for water and food.
- A supply of kitten food: Kittens are fed both dry and wet food. Please note that food must be specifically for kittens; kittens cannot eat adult cat food!
- Bottles and formula (only applicable for litters that are bottle-feeding).
- Litter box with low sides: More than one may be needed for larger litters.
- Litter.
- A heating pad.
- Bedding, blankets, towels.
- A secure sleeping area: A cat carrier with the door removed or a box laid on its side work well.
- Toys: Use kitten-safe toys that are easy to sanitize and clean. Kittens can play with them when you're not home.
- Scratching post: Kittens need to learn to scratch on them rather than the furniture.

Kitten-proofing your home

Foster kittens are tiny and cute, but just like children, they are also very curious. They will try to get into everything to explore, so you will need to kitten-proof your home. Here are some tips:

- Put away any small items that a kitten can swallow.
- Hide any breakable items, block electrical outlets and remove toxic plants.
- If your kittens are staying in a bathroom, make sure that the toilet lid is closed at all times.
- Block off any spaces that the kittens could crawl into and hide in. You can do this by stuffing gaps with towels.
- When setting up your kitten room, be sure to place the litter boxes as far away from food and water as possible. Kittens are messy!

What Age of Kittens is Right for Me:



Newborn to 2 weeks:

Newborn kittens are completely helpless and rely entirely on their foster family for survival. They cannot see or hear fully until about 2 weeks of age and will sleep for approximately 90% of the time. They will require a constant source of warmth and bottle feeding every 2 to 3 hours; meaning the foster must feed them with a bottle, they will not eat on their own. Typically mother cats will teach their kittens how to eliminate (use the bathroom), but as you are their foster, you now have the honor of performing this duty! This will typically need to be done as often as the feeding (every 2 to 3 hours), and will involve rubbing the genital/anal area of the kitten with a damp cloth to help them urinate/defecate. This process typically only takes a few minutes.

This is the most crucial time for a kitten, so dedicated and thorough care is required at this age. Someone must be available to tend to the kittens every 2 to 3 hours throughout the day and night.



3 weeks to 4 weeks:

Kittens begin to learn the ropes at this age. They will begin to want to investigate their surroundings, begin to take an interest in toys and scratching, and will also be introduced to using a litter box. At this age, the kittens will require a constant source of warmth and bottle feeding every 4 to 6 hours; meaning the foster must feed them with a bottle, they will not eat on their own. You may start introducing the idea of “weaning” to the kitten, but do not expect for them to fully grasp it at this age. At this age, kittens can begin being introduced to the litter box. They still may need the foster’s assistance with elimination until they get the hang of using the litter box on their own.

Someone must be available to tend to the kittens every 4 to 6 hours throughout the day and night.



5 weeks to 6 weeks:

Kittens begin learning to be more independent at this age. They will still require being taught things by their foster, but they are well on their way to being “self-sufficient” (or so

they think). At 5 weeks of age, kittens will continue the weaning process and will transition off of formula. They will eat “gruel” (kitten formula mixed with dry food/wet food), softened kitten dry food, and kitten wet food. They will require feeding sessions every 6 to 8 hours at this age; they may start eating on their own, but may still require some help. At this age, they should be using the litter box with no problems.

Someone must be available to tend to the kittens every 6 to 8 hours throughout the day and night.



6 weeks to 8 weeks:

At this age, kittens are typically eating on their own, using the litter box, and really just need a loving home to hang out in until they are 2 lbs. At this age they are ready to rampage and are extremely mischievous! There is not a set feeding schedule required; however constant interaction is still just as important for the socialization of the kittens.

Caring for Your Foster Kittens:

Because kittens are fragile, it is important for you to watch the behavior of your foster kittens closely and monitor their health daily. To keep track of their health, keep a journal of

the kittens' weight, eating habits and overall health. You should weigh the kittens daily to ensure that they are growing, and record the weight in the journal.

Watch for signs of illness, including frequent crying, restlessness, weakness, coldness (hypothermia), diarrhea, dehydration, shallow or labored breathing, paleness or blueness in color. Utilize the emergency contact information if a kitten is losing weight, is cold to the touch, or is having trouble breathing (either shallow or heavy breathing).

