

# Foster Coach Program SOP - Cats/Kittens

## Purpose

Use the experience and expertise of our volunteer and foster base to provide support to our foster program as a whole. Roles include foster coaches, foster coach admin, and lead foster coach. All positions report to Feline Foster Coordinators and Foster Supervisor.

## Positions

- **Foster Coach Admin Volunteers** maintain the spreadsheet of active fosters, add notes to coach and Foster Coordinator spreadsheet from other sources (ie. emails), and maintain the Drive of foster and foster coach resources.
  - **Lead Foster Coach** supports and guides foster coaches, assists foster coordinator in fielding foster applications and works closely with foster coordinator to determine best foster placement options.
  - **Foster Coaches** serve as mentors to foster parents and act as an intermediary between foster parents and coordinators to limit inundation of non-critical or routine items to Foster Coordinator.
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## Foster Coach Admin

### Tasks

- Foster Coach Admin works closely with the Foster Coordinator to maintain a spreadsheet of active foster homes.
- Maintains Drive of foster parents and foster coach resources and forms.
- Assists Foster Coordinator and Lead Foster Coach in assigning foster coaches to new foster parents.
- Keeps foster coaches updated on changes to processes within the program.

### Requirements

- Foster Coach Admin Volunteers must possess excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Knowledge of excel and google suite.
- Ability to aggregate information from various sources (ie. foster coaches, foster coordinator, foster parents via email, messages, social media posts.)

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## Lead Foster Coach

### Tasks

- Lead Foster Coaches work closely with the Foster Coordinator to help assign foster pets to foster parents to make best placement decisions for foster pets.
- Works with Foster Coordinator and Admin to assign foster coaches to new foster parents.
- Provides support to foster coaches and can assist with triaging a problem to Foster Coordinator.

### Requirements

- Lead Foster Coaches must possess leadership skills and use good judgement in making foster placements.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner.
- Advise fosters and foster coaches in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Must be familiar with and able to explain the foster process from inquiry to adoption.

## Foster Coaches

### Tasks

- Foster Coaches will represent LifeLine and LifeLine's policies in a professional manner and will advise foster parents in accordance with the guidelines in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Must be familiar with and able to explain the foster process from inquiry to adoption.
- Foster Coaches will reach out to assigned foster parents at designated check in contact schedule (see below).
- Provide appropriate coaching for medical and development concerns for kittens
- Provide access to marketing assistance.
- Provide coaching on the adoption process.
- Ensure regular vetting reminders for dewormers and vaccines are sent and will communicate to the Foster Coordinator as needed in regard to vetting for foster kittens.
- Anytime the foster coach feels uncomfortable addressing a particular situation with a foster parent, the foster coach should reach out to the Foster Coordinator.

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## Requirements

- Foster Coaches must possess excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Foster Coaches must be familiar with and abide by the policies set forth in the LifeLine Animal Project Foster Manual.
- Able to use good judgement in escalating concerns to the Foster Coordinator.

## Escalation Procedures for Foster Coaches

Sometimes a foster parent will raise a concern to the foster coach that requires the immediate notification of the Foster Coordinator. Examples would include:

- Foster cat bites someone and breaks skin
- Shows symptoms of fading kitten syndrome
- Mom cat foster has rejected kittens
- In need of scheduling medical procedures (foster coach should give walk in hours for routine medical)
- Foster is no longer with foster parent (missing or gave to someone else)

## Use of Foster Coach Email

Foster Coaches are permitted to use their personal email accounts to contact their foster parents, however there is an account set up to field general questions and requests for advice from current foster parents. ALWAYS sign the emails you send from the foaster coach account with your name.

The account has two types of labels. The first is to label by type of issue to give coaches who give good advice for certain behavior problems an easy way to identify those emails. The second type of label is each foster coach's name. You can add your name to emails that come in from one of your foster parents, or emails that you are responding to. After a correspondence is complete, always add the label “\_complete.”

## Check-In Schedule and Talking Points

Check-In Schedule	Time Frame
Introduction and first check in	~24-48 hours after take home
Routine check ins	Every two weeks until adopted

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After adoption check in	After foster is adopted or returned to shelter
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## Check-in #1 Template (sent within 24-48 hours of take home)

Hello [foster parent name]!

Welcome to feline fostering with LifeLine Animal Project! My name is [foster coach name] and I'm here to help as your foster coach. With so many kittens out in foster this season, our foster coordinator often receives a ton of emails and questions to process each day.

Foster coaches such as myself can often help you out with any questions and concerns you may have, allowing foster staff to be able to triage emergency cases. I should be your first point of contact with any questions you have. Every litter that goes out to foster opens up another spot for us to save more kittens, so thank you so much for your help!

Make sure you have your manual handy, it has everything you need to know about the foster process, but please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or issues.

### **A couple initial questions:**

1. Are your kittens in a safe quarantine area? This should be a safe spot in the home where they are isolated from other animals. Most people use bathrooms and spare rooms. Do you have any questions I can answer about quarantining?
2. Did you watch our Cat Foster Orientation video? Are you aware of your kitten's vetting schedule and know when you are able to come to the shelter vet for drop in appointments?
3. Do you need any additional supplies? If so, please let me know and I will ask the foster coordinator to let you know when you can pick them up!

### **For bottle babies:**

1. How have feedings gone so far? Are your kittens latching, eating the appropriate amount for their weight?
2. Are the kittens peeing and pooping regularly? If so, about how often? What is the consistency of their stool?
3. Are they gaining/maintaining/losing weight?

