



# Foster Care Training

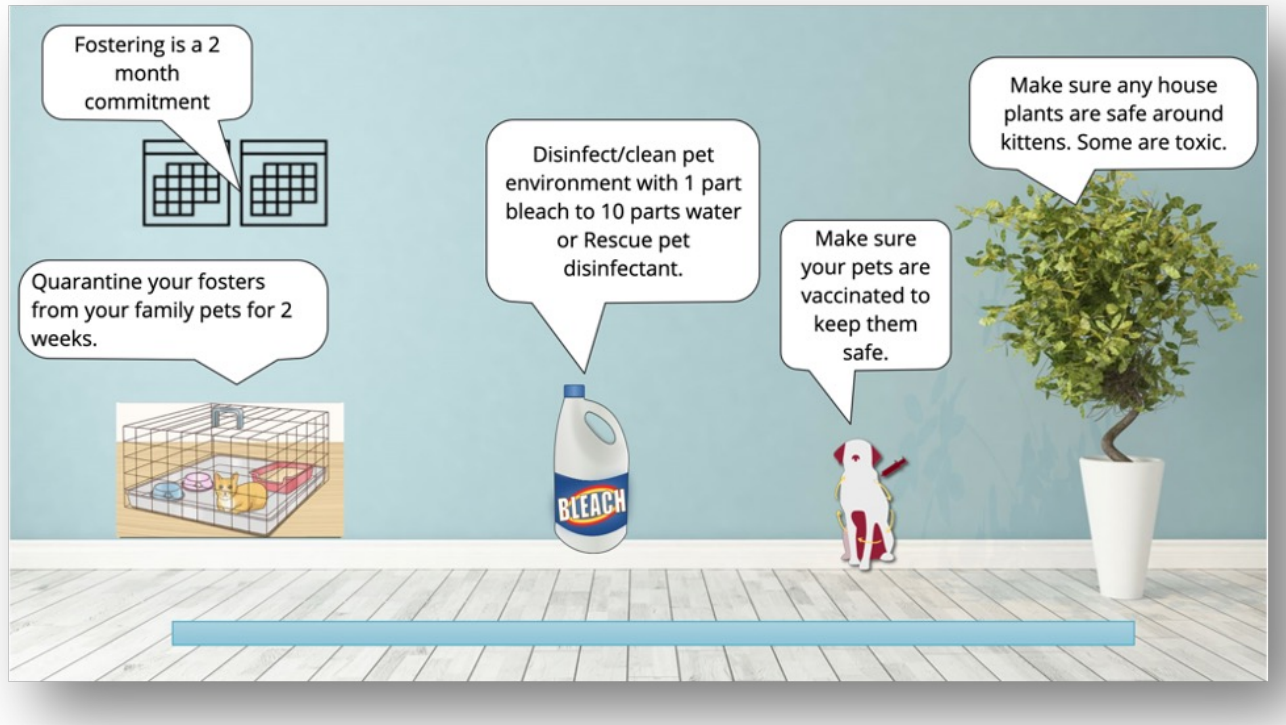
## Lesson 1

2024 - 2025



# Preparing Your Home

## Part 1/8



- Fostering is a 2-month commitment
- **Quarantine your fosters from your family pets for 2 weeks**
- Disinfect/clean pet environment with 1:10 bleach:water solution or Rescue pet disinfectant
- **Make sure your pets are vaccinated to keep them safe**
- Make sure any house plants are safe around kittens. Some are toxic & deadly.

# Teamwork

## Part 2/8

### Join the KC Team

We all work as part of a team at Kitten Central, so when you accept kittens to foster you will be responsible to support our team by:

- Downloading and accessing the TeamUp calendar
- Bringing your kittens to their appointments every 2 to 3 weeks.

The TeamUp Calendar is an app we ask our fosters to put on their mobile devices for quick access to appointment times or other events that are part of the foster experience. The graphic shown is what the app will look like on your phone or computer. More on how to download this app later.

**Check your appointment dates for your fosters' checkups.**

**They change frequently due to many moving parts when it comes to scheduling. We are always happy to accommodate you if your scheduled appointment time doesn't work for you.**

## The TeamUp Calendar



# Care for Neonatal Babies

Part 3/8

Kittens develop through distinctive phases as they grow. The care you give them will change with their progress. This section covers kitten development throughout the fostering commitment.





# Care for Neonatal Babies

Part 3/8



## Care for Neonatal Babies 1-2 Weeks Old with Mama

Make sure mom has food, water, and a litter box. Weigh each baby daily to be sure there are no underlying issues with health or a baby who is not getting enough food.



