



Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue

arnpriorcats@outlook.com - general inquiries

Foster Program Introduction

Welcome!

Welcome to the foster program at Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue! Thank you for offering up space in your heart and home to a cat in need. Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue's goal is to decrease the stray cat population in the Ottawa Valley through securing stray cats, rehabilitating them in foster care and adopting them out to loving homes.

Starting Tips

- Make time to spend with your foster cat. Proper socialization is a key part of fostering.
- Be patient, sometimes it takes awhile for foster cats to warm up to their new surroundings. Try not to get discouraged if it takes them longer than you were expecting.
- Get to know the foster cat. Learning the cat's behaviour and temperament is important so they can be placed with an appropriate adopter in the future. Keep notes of their progress.
- Take lots of photos and videos and be sure to share them with us. Photos and videos help the cats find their forever homes.
- Fostering can be a tough, but rewarding experience, have fun, make the most of it and reach out to other fosters or the foster program leaders for support and guidance. We are a safe and welcoming community of cat lovers.

Getting Started

Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue will equip you with all the necessary supplies to keep your foster cat happy, healthy and fed. You will be provided with the cat's background story and medical history. We will add you to our foster group chat on Facebook, this group chat is where we share photos, video and chat with one another to offer support and encouragement.

Foster Responsibilities

At ARCR our goal is to make sure our fosters and their foster cats are comfortable, happy, feel heard, supported and respected. We have a wonderful group chat on facebook full of other fosters as well as some volunteers. This is a great space to chat with others for advice or general support. Fosters are always welcome to reach out to any of the foster volunteers or board members, these emails are provided at the bottom of this document.

Optional Responsibilities

Fosters are NOT required to financially support their foster cat(s), some fosters graciously provide their own food and litter for their foster cats, however, this is not a requirement to be a foster. All fosters will be provided with toys, litter, food and any extra necessities that the foster cat requires. ARCR is a non-profit which means we rely solely on donations. This means that sometimes the foster cats will have different types of foods or litter provided while they are with you.

Other responsibilities that foster's can take on include,

- Taking your cat to veterinary appointments
- Picking up medications at veterinary offices
- Delivering your foster cat to their adopter
- Attending adoption events at pet stores

You will never be expected to pay for a veterinary appointment or medication

General Responsibilities

The responsibility and role of a foster is to provide love, attention, time and dedication to their foster cat. The foster will help to rehabilitate a cat if they are unwell, recovering from surgery or require more socialization. This helps to get the foster cat accustomed to a home setting and prepare them for adoption.

Required responsibilities include,

- Spending an appropriate amount of time with your foster cat
- Keeping a detailed list of your foster cat's personality type
- Reviewing adoption applications and reaching out to applicants
- Tending to their basic needs (litter, food, medication)

Preparing your Home to Foster

Properly preparing your home for a foster cat will keep you, your household and your foster cat happy.

Choosing a Space

A relatively warm and quiet indoor space in the home is the ideal place for your foster cat. This should be a well ventilated, easy to clean area where a foster cat can be quarantined from your pets. A basement room, spare bedroom, bathroom, or laundry room generally works well, provided it can be shut off from the rest of the house. Remember that not all cats in the foster program have been litter-trained, especially young kittens, so choose a space that is easy to clean and disinfect with pet safe cleaning products.

Cats and kittens prefer their food and water to be placed away from their litter box, so separate the bowls and litter box as far away from each other as the room allows.

Cat-Proofing the Space

- Remove small, ingestible objects from the environment; this may include small toys or parts of toys, elastic bands, paper clips, string, sewing pins and needles, ornaments, tinsel and more

- Block off small areas where the cat may try to hide and get stuck (holes in the wall, open ceilings)
- Do not let your foster cats outdoors under any circumstances, including in shared hallways, and keep them separated from any resident animals in a confined space such as the crate you are provided with or in a spare room
- Keep toilet bowls securely closed, especially when small kittens are in the home
- Secure window screens in any open windows no matter how small the opening
- Ensure that side panels on window AC units are securely in place and cannot be moved or opened.
- Secure loose electrical wires, cords for window blinds and other potential hazards
- Remove plants and flowers from the vicinity of your foster cat's space; many types of indoor plants are highly toxic to animals
- Do not offer any human food to your foster cat, keep their diet to their specific food.
- Keep your home reasonably climate-controlled (if it's too hot for you, it's too hot for your foster)
- Ensure visitors do not leave doors or windows open, and are aware and conscientious about safety measures that are in place for your foster
- Discard old or uneaten animal food and keep fresh water available at all times
- Secure/remove household toxins such as cleaning agents, pesticides and solvents

Common Toxins

There are many common household items and plants that are extremely toxic to cats. We highly suggest ensuring these items are NOT in the space with your foster cat. Click [here](#) for some common household hazards.

