

Neonatal Kitten Intake Procedures

Intake Policy:

For your organization being with a description of your intake policy, including: where kittens come from, such as directly from the community, or from another shelter; ideal duration of time litters should be in the nursery before being moved to foster, etc.

APA! Intake Policy (sample):

As a matter of policy and under our contract with the City of Austin, APA! does not take animals directly from the public. When exceptions are made, kittens enter our program through PASS (Positive Alternatives to Shelter Surrender). Our kittens come primarily from the city shelter, Austin Animal Center (AAC). If AAC receives kittens or nursing and pregnant cats they cannot keep, they call APA!. If we are at or over capacity in the nursery, we must decline, in which case the kittens will be euthanized. We strive to accept all kittens. Ideally, all kittens go to foster homes at intake or within 7-10 days.

When partner shelter receives kittens:

- The Rescue Manager is alerted that there are kittens needing transport to APA!.
- The Rescue Manager confirms that we can accept the kittens and then sends out a plea for transport.
- Upon arrival in the nursery:
 - Kittens are tested for FeLV and their overall health is evaluated. FeLV-positive kittens are isolated and fosters are found for them.
 - Flea treatment and dewormer are given.
 - Necessary medications and/or medical treatments are started.
 - Kittens are bathed if necessary.
- If a foster is available to take the kittens, they are passed directly to the foster. If not, the kittens are sent to the nursery.
- Kittens are named by transporter, foster, or feeders on duty.
 - Litters in our program are identified by an alphabetical numbering system. The first litter of the year is A1, and each kitten in the litter is given a name beginning with the letter "A." This continues through the end of the alphabet, and then we start over with A2, etc.
 - The number of the litter is attached to each kitten's name (ex: a kitten from the A1 litter will be named Adam 1; a kitten from the B2 litter, Bob 2) as additional identification for administrative purposes.
- Kittens are placed into a crate and a file with their medical charts and each kitten's feeding chart is started. Accurate record keeping is essential.
- There are other administrative tasks associated with the intake of a kitten that are done by management or the Data Administrator.

Kittens are housed in three different areas in the nursery, which are designated Room A,

Room B, and Room C. There is also an overflow/intake room that can be used when the nursery is at peak capacity. The nursery has a total capacity of 45 litters.

Nursery room rotation—"all in—all out"

- When one room is filled, then the next room will be used, and then the next.
- Once a room has reached capacity, new litters are not put into that room until all of its litters have left the nursery and the room has been decontaminated. This is referred to as "all in—all out" and is done to prevent and control contagion.
- When possible, management will decontaminate the room. When management is not available, a plea will be sent for volunteers, or feeders can be tasked to decontaminate during their shifts if the nursery is caught up.
- Empty cages should be cleaned, sanitized, and made ready for incoming litters. Crates are not reused once they've been vacated by a litter.

When kittens arrive in the nursery

- If the kittens arrive in a pet carrier, sanitize the carrier and place it in the storage room—do not put a carrier in the storage room until it has been sanitized.
- Sanitize the pet carrier by first scrubbing with 409 cleanser (the only cleanser approved for use in the nursery), then spray completely with either diluted bleach or disinfectant (currently, the nursery uses Trifectant) and allow to soak for 10 minutes. Wipe clean thoroughly. Wear gloves when sanitizing carriers.
- Dispose of any bedding that came with the kittens as soon as they are taken out of the carrier. We do not know what it may have been exposed to and it is not to be mixed with any nursery laundry. Do not leave used bedding out in the nursery.
- Small bottle babies that arrive in clean cardboard carriers are left in the carrier with clean bedding and a heat source, and the carrier is then placed in a crate. If the cardboard carrier is soiled, dispose of it. Dispose of any bedding that came with the kittens and give them clean nursery bedding. Small kittens are kept in the carrier as a precaution—they can crawl away from their heat source if they are in too large of a space or can slip through the bars on the crate door.
- If older kittens arrive in a cardboard carrier, break it down and dispose of it in the recycle bin; if it is soiled, dispose with the trash. Do not leave these carriers sitting out in the nursery—they may carry contagion that can spread to the kittens.
- If the kittens are older, they can be placed in the crate without the extra precaution of a carrier. Place a heated snuggle disc and clean bedding with them. Larger crates may need additional heat sources; ask if you're uncertain.
- If the kittens are at least 4-weeks old and are either eating on their own or are ready to transition to gruel, place a litter box and some food in the crate with them. They may also want toys.

Paperwork and recordkeeping

- Put the litter's file, and anything else that belongs to the litter (smock, lap pad, etc.), in the chart holder that accompanies the crate.
- Start a file for each litter. Start a Daily Care Sheet for each kitten in the litter, making sure to write the A# on the chart.
- The Nursery Manager will attach a med chart to the file when necessary.
- Add the litter to the Feeder Board.

- Identify each kitten. If two kittens look alike, put a colored Sharpie dot in one of its ears. Be sure to note this on the kitten's chart.
- Weigh each kitten and record the weight.
- Feed the kittens as soon as possible; they probably have not eaten in a while.
- Update the Feeder Board.
- Accurate and timely record keeping is essential. Follow all recordkeeping steps, even if they seem redundant.

Stages of Kitten Development

Overview

A kitten is born both deaf and blind. The kitten's ears remain in the folded position that they were in while the kitten was in the womb, and the eyes are still sealed shut. Normally, a small bit of the umbilical cord will still be attached to the midsection of the kitten. Newborn kittens are completely helpless and rely on their mother for all of their needs. In addition to nursing the kittens, the mother will also groom her kittens (this also stimulates the intestines to start functioning). Since the kittens cannot yet regulate their body temperature, they will stay close to their mother to keep them warm.

Developmental Milestones

- Kittens weigh approximately 90–100g at birth and should double their birth weight in about a week.
- Within a couple days of birth, kittens will begin to hear muffled sounds.
- At about 3–5 days, the umbilical cord will dry and fall off.
- At about 7–10 days, the eyes will begin to open. Kittens are usually born with bluish eyes; they will stay blue until the kittens are about 6–7 weeks old, but true color won't settle in until the kittens are about three months old.
- If eyes seem to be pus-filled or sealed shut, alert the nursery management.
- At around two weeks old, kittens will start moving around, crawling, and standing more.
- Around 3½ weeks of age, the kitten's teeth will begin to break through the skin. The ears will also start to stand up around this time.
- Teeth should be fully in around 4 weeks of age. Once their incisors are in, kittens can eat kitten food and start using a litter box.
- Kittens will start to gain weight rapidly around 4–5 weeks. Kittens will also start to play around this time.
- By six weeks, they are beginning to regulate their body temperature.

How to Age Neonatal Kittens

Kitten Age	Characteristics
Less than 3 days old	Eyes completely closed and wet umbilical cord still attached
Less than 5 days old	Eyes completely closed and dry umbilical cord still attached
Less than 7 days old	Eyes completely closed
Between 7 and 10 days old	Eyes mostly closed or beginning to open, no umbilical cord attached
2-3 weeks old	Eyes completely open, no umbilical cord, "rounded" ear shape, no incisors
3 1/2 - 4 1/2 weeks old	Eyes completely open, no umbilical cord, "pointed" ear shape, small incisors not all the way through
5-6 weeks old	Eyes completely open, no umbilical cord, "pointed" ear shape, incisors all the way through, weigh about 1 1/2 lbs

Managing Body Temperature of Kittens

Keeping Kittens Warm

A kitten's body temperature ranges from about 102°–104°F. Kittens under three weeks of age cannot regulate their own body temperatures—they have littermates and a mother to help them. It is crucial to keep the kittens' crates warm, dry, and draft-free. If a kitten feels cool or cold, warm it immediately; never try to warm a kitten with your own body heat, as your body temperature is lower than that of a kitten and the kitten's body temperature could continue to fall. If its body temperature falls too low, a kitten can fade and may not survive.

- Place a heated snuggle disc in a snuggle cover, or cover it with a single layer of towel or blanket in the kittens' crate. Do not place the warm disc directly on the metal crate—the metal will quickly draw the heat out of the disc.
- Snuggle discs are heated for 4–5 minutes in the microwave, based on microwave wattage, and will stay warm for hours. Heat them only when they are cool, as too much heating can deteriorate them.
- Snuggle discs should be freshly heated at each feeding.
- If a snuggle disc is not available, use a heating pad on a low setting. Be certain it is not a type of thermostat that automatically shuts off, or the kittens will lose their heat source.
- Be sure the crate is not in a draft and that air vents or fans are not blowing on the kittens. Cover the front of the crate with a cloth if necessary.
- There should be a small space in the crate where the kittens can go if they get too hot; the back of the crate is probably best. Take care, however, that the kittens cannot get too far away and that nothing obstructs their path to the heat.
- Check the bedding at each feeding to be sure it is dry; change if it is wet. or damp bedding can chill the kittens despite the heat source in the crate.
- If kittens are soiled, clean them gently, taking care to dry them with a towel thoroughly before returning them to their crate.
- If a kitten feels cold, determine if it is fading. If so, immediately begin the fading kitten protocol.
- If a kitten feels cold but is determined not to be fading, warm it immediately by wrapping the kitten in a towel, and then place the towel in a bin with a heating pad set on low.
- Never place a kitten directly on an uncovered snuggle disc or heating pad.
- If a kitten becomes chilled during feeding, warm it before continuing. Kittens might stop eating if they are cold.
- Food should be warm so that the kitten does not become chilled.