Kittens are susceptible to illness, so foster kittens must be kept indoors. If your personal cat has access to the outdoors, he or she cannot interact with your foster kittens. Also, please do not let your foster kittens ride loose in a car. Use a carrier at all times to transport kittens to and from appointments.

Caring for Bottle-Fed Kittens

Bottle-feeding neonatal kittens requires an around-the-clock commitment. Thank you so much for offering your time and attention to these fragile babies. And please remember that we are here to support you. Here's some general info about bottle-feeding.

Milk Preparation

You can pre-mix enough formula to last for 24 hours of feeding, but it must be refrigerated at all times. Discard all unused and mixed formula after 24 hours. Only heat enough formula for each feeding, and throw away any uneaten warmed formula after each feeding. Do not re-use warmed formula because harmful bacteria can develop in it.

Bottle-Feeding Tips

It is easier to feed your kittens when they are gently wrapped in a towel or blanket, instead of just using your hands. The towel or blanket is softer and warmer than your hands, and being wrapped up makes the kittens feel safer as they eat. If the kitten allows it, the forelegs should be free to allow him to "knead" with his feet. This kneading activity is essential to the kitten's muscle development and helps aid in digestion of the kitten's food. Also, be careful to position the kitten so that his belly is toward the floor. To decrease the chance of formula being aspirated into the lungs, kittens should not be fed on their backs.

Latching On

It may take a couple tries for a kitten to latch on to the bottle nipple. Just be patient; sometimes kittens need some encouragement to eat. Make sure that the nipple you are using on the bottle has an adequate flow of milk. When the nipple tip is punctured with a sterile needle, formula should drip out (one drop at a time, not a stream) when the bottle is inverted 180 degrees. Do not hesitate to call the foster department if you need any help or assistance with feeding your kittens. We are always here for you, ready to answer any questions that you may have.

Aspiration

If liquid bubbles out through the kitten's nose or he starts coughing, he may have gotten formula in his lungs. Pat the kitten very gently on the back to elicit a cough or sneeze, or hold him in an inverted position, tail over head, for a moment to remove the formula from his lungs. Please notify the foster department if this happens so we can determine if antibiotics or a vet visit is needed.

Peeing and Pooping

Bottle-fed kittens need help with elimination, so you'll need to stimulate your kittens to pee and poop. After you feed them, wipe each kitten's back end with a baby wipe or warm wet cotton ball. Remember to do this every time you feed them. Document the color and consistency in your journal. Kittens should urinate after every meal and should poop at least once a day. The normal color of kitten poop is various shades of mustard and the consistency is similar as well. When a kitten is first introduced to formula, it is normal for him or her not to poop for 48 hours.

Signs of Illness

Watch for signs of illness, including frequent crying, restlessness, weakness, coldness (hypothermia), diarrhea, dehydration, shallow or labored breathing, paleness or blueness in color. Notify the program manager for all non-emergency issues; utilize the emergency contact sheet if the kitten needs immediate veterinary care. If you are unsure if a situation is emergency or not, is it better to call the emergency contact to check.

Keeping Kittens Warm

When kittens are infants (less than two weeks old), they can be kept in small carriers or playpens that can easily be covered by a blanket to maintain heat and reduce draftiness. As

they grow and become more mobile, they will need more space to roam and play. Also, don't forget that kittens cannot regulate their body temperatures, so please keep a SnuggleSafe disc warm and with them at all times. Because kittens' skin is very sensitive and prone to thermal burns, the warming disc must be covered by a blanket and puppy pad that the kittens cannot burrow under.

Weighing

Please weigh the kittens before and after each feeding to ensure that they are growing, and record the weights in the journal. Kittens should gain 3 to 4 ounces per week.