Toxic Household Plants

While some plants may just cause nausea or diarrhea, other plants can kill a cat very quickly. There are also cut flowers that are incredibly toxic to cats as well. For a complete list of toxic and non toxic plants to cats please click [here](#).

- Croton (Joseph's Coat)
- Caladium (Elephant Ear)

- Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane)
- Ficus (rubber plants, weeping and variegated fig plants)
- Philodendron
- Mandrake
- Azaleas
- Mistletoe
- Hyacinths
- Daffodils
- Tomato Plant (stem and leaves)
- Jade
- Eucalyptus
- ALL lilies
- Monstera (Swiss Cheese Plant)
- Oleander
- Poinsettia
- Christmas Cherry
- Holly Berries

Toxic Household Items

- Household cleaners (drain cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner and other household cleaners)
- Laundry detergent
- Human antidepressants
- Flea and tick topical medications for dogs
- Over-the-counter aspirin, baby aspirin, naproxen, and ibuprofen
- Onions, garlic, chives, raisins and grapes

Living With Your Foster Cat

If you are picking up your foster from an Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue representative it is required that all our cats travel securely in cat carriers. Cat carriers can be borrowed by fosters from Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue.

First Night Home

Set up your foster cat or kitten's new living space before allowing the cat or kitten out of their carrier. Have the litter box, food and water bowls, toys and bed in place and allow the cat to explore the room quietly on their own. Most of our foster cats will come with a blanket or towel

as a comfort item with a familiar smell for them. Place their blanket or towel in a cozy spot for them. Try gently wiping any towels or blankets you have for your foster cat around their face and shoulders to transfer some of their scent onto their new living area. Being in a new environment is stressful for most cats, and a normal reaction may be to hide.

Getting Acquainted

Allow your foster cat time to adjust to your home while being housed in a “safe haven” such as a roomy crate or a separate room. Block off small areas where the cat may try to hide and get stuck. Spending some quiet time sitting in the room with your cat may help them adjust.

Scared cats have been known to hurt themselves by wedging themselves inside air-conditioners, heaters, and radiators; behind ovens or inside ceiling tiles—or by dashing out the front door in fear. It is much safer to keep a frightened new cat safely in one cat-proofed room. Open up your cat carrier and let the cat decide whether they want to explore or want to remain in the carrier. Many times a cat will remain in their carrier for hours. Secure the door in the open position and keep the carrier covered so your cat feels secure.

Never try to pull your new foster cat out of hiding. Instead, use toys or treats to encourage them to come out. If your foster cat still won't come out, let them be. Cats need time to adjust to their new environment.

Let your foster cat get used to you slowly. Sit in the room and have treats with you. Read a newspaper or a book out loud while you're sitting there so the cat gets to know your voice. Offer treats to your foster cat in moderation. Never stare directly at your cat or stand or loom over your cat as your cat may feel threatened. When your cat is eating, drinking, using the litter box and moving around the room in a relaxed manner, they may be ready to explore more of the house (after the initial quarantine period). However, if your cat runs when you enter the room, hides, only eats or uses the litter box at night, slinks around the room with their body low to the ground, hisses, growls or cowers, these are signs of fear. They are not ready to come out of confinement yet. Some cats may need less than a day to adjust; others may need days or weeks

to become comfortable enough to explore the entire house without fear. This is normal cat behavior.

Integrating a New Cat

Below is a helpful link for getting your foster cat adjusted to your home.

[Integrating a New Cat in Your Home](#)

Your Foster Cat's Timeline

While your foster cat is with you we will be working on getting them ready for adoption.

Intake

Upon intake all cats are quarantined for up to ten days. During this quarantine period all cats will receive a flea, tick and deworming treatment. Two weeks after intake the cats will receive another round of deworming treatment.

Vaccinations

All foster cats will receive two doses of vaccinations.

The first RCP vaccination will be given as soon as possible. The second RCP vaccination will be administered two weeks prior to their spay/neuter surgery date.

Rabies vaccination is given at the same time as their spay/neuter surgery.

Spay/Neuter Surgeries

All foster cats will be spayed or neutered prior to being adopted. Surgeries take place once a month. Foster cats will recover for a minimum of two weeks before going to their forever home.

Cats will receive their microchip and rabies vaccination at the same time as their spay/neuter surgery.

Posting As Available

Cats will be posted as available as soon as they have a surgery date booked. When it is time for your cat to be posted as available we will ask you for a detailed biography of your cat.

Adoption Time!

When your foster cat is ready to be posted as available the foster plays an important role. At each step of the adoption process we ask that you keep us informed.