Your body heat is lower than the kitten's, so never try to warm a kitten with your own body heat—it will not work, and the kitten's body temperature will plummet.

Alternative Heat Sources

Rice socks

A sock filled with rice that is warmed in the microwave can be used to keep babies warm, but it will only stay warm for up to an hour. Rice socks can easily get overheated and must be checked carefully before they are placed in a carrier so they do not burn the kittens.

- *This is not an approved means of keeping kittens warm in the nursery;* this heat source is used only during transport or other temporary situations.
- Once a rice sock is used, throw it away, as it cannot be effectively sanitized.
- Rice socks are kept in the nursery so that fosters will have something to take with them when they pick up kittens.

Heating pads

- There are heating pads in the nursery to be used for fading kittens, when a snuggle disc is not available, or when an additional heat source is needed.
- Heating pads are not preferred for use in crates. If a heating pad is being used in a crate, make sure it is not one with an automatic shut-off thermostat; these heating pads will turn off and the kittens can suffer a serious loss of body temperature, which can lead to fading.
- After using a heating pad, always sanitize it and return it to its proper place after use—*do not leave used, unsanitized heating pads out in the nursery.*

Note: Snuggle discs and heating pads are the property of the nursery and should never be taken out of the nursery by volunteers, staff, or fosters. If someone comes to the nursery and asks to borrow one, politely refuse and refer the person to nursery management.

If someone needs to keep kittens warm during transport, they can take a rice sock (which does not need to be returned to the nursery) if there is one available. Once they get home, fosters must provide their own heat sources for the kittens in their care.

Feeding Neonatal Kittens (Bottle Babies)

Overview

Orphan kittens need to be bottle-fed until they are ready to be weaned and can eat on their own. It is imperative that all kittens are consuming enough food at each feeding to insure proper nutrition, hydration, and weight gain. Ideally, kittens are fed every 2–3 hours; they can make it about four hours overnight as long as they have been eating regularly throughout the day and have been gaining weight steadily. The only milk that is approved for use in the APA! nursery is Kitten Milk Replacement (KMR). We use a powder KMR mix that we make as needed. Open bags of KMR should be kept in the refrigerator before and after mixing.

Cow's milk and other types of milk replacements are not nutritious enough for our kittens and their use can lead to slow starvation or other detriment to the kittens. They also cause diarrhea, which is extremely dangerous for young kittens. Once a certain type of milk has been started for a group of kittens, it must be continued until they are weaned. Changing formula brands can cause major GI illness.

Mixing KMR

- KMR is mixed in graduating ratios of water to KMR to ease the kitten's transition from its mother to bottle-feeding. This is done to prevent diarrhea, which commonly occurs whenever there is a change to a kitten's diet.
 - First four feedings are at a ratio of 8:1, water to KMR.
 - Second four feedings are at a ratio of 4:1, water to KMR.
 - Remaining feedings are at a ratio of 2:1, water to KMR.
- KMR clumps badly and clumps can clog a bottle's nipple and prevent the kitten from getting its food. Mix the KMR thoroughly with warm water; strain if necessary. If you strain the KMR, be sure to break up the clumps and stir the powder back into the KMR mixture so the nutritional value is not depleted.
- After mixing, store KMR in a covered container in the refrigerator. Label the container with the ratio of water to KMR and the date and time it was mixed. Try not to mix more KMR than can be used in a day's time; it will spoil and should be thrown out after 48 hours.
- Do not leave mixed KMR out while feeding, as bacteria can grow quickly. Put it back in the refrigerator after you have filled the bottles.
- Use only clean, sanitized bottles and nipples. Label all bottles with the litter number, the ratio of KMR, and the date and time the KMR was made, **not** the date and time you are filling the bottle.
- Do not refill a bottle with KMR that was mixed on a different day/time. If there are no clean bottles, thoroughly rinse the bottle and nipple before re-using it for the same litter. Remember to put a new label on the bottle—do not write over an old one.

Bottle-Feeding Techniques

Kitten positioning for feeding is very important; this is where the crucial surrogate-mom bonding happens. Different people have different "styles" of bottle-feeding. Kittens are most comfortable in a position similar to the position they'd be in if they were nursing from their mother. One option is simply to place the kitten on its stomach on a towel or cloth that it can cling to. Always use a lap

pad or towel for the kitten to lie on while feeding—the kitten should never come into contact with the surface of the table or the skin or clothing of the feeder.

- Open the kitten's mouth gently with the tip of your finger and slip in the nipple in. Once your kitten gets the hang of it, it will search out the nipple.
- To keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach, hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle and keep a light pull on the bottle.
- The kitten should be allowed to suckle at its own pace.
- If a kitten refuses to take the nipple or won't suckle, try rubbing its forehead or stroking its back; this replicates a mother cat's cleaning and can effectively stimulate the kitten to nurse.
- Use the correct nipple. The long, thin nipples are for young kittens up to 6–7 days old; the short, round nipples are for kittens over 6 days old. As a general rule, if the kitten's eyes are still closed, it can use the long nipple; if the kitten's eyes are open, it should use the short.
- If milk comes out of a kitten's nose, it is aspirating. Kittens are pretty good at clearing milk from their lungs on their own. Set the kitten down and allow it to begin breathing normally, which should take a few seconds. Note any aspirating incidents on the kitten's daily care chart and alert the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager so it can be placed on antibiotics immediately.
- When a kitten has had enough formula, it will usually unlatch from the nipple on its own and its tummy will be very rounded, almost pear-shaped.

When you are ready to feed your kitten, remember:

Sanitize – Weigh – Feed – Weigh –Sanitize

Bottle-Feeding Kittens and Care

- Identify the litter that needs to be fed. Update the Feeder Board with the time you start to feed the litter, not after feeding, making sure to use the correct color pen for that day.
 - Bottle babies are fed every 2–3 hours, and gruel kittens are fed every 4–5 hours. Prioritize feeding according to the times litters were last fed.
 - The 6am feeders will always start with bottle babies, feeding the smallest and most critical first and then moving to the oldest and independent eaters.
 - Never skip gruel kittens or moms with litters in favor of bottle babies; kittens should be fed according to when they were last fed.
- Feed only one litter at a time.
- Get the litter's feeding chart out of the file.
- There should be a bottle in the refrigerator for the litter you are about to feed. If not, fill one with the correct ratio of mixed KMR, making sure to label it correctly.
- Fill the bottle about 1/2–2/3 full. Label the bottle with the litter number, the ratio of water to KMR, and the date and time the KMR was made—**not** the date/time you are filling it.
- Return the KMR to the refrigerator. It should never be left out, as bacteria can grow.
- With the cap and nipple **off**, heat the bottle in the microwave. Start at around 12 seconds and then check the temperature on the underside of your wrist. If it is too hot, you can add cold KMR. If it isn't hot enough, heat until it is. Attach the nipple.
- Make sure you have a sanitized scale. See Section 10 for sanitizing instructions.
- Wash your hands between litters.
- If there is a smock in the litter's bin, wear that; if not, get a clean one to wear while feeding. Use a towel or clean puppy pad while feeding kittens—they should not come into contact with the table surface or the feeder's skin or clothing.
- Weigh the kitten and write down the weight. Do not "remember" the weight to record after feeding—it is too easy to forget the correct weight.
- Wrap bottle babies in a towel or blanket to create a "burrito." This helps to control the kitten's movements and also helps to keep the kitten warm while feeding.
- Offer the nipple to the kitten. Once it latches on, let it eat as much as it wants.
- Weigh the kitten. The kitten must consume a minimum of 5g per 100g of its body weight. Once the kitten is fed, record its weight and update the Daily Care Sheet.

- If the kitten is sated and has consumed an adequate amount of food, stop feeding. Overfeeding can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and other problems.
- If the kitten did not eat enough on its own, supplement with syringe feeding.
- Stimulate the kitten (see below).
- Return the bottle baby to its crate, making sure its face and body are clean.
- Refill the bottle for the next feeder and return it to the refrigerator.
- When a bottle needs to be washed, empty any remaining KMR into the sink and rinse the bottle and nipple. Remove the nipple from the cap and soak the bottle, nipple, and cap in bleach water.
- Remove all tape from the bottle (it can come off in the dishwasher and cause clogs).
- When hand-washing, use a small brush to clean the bottle and nipple.

Some kittens will not take easily to bottle-feeding. When they are with their mother and littermates, kittens rely on scent and instinct to guide them to proper feeding. Always try to let the kitten eat on its own from a bottle first; if a kitten is not eating a sufficient amount on its own, or is not eating at all, then it must be supplemented with syringe feeding.