How to Bottle-Feed:

1. Warm the formula: Place the bottle in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. Before feeding the kittens, always test the temperature of the formula by placing a few drops on your inner wrist to be sure it is not too hot. It should be slightly warmer than your body temperature.
2. Ensure that your foster kitten is warm before offering food. Do not attempt to feed a kitten who is chilled* because it can have serious health consequences.
3. Wrap the kitten in a towel or blanket and position him so that his belly is toward the floor. Kittens should not be fed on their backs or in an upright position.
4. Turn the bottle upside down and allow a drop of formula to come out. Place the bottle nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently move it back and forth, holding the bottle at a 45-degree angle to keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach. This movement should encourage the kitten to start eating. If at first you don't succeed, wait a few minutes and try again. Usually the kitten will latch on and begin to suckle. If the bottle appears to be collapsing, gently remove the nipple from the kitten's mouth and let more air return to the bottle.
5. Weigh each kitten before and after feeding and record the weights in your journal.

Week 1: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula

Frequency: Every 2–3 hours (8–12 times per day)
Amount: 3–4 cc per feeding, approximately 3–6 g per kitten

Week 2: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula
Frequency: Every 3 hours (8 times per day)
Amount: 5–6 cc per feeding, approximately 8–15 g per kitten

Week 3: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula
Frequency: Every 4 hours (6 times per day)
Amount: 13–17 cc per feeding, approximately 10–20 g per kitten

Weaning Kittens:

Once your kittens are about four weeks old, it is time to start the weaning process. Your goal is to have the kittens eating on their own consistently by the time they're adopted. So, beginning at four weeks, start offering warm gruel (two parts wet food, one part formula) at all times, along with dry kitten food and water. Every four to six hours, discard any uneaten gruel and provide a fresh batch.

You will still be supplementing the kittens with a bottle every eight hours to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients they need, but encourage them to eat gruel before you offer a bottle. To get a kitten interested in trying the gruel, you may have to offer the gruel with a spoon or use your finger to place a small amount on the kitten's tongue. Ideally, by the end of five weeks, your foster kittens will be happily eating dry and wet food on their own.

It is important to continue weighing your foster kittens every day, after each feeding, to ensure that they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the kittens to the litter box because they should be able to eliminate on their own by about four weeks of age.

Week 4: Weaning stage

Food type: Milk replacement formula, gruel, kitten kibble and water

Frequency: Kibble, water and gruel should be available to kittens at all times; bottle-feed every 8 hours (3 times per day)

Amount: 13–17 cc per feeding with the bottle; will vary depending on how much gruel the kitten eats

Making gruel:

Mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 can of formula per kitten. You can add a little water if the kittens seem to like a looser consistency. It's OK make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it, but you'll need to warm it before offering it to the kittens.

Medical and Emergency Protocol:

All kittens must be FeLV/FIV tested, spayed/neutered, FVRCP vaccinated, and microchipped at the time of adoption. As a foster, you will be responsible for bringing the kittens in for their routine vaccinations (every 2 weeks starting at 6 weeks). You will also need to bring them into the shelter/to an approved veterinarian in case of any unforeseen medical needs.

Veterinary Care: Lost Our Home provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinics. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster animals' well-being, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster animals at our approved veterinary partners.

If your foster kittens need to go to the veterinarian, please contact the program manager by email or by cell phone. The program manager will help you to take the needed steps at this point in time, as we utilize different veterinary offices for different needs. For non-emergency situations, please understand that our veterinary partners book quickly and may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you schedule basic non-emergency appointments at least 24 hours in advance.

Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from Lost Our Home.

Signs of illness and what to do next: Kittens do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if a foster kitten is under the weather will require diligent observation of the kittens' daily activity and appetite levels. Be aware that kittens act differently at different ages. For example, a healthy two-week-old kitten will sleep often and get up only to nurse, whereas a healthy six-week-old kitten should have a lot of energy. If you have any questions about the health of your foster kittens, please contact the program manager, who will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Eye discharge: It is normal for kittens to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up. But if a kitten has yellow or green discharge, or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment.