### **For in-betweeners/weaning age:**

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1. Are your kittens eating wet food well, or are they eating slurry? About how often are they eating? Do they seem to enjoy their food?
2. How is their activity level? Is there any hissing or hiding?
3. Are they gaining/maintaining/losing weight?
4. Are the kittens peeing and pooping regularly? If so, about how often? Are they using the litter box? What is the consistency of their stool?

## **For independant eaters:**

1. How are your kittens adjusting to their new environment?
2. Is there any hissing, or hiding? Do they readily approach you?

## **For queens & kittens:**

1. How is the mama cat adjusting to the new environment? Has she found a suitable nesting place? Is she nursing and tending to the kittens?
2. Are the kittens gaining weight? Are they active and alert? Can you handle them without mama cat being upset?
3. Has mama been using the litter box? What have her bowel movements been like?

## **For adults/special needs:**

1. How is the kitty adjusting to the new environment? Have they been eating, drinking, and using the litter box?
2. If the kitty is on medication, how are they at taking the medicine? Do they have trouble or give you trouble with it?
3. If the kitty is healing from a surgery, are they fussing with their suture/surgery site? Does it seem to be healing okay?

Do you know we have a Facebook group? Our group is a fun place for other foster parents to meet and interact with each other, share photos, and is also a great resource for tips and tricks from other experienced foster parents. You can request to be added here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/218185506266779>

Lastly, I just wanted to make sure you are aware of LifeLine's emergency protocols. Full details can be found on page 20 of your foster manual or on your Foster 911 sheet. LifeLife will not reimburse for any veterinary expenses outside of this protocol, so make sure you have read that thoroughly. As a general rule, if your kitten is still alert and active, it is not an Emergency.

## **DCAS:**

If you're having an emergency between the hours of 9am-5pm, come to the Shelter directly or call 404-782-0942. For after-hours emergencies (5pm-9am), call 404-782-0942. Leave a message if no one answers. If your call is not returned within 5

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minutes, send a text message listing who you are, your foster pet is, and the nature of the emergency.

## FCAS:

If you're having an emergency between the hours of 9am-4pm, come to the Shelter directly or call 404-550-2919. For after-hours emergencies (4pm-9am), call 404-550-2919. Leave a message if no one answers. If your call is not returned within 5 minutes, send a text message listing who you are, who your foster pet is, and the nature of the emergency.

## CAC:

If you're having an emergency between the hours of 9am-5pm, come to the Shelter directly or call 404-357-1809. For after-hours emergencies (5pm-9am), call 404-357-1809. Leave a message if no one answers. If your call is not returned within 5 minutes, send a text message listing who you are, your foster pet is, and the nature of the emergency.

Thank you again for fostering, and please let me know how they progress!

## Routine Check-in Template (every two weeks until adoption ready)

Hello [foster parent name]!

How are you? I just wanted to check in on you and your foster kitten(s). Let me know if you have any questions or concerns about your foster(s)! I'm here to help.

If you have any photos or videos of your foster(s), we'd love to see them! Content like this could appear on our newsletter or in our marketing materials in order to recruit more foster parents, show donors where their money is being spent, and demonstrate the successes of our foster programs to the public! Also, who doesn't love sharing cat pictures?

Once again, I'm here if you need anything. Thank you for fostering!

## After Adoption Check-in Template

Hello [foster parent name]!

Congratulations! Your foster kitten(s) have all been spayed/neutered and adopted!

We want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for nurturing these precious felines and giving them a shot at full, happy lives. Without you, this would not have been

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possible! Families have been completed, lives have been changed, and tremendous love has been shared because of your dutiful care and commitment to your foster animal(s).

This is an incredible step in the fostering process, and while it can be heartbreaking to say goodbye, you can rest assured that your fosters are in loving hands. If you are having difficulties with the transition process, we encourage you to read this [lovely article about saying goodbye](#). The time immediately after a foster goes to their forever home can be rough, but if we keep our hearts open we can continue to make change in our community through fostering!

Now that your fosters are in their forever homes, we'd like to hear any feedback you have about our program and whether or not you'll be fostering with us again. If you no longer wish to foster, please let us know and we'll take you off of our emailing list! If you want to continue fostering, no further action is needed. If you have any questions or concerns about your fostering experience, please email me and your foster coordinator and we will get back to you as soon as we can to address your comments!

Once again, I want to say THANK YOU for fostering with Lifeline, and we hope to see you again soon.

## Home Inspection Check In Template

All foster homes are required to undergo a home inspection twice a year per the Department of Agriculture Animal Protection Act rule 40-13-13-02 (6). In order to keep complete this requirement, foster coaches must complete a virtual home inspection within 14 days of a new foster being assigned. Existing foster homes will be subject to a home inspection every six months.

***Please familiarize yourself with the home inspection requirements and paperwork:***

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vgZVEC58nbd4R6q3UZWSJidnCrFYrzrj/view?usp=sharing>

1. Receive an email from the Foster department containing the home inspection paperwork.
2. Contact the foster to arrange a time to do a video chat home inspection on the platform of your choice.
3. After video home inspection is complete, fill out the applicable sections of the dept of ag home inspection form and submit. This will send the forms to the

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foster parent for them to fill out their portion. Once they submit, the paperwork will automatically come back to the Foster Dept for filing.

4. If you have any concerns regarding the inspection, please contact your coordinator.
5. For existing foster parents, they are required to fill out an updated foster agreement form along with the department of agriculture home inspection form. Once they submit, the completed will be sent to the foster office.
6. Please go to the Main Foster Spreadsheet Copy and enter the date of the home inspection in the Home Inspection column.