Syringe-Feeding and Care

- Weigh the kitten so that you know how much it needs to consume.
- Fill a clean 1cc syringe with warmed KMR.
- Push a few drops into the kitten's mouth. Wait for the kitten to swallow, and then repeat this until the kitten has consumed a sufficient amount.
- Kittens should consume a minimum of 5g per 100g of body weight. Consult posted charts for help with calculations.
- Be sure to gently clean any KMR off the kitten's fur and face. Dried KMR can cause sores and hair loss.
- When finished syringe-feeding, remove the plunger from the syringe and place both pieces in a dishpan to soak.

It can seem like you are giving a kitten a lot of KMR, but the kitten may not be swallowing much of what you are feeding it. Be patient—syringe-feeding can take a while. The only accurate way to determine if a kitten is eating enough is to weigh the kitten, then feed it, then weigh it. Always weigh, feed, weigh.

Stimulation for Urination and Defecation

By nature, mother cats lick the "back end" of their babies to stimulate the bowels and bladder on a regular basis.

- After each feeding, gently rub the kitten's genitalia and rectum with a baby wipe (alcohol-free, dye-free, fragrance-free) or a cotton ball or cotton pad (can dampen with warm water), using a front-to-back motion and very gentle pressure.
- Once the kitten has finished eliminating, stop rubbing. Overstimulation will irritate the area—watch for chafing.
- Kittens will almost always urinate during stimulation. They should defecate about once every 1–2 days.
- Make note of diarrhea if the kitten is not already being treated for it
- Record the kitten's elimination on its Daily Care Sheet, noting anything abnormal

Look at the kitten's urine and feces and make sure they look normal. Note any abnormalities on the kitten's chart and on the Feeder Board.

Possible abnormalities include:

- Blood in the urine or feces
- Dark yellow or brownish yellow
- If the kitten has not defecated for 2–3 days and its belly is bloated

Once kittens begin transitioning to solid food and independent eating, they no longer require stimulating.

Tube-feeding

If a kitten is sick, it can become too weak to eat on its own or may not be able to swallow. When this happens, the kitten can become malnourished and fade quickly. The kitten must be tube-fed to rebuild its strength and keep it nourished and hydrated. The decision to tube-feed is not made lightly. Tube-feeding can cause damage to the kitten's esophagus and stomach lining, and if the tube goes down the wrong way, the kitten's lungs can fill with fluid and the kitten can drown.

Feeders are not authorized to tube-feed kittens. The Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, or other authorized personnel will do all tube-feeding—no exceptions!

It is the feeder's responsibility to see that the kitten gets fed, however, and if a feeder encounters a kitten that needs to be tube-fed, the feeder should let the Nursery Manager know. The Nursery Manager may want the feeder to try syringe-feeding the kitten first and will let the feeder know what to do.

- If no one is available to tube-feed a kitten outside of business hours, contact the Nursery Manager and/or the Assistant Manager.
- Be sure to update the kitten's Daily Care Sheet when it is tube-fed.
- If an authorized person is not available to tube-feed a kitten, try to syringe-feed the kitten as much as possible. Be sure to update the kitten's Daily Care Sheet.
- Bottle babies must be stimulated after tube-feeding just as after bottle-feeding.
- Kittens requiring tube-feeding may need to eat smaller amounts more frequently.

Suckling

It is natural for kittens to suckle on each other or on your fingers, even after they're finished eating. This is harmless unless you notice that this activity is causing irritation to other kittens' fur or skin. It is a good idea to check each kitten's genitals to ensure that the suckling activity is not causing problems such as redness, irritation, sores, swelling, penis hanging out, etc. If any issues occur, contact nursery management right away. Excessive suckling can cause scar tissue to form over a male kitten's penis, which can ultimately require surgery to correct; it can also cause hair loss and sore spots at the site of the suckling.

Dehydration

Water drives all metabolic functions in kittens (and in people), so adequate hydration is essential. When a kitten is not getting enough water in its diet, or if it is vomiting or has diarrhea or another illness, it can become seriously dehydrated. Just as with people, proper hydration levels are critical to a kitten's good health.

- If you believe a kitten is dehydrated, alert nursery management.
- If a kitten is dehydrated, nursery management will administer subcutaneous fluids. Feeders are not authorized to administer subcutaneous fluids.

Feeders should not give kittens Pedialyte unless it is approved by the Nursery Manager. Pedialyte given orally to a kitten won't cause any harm, but it offers no real benefit to a truly dehydrated kitten. Pedialyte can be mixed with the kitten's KMR to add electrolytes back to the kitten's system, but is not usually necessary. Pedialyte should be thrown out if it is not used within three days. Pedialyte should be labeled with the date it is opened.

Feeding Kittens Post-Bottle

Gruel Babies

Gruel babies are kittens that have outgrown the bottle. At about 3½ weeks, a kitten's teeth will begin to break through the skin. Around this time, kittens may begin to bite the nipple, may seem hungry yet not want to suckle, and will have a greatly increased appetite. This usually means they are ready to be weaned and begin eating on their own. In the nursery, we want to wean the kittens as soon as they are ready, because gruel babies typically take less of our time to care for than bottle babies and they are easier to find fosters for.

When the kittens' teeth are fully developed, nursery management will make the decision for the litter to transition from the bottle to solid food. Place kittens in a bin with a shallow saucer—not a bowl—of warmed gruel and let them "discover" it. Some will take to it right away, others not so much, but they will be curious. If this is their first time to experience gruel, they are not going to know what to do with it, so be patient and allow them to get used to it. If they do not take to it right away, go ahead and syringe-feed them. At this point, put a litter box in their crate to let them start eliminating on their own. Put a small dish of gruel, a small dish of kibble, and small bowl of water in the crate with them so they can begin to eat on their own.

Making Gruel

Gruel is made with canned food and water mixed together until it reaches an applesauce-like consistency; this ensures the kittens are getting enough water in their diets while giving them proper nutrition. If gruel is too watery, it will not have enough nutrition. Usually, the correct ratio is two cans of food to one can of water. Always make gruel according to directions posted in the feeding area.

- Gruel that is to be used for syringe-feeding can be blended in a blender; the ratio of food to water is the same.
- Always store gruel in a covered container in the refrigerator. Do not leave gruel out in the work area after filling bowls or plates, as bacteria can grow.
- The nursery uses donated canned cat/kitten food and Royal Canin Baby Cat kibble. These are the only approved kitten foods to be used. When other brands are used, they should be slowly mixed in with the nursery brand to get the kittens used to it and to prevent diarrhea.
- Be sure to alert nursery management if you notice the nursery is low on food.
- Changing the brand or type of food you are feeding a kitten can temporarily cause diarrhea.
- Fill a dish that is the appropriate size for the litter about 1/2–2/3 with gruel—do not overfill. Warm the gruel in the microwave; check for the correct temperature by stirring it a bit with your finger. Gruel can get hot spots in the microwave that can burn the kittens' mouths, so be sure to check it properly before giving it to the kittens.

Teach the Kittens About Gruel

Weaned kittens need to be fed every 4–5 hours to ensure their blood sugar stays up. They can go 6–8 hours overnight, but not during the day.

- Identify the litter needing to be fed and update the Feeder Board.

- Feed only one litter at a time. Clean a bin to put the kittens in while they eat the gruel.
 - Change smocks between litters.
- Weigh the kittens as you place them in the bin, recording the weights on their Daily Care Sheets.
- Place some gruel and kibble in the bin with the litter.
 - The kittens may bite the edge of the plate or walk in the food. Sometimes it takes several meals before they catch on. If a kitten doesn't seem interested in the gruel at all, try gently opening the kitten's mouth and rubbing a little of the food on its tongue or teeth. Be patient; the weaning process takes time.
 - If necessary, place a cover on top of the bin so the kittens cannot climb out. While they are eating, you can clean their crate.
 - If the kittens have toys in their crate, you can put those in the bin with them while you clean.
- Clean the crate, making sure to wipe off all feces and food particles with 409. Follow cleaning with a thorough wiping of disinfectant or diluted bleach.
- Clean the litter box; if it is soiled through, dispose of it and replace with a clean box and clean litter. Use paper towels, paper cups, or other disposable material to take feces out of the litter box. Litter scoops are not used in the nursery.
 - Kittens should only be given non-clumping litter at this stage of development. Kittens are very curious and will consume bits of litter, which will expand in their stomachs. Litter dust can also coat kittens' lungs.
 - Clumping litter can be introduced after six weeks of age.
- Check the bedding in the crate; if it is wet or soiled, replace it with clean bedding.
- Reheat the snuggle disc, making sure to sanitize the disc before warming it.
- If the kittens have been gaining weight regularly and are eating, you can weigh them and put them back in their clean crate.
 - Check to see if kittens are eating on their own. If the kittens are losing weight or are not eating enough by themselves, supplement them with syringe-feeding and return them to their crate after they have consumed the appropriate amount.
- Place gruel and kibble in the crate, along with a small bowl of water. Bowls should not be overfilled and should be an appropriate size for the litter.
- Update the Daily Care Sheets.
- Clean and sanitize the bin and put it back where it belongs so it can be used again.
- Sanitize the food preparation area, change your smock, and wash your hands before moving on to the next litter.