Reviewing the Application

When ARCR receives an application for your foster cat we will send you the application to review. You will review the application and consider if this potential adopter is a good fit for your foster cat. Once you have reviewed the application, if you feel it is a good fit we will have our adoption volunteer contact the applicant's references. If the applicant references are good we will inform you so you can continue on with the next steps.

Interviewing the Potential Adopter

Once you have approved the applicant and the references are checked, you will contact the potential adopter via email or phone to discuss your foster cat, be as honest as possible about your foster cat, tell the potential adopter about the good and the bad, and be as detailed as you can about your foster cat's personality type. Ask the potential adopter some questions and just have a chat with them.

Setting up a Meet & Greet

If you are comfortable, you can set up a meet and greet with the potential adopter so they can come and meet the foster cat in person. If you wish to have an ASCD representative present during the meet and greet please let us know in advance.

Show Off Your Foster!

Take lots of pictures and videos, we will share your cat or kitten's story on our social media. Please share on your social media too! If you write a story about the cat or kitten's personality it can make a big difference in the amount of interest the cat gets, so be as descriptive as possible. Pictures, videos and stories can be shared in the Foster chat on facebook.

Foster Cat Biography Outline

Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue has a google form to help guide you in what traits to look out for. All links will be shared at the end of this document.

Health & Temperament

It is important to monitor your foster cat or kitten's health daily. You will need to watch your foster cat or kitten closely for any changes to her health and activity levels.

Behaviour to Watch for

If you notice any of the following behaviours or any behaviour you are uncomfortable or unsure of, contact your foster director or coordinator as soon as possible to discuss:

- Urination/defecation outside of litter box
- New or excessive hissing or growling (in non-ferals)
- New or excessive biting or scratching
- New or continued avoidance

Socialization

You can help set your foster cat up for success through regular handling and play. The more comfortable they are interacting with people, the more social and attractive they will be to potential adopters. One or two play times daily, toy play, gentle handling and brushing are all wonderful ways to socialize while interacting with your foster cat. The degree and nature of human contact a given cat prefers depends on its socialization to people and involves genetics, early rearing conditions, life experiences and personal preference. Providing opportunities for interaction with people gives cats and kittens the opportunity to become better socialized and increases their chances of being adopted.

Short socialization sessions (3-5 minutes) several times a day are better than one or two long sessions. Once the kittens become social with you, have friends or family interact with them too, so that they learn to be social with everyone:

- Work on getting them used to household noises and voices by slowly introducing them (i.e. talking in a normal voice, laughing, opening cabinets, etc.)

- Always pair food or playtime with your presence, whether or not you are touching/interacting with them
- Give them safe objects to explore, such as paper bags and cardboard boxes
- Do not allow them to play with your hands or feet. This will encourage play biting which will continue and be painful once they get older.

Cleaning & Proper Hygiene

Providing a clean, sanitary living space dedicated to just your foster cat is a highly important part of caring for your foster cat and lowering the risk of infections for you and them.

- Practicing good hand hygiene before and after handling animals or objects in the
- Cleaning and disinfecting items in the foster area using the appropriate products
- Ensuring surfaces that are easy to clean and disinfect (vinyl or tile floor, not carpet if possible)
- Stocking the area with animal care supplies that are dedicated to the area and easy to disinfect
- Wash your hands before and after each interaction with your foster pet
- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning or scooping litter boxes
- Scoop out litter boxes at least daily
- Wash food and water bowls frequently
- Remove any organic materials (feces, urine, fur, food) from bedding, floor, furniture etc.
- Wipe up any organic material using animal safe cleaning products and paper towel
- Wash and thoroughly dry bedding if soiled

The cat must be allowed to approach and choose the level of physical contact it desires.

Caretakers should be careful not to force an interaction on a cat.

Signs that indicate that the cat welcomes interaction include:

- Slow blinking
- Purring
- Headbutting against a person's hand or body
- Staying in close physical proximity
- Rubbing or pushing against a person
- Rolling around to the side and back in a relaxed manner

Veterinary Care & Wellness

All veterinary care provided to your foster cat must be approved by the Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue Vetting Director. Veterinary care will be handled by Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue. If you believe your foster cat requires vet attention you will need to submit a vet request form to the Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue Vetting Director. It is important to contact your Foster Director or Coordinator immediately if you notice any concerning behaviour regarding your foster cat so they can be seen as soon as possible. DO NOT CONTACT THE VET. Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue is the client and we must be the one to contact the vet and set up an appointment. The vet is not able to release information to a foster or answer questions. Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue is the client so it must be done through us.

Emergency Situations

If you believe your foster cat is in an emergency situation contact your foster director or coordinator immediately.