## Care for Neonatal Orphan Babies 1 - 2 Weeks Old

Kittens without a mom need more attention and care. You will need to:

- Provide a heat source, *not your* body heat, either a heating pad without automatic shut off or a heat disc you warm in microwave.
- Bottle feed 1-week-olds every 2 hours, 2-week-olds every 2 to 3 hours, (at night as well)
- Line their enclosure with flannel & baby blankets (provided by Kitten Central)
- Include a Heartbeat Friend (Optional)
- Provide potty relief. Kittens this age cannot go potty on their own, you will need to stimulate them before and after feeding, so they can pee and poop.
- Watch for sucking. Orphan kittens have the instinct to suck, since they are without a mama, they often try to suck on their siblings' genitals. This is dangerous for both the kitten sucking and the kitten who is the target. The only way to manage this is to separate the kittens involved.



# Care for Neonatal Babies

Part 3/8

## Care for 3-Week-Old Kittens

- Kittens at this age are beginning to get some control of their legs. They can just about walk with their belly off the floor. This is a perfect time to let them explore their little environment. They are not interested in toys, but they like to motor around to check out their world. They still need their heat source and need regular bottle feedings about 4 to 5 hours apart. They still need to be stimulated to potty.



## Care for 4-Week-Old Kittens

4 Weeks is discovery time! These little guys will be making a number of transitions:

- They begin to notice their toys and explore how to play with them.
- Wrestling with siblings is becoming a very popular pastime.
- You may notice poop or pee in their bedding. This is a sign that these little guys can start learning to use a litter box. ONLY NON-CLUMPING clay litter should be used at this age. Clumping litter is hazardous as they will try eating it and that can lead to serious health issues.
- You can begin adding wet food to their formula to begin the process of weaning.
- Place a small bowl of kibble and a small bowl of water in their pen for them to try out. Often, they walk through it, but it's a good time for them to start to learn.
- Continue providing a heat source as the kittens will seek it out when they are resting.
- Bottle feeding should be approximately every 5 hours including overnight.



# Care for Neonatal Babies

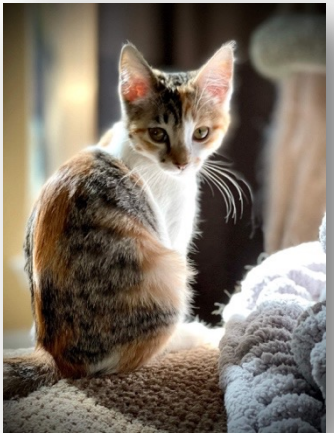
Part 3/8



## Care for 5-6-Week-Old Kittens

Kittens this age are much more active! Their molars are in which indicates they can crunch the dry food or kibble. You support kittens this age by:

- Ensuring water and kibble are always available
- Weighing kittens daily to verify the kittens are eating enough and gaining weight
- Providing an environment with lots to explore and play
- Focusing on safety. Recliners, toxic plants, electrical cords, string or ribbon on the floor can all provide hazards. This is the time to kitten-proof the environment.



## Care for 7+ Week-Old-Kittens

Kittens at this age are nearing the end of their foster care time. They should be eating confidently and be active and playful. This is the age where it sounds like you have a herd of elephants and not a litter of kittens. These guys are getting closer to their adoption day.

- Continue to monitor their weight.
- When they reach 2 pounds, they are ready for spay and neuter. You will be contacted when it's time for them to be scheduled.
- Once the kittens are scheduled for their procedure with the appropriate facility, you will be informed as to the time and what steps you will need to take.

# Care for Neonatal Babies

Part 3/8

## SUMMARY

Kittens change radically in the 8 weeks they are with us. Each phase the kittens go through has a specific care response from the foster.



Remember:

- Even if you are caring for a mom and babies, be sure to weigh the kittens daily to catch a baby that isn't gaining weight or seems to be struggling with a health issue.
- **Do not** leave bottle-fed babies unattended for more than 1-hour at a time until they are being fed every 4 hours. At that point they may be left unattended for up to, but no longer than 2 hours at a time.
- Weigh your kittens as they begin to wean to ensure they are getting the nutrition they need and make sure they always have access to food and water.
- Kitten-proof your home. As they are exploring more of their environment, make sure they have a safe environment to play in.



# Care for Neonatal Babies

Part 4/8

Hannah Shaw is referred to as “The Kitten Lady”. She is an experienced kitten rescuer and fantastic resource for foster parents, and we suggest watching her YouTube videos throughout the foster journey.