Feeding Baby Food to Kittens

Human baby food is sometimes fed to weaned kittens when they are learning to eat on their own, or if they are not eating due to illness. This is only done to entice the kitten to eat on its own. Baby food should not be used on a regular basis; it does not give the kitten sufficient nutrition or calories for proper health and weight gain. Almost all kittens like baby food, but it should only be used to help the kitten eat the right food by itself. Baby food should not be used because it is easier or more convenient for the feeder.

- When feeding with baby food, use only pure meat with no additives, such as garlic or onion. Chicken or turkey is preferred, though beef can be used; do not use pork.
- Once opened, baby food must be kept covered and refrigerated. Label open jars with the date and time they were opened. If spoons or other utensils that were used for a particular litter touched the baby food, identify those with the litter number.
- There are no preservatives in baby food. Baby food should be disposed of if it is not used within two days.
- Baby food does not last as long as cat food when it is left out. If you are putting baby food in the crate with a litter, be sure it is disposed of within a few hours; otherwise it can spoil or bacteria can begin to grow.

Dehydration

Water drives all metabolic functions in kittens (and in people), so adequate hydration is essential. When a kitten is not getting enough water in its diet, or if it is vomiting or has diarrhea or another illness, it can become seriously dehydrated. Just as with people, proper hydration levels are critical to a kitten's good health.

- If you believe a kitten is dehydrated, alert nursery management.
- If a kitten is dehydrated, nursery management will administer subcutaneous fluids.
- Feeders should not give kittens Pedialyte unless it is approved by the Nursery Manager.

Pedialyte given orally to a kitten won't cause any harm, but it offers no real benefits. Pedialyte can be mixed with the kitten's gruel to add electrolytes back to the kitten's system, but is not usually necessary. Pedialyte should be thrown out if it is not used within three days.

Suckling

It is natural for kittens to suckle on each other or on your fingers, even after they're finished eating. This is harmless unless you notice that this activity is causing irritation to other kittens' fur or skin. It is a good idea to check each kitten's genitals to ensure that the suckling activity is not causing problems such as redness, irritation, sores, swelling, penis hanging out, etc. If any issues occur, contact nursery management right away. Excessive suckling can cause scar tissue to form over a male kitten's penis, which can ultimately require surgery to correct; it can also cause hair loss and sore spots at the site of the suckling.

And Remember:

Kittens are never allowed to roam freely in the nursery.
Be sure they are secure at all times.

Caring for Pregnant and Nursing Cats

Overview

Since pregnant and nursing cats with litters can require a great deal of care and attention, they are part of the Neonatal Program. Most pregnant and nursing cats go to foster and never come to the nursery, but we do occasionally house them here. Usually, a mother cat can take care of herself and her babies.

When moms are sick or not lactating, they can require as much attention as our tiny bottle babies. When a nursing cat is not lactating, it is more difficult to find a foster for her and her litter because of the time demands on the foster. When a mother cat does not have milk or does not produce enough milk to feed her litter sufficiently, nursery feeders will bottle-feed the kittens and mom will do the rest of the work—she will love and comfort her babies, she will keep them warm, she will groom them, and she will stimulate them. When kittens are able to remain with their mother, they develop much better and are much happier.

If Lactating:

Some mother cats may be lactating but are not making enough milk, so we must monitor their kittens for proper growth and development. Litters are cared for according to the age of the kittens when necessary.

- If the kittens are not gaining weight appropriately, supplement bottle babies with a bottle or syringe; supplement gruel babies with food in their crate or with a syringe. Update the kittens' Daily Care Sheets.

If NOT Lactating:

Some mother cats may be a little nervous when someone takes their babies away, but they usually get used to nursery activity quickly and are happy for the attention. Be gentle when approaching a mother's babies.

- If a mother cat is feral or has shown signs of aggression or extreme nervousness, this should be noted on the Feeder Board and on her crate. If you are unsure how to approach kittens with a feral mother, check with nursery management.
- Litters with a mom are cared for according to the age of the kittens.
- Update the kittens' Daily Care Sheets and update the Feeder Board.

Always Remember To:

- Clean the litter box and refill as needed with non-clumping litter.
- Clean the interior of the crate and replace any soiled or wet bedding. Be sure to completely clean any feces or food matter according to protocol.
- After feeding the kittens, give mom fresh food and water. If the mother cat is not eating, alert nursery management.
- Do not overfill food bowls for the mother cat; only feed as much as she will eat until the next feeding. Otherwise, the food will dry out and will have to be thrown away.
- If the kittens are not eating solid food yet, there is no need to place extra food in the crate for them; wait until they are transitioning to solid food. Otherwise, the food may not be eaten and it will have to be thrown away.

Neonatal Health and Medical Overview

Common Medical Issue Overview

Neonates do not have fully developed immune systems and are susceptible to many illnesses and parasites, some of which they get from their mother at birth. Kittens need proper care and attention to ensure they grow up happy and healthy.

Alert the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager if you notice:

- Aspiration (milk coming out of nose during feeding)
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Eye and/or nasal discharge
- Wheezing; difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Abnormal twitches
- Walking in circles; walking into things
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Steadily losing weight
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Lethargic or depressed
- Head slumped in food or water bowl
- Any unusual behavior

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

The term "upper respiratory infection" is used to refer to any illness that affects a cat's upper respiratory system; it is basically a kitty cold. URIs are common in shelter cats. Common symptoms include sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes, fever, and loss of appetite. URIs are treated with antibiotics. If kittens are having difficulty breathing, they may also need to be nebulized. Be certain to keep kittens warm until they have recovered from a URI. URIs are very contagious to other cats and kittens through direct contact and can also be airborne. Feeders should be especially diligent about sanitation protocols when tending to sick kittens and should wash their hands after handling kittens with URIs.

FelV and FIV

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) suppresses the immune system and can cause cancer or other serious illnesses in susceptible cats. FeLV is fatal and the life expectancy of a mature, infected cat is 2–4 years; most FeLV+ kittens do not survive to maturity. FeLV is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, as well as through urine, feces, and milk from infected cats. The virus can also be transferred through a bite wound, mutual grooming, shared use of litter boxes and feeding dishes, sexual contact, and from a mother cat to her kittens while in utero or during birth. FeLV+ cats and kittens are not housed in the Neonatal Ward. Young kittens testing positive for FeLV are tested again when they are a little older to confirm the results of the first test, which commonly gives a false positive as antibodies from the mother can be detected in the kitten. FeLV does not survive

long outside of the cat's body, probably less than a few hours, so carefully adhering to established protocols should limit the possibility of transmission.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that can cause a multitude of health problems in cats due to reduced immune system function; it is also known as feline AIDS. FIV is contagious, but only to other cats—people cannot get AIDS from their cats. Most cats with FIV live a normal life despite the virus and can live well with other cats as long as there is no aggressive fighting. Cats living indoors in a stable social structure have little chance of passing the disease to other household cats. Transmission occurs most commonly through deep bite wounds; less commonly, it is transmitted by an infected mother cat during birth or through sexual contact. If FIV is present, it should be noted on the litter's crate and on the Feeder Board.

Mature cats and kittens six weeks and older are tested for both FeLV and FIV during intake at APA!. All kittens are tested for FeLV. Usually, if a mother cat has either of these two diseases, it is assumed the kittens will also have them, since mother cats can transmit them to their babies during birth.

FeLV and FIV+ kittens and cats are adoptable. FeLV kittens must go to FeLV fosters and can be placed in the APA! FeLV sanctuary to await adoption. FIV kittens can be placed in foster homes with other cats and kittens and in the cattery to await adoption.

Calicivirus

Calicivirus, also known as "calici," is a viral infection that can occur in cats and kittens that are not vaccinated or are newly vaccinated. Calici is spread between cats through direct contact with eyes and noses, or through contact with contaminated objects that an infected cat has sneezed on or otherwise been in contact with, such as carriers, feeding dishes, and even food. Humans that have come in contact with an infected cat or kitten could potentially pass the virus through contact with other cats.

The virus can have multiple forms, the most common being an upper respiratory tract form. Other forms include the joint form, which can cause fever and swelling of the joints, and the mutant virulent form, which can cause URI signs and ulcers on the face, among other symptoms.

Due to the ease of transmission of this virus, cats and kittens with calici should be immediately quarantined in a separate area from healthy cats. Those who treat the affected cats and kittens must follow strict sanitation protocols to ensure that the virus is not spread.

Panleukopenia

Panleukopenia, also known as "panleuk," is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted through direct contact with saliva, vomit, and feces. An infected mother cat can also transmit panleuk to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating and difficult to deal with because the virus is very durable, can survive in the environment for up to a year, and is highly transmissible. This means that other unvaccinated cats can become infected with panleukopenia simply by coming into contact with places where an infected cat has been.