Emergency situations may include:

- Very high or low body temperature
- Very pale, blue or grey gums
- Trauma – eg. hit by car, dropped, consistent limping, stepped on, unconscious
- Open mouth breathing, erratic, gasping
- Sneezing or coughing blood
- Seizures or neurologic symptoms
- Severe bleeding (includes bleeding in urine or stool)
- Not eating or drinking
- Continuous vomiting and dehydration
- Liquid diarrhea
- Straining to defecate/not defecate, urinate/not urinating more than 24 hours
- Failure to defecate more than 2 days
- Unable to stand or walk
- Blood in the stool

- Changes in behavior, appetite or thirst
- Darker than usual stools (can be a sign of blood)
- Defecating outside the box
- Straining or vocalizing in the litterbox

Non emergency situations may include:

- If your foster pet has vomited once or has diarrhea once but is still active, eating and drinking
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing or sneezing without blood or airway blockage
- Clear, yellow, or green discharge from the eyes or nose
- Weakness
- Visible parasites

Upper Respiratory Infections (URI)

Viral and bacterial respiratory infections are very common in cats, especially young or stressed ones. Signs include clear to colored discharge from eyes and/or nose, loss of appetite, depression, congestion, sneezing, coughing, fever, etc. Keep the nose and eyes clear of discharge with warm, damp cotton balls. A cat who doesn't feel well may appreciate some extra petting and quiet time in your lap. If you can, coax your foster cat to eat, and their drinking water, inform your Foster Director or Coordinator. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling a cat with visible URI symptoms and before contact with any other cats as URI is extremely contagious to other cats. URI is similar to a human cold, but is generally not transmittable to people or other animal species except for cats. Any cat showing signs of an upper respiratory infection should be isolated from other cats in the household.

Dehydration

Watch carefully to see if your foster cat is drinking water and keep track of litter box activity. You can check for dehydration by lifting the skin up just a little lower than the back of the neck. It should be taut and snap back down when released. If it stands up or takes some time to go

back down, the cat may be dehydrated. Please contact us right away if you think your cat is dehydrated.

Other Common Issues

Let your coordinator know if you notice any of these:

- Fever (greater than 39.5C)
- Loose stool or has had diarrhea once but is still active, eating and drinking
- Continual vomiting or occasional vomiting that lasts more than a day or two
- Extreme lethargy for more than one day
- Eyes that are red and inflamed or have an extreme amount of discharge and swelling, vs. small amounts of discharge, usually in both eyes (common with a URI)
- Any crumbly wax-like substance in the ears, head shaking or scratching
- Fleas or flea dirt (black pepper-like substance in the fur)

Top Tips for Foster Caregivers

- The general rule is to have 1 food bowl, 1 water bowl and 1 litter box for every 2 cats.
- Remember to thoroughly wash your hands after being in contact with your foster animal, especially between handling resident animals and foster animals.
- Appetite and energy are the two most important things to keep watch on. A lack of interest in food or a drop in energy can indicate a serious medical issue, even if no other symptoms are present.
- If your cat seems sick, check immediately for dehydration by pulling the skin up just a little lower than the back of the neck. It should be taut and snap back down. If it stands up or takes some time to go back down, the cat may be dehydrated. Please contact the medical hotline for further instructions.
- Do not take your foster animal to your own veterinarian. If the animal requires any veterinary care, contact your foster coordinator.

Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue Links

The links provided below will help you navigate our foster program systems.

Requesting Supplies

We will periodically ask you to update your supply inventory, this will be done using this google form: [Foster Supply Inventory](#)

Once or twice a month we will have deliveries of supplies, it is important to keep track of your supplies to ensure you do not run out. Pick up is always an option as well. Supply requests will be made here: [Foster Supply Request](#)

Requesting a Vet Appointment

If your foster cat requires a vet appointment you will need to contact your Foster Director or Coordinator, they will email you a questionnaire which you will then send to the Vetting Director at arnpriorcats@outlook.com - Fosters cannot contact a vet on behalf of their foster cat.

Fosters cannot email, call to ask the vet questions. As Arnprior Regional Cat Rescue is the client the vet can only release information to ASCD, please contact your Foster Director or Coordinator if you have questions or concerns about your foster cat's health.

Providing a Thorough Cat Biography

Providing a thorough biography of your foster cat helps them find their forever home, we provide a form which can be filled out here: [Foster Cat Biography Form](#) This form can be filled out as frequently as you'd like to keep us updated on the status of your foster cat. We will generally request this form be completed when your foster cat is ready to be placed up for adoption.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns you can contact your Foster Director or Coordinator on Facebook Messenger in the Foster Group Chat or send an email to arnpriorcats@outlook.com

If you would like to speak to another ASCD Representative that is not your Foster Director or Coordinator send an email to arnpriorcats@outlook.com