# Cleanliness is Key

Part 5/8



## Cleanliness is Key!

- Newborn kittens are fragile, so hygiene is extremely important. Exposure to bacteria can kill a kitten and it is your job to be sure the feeding environment is as sterile as possible.



## Tip #1: Keep All Feeding Equipment Extremely Clean

- Sterilized equipment ensures you are eliminating bacteria.
- **Do** wash bottles, nipples, storage bottles, and bottle brushes in hot, soapy water.
- **Do** boil them to sterilize them between uses. (You can also sterilize them using the microwave sterilizer bag you received in the foster kit).

## Tip #2: Use Kitten Formula Safely.

- ***Kitten formula has a small window for use so be sure you are preparing it correctly.***
- **Do** prepare the right amount of milk replacer that can be used within 24 hours.
- **Do** keep the dry formula refrigerated. Discard any left-over mixed formula after 24 hours.
- **Do** discard any formula after 1 hour if left at room temperature.
- **Don't** reuse leftover formula that has already been warmed for use.



# Cleanliness is Key

## Part 5/8

**Tip #3: Give attention to cleaning the mixing bottle and baby bottles properly.**

- *Kitten formula leaves a film on the mixing bottle, baby bottles and nipples.*
- **Do** soak mixing/storage bottle with very hot water mixed with a few drops of Dawn dishwashing liquid to remove the film.
- **Do** clean the plastic mixing/storage bottle thoroughly every 24 hours with a bottle brush of corresponding size
- **Do** use a bottle brush made specifically for kitten bottles to clean the baby bottles of film.

### Your Bottle Hygiene Checklist

- ✓ Gather your cleaning equipment: bottle brushes, Dawn dish soap, microwave sterilizer bags or pan with boiling water.
- ✓ Soak bottles, nipples and plastic mixing bottle in very hot water with a few drops of Dawn dish detergent. Scrub with bottle brushes. Sterilize after washing.
- ✓ Prepare kitten formula with cleaned bottles and warm for kittens.
- ✓ After feeding, discard warmed formula, return mixed formula to refrigerator, store unmixed dry formula in refrigerator.
- ✓ Be sure to discard any unused mixed formula after 24 hours.



# Equipment Review

## Part 6/8

A) A blender bottle is handy to smoothly mix the formula with water. You don't need to get so fancy, though. A mason jar, lid and any item that will mix the ingredients works fine as well.

B) Kitten Central provides you with a bag in your foster kit. It will be good for 20 uses. However, if you are dedicated to bottle feeding and want to invest in additional sterilizer bags you can purchase them for an entire season of bottle babies.

C) Through trial and error, Kitten Central has found these Well & Good Kitten Nursing Bottles do best with nursing kittens. We have found other bottles tend to collapse at the neck when the kittens suckle. You can find them at PETCO.

D) This is the same bottle but comes as set of different nipple sizes, a bottle and a bottle brush. At Kitten Central we use the Miracle Nipple, so even though the bottle kit comes with other nipples, don't use them. KMR is oily so soaking the bottle in Dawn dish soap and hot water for a few minutes and then cleaning with a bottle brush gets the bottle clean for the next use.





# Equipment Review

## Part 6/8



E) Miracle Nipples are strong and closely resemble mama's teats. They have the hole already set, other nipples you will need to make the hole in the nipple. Miracle Nipples come in a regular and mini size.

F) If you have bottle brushes that fit kitten feeding equipment already, great! If you are looking for a new set, this is a great set to invest in. This set of bottle brushes fits large and small bottles and kitten nipples as well. They are sturdy and long lasting and can be sterilized.

G) Kitten Central provides the formula for nursing kittens. The formula powder should be stored in the refrigerator and once the formula is mixed, it also needs to be stored in the refrigerator and it should be used within 24 hours. **NEVER SUBSTITUTE FORMULA WITH ANY MILK PRODUCT, EVAPORATED MILK, OR DIFFERENT FORMULA PRODUCT.** Only use formula provided by Kitten Central.



H) Baby Wipes should be water based, no fragrance or extra ingredients. Of course you can use a clean, soft cloth or moistened paper towel.



# Bottle Feeding Review

Part 7/8

## Feeding frequency

Depending upon the age of the kitten, you will be bottle feeding on a regular schedule. Refer to this chart from [The Kitten Lady](#) as a rule of thumb.