Testing for panleukopenia is not routinely done during intake since the test will not show positive until the virus is shedding. The test also does not have a high accuracy rate, and if the mother cat has been vaccinated, then the kittens will test positive. Vaccinated cats and kittens will sometimes have a false positive from the Parvo test. Symptoms of panleuk include vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and lethargy. Symptoms can take 3–10 days to present once a kitten has been infected. Once kittens are suspected or confirmed of having panleuk, they are put into quarantine or placed with a specialized foster for treatment.

Due to the ease of transmission and the high number of potential fatalities from this disease, the Neonatal Program has an isolation area where panleuk kittens can be quarantined until they have

completed treatment and can be confirmed as post-panleuk. There is a team of experienced feeders who are trained to work in the Parvo/Panleuk Ward with these kittens when there is not a specialized foster available. Once the infected kittens test negative for the virus and are approved to commingle with healthy cats and kittens, they can go to foster or to the cattery for adoption. Once a cat has survived panleuk, it will be immune for the rest of its life and will never be contagious again. When a nursery kitten is diagnosed with panleuk or suspected panleuk, the entire area must be decontaminated.

- To clean all crates, supplies, and everything else that was touched by or was near infected kittens, use bleach diluted with water at a ratio of 1:32, bleach to water. A stronger dilution is not more effective and can lead to skin and respiratory problems for both kittens and humans. A weaker dilution is not effective.
- First, all surfaces must be hard-scrubbed with cleanser and water. In the nursery, 409 cleanser is the only approved cleanser, as it will remove organic matter that may be infected with the virus.
- Next, all surfaces must be soaked with diluted bleach for 10 minutes. Then, all surfaces must be wiped clean again with cleanser.

This process is repeated three times. So: scrub with cleanser, soak with diluted bleach for 10 minutes, wipe with cleanser; soak with diluted bleach for 10 minutes, wipe with cleanser; soak with diluted bleach for 10 minutes. After the third soak, thoroughly wipe the area clean, spray with disinfectant, and wipe clean again.

- When scrubbing, be sure to thoroughly clean any crevices; use a toothbrush for very small or tight spaces. All organic matter must be decontaminated and removed.
- Always wear gloves and a smock when decontaminating for panleukopenia.
- If a surface or an item cannot be effectively decontaminated, dispose of it.
- Laundry must be washed with soap and a cup of bleach and should not be washed with any laundry that has not been exposed to panleuk.
- While wearing gloves and a smock, place laundry loosely in the washer; if it is packed too tightly, the laundry will not be washed and sanitized thoroughly.
- If it is determined that the laundry item cannot be effectively decontaminated, dispose of it.

All feeders are warned that exposure to panleukopenia is always a possibility. It is critical that all sanitation protocols are followed when tending to the kittens in our care so that the possibility of transmitting disease is lessened. Feeders are strongly advised to have their personal pets vaccinated to prevent transmission of this deadly disease. The sanitation protocols established for the nursery and for the Panleuk Ward have proven quite effective, although are not guaranteed to prevent transmission. Should a feeder's personal pets contract panleukopenia, APA! is not responsible for treatment or for the cost of treatment. The panleuk vaccine is considered very effective.

More information about panleukopenia can be found on this website:
<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=1983>

Medications and Treatments

- Feeders are not authorized to give medications or injections.
- The Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, or other authorized person will administer all medications and injections.
- There will be a medication chart attached to the file of any litter taking medications.

Nebulizing

When kittens contract respiratory infections or any other illness that causes trouble breathing, a nebulizer is placed in their crate to administer a medicated mist they inhale, much like people using a humidifier.

- Before setting the nebulizer up for a crate, check first to be sure it has all the necessary pieces and that it works—motor, tubing to go from the motor to the fluid reservoir, and a fluid reservoir. Be sure the tubing will remain attached to both the motor and the reservoir.
- Try to plug the nebulizer in where it will not be hazardous to anyone walking in the nursery.
- Nebulizer solution is a mixture of fluid, an antibiotic and a steroid. Only use fluid from a refrigerated bag that is clearly labeled “NEB” or “NEBULIZER SOLUTION.” Do not use any fluid in the nebulizer that is not clearly marked.
- If there is no nebulizer solution in the refrigerator, ask the Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, or Med Tech for some. Be sure new containers of neb solution are clearly marked.
- Nebulizer solution should always be refrigerated; do not leave it out.
- Fill the reservoir with nebulizer solution.
- Put a towel or blanket over the crate’s door so that the mist stays inside the crate where the kittens can breathe it. Turn on the nebulizer.
- Check the nebulizer periodically to ensure it is still working properly and that it has not run out of fluid. The fluid will run out in about 30 minutes or so.
- **Never** leave a nebulizer running unattended.
- **Never** let a nebulizer run in a crate with an empty reservoir—an empty nebulizer will continuously blow cold air on sick kittens, which can lead to hypothermia and cause the kittens to fade.
- Update the kittens’ Daily Care Sheets and the Feeder Board when kittens are nebulized.
- When the litter no longer needs to be nebulized, clean and sanitize the nebulizer and return it to its proper place.

Kittens that need to be nebulized will be easier to feed if they are nebulized first.

Eye infections

Eye infections are quite common with kittens—sometimes a kitty cold can move into the kitten’s eyes, and some kittens come to the nursery with eye ailments. These are usually treated easily with medicated eye drops or ointment.

- If you notice any eye discharge and the kitten is not currently being treated for any eye issues, note this on the kitten’s chart for evaluation.
- Clean discharge matter from a kitten’s eyes with a cotton ball or piece of gauze dampened with warm water or with a diluted solution of iodine or betadine, wiping gently so as not to hurt the kitten’s delicate eye area.
- **Never** double-dip a cotton ball or gauze in the warm water or medicated solution; always use clean gauze or cotton so as not to contaminate the water or solution.
- Feeders do not treat a kitten’s eyes unless asked to do so by the Nursery Manager.

If a kitten has something more serious than simple conjunctivitis, other eye medications or treatment may be required. Shelters often see kittens whose eye infections or injuries will leave them partially or completely blind, and in some cases even require removal of the eye itself. These kittens are still highly adoptable and adjust very well to their condition.

Vaccinations

Most pet owners are used to having their kittens begin vaccinations around eight weeks of age, when the immunity a kitten gets from its mother starts to wear off. Since kittens living in a shelter do not have a mother, they have a different schedule for vaccinations so they are protected from contagions coming into the nursery.

- Kittens will be vaccinated at intake if they are four weeks of age and weigh at least one pound.
- Kittens residing in the nursery will be vaccinated once they are four weeks of age and weigh at least one pound. If one or more kitten in a litter is not ready to be vaccinated, vaccinations will be done when all kittens are ready so that the entire litter is on the same schedule.
- Kittens must have booster shots every two weeks.
- The Nursery Manager is responsible for making sure kittens receive vaccinations at the right time and will maintain vaccination records for all kittens in the Neonatal Program.

Ringworm Overview

Neonatal Specific

Overview

Ringworm is a fungal infection affecting the skin, hair, and occasionally nails of animals and people. It is in the same family as athlete's foot and is not a life-threatening condition at all; in fact, it does not affect the health or well-being of animals or people. Three species of ringworm fungus most commonly affect cats and dogs. The species that affect cats and dogs can be passed between these two species, as well as passed to humans. It is contagious for people; the young, old, and immune-compromised are more likely to get it. Ringworm is also very contagious to other animals.

Most often it will cause a circular area of fur loss that is red and may be slightly raised. Ringworm can also have other characteristics but these circular, hairless lesions are most common.

Ringworm in an individual cat is a nuisance, but ringworm in an animal shelter can lead to almost unmanageable outbreaks, thousands of dollars in diagnostic and medical costs, spreading among adopters and staff, and an intolerable blow to shelter status in the community. It is vital to have a consistent and effective strategy in place to prevent and manage this problem.

When kittens in the nursery have ringworm, it should be noted on their crate and on the Feeder Board so that feeders know to take extra precautions. Feeders can get ringworm from nursery cats and can also pass it to their pets at home. If the following established procedures are followed, however, the risk of doing so is minimized.

Risk Factors

- Animals of any age are susceptible to ringworm, but animals less than one year old and geriatric animals have the highest risk. Cats have a greater risk than dogs.
- Animals with compromised immune systems and conditions such as FIV, FeLV, pregnancy and lactation, malnutrition, cancer, and stress, or those on anti-inflammatory drugs, can have a higher risk.
- Animals with preexisting conditions that compromise grooming, and those with external parasites such as fleas, are at an increased risk.

How is Ringworm Spread?

Ringworm is most often spread through contact with an infected animal or a contaminated environment and therefore can be a serious problem in a shelter. Ringworm is very durable in the environment, and if left untreated, it can persist for months in carriers, furniture, carpets, dust, and so on; it can also infect animals housed in a contaminated environment. Ringworm can be spread readily through grooming implements, contaminated toys and bedding, or by humans' clothing and hands. It can be found on the hair of animals from a contaminated environment even when the animal itself is not showing any symptoms. In nature, the incubation period for ringworm is between 4 days and 4 weeks. Close contact with the infected animal or its bedding is usually required for transmission.

