

COLLIER COUNTY



Foster Care Manual

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Revised July 2013

Welcome!

Thank you for participating in the Collier County Domestic Animal Services (CCDAS) Foster Care program. Fostering is a wonderful way to contribute to CCDAS and its mission by providing love and care to sick, injured, under-socialized, or underage animals. By temporarily sheltering these animals in your home, you allow the shelter to vacate cages & kennels that would otherwise be occupied by animals that are not ready for adoption. Cats and dogs recuperate from illnesses more rapidly in a nurturing home environment and may have a greater opportunity to be socialized than they do at our shelter. The individualized attention you provide for your foster animal is priceless – you are making a lasting impact on their physical and emotional well-being.

This manual is designed to guide you through the fostering process and contains important information about caring for your foster animal and will help to clarify any questions or concerns that you might have along the way.

Our Goal

The goal of the foster program is to provide the animals that come into the care of CCDAS in need of treatable medical conditions the opportunity of a quiet, loving place to recover.

Our Objectives:

- To provide nurturing, temporary homes for dogs, cats and small animals requiring short-term convalescence outside the shelter environment
- To encourage the normal growth and development of very young, otherwise healthy animals
- To encourage the recovery and rehabilitation of animals not yet ready for adoption
- To protect animals, especially very young puppies and kittens, from the risk of disease that may be present in the shelter.

The Collier County Domestic Animal Services Mission Statement

To ensure compliance with local and state animal-related laws, to return strays to their owners and promote adoption of homeless animals to new families, and to work toward ending the community problem of pet overpopulation.

Contact Information

We are here to help and available to answer questions as they arise. When you need to get in touch with us, who you call will depend on the reason and the time.

How to contact us:

Reason	When	Who to Contact
Emergency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal is in immediate distress, having trouble breathing, injured, etc. 	Monday to Saturday 9 am to 6 pm Sunday & after 6 pm on weekdays	CCDAS Dispatch 239-252-7387 Shelter Volunteer Coordinator 239-252-8657 office 239-877-9185 cell or CCDAS Veterinarian 239-877-9184
General Inquiries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking questions or seeking advice, reporting problems, arranging to pick up food, meds, etc. 	Monday to Saturday 9 am to 6 pm Sunday & after 6 pm on weekdays	CCDAS Customer Service 239-252-7387 Volunteer Coordinator 239-252-8657 office 239-877-9185 cell Volunteer Coordinator 239-252-8657 office 239-877-9185 cell
Pick-Up and Returns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make an appointment to pick-up or return a fosterling for surgery or check-up etc. 	Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm	CCDAS Veterinarian Clinic 239-252-6971 Volunteer Coordinator 239-252-8657 office 239-877-9185 cell

Preparing Your Home For A Foster Animal(s)

Before you pick-up your foster animal(s), you will want to prepare your home for their stay.

- Decide where the animal(s) will be kept

Choose a well-ventilated area that is out of the main flow of traffic. A spare bedroom or a lesser-used bathroom (with a window) is a good option. Remember that while the space you provide may seem small compared to what you own animal(s) are used to, even a bathroom will provide the animal with more space than a cage at the shelter would.

The floors in your chosen room should be easy to clean; hardwood, tile or linoleum works best.

- Gather all necessary supplies

You will be given basic supplies: animal carrier, food bowls, food, litter pan, litter, medicine (if needed), crate, collar, toys and leash. Essential items such as food bowls and a litter pan with scoop should be set in place prior to the fosterling's arrival in your home.

- Provide a nest for nursing animals

Nursing cats & dogs should have comfortable blankets to nest in with their offspring. Keep a stock of old linens, as they will have to be changed often. Set up a nest for the animals in a warm and ventilated spot away from high-volume traffic & noise.

- Set up the cage or crate

CCDAS will provide a crate for fostering canines. The crate serves as a quiet resting place for dogs that, as a species, naturally gravitate towards a den. In addition, you may find a crate helpful when you foster kittens and cats, to keep them confined when they are left alone and at night.

CCDAS recommends that dogs sleep in the crate provided at night and during the day when they are left alone. A crate is an essential tool for housetraining and will prevent destructive behaviors borne out of boredom or anxiety while you are away.

To set up the crate, first line the bottom with newspapers, then set up a comfortable sleeping area with food and water dishes and, for cats and kittens, the litter pan. Since a housetraining routine can be established using the crate, we do not recommend allowing a puppy continuous access to his/her food.

Children should be discouraged from playing inside the crate for their safety.

Crating should never be used as a form of punishment.