### kitten weight and feeding chart

AGE	WEIGHT	AMOUNT PER FEEDING	SCHEDULE
0-1 week	50-150 grams	2-6 ml	Every 2 hours
1-2 weeks	150-250 grams	6-10 ml	Every 2-3 hours
2-3 weeks	250-350 grams	10-14 ml	Every 3-4 hours
3-4 weeks	350-450 grams	14-18 ml	Every 4-5 hours
4-5 weeks	450-550 grams	18-22 ml	Every 5-6 hours
5-8 weeks	550-850 grams	(weaning; offer ample wet food)	Every 6 hours

Follow this guideline to determine the proper amount and frequency of feeding. Remember that every kitten is different, and this is a guideline—not a rule book!

# Bottle Feeding Review

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Part 7/8



## Correct Posture

- Kittens need to feed with their belly down. Never feed them holding them like a human baby.

## Warmed Formula

- Make the formula per directions of the manufacturer. You may need to adjust the ratio up or down depending upon your kitten. The Vet Techs at Kitten Central will guide you on this if you need help.
- The formula will need to be warmed before feeding the kitten. Do not use the microwave. The best method is to warm the bottle in a mug of hot water until the formula is a comfortably warm temp which you test by dripping a few drops on your wrist. You can store any unused formula left in the mixing bottle in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Throw out any leftover formula in the baby bottle to avoid bacteria build-up.

# Bottle Feeding Review

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Part 7/8



## Check the Weight

- Particularly when you are dealing with a kitten 1 to 3 weeks old, you need to weigh the baby at each feeding to be sure the kitten is gaining weight. Keeping tabs on the weight indicates if the ratio is right for them & alerts you of any developing health issues. There is a handy weight log on our website under Foster Resources.



## Potty Assistance & Cleaning

- Before and after feeding, potty the kitten. Many kittens will mew while you help them go to the bathroom that is normal.
- After feeding, kittens should have any formula cleaned from their fur. After pottying, the kittens need their bottoms wiped to prevent urine scald.



# Monitoring Kittens

Part 8/8

Weight is an important indicator of how the kitten is doing. Monitor each kitten's weight throughout their placement with you.



*Weight*



*Potting*



*Activity*



*Habitat*



*Progress*



*Safety*

Another key indicator of a kitten's health is her activity level appropriate for their age. While activity levels vary from kitten to kitten, a kitten who is very quiet, listless, and lethargic is cause for concern.

How are your kittens growing? Are they playing with each other? Are they weaning? Are they interested in toys? Do they respond well to you? To other humans? You want to monitor these behaviors to be sure they are growing in confidence and socialization skills.

Kitten elimination is a key indicator of their health. Noting whether a kitten has normal poop, diarrhea, or is constipated, indicates what your care response needs to be.

Observing the kitten's environment provides insight into little milestones they may be achieving such as a three-week-old kitten moving around the pen. Making sure the environment has a good heat supply, for older kittens, food and water. Always make sure their home is clean and dry.

Kitten-proof their environment. Be sure their toys have been properly sanitized if they have been used by another litter. As they grow and explore more of your home, make sure electrical cords, recliners, and other hazards are moved or monitored so the kittens can play safely.

# Assessment

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You have completed Lesson 1 Training.

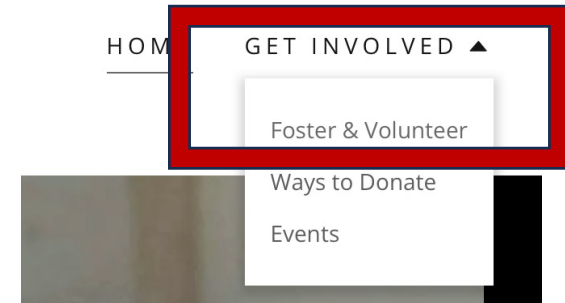
Please return to [www.kittencentral.org](http://www.kittencentral.org) -> Get Involved -> Foster & Volunteer -> Become a Foster

On the Foster training page click on the **Lesson 1 Assessment**. This will open a PDF assessment. You may fill it in electronically or print, fill out, scan it and email it back to us.

Navigate to this page to take the remaining lessons and assessments.

Once all 3 assessments are complete, attach them in ONE email to [katy@kittencentral.org](mailto:katy@kittencentral.org).

Please do not send 3 separate emails. This makes it harder to keep track of completion.



### Become a Foster

Foster parents give kittens a safe environment and monitor their health. They feed the kittens regularly and even help them go to the bathroom. Foster parents make sure their kittens stay clean and warm. Most importantly, they play with and love their kittens to set them up to one day be adopted.

#### Required Foster Training

All prospective fosters must go through our training course and submit their quiz before being an approved foster.

[CLICK TO TAKE OUR FOSTER TRAINING COURSE AND ASSESSMENTS](#)