Signs and Treatment

Irregularly shaped areas of fur loss; the skin in these areas can appear rough and scaly, and the bald patch is often round. Full-body dipping or spot treatment with a lyme sulfur dip is effective, but it takes time to eradicate the fungus

- Lymdip needs to be diluted at a ratio of 3.5ml of Lymdip into ¼ cup of water
- Kittens under the age of six weeks should not be dipped
 - Dab a cotton ball in the Lymdip and dot onto visible lesions
- When dipping kittens, make sure that they do not get chilled
 - Allow to air dry in a warm kennel. Note that the dip will cause the fur on cats to yellow, but the color fades quickly
- The dip does have a “rotten egg”-like odor, so keep towels used during dipping separate from regular laundry and wear old clothes to dip. Also remove any jewelry or nice clothing that could come into contact with the solution.

Medication is sometimes used but not on very young cats, as it has a very damaging effect on the liver

Sanitation

- If a litter has ringworm, put a note on the crate and on the Feeder Board.
- Use diluted bleach mixed at a ratio of 1:10, bleach to water, on any surface that you or the infected cats touch—bin, scale, table, pen, microwave, snuggle disc, refrigerator, your arms, etc. Leave it on for 10 minutes and then wipe with paper towels before moving to the next litter.
- Gloves may be worn with the understanding that they do not prevent the spread of ringworm. Gloves must be provided by anyone choosing to wear them; the nursery does not provide them since their use is not part of our protocol.

Parasite Overview Internal & External

Fleas

Fleas are bloodsucking parasites and, as with ringworm, a flea infestation is a nuisance in a single animal but can be devastating in a shelter. On a mature cat, fleas are not particularly serious, but young kittens do not have that much blood and they are virtually defenseless; they do not groom themselves yet, so they are not scratching. Young kittens can easily get anemia from a flea infestation, which can be life-threatening.

- Flea treatments that are meant for older cats can kill a kitten, so if you find fleas or flea dirt on kittens of any age, alert nursery management so the correct treatment can be administered.
- Over-the-counter flea treatments are not used in the nursery because they are not effective and are much more toxic than what our veterinarians use.

Ticks

We rarely see ticks on our kittens or mother cats. If you think you see ticks, alert nursery management for further evaluation and treatment.

Ear Mites

Ear mites are tiny parasites that live in the ear canal. If you see a dark brown discharge (which can look like dirt or coffee grounds) in a kitten's ears, it is probably ear mites.

- If you see dirt in a kitten's ears, alert nursery management so it can be evaluated and treated.
- Do not clean a kitten's ears without first checking with nursery management. A kitten's ear canal can easily be damaged by the improper use of cotton swabs.
- Ear mites can be passed from one kitten to another, and transmission usually requires direct contact.

Roundworms, Tapeworms, and Hookworms

Worms affect a cat's digestive system and are very common in kittens. You can sometimes see worms in or around a kitten's rectum; you may see a long worm or what looks like rice protruding from its anus. Indications of worms are a large belly, diarrhea, and an inability to gain weight even when eating well. If you see signs of worms, alert nursery management. There are various medications given to the kitten, depending on the type of worm, that easily take care of the problem. Worms can be passed through the feces to other animals.

Coccidia and Giardia

Coccidia and Giardia are very common. They are protozoa that invade a kitten's digestive system and cause diarrhea. These are highly transmissible and can be spread through feces. These parasites are easily treated with oral medications.

Parasites can cause digestive problems as well as diarrhea for the kitten. Diarrhea can be dangerous for a kitten and should be treated as soon as it shows up. Not all diarrhea is related to illness or infection—sometimes it can be a result of a change in diet—but all diarrhea should be reported to the Nursery Manager for evaluation.

Neurologic Kitten Protocol

Neurologic Kitten in Nursery

1. Kitten is exhibiting signs of: excessive wobbliness (as determined by manager), circling, falling over, head bobbing, tremoring.
2. Start Clindamycin, 25 mg/mL at the following dosing (by mouth, twice a day, for two days):
 - a. < 0.5 pound: 0.11 mL
 - b. 0.5–1 pound: 0.22 mL
 - c. 1–1.5 pound: 0.34 mL
 - d. 1.5–2 pound: 0.45 mL
 - e. 2 –2.5 pound: 0.57 mL
 - f. 2.5–3 pound: 0.68 mL
3. To make the Clindamycin suspension at 25 mg/mL – mix one 150 mg capsule in 6 mLs of liquid (Karo syrup, Feline oral solution...). Label with drug name and concentration.
4. If signs do not start to improve in 4 days, or if kitten's condition worsens, then schedule appointment with clinic.
5. If signs start to improve within 4 days:
 - a. Extend course of medication x 10 more days (two weeks total) at current dose.
 - b. After two weeks, increase the dose to the next weight range on the dosing chart and give medication for two more weeks (28 days total). For example: if kitten was getting 0.34 mLs, at the two-week point increase to 0.45 mLs and extend for two weeks.
 - c. Kitten should be considered contagious and has zoonotic potential, so staff needs to take precautions when handling kittens and with litter box (washing hands/wearing gloves, etc.). Kittens should not be mixed with other kittens until end of course of medication.

Ocular Discharge Protocol

Kittens with Ocular discharge in Nursery

1. If kittens have crusty eyes/ocular discharge, start Gentamycin drops: one drop each affected eye at every feeding for 5–7 days.
2. If the “crusting shut” is not improving after 24 hours, then switch to erythromycin ointment: small ribbon each affected eye three times a day.
3. If crusting continues for another 24 hours or if the eyes worsen at any point, continue eye ointment and make appointment.

Never use the bottle on more than one kitten/litter. Dispense the ointment or drops into syringes without needles and use that to treat directly.

Common Neonatal Medications

Upper Respiratory Infections (URI)

Symptoms include sneezing, watery eyes, nasal discharge, congestion. Nebulizing is used in conjunction with an antibiotic for severe URIs (refrigerate solution).

- **Doxycycline** (100mg/ml) - Antibiotic used as a starting point for most URI's. Dose is 0.05cc/# PO SID x 7-10 days (best if not refrigerated)
- **Azithromycin** (40mg/ml) (abbreviated Zithro or Zithromax) - Antibiotic, used for more severe URI or if doxy did not work. Dose is most commonly 0.1cc/# PO SID x 3 days then once every third day x 3 more doses (refrigerate!).
- **Baytril** (injectable) broad spectrum antibiotic - Used for very severe URI with severe congestion. Also use if aspiration is severe and turns into pneumonia. Dose is 1 "hub" diluted in at least 3cc LRS fluids SID x 5 days then recheck (do not refrigerate).

Eye infections

These often occur with URIs

- **Gentamicin sulfate** - eye drops (antibiotic), one drop each eye with infection BID-TID x 3 days then extend if needed. Eyes will often need to be cleaned first with a diluted iodine solution to remove discharge (do not refrigerate).
- **Canine serum** - used for severely irritated/infected eyes, one drop each eye TID. Use at least one minute before antibiotic eye drops.

Diarrhea

Learn the difference between diarrhea and "normal" kitten feces—diarrhea is very runny or watery, "cow patty" or "toothpaste" is OK)

- **Pen-G injection** - broad spectrum antibiotic, dose is 0.25cc SQ SID x 3 days diluted 6 parts LRS fluids to 1 part Pen-G (refrigerate). First choice for diarrhea unless bloody or worms are seen
- **Panacur** - Dewormer, dose is 0.2cc/# PO BID x 5 days. Often used in conjunction with marquis paste (do not refrigerate)
- **Marquis Paste** - anticoccidial/antiprotozoal, dose is 0.2cc/# PO SID x 3 days if used with panacur. If coccidia suspected the course is longer (do not refrigerate)
- **Metronidazole** - Antibiotic, dose is 0.05cc/# PO BID x 7 days. Use if diarrhea is bloody or if previously listed meds are unsuccessful (refrigerate)
- **Baytril** - used sometimes used as a last resort if the other medications don't work. Occasionally other medications will also be dispensed at the medical clinic's discretion.
- **LRS fluids** - used for dehydration. The dose is 10cc/# SQ.

Other medications will be used in the nursery and you will encounter many more diseases and conditions. This is a list of the most common and the ones you should memorize.

SID = once a day. BID = twice a day. TID = three times a day. PO = by mouth. SQ = subcutaneous (under the skin). IV = intravenously (used rarely in the nursery). IM = intramuscular (used very rarely in the nursery)

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Overview

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade. This can occur with kittens who have a mother, as well as those who do not, so watch for mother cats pushing away a kitten and not caring for it. If not dealt with immediately, this can result in death. There is not always a clear reason for this condition. It has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress, and infectious disease. Early detection and treatment are imperative, but even with tube feeding, rehydration, and monitoring, many of these kittens will still die.