If you have other pets in your household, you must provide a separate room for your foster animal unless prior authorization is given to allow the pets to interact. This is for the health and safety for all animals involved. No matter how friendly your dog or cat may be, you never know how they may react to a new animal in their territory. Also, although our medical staff examines our shelter animals as soon as they arrive at CCDAS, they may be harboring an illness that could be contagious to your own animals. It is especially important that pregnant and nursing moms and underage animals be kept isolated from other pets in the household. CCDAS cannot reimburse you for medical expenses if your pet catches an illness or becomes injured from an interaction with your foster animals

Picking Up Your Foster Animal(s)

When the shelter has animals that are waiting to go to foster homes, CCDAS staff will begin contacting volunteers (via phone or e-mail), to make foster care arrangements. We will give you detailed information about the foster case including the type of animal, number of animals in the litter, age of the animal, approximate length of needed foster care, and any special instructions pertaining to the animals. Please do not agree to take a foster assignment unless you can keep the animal(s) for the entire length of their foster period.

Once you agree to a foster case, CCDAS staff will arrange a time for you to come to the shelter to pick up the animal(s).

When you arrive at the shelter to pick up your foster animal(s), a CCDAS staff member will go over specific instructions with you regarding the care of the animal(s), and will give you an approximate date as to when the animal(s) are due back to the shelter. You will also be given basic supplies: animal carrier, food bowls, food, litter pan, litter, medicine (if needed), crate, collar, toys and leash.

When your new fosterling arrives home:

If your fosterling is a cat, introduce her/him to his /her room & crate and show him/her where the litter box is. Provide a fresh bowl of water. Give the cat time to settle in and try not to overwhelm him/her with too many noises or visitors during the first few days.

If your fosterling is a dog, take him/her out for a 10 to 15 minute walk as soon as you get home to help relieve anxiety through exercise. This can only be done if the dog is not recovering from an injury. After the walk, walk him/her around the inside of your home on a leash so he/she can become familiar with the new environment. During this process if you have pets in your home they will need to be placed in an area so there is no contact between them and your fosterling for this process.

Caring For Your Foster Animal

Each day you will need to provide your foster animal with fresh food and water. CCDAS staff will discuss how much and how often to feed your foster when you pick them up. Fosters should always have access to fresh water, except bottle feeding infants. Litter pans should be placed away from food & water, and should be cleaned out daily.

Foster animals should be kept cleaned & dry. If your foster animal(s) become dirty, you may need to give them a bath. After bathing young kittens or puppies, make sure to dry them off thoroughly. Make sure to keep their faces clean, and wipe off any excess formula or food to prevent bacterial infections.

Please spend time socializing your foster animal(s) every day. Both playtime and snuggle time are very important in the development of young kittens & puppies. At least one hour of socialization time per day is ideal.

Foster cats & kittens must be kept indoors at all times. Dogs can go for walks, but please do not take them to dog parks or dog beaches or let them interact with other dogs. Puppies may be taken outside to do their business, but please keep them in your own yard. Young puppies have not been vaccinated against disease and should not be around other dogs. Foster dogs are only allowed off leash in a securely fenced in area. Never leave your foster dog alone in the yard, monitor him/her while outside.

If you run out of needed supplies, please call the main number of the shelter during regular business hours to schedule a pick-up of refills. CCDAS will not deliver supplies to you. CCDAS will not be able to reimburse you for supply purchases unless prior authorization was given. We feed all of the animals a consistent diet to prevent stomach upset. Please do not switch your foster animal(s) to another brand of food unless directed to do so by CCDAS staff.

Health Concerns

It is always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals, whether at the off-leash dog park, the vet's waiting room, or other common animal areas. If the foster parents' own animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle and are not elderly or very young – and therefore their immune systems are not compromised – then the health risk is minimal. If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before fostering. If you or someone in your household is pregnant, talk to your doctor before fostering cats.

Working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonoses. A zoonotic disease is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also humans to animals. There are about 400 of these diseases. To find out more about them talk to your

veterinarian. Proper hygiene, preventative measures and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.

Foster Parent Responsibilities

You will need to communicate with CCDAS on a weekly basis via phone or e-mail, particularly with regard to the temperament and medical condition of the foster animal in your care.