Sneezing and nasal discharge: Occasional sneezing is common in kittens. If the sneezing becomes more frequent, examine the discharge coming from the sneeze. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be necessary. But it is important to monitor the kittens in case the problem becomes worse. If the discharge becomes colored, contact program manager to schedule a vet appointment because the kittens may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the kittens' breathing. If they start to breathe with an open mouth or wheeze, utilize the emergency protocol (which can be found on the last page of this manual). Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the kittens' eating habits more closely to ensure that they are still eating. And, of course, continue to weigh them daily.

Loss of appetite: Your foster kittens may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. Unwillingness to eat in kittens can be very serious, so pay close attention to whether the kittens are eating. Kittens should eat on a four- to eight-hour schedule, depending on their age. If a kitten under four weeks old misses two meals or a kitten over four weeks of age goes more than 12 hours without eating, the program manager should be called. With a kitten that is not eating, please do not change the kitten's diet without contacting the program manager. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which will lead to dehydration.

Lethargy: The activity level of your kittens will vary with each kitten in your litter and with age. Sick kittens may have lower energy levels and just want to sit in your lap or on the floor and not move much or play. If you notice a drop in your foster kittens' energy level, please contact the program manager to make a medical appointment. If a kitten cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, this is an emergency, so you'll need to start the emergency contact protocol.

Note: Some under socialized kittens will move less because they are frightened. If you have a fearful group of kittens, it can be more difficult to determine if their energy levels are low. But tracking all behaviors in your journal will help you decide whether you should call the program manager to schedule a vet appointment.

Dehydration: Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the kitten's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the kitten is dehydrated. You can also check the color of the kitten's gums; the kitten's gums should be pink and paleness can signify dehydration. Dehydration can be fatal in kittens, so please utilize the emergency protocol in these situations.

Vomiting: If a foster kitten has thrown up two or more times in one day, please notify the program manager. If there is bile or blood in the vomit, please utilize the emergency protocol.

Pain or strain while urinating: When kittens first go into a foster home, they may not urinate due to stress. If a kitten hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours, however, please contact the foster coordinator. Also, if you notice the kitten straining to urinate with little or no results, or crying out when urinating, please contact the program manager because it may be indicative of an infection or a urethral obstruction, which can be life-threatening.

Diarrhea: In kittens, it can be tricky to determine if diarrhea is a problem. Soft stool diarrhea, most likely caused by stress, is normal for the first two days after you take kittens home. Kittens who are nursing tend to have loose stool, but if it is watery or very large in volume, that's a concern. By the time kittens are five weeks old and are eating consistently on their own, they should have firm, normal stool. If your foster kittens have liquid stool, please contact the program manager so that a vet appointment can be scheduled; the kittens may need medication. Once your kittens are using a litter box, please monitor the box daily. Remember that diarrhea will dehydrate your kittens, so be proactive about contacting the program manager if you notice excessive diarrhea. If a kitten has bloody or mucoid diarrhea, please contact the program manager immediately.

Frequent ear scratching: A foster kitten may have ear mites if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently, or if you see a dark discharge that resembles coffee grounds when you look in her ears. Contact the program manager at this time and the kittens can be treated at Lost Our Home.

Hair loss: Please contact the program manager if you notice any hair loss on your foster kittens. It is normal for cats to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears,

but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm or dermatitis. It is important to check your foster kittens' coats every day.

Socializing and Teaching Kittens Good Behaviors:

Your goal as a foster parent is to prepare your foster kittens for forever homes. While a big part of that is helping the kittens to grow and be healthy, another component is helping them develop the good habits that will make them wonderful companions for their adopters.

Establishing good litter box habits:

Start introducing your kittens to the litter box around the age of four to five weeks. Make sure the litter box you are using has low sides, to make it easy for the kittens to climb in and out. Some foster parents like to use disposable litter boxes, and that's fine. Keep kittens confined to a small area and have at least one litter box in each room that the kittens can access. You can encourage the kittens to use the bathroom facilities by gently returning them to their litter box every 15–20 minutes while they're playing.

You also want to make sure that you are scooping the litter box at least twice a day, more if you have a large litter or they have diarrhea. You will also need to dump the litter box entirely every two to three days and clean with dish soap. A clean litter box will promote good bathroom habits for the kittens going forward. If your foster kittens are not using the litter box, please notify the foster coordinator so you can start resolving the issue before it becomes a habit.