Symptoms

- Low body temperature; the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy; not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet, can’t hold its head up
- Gasping for breath; mouth breathing
- Meowing, crying out

When a kitten is fading, two things are happening: hypothermia (being too cold) and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). You must get the kitten’s body temperature up and raise its blood sugar, or it will die.

Act Immediately!

Process

- Get the kitten warm.
 - Immediately wrap it up in a towel like a burrito, leaving only the kitten’s face exposed. Its whole body—tail, ears, and paws--should be in the towel. **Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust it or check on it.** Every time you take the kitten out, you will make it cold again, even if it is only for a second.
 - Wrap a heating pad set on low around the towel (to avoid burns) as an extra source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place.
 - The kitten’s body cannot warm itself with only a towel; you have to apply extra heat. Your own body heat won’t work because it is lower than what a kitten’s should be.
- As soon as the kitten is warmed, work on raising its blood sugar
 - Put some sugar or Karo syrup in warm water at a ratio of 1:1. Put some of this solution in a syringe and give the kitten three drops every three minutes.
 - If the kitten is not swallowing, try rubbing some Karo or sugar water on its gums and tongue.
 - If we have dextrose or glucose in the nursery, that can be used in place of sugar or Karo. If we have dextrose, it will be in the refrigerator.
 - Whatever sugar source you use, take care not to contaminate anything by double-dipping syringes.
 - Be sure you are administering the sugar every three minutes.

It may seem like you are not doing enough to help the kitten, but this is the only treatment for a fading kitten. The medical team cannot and will not do anything other than the steps above for a fading kitten. Be sure to alert the Nursery Manager and Assistant Manager that the kitten was fading and make clear notes about the episode in the kitten's chart and on the Feeder Board. If the kitten passes, follow the deceased kitten protocol and be sure to alert the Nursery Manager and/or Assistant Manager.

If the above steps are followed, we generally have success with these kittens. Keep in mind that it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of it and start acting normal again. Know that even with love, attention, and the perfect treatment, some fading kittens still won't make it.

Deceased Kitten Protocol

Overview

It is never easy to lose a kitten, and it affects each person differently. Understand that we are operating against nature most of the time, and the statistics are against us. If you ask a veterinarian, he will tell you that an orphan kitten has a less than 10% chance of survival. Even against the most incredible odds—remember, most of the kittens and cats we take into our program arrive sick or injured—our survival rates have been 80% and higher since the inception of this program. We focus on the positive outcome of the work we do, but we do not pretend that we can save every kitten we rescue.

Process

- Make sure the kitten has passed. If you are not sure, check with the Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, Med Tech, or a more experienced feeder. A very cold, hypoglycemic kitten can appear to be dead, but may not be.
- Wrap the kitten in a cloth and place it inside a Ziplock bag or other bag.
- With a *Sharpie*, write the kitten's name and A# on the outside of the bag. This is very important, as all deceased kittens must be accurately reported in APA! records and must also be reported to AAC.
- If the kitten is not properly identified, someone will have to inspect the kitten later to determine its true identity. Please be sure the kitten is correctly identified and be sure to use a *Sharpie* to write the A# and name on the bag.
- Place the kitten in the freezer.
- Remove the kitten's Daily Care Sheet from the file, write "DECEASED" on it, and put it in the nursery office.
- *If this was the only kitten in the litter*, remove its information from the Feeder Board so subsequent feeders will not be alarmed that it is missing.
 - Do *not* write on the board or in the litter's file that the kitten has passed; do *not* send any messages to the group that the kitten has passed.
- Notify the Nursery Manager and/or Assistant Manager that the kitten has passed.

When you arrive for your shift and find that a kitten is gone from the nursery, please refrain from asking other feeders if the kitten has passed. This is often distressing to other feeders and is not conducive to a pleasant atmosphere in the nursery. If you are particularly interested in the fate of a kitten, ask the Nursery Manager about it directly.

Bite Protocol

Process

The following is the APA! Bite Protocol and is to be followed by all staff, volunteers, fosters, and the public.

1. Wash bite wounds with soap and water immediately.
2. Stop bleeding with pressure. If bleeding is severe, call 911.
3. Report the bite to the Nursery Manager *[email address]* or to *[Executive Director of Organization]* at *[email]* the same day the incident.
4. Did the bite break the skin?
 - a. If no, no further action is required.
 - b. If yes, is it punctured or scratched?
 - i. If scratched, keeping an eye out for redness or infection should be sufficient.
 - ii. If punctured, you will need oral antibiotics. Please see your personal physician as soon as possible to prevent sepsis, loss of function, or even death.

Bites are a very dangerous issue and must be reported to APA! management. An infected bite can cost well over \$10,000 if it is not treated immediately and can even cause loss of function. If the animal has rabies, a bite can cause death for the human, as rabies is 100% fatal.

Although APA! is not responsible for medical bills associated with bites, we can often instruct you on what to do after a bite, and we need to keep records for any bite that occurs.

If you choose not to seek medical help, APA! cannot be held liable for any consequences that result from not taking appropriate action.

Neonatal Staff Q&A's

How do I communicate with the team or with team leadership?

Most of your questions can be answered by the Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, or Volunteer Liaison. If you are unsure who to contact, check the team roster or the "Go-To" chart posted in the nursery.

What do I do if I am unhappy or confused about nursery operations?

Contact the Nursery Manager, Assistant Manager, or Volunteer Liaison for guidance; see the "Go-To" chart or the team roster for contact information.

Who do I contact in an emergency?

If you have a medical emergency with a kitten in the nursery, contact the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager right away. If neither of them are in the nursery and cannot be reached by phone, contact the clinic right away. If an emergency concerns your immediate personal health or safety, call 911 before attempting to call anyone from APA! or the Bottle Baby Team, especially if it is outside normal business hours.

I'm on the team—now what?

All scheduling issues are addressed with *[insert email address]*. To maintain a schedule of feeders in the nursery, all volunteer feeders must commit to a minimum of one 3-hour shift per week. All missed shifts must be made up.

Can I bring my pets or foster animals to the nursery with me?

Due to the possibility of spreading disease to cats and kittens residing in the nursery, you cannot bring any personal pets or foster animals into the nursery at any time. If you believe it is necessary to have a foster animal with you for some reason, you must get prior approval from the Nursery Manager.

Why is it so important to keep kittens warm?

A very young kitten cannot regulate its body temperature. If a kitten becomes chilled to the point that its body temperature drops, this can cause the kitten to fade. If steps are not taken to prevent this, the kitten can die.

Why do we dilute the KMR in ratios of 8:1, then 4:1, then 2:1?

This helps the kitten avoid diarrhea or other digestive problems as it is introduced to a new environment and a new diet.

How much should a kitten eat?

The general rule is for kittens to consume 5% of their body weight at each feeding. To verify that a kitten has consumed enough, compare its weight before feeding with its weight after feeding (but before stimulation). There are feeding charts posted in the nursery to help you with these calculations.

How do I force-feed?

Force-feed a kitten with either formula or gruel using a syringe—a small one for bottle babies and a larger one for gruel babies. Some kittens take to this easily, while others do not; exercise patience. Always be careful not to let the kitten aspirate (get food or liquid into its lungs). If the kitten is mouth breathing, do not force-feed, as this can lead to choking. Alert the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager right away if a kitten chokes or aspirates.

What do I do if a kitten won't eat or gain weight?

If the kitten is healthy, it may be having a hard time adjusting to life without its mother. Be patient—syringe feeding may be required to supplement what the kitten eats on its own, or may be required completely if the kitten is not eating at all. If the kitten has a URI, diarrhea, or other illness, it may not be able to swallow or may be too weak to eat properly on its own. Be sure to note eating habits on the kitten's chart and on the Feeder Board.

How do I know when a kitten is ready to eat gruel rather than KMR?

If a kitten has teeth, including incisors, it can usually move on to gruel. Nursery management will determine when a litter is ready to be weaned. All kittens in a litter should be eating the same food, whether it's KMR or gruel and kibble.

Who do I tell if I see fleas or other parasites?

All animals have fleas and frequently have parasites. While these are normal and almost unnoticeable in older animals, they can cause serious illness in very young kittens. Bring these conditions to the attention of nursery management.

Will my pets at home be safe from contagion that is in the nursery?

If your pets are current on all their vaccinations and you adhere to sanitation protocols, your pets should be safe from contracting illnesses you come into contact with in the nursery. Be advised that your pets could contract an illness if their own health is compromised in some way, if they are not vaccinated, or if you do not follow all sanitation protocols.

Are the kittens in the nursery healthy?

Many of the kittens we rescue are sick, and some of them are injured. Most of these kittens were found out in the elements where they were exposed to every type of parasite and contagion imaginable. They are also exposed to predators and other means of injury that are not common to housecats. They are evaluated at intake and treated for any known illnesses or injuries at that time.

What do I do if a kitten vomits or has diarrhea?