The responsibilities of the foster parent are:

- Provide safety for the animal at all times.
- Provide food and water (adequate nutrition).
- Provide lots of love!
- Provide the creature comforts (toys, treats, bedding, etc.).
- Provide time (nurture, play, socialization, etc.).
- Prescribed Medical Care

Common Parasites in Cats and Dogs

CCDAS works to diagnose any health concerns in animals prior to them being sent to a foster home, but some conditions may only become apparent once the animal has settled in. Unexpected conditions can range from common parasites to severe viral infections. Please contact us if you have any questions whatsoever about your fosterling health or behavior. Below is a chart of the most common parasites found in cats & dogs:

Parasite	Description & Symptoms	Treatment
Roundworm	Roundworm is the most common worm in both dogs & cats. They live in the stomach and intestinal tract, resemble spaghetti, and are about 5 inches long. Heavy infestation causes animals to appear thin and pot-bellied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-worming with oral medication • Please contact CCDAS if you notice worms around the anal region or in stool or vomit.
Tapeworm	Tapeworms have flat, white, rice-like bodies that are approximately 1.5 inches long. They rarely produce well-defined symptoms but, in the cases of heavy infestation of a malnourished animal, symptoms may include dullness, irritability, increased appetite, dry & harsh coat, or mild diarrhea. It is important to know that tapeworm cannot be directly transmitted to your own animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-worming with oral medication • Please contact CCDAS if you notice worms around the animal's anal region or in stool or vomit.
Ear Mites	Ear mites are highly contagious tiny, white parasites that live on the surface of the ear canal producing a flaky, dark brown and sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of a topical miticide and routine ear cleaning.

	waxy discharge in the ear canal. Infected animals will shake their heads and scratch or rub their ears.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please contact CCDAS if you notice the animal shaking its head or scratching its ears excessively.
Fleas	Fleas are the most common external parasite that is found on the skin of cats & dogs. An adult flea is a dark brown insect that can be seen on the animal's skin along with their eggs and flea feces (black specks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All cats and dogs are given a flea treatment soon after their arrival at the shelter. • Please contact us if you notice excessive scratching.
Ticks	Most common to dogs, ticks are small rounded arachnids that attach to one spot and do not move. Once they insert their head under the skin, they begin engorging themselves on the blood of the host.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All dogs are given a tick treatment soon after arriving at the shelter via topical or oral medication. • If you see a tick on your fosterling, please contact us.
Ringworm	Ringworm is a highly contagious fungal disease that produces dry, scaly, hairless patches. While ringworm does not usually itch, advance cases may produce scabs and lesions that the animal may lick or scratch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment requires routine shampooing. • Please contact us if you notice patches of hair loss and excessive scratching.

Medical Concerns

Because animals come from various sources, an animal may have medical or behavioral condition that doesn't show itself until after it has entered the foster home. In some cases, the condition(s) may require that the foster animal be removed from the foster care program entirely. If such a situation arises, you will be required to return the animal to CCDAS within 24 hours of being requested to do so.

Please be sure to monitor your foster animal(s) daily for signs of illness or injury. Any vomiting, diarrhea, sneezing, coughing, lethargy or change in energy level, loss of appetite, loss of weight or failure to gain weight, constipation, blood in stool, dehydration, nasal or eye secretions, or anything "different" should be reported to CCDAS.

It is important to monitor fecal/urinary activity daily as it will provide clues to the health of the foster animal. If you are fostering a litter of kittens or puppies, it is also a good idea to weigh them daily on a digital scale. Kitten & puppies should gain roughly ½ ounce per day. A failure to gain weight may indicate that they have parasites.

Infant animals are very fragile, and many medical concerns can be life threatening. Diarrhea can lead to severe dehydration which is often fatal, and even a flea infestation can lead to anemia and death. It is very important that you take all medical issues seriously when dealing with infant animals.

In the unfortunate event that a foster animal passes away at your home, please call us and inform us. We require that the body be brought to the shelter for proper disposal. Please understand that unfortunately death is a reality when fostering infant animals. Infants that were abandoned by their mother at a young age may not have received the necessary immunities from their mother's milk to ward off illness, and they may not survive despite the best care and medicine.

Administering Medications

Administering medication to your foster animal may be necessary. Medications come in many different forms and proper administration is essential for the animal to receive the maximum benefit from the prescribed treatment. *Medications should always be given for the full amount of time prescribed, even if you fosterling starts to show signs of improvement.*

Pills & Capsules

- Pills and capsules are administered by mouth.
- When giving pills, tilt the animal's head back with one hand while gently opening its mouth and dropping the pill into the back of its throat with your other hand. Gently hold the animal's mouth closed, with its head pointed straight up, and gently rub the throat in a downward motion or blow on its nose to encourage the swallowing reflex.
- Pill may also be administered in a small piece of cheese, hotdog, canned food but this method is usually less effective with cats.