Oftentimes, kittens miss the litter box if they have medical issues like diarrhea, or if they have too much free space, causing them to forget where the box is when they have to go. Clean all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner and don't ever punish a kitten for having an accident.

For more info about litter box training, see the table of contents

Discipline:

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster kittens for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster kittens to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pets. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

You must not punish the kittens for behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If a kitten is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your foster pets, which will help them to learn faster.

Play time:

Play time is a very important part of kitten development. It is crucial for young kittens to have other kittens to wrestle with in order to develop appropriate play skills and be properly socialized with other kittens. Kittens also need toys to play with so that they can get physical exercise and mental stimulation. There are two types of toys that help with kitten development:

- Solo toys are things the kittens can play with when you aren't there. These toys should be easy to clean and impossible for the kittens to consume. Examples are ping pong balls, toilet paper tubes, bottle corks and plastic shower curtain rings.
- Interactive toys are things that you use to engage the kittens in play. Examples are Da Bird (a feather dangling from a string) and other toys with yarn or string attached. Don't leave kittens alone with these toys, since they can easily strangle or be ingested by the kittens.

During play time, it is always important to discourage kittens from biting your hands and feet. It may seem cute, but we want to avoid teaching kittens a habit that adopters may find undesirable.

Socializing and handling:

Introducing your foster kittens to new things and new experiences will also help prepare them for living happily in forever homes. Follow these rules to positively expose your kittens to new people, environments and noises:

- **New people:** Introducing your foster animals to new people will help them become well-adjusted adult cats. Monitor all interactions with new people, though, to ensure that they are positive, not scary, experiences for the kittens. Have new people give gentle pets and treats to the kittens and interact with them using fun toys. If children are visiting, they must always be supervised until they are old enough to understand how to gently interact with a kitten.
- **New environments:** It will help the kittens' adjustment into adopters' homes if you can allow your kittens to experience different parts of your home. Whenever you introduce the kittens to a new space, provide lots of treats and play with interactive toys so that the kittens associate the new space with their favorite things. Keep the exploratory sessions brief so you don't overwhelm your kittens, and return them to their living space if they do seem overwhelmed or scared.
- **New noises:** It is beneficial to expose kittens to a variety of normal household noises but, again, try to do it in a positive way. The key is to introduce different noises gradually. For example, start by keeping a radio on low volume and gradually increase the volume over a few days. Another example: Run the vacuum in another room at first, with your kittens at a safe distance. Then, over the course of a few days, move the vacuum noise closer to their room. If another person plays with the kittens while you make the noise, it may help alleviate any stress or fear that they may feel. Some kittens are naturally fearful, so just go even slower with the timid ones.

Another thing you can work on with your foster kittens is getting them comfortable with being in a cat carrier. When you are not using the carrier for transportation, leave the carrier (with the door removed or securely propped open) in your foster kittens' room. Put toys, treats and a soft blanket in the carrier, to encourage the kittens to go in and spend time there.

Conclusion:

In the end, while fostering kittens may be an exhausting and trying experience, the reward is far greater than anything you could ever imagine! Without the help of our very valued foster families, we would in no way be able to help all of the pets that we do. THANK YOU!

Emergency Protocol:

All LOH foster parents are expected to monitor the health of the foster pets in their care. Specifically, Foster Parents are responsible for:

- Transporting animals in their care to and from appointments with LOH authorized veterinarians. These vet appointments will be arranged through a LOH staff member.
- Foster Parents are **NOT** to schedule their own vet appointments. LOH only pays for medical costs approved in advance and coordinated through our network of approved veterinarians.

In the event of such an emergency:

- **Call the Shelter & Medical Director Emily Vivian at (480) 226-3228 (TEXT IS BEST- personal cell phone for foster use only).**
- **If you are unable to reach Emily, please contact the Shelter Operations Manager Kris Shaffer at (623) 734-2259 (personal cell phone for foster use only).**