



# Champaign County Animal Control



## Foster Handbook







# 1. Before You Foster

## Foster Requirements

We require our fosters to meet these criteria:

- Foster must be at least 20 years of age
- Foster must live in a home that allows animals
- Foster must have valid ID
- Foster must have reliable transportation

Before CCAC staff matches you with an animal, you must first fill out all necessary forms and complete all necessary trainings. Be sure that all members of your household are listed on the application. Make sure everyone agrees to foster the animal. Delegate who is responsible for the animal's care. We do a thorough background check on all applicants, so please be honest on your application.

## Where do our animals come from?

Our animals come from a variety of different places around Champaign County. Some come from cruelty confiscation, while others are strays. Their history is often unknown to us, so we are unaware of their quirks and behaviors. Often, the animals are abused, neglected, or have never known a good family. These animals need specialized attention and patience, so they can learn what it's like to live with a normal family. These animals are not perfect and may not be ready for adoption. Our animals may also be hurt, or sick and need extra observation and medical attention.

Sometimes, our animals are owner surrendered to us because their owners are unable to care for them. This often leaves the animal confused, or depressed and in need of another loving home. This is when our fosters come in to give our animals confidence and stability.

## Home Checks

Before fostering, fosters must pass a 'home check.' A home check is an evaluation of the home the animal will be living in. A member of CCAC staff will do a walkthrough of one's home and look for any potential hazards that may exist. These hazards include, but aren't limited to:

- Chemicals
- Certain plants
- Loose cords
- Human food and medication
- Drugs/alcohol
- Holes in fences
- Unnecessary clutter/mess
- Faulty windows/doors
- Aggressive/standoffish pets

Please be sure none of these items are accessible to your potential foster animal. If you cannot pass a home check, we will be unable to send a foster pet home with you.

## Foster Expectations

Fosters are not expected to supply any physical supplies. Instead, we expect fosters to have patience and time for their foster animals. Foster animals are a time commitment. We expect our fosters to allot time for play, walks, and cleaning. Due to a high volume of mistreated animals, you will likely have to train your animals for certain situations. Possible training opportunities are walking outside on a leash, house-breaking, or even just getting used to being around people. If your animal has specific behavioral needs, they will be outlined at animal pick-up.

There are instances where your foster animal may have special needs like sickness, or injury. In this case, we expect our fosters to give medications (if necessary), monitor symptoms, and take your foster animal to scheduled vet appointments.

# Fostering

## Supplies

CCAC will provide all necessary supplies for your foster animal. This may include:

- Food
- Litter
- Crates
- Blankets
- Bowls
- Medication (if needed)
- Toys
- Collar/Leash/Harness

All animals will be vaccinated and microchipped before leaving the CCAC facility.

## Initial Visit

We have our fosters visit the animal before taking them home. This is to make sure that the animal's personality will mesh well with your lifestyle. We do allow you to take the animal home the same day if you decide the animal will work for you.

## Medical Dates

The most common medical date for a CCAC foster animal is a spay/neuter surgery. If the animal has not yet been neutered, they may need to come back for their neuter appointment. Animals cannot be adopted out until after they are neutered. CCAC will have care instructions for animals' post-operation.

Sometimes animals will have medical dates outside of being neutered. Since this is a case-by-case basis, our resource coordinator will send you with special instructions and medical visit dates.

## First Few Days Home

Your foster animal will likely be overwhelmed when they first arrive to your home. Best practice is to follow these instructions:

- Designate an area for your new foster dog. This

could be a small room in your house, a crate, etc. Make sure your animal can be separate from loud noises, other animals, and children. Give your animal a few days here and allow them to exit once they are comfortable. Be sure they always have access to this area. If you have animals in your home already, make sure to follow the steps in the next section for animal introductions.

## Animal Introductions

If you have animals already in your home, please follow these steps when introducing:

### Scent Swapping

Confine your new animal to a designated area that your pet cannot access. This is important because animals can be unpredictable when it comes to encountering a strange animal.

Before the animals meet face to face, you should introduce an item with the new animal's scent to your pet. This can be an item like a blanket, bed, or toy.

Put both animals' food bowls on opposite sides of a closed door. This will help both animals associate their scents with something they enjoy.

### Slow Introduction

Once your pets are comfortable with each other's scents (No growling/hissing) you can supervise a visual introduction. It is best for them to see each other through a gate or clear door so they are still separated. Gradually increase the time they can see each other

Once your pets are used to seeing each other you can conduct a face-to-face meeting. Be sure to do this in neutral territory (outside, garage, common area). Gradually increase meeting times until they are comfortable with each other.

### Safe Spaces

Make sure each animal has their own space they are comfortable in and can retreat to.

Reward calm, non-aggressive behavior. Positive reinforcement is more effective than negative reinforcement.

Be sure to supervise your animals during the initial stages of introduction. Never force

interactions as this can create more stress for your animals. Allow them to approach each other at their own pace.

## **Behavior**

When training, animals respond best with positive reinforcement. Refrain from hitting or yelling at your foster animal. Not only is this abuse, but it is not effective in training your animal. Reward good and wanted behavior with treats and toys. Redirect or ignore when the animal is doing unwanted behavior e.g. redirect a teething puppy by giving them a teething toy when they are chewing on something they shouldn't.

## **Health/Vet Care**

Life threatening illness or injury

If your foster animal is showing signs of a medical emergency, please contact UIUC at (217) 333-5300. Here are some examples of what constitutes an emergency:

- Shortness of breath
- Excessive bleeding
- Excessive vomiting
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness
- Choking
- Broken bone
- Bloating

If you bring your foster animal to UIUC for an emergency, be sure to bring your foster folder with the animal's medical records and ID number. If you do not bring this folder, you will be responsible for payment.

Non-threatening illness or injury

If your foster is showing signs of a non-threatening illness, please email the resource coordinator and they will schedule a vet visit for your foster animal.

**\*NOTICE\*** Often when an animal leaves a facility that houses animals they will break with kennel cough. Although this is contagious, it will often go away on its own. If your foster animal is still

showing symptoms after 10 days, please contact the CCAC resource coordinator. Quarantine foster animal from other animals in your home for at least 10 days to prevent the spread of kennel cough.

## **Grooming**

If necessary, CCAC will book a grooming appointment. This will be for cases for matting, skin conditions, or an extreme need for de-shedding. A groom appointment will need to be scheduled by CCAC staff. If the foster schedules an appointment without prior approval, the foster will be responsible for payment.

## **Visits**

Fosters must be able to transport animals to CCAC for adoption visits. We will be sure to give a week's notice if your foster animal has a visit. Adoption visits typically last 30min.-1hr. You are welcome to stay during the visit, but it is not mandatory.

## **Returning Animals**

Please give us 2 weeks' notice if you are unable to keep your foster animal. If you are going out of town, please give us one weeks' notice so we can plan for space.

## **Staying in Touch**

The resource coordinator will do monthly check-ins either by email or phone call. It would help us greatly if you sent photos/bios for your foster animal to help them get adopted. If you'd like, post your foster animal on your social media with the link to their Petfinder page.