Liquids

- For Cats: tilt the head back, open the mouth and slowly dribble the liquid from a syringe or dropper onto the back of the cat's tongue. If the cat coughs or sputters, decrease the amount of the head tilt. If the medication is bitter tasting, the cat may foam at the mouth.
- For dogs: Liquids may be administered in one of two ways. You can tilt the dog's head back, open its mouth and dribble the liquid onto the back of its tongue with a dropper or syringe. If the dog coughs or sputters, decrease the degree of the head tilt. Otherwise, you may tilt the dog's head back slightly, hook the side of its cheek out to form a pouch and slowly dribble the liquid into the pouch with a syringe or dropper, allowing the dog time to swallow.

Pastes

- For dogs or cats: the easiest way to administer a paste is to place the appropriate amount as a ribbon on your finger, open the animal's mouth and smear the paste on the roof of its mouth.
- For cats, an alternative method is to place the paste on his/her front leg so he/she will lick it off. (Since the dosage isn't always accurate this way, only use this method for medications that don't have to be measured exactly.)

Ointments and Creams

- Eyes: to administer ointment, tilt the animals head back slightly, squeeze a small amount of ointment evenly over the surface of the eye. When administering drops or ointment to a cat, it may be necessary to have someone assist you by holding the cat, or you may want to wrap the cat securely in a towel or pillowcase.
- Ears: Grasp the tip of the ear with one hand and hold the ear flap perpendicular to the head. With the other hand, drop in the prescribed number of drops or amount of ointment. Continue to hold the ear to work the medication down inside the ear canal. Again, when administering drops or ointment to a cat, you may need assistance or may find it useful to first wrap the cat securely in a towel or pillowcase.

Checking Temperature

In rare instances, we may ask you to take the temperature of your fosterling if you suspect a fever or to monitor the health of young animals and their mother. If you are uncomfortable with taking your fosterlings temperature, we will do it at the shelter.

We recommend using a digital thermometer, since it provides a clearer reading and is more durable than a glass thermometer.

To take your fosterling’s temperature:

1. Lubricate the end of a rectal thermometer with petroleum jelly.
2. Insert the thermometer into the animal’s rectum and wait for the thermometer to beep.
3. Use a tissue to clean off the end of the thermometer and read the temperature displayed.

Contact us immediately if your fosterling’s temperature is over 40 C (104 F).

Species	Normal Temperature Range
Cat	37.78 – 39.17 C (100 – 102.5 F)
Dog	38.33 – 39.17 C (101 – 102.5 F)

Injuries and Bites

Injuries and/or bites may happen however diligent a caregiver may be. ANY injury or bites must be immediately reported to CCDAS so further investigation may be given.

Returning Your Foster Animal (s)

All foster animals remain the property of CCDAS and must be returned to CCDAS for their final health check, spay, neuter procedure and adoption. When returning your fosterling, you may feel a sense of sadness, loss, and even guilt. Often this is the most challenging time for a foster volunteer. Rest assured, all potential adopters must fill out an adoption application and be approved; your fosterling will soon be in a loving home.

Please call in advance of your approximate return date so that we can schedule a mutually convenient time for the foster animal(s) to be returned. We will need to make sure to reserve a kennel or cage space for your foster. Please do not return fosters without calling first ahead to schedule their return.

Foster Parent Adoptions

Foster parents may adopt their foster animals as long as they meet the same adoption requirement as any other potential adopter. The foster parent must fill out a CCDAS adoption application and be approved as with any other adoption. The foster parent must sign the adoption contract and pay for the adoption fee.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following plants and foods can be harmful and in some cases fatal to animals:

Alcohol	Caladium	Four-O'Clocks	Mountain Laurel
Almonds	Calla Lilly	Foxglove	Narcissus
Amaryllis	Castor bean	Garlic	Oleander
Anthurium	Cherry	Hyacinth bulbs	Onion
Apricot	Chinese Sacred	Hydrangea	Peach
Aspirin	Heavenly bamboo	Holly berries	Pencil Cactus
Autumn Crocus	Chocolate	Iris corms	Philodendron
Avocado	Choke Cherry	Jack in the pulpit	Poinsettia
Azalea	Chrysanthemums	Jimson Weed	Potato
Begonia	Clematis	Kalanchoe	Rhododendron
Bird Of Paradise	Crocus bulb	Lantana	Rhubarb leaves
Bittersweet	Croton	Lilly	Rosary pea
Bleeding Heart	Daffodil	Lilly of the valley	Schefflera
Boxwood	Delphinium	Lupine species	Shamrock
Bracken fern	Dumb Cane	Marijuana or Hemp	Spurge
Buckeye	Elderberry	Milkweed	Tomatoes
Buttercup	English Ivy	Mistletoe Berries	Yew
Caffeine	Fig	Morning glory	

Remove any rat or mouse poisonings and windshield wiper or antifreeze fluid from your house before fostering!

**Thank you very much for your commitment to the animals at
Collier County Domestic Animal Services.**