If the kitten has diarrhea and is already being treated for it, watch for any changes that signal a problem; alert the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager. If the kitten is not already being treated for diarrhea, note it on the kitten's chart and on the Feeder Board. If a kitten vomits, always note it on the kitten's chart and on the Feeder Board. If the kitten is soiled, clean it gently with warm wipes and dry the kitten well. If the kitten's bedding is damp, wet, or soiled, clean the crate and replace the bedding.

What do I do if I am bitten?

Cat bites can be serious. If a cat or kitten in the nursery is feral or has shown signs of aggressive behavior, there should be a note on the Feeder Board and on the crate so that feeders use caution when tending to these cats. It should be noted that ALL ANIMALS CAN BITE, and while there have been few instances of biting in the nursery, as a feeder and as someone charged with the care of

cats and kittens, you should be aware that the possibility is ever-present. If you are bitten, the procedure to follow is posted throughout the nursery and in the operations manual, and it should be followed precisely.

Neonatal Methods of Communication

Bottle Baby Yahoo Group

The Neonatal Program communicates as a group using a Yahoo group: APA! Bottle Baby Program, [website]. The Yahoo group allows us to email messages that the entire group can see and to engage in group discussion. Messages are made and sent through your personal email to [email address]. You must receive and accept an invitation from the group before you can send or receive messages.

- The neonatal team does not communicate using Volunteer Squared (Vol2).
- Only active feeders and bottle baby leaders are members of the Yahoo group.
- Messages sent to/from this email address are public and go to everyone in the group. If you wish to have a private communication with someone, you must use that person's private email address.
- When you receive a group email and wish to reply, consider first if you want to "reply all" to the group or "reply" just to the sender.
- Emails about fading and/or deceased kittens should be directed to nursery management and should never be sent through the Yahoo group. Consult the "Go-To" chart for the email address you need.
- Problems with management, staff, or volunteers can be taken to the Volunteer Liaison either through [email address] or through their personal email. Messages that create dissention in the nursery will not be tolerated and can be grounds for removal from the group and/or termination from the program.
- Be thoughtful when emailing the group. There are more than 100 people in this group and their feelings and privacy should always be considered.

Volunteer Liaison

The Volunteer Liaison is here to maintain open lines of communication between the volunteers and program management and can be contacted at [email address] or directly. If you wish to communicate confidentially, contact the Volunteer Liaison directly. Staff and interns are welcome to contact the Volunteer Liaison with any concerns, with the understanding that the VL may not be able to resolve the problem. Staff and interns are welcome to meet with the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager with any problems.

Team Meetings

Team meetings are not typically scheduled during the season unless there is something of immediate importance to the team. If there is a team meeting, everyone should attend, except for those scheduled to feed during the meeting time; feeders in the nursery will be updated after the meeting.

Group messages

Program management strives to be respectful of everyone at all times and only sends emails if they are important.

- The subject line of all emails to the group will identify the purpose of the message.
- Weekly Update emails are required reading by nursery staff and volunteers and everyone is responsible for the information in them. These emails contain helpful tips and reminders, changes to procedures or protocols, and other important information.

- Pleas for shift coverage are sent when the nursery is short-handed. If you are available to take an extra shift, please "reply all." If you are not available to take an extra shift, then do not reply.
- Pleas for supplies are sent when the nursery needs something.
- Pleas for fosters are sent to the group as needed. If you are available to foster, reply directly to the foster plea. If you are not available to foster, you do not need to reply.
- Other emails sent by management with important announcements should be read by everyone and acted upon accordingly.

Neonatal Staff Roster

Please be respectful of everyone's personal information and their time away from the nursery. If your matter is not urgent, email the person first before calling.

If your matter needs immediate attention but is not critical, send a text message before calling. In an emergency, call the appropriate person for help. *Never* give out contact information to anyone other than BB team members!

Staff:

Neonatal Program Manager	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Assistant Manager	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Volunteer Liaison	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Training Coordinator	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Rescue Manager	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Neonatal Foster Manager	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Assistant Foster Manager	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]
Foster Mentor Coordinator	[Name]	[Number]	[Email]

Authorized to administer medications, injections, subcutaneous fluids and tube-feed:

[Manager Name] [Number]
[Assistant Manager Name] [Number]
Interns
Med Techs

Contact in case of emergency:

[Manager Name] [Number]
[Assistant Manager Name] [Number]

Clinic:

[Number]

Only call if both Manager and Assistant Manager cannot be reached.

Neonatal Staff Responsibilities and Job Descriptions

Nursery Staff Responsibilities

The Neonatal Program includes the nursery where kittens reside until they transfer to foster homes, as well as the Foster Team. Below is the Neonatal Program organizational chart, job descriptions for all nursery positions, and the Neonatal Program Participation Agreement. Foster Team procedures are in a separate manual.

Along with the Neonatal Program Manager, the Training Coordinator coordinates training for all volunteer feeders; the Nursery Manager and Assistant Manager train all other positions. All feeders, Med Techs, and interns must sign the Neonatal Program Participation Agreement.

Job Description: Neonatal Program Manager

Purpose: To oversee all administrative and operational functions of the Neonatal Program, which provides basic care and medical attention for orphan kittens, pregnant and nursing cats, and their litters. This includes cats and kittens, both in-house and in foster care, that are rescued each year from a five-county region, which primarily includes Travis County and the Austin Animal Center (AAC). The Neonatal Program Manager works to achieve the highest possible survival rate until animals are adoptable and can be transferred to the Cat Program, thereby ensuring APA! helps the city of Austin maintain a No-Kill referendum.

Kittens range in age from newborn to six weeks old and may remain in the program longer depending on their health or other factors; mother cats remain in the program until they are healthy, no longer lactating, and can be transferred to the Cat Program. Peak season, which can last 6–7 months, sees the highest number of intakes, with as many as 40–60 kittens per week and an in-house population of 45 litters (an average litter is 2–5 kittens). Many of these kittens need medical attention, and all of them need to be fed consistently every 2–4 hours in accordance with mandated procedures. While managing the onsite and offsite populations and paying special attention to the specific needs of such young, fragile kittens.

The Neonatal Program Manager must perform the following activities:

- Work with APA! leadership to establish and enforce program policies and standard operating procedures.
- Work with the APA! medical team to establish and enforce protocols for the general care and medical treatment of the kittens in accordance with veterinary standards.
- Provide individualized care and attention for critical kittens.
- Work with the APA! medical team to establish and enforce sanitation protocols for general operations and for the containment and prevention of contagion.
- Supervise a separate quarantine ward for highly infectious diseases, such as panleukopenia, as needed.

- Supervise the daily operations of the nursery, which includes but is not limited to: feeding kittens; intakes and medical treatments; supply management; staff management, including paid and volunteer staff and interns; ensuring all kittens and cats entering the program have been tested for FeLV and/or FIV; disposal of deceased kittens; and maintaining physical space.
- Work with APA! leadership to create an operating budget, and operate within that budget; solicit financial and in-kind donations on an ongoing basis.
- Build a team of feeders, primarily volunteers, to be in the nursery 21 hours per day during peak season to provide adequate care; monitor team morale.
- Create and supervise teams within the program, such as Foster, Fundraising, Volunteer Recruitment and Training, and Rescue Manager.
- Perform all administrative and reporting duties, including but not limited to: Pet Point entries for each kitten and cat; medical and feeding charts for each kitten and cat; End- of-Day (EOD) Reports; and weekly accountability of all kittens and cats in program.
- Work with PASS Manager to accept cats and kittens from the public.
- Coordinate with local shelters and Rescue Program Manager to accept and transport all kittens and cats to the program; must give final approval for all kittens accepted or declined.
- Work with Neonatal Foster Manager to stay informed of whereabouts of all kittens in foster; maintain all administrative records for kittens and cats in foster; mentor fosters and Foster Team members.
- Respond to written and phone inquiries from other shelters and rescue groups, locally
- and across the nation, about starting and maintaining neonatal programs..
- Speak at the American Pets Alive! Conference and other such conferences to engender interest in and support for neonatal programs.
- Respond to inquiries from the general public about caring for neonates

Job Description: Neonatal Program Assistant Manager

Purpose: To assist the Neonatal Program Manager in the daily functions of the ward to assure that the kittens' basic and medical needs are met; to assist with general operations of the ward so that there is no interruption of the daily operational flow in terms of procedures, staffing, and supplies. With an expectation of more than 1,000 kittens and pregnant and nursing cats to care for in the program, and potentially 50–100 kittens residing in the nursery during peak season (May–August), the Neonatal Program Manager must be able to maintain a detailed record of both the offsite and onsite populations and must report this information to APA!, as well as oversee all administrative and operational functions of the ward itself, which is staffed for 20 hours each day, 6am to 2am. In order for the Neonatal Program Manager to establish and maintain a high standard of efficiency and the highest possible live outcome for the program.

The Assistant Manager is needed onsite to:

- Schedule volunteer and paid feeders
- Help supervise nursery staff
- Maintain sanitation according to established protocols in the nursery
- Perform intake testing and evaluations
- Dispense oral medications and injections, and perform other medical treatments as needed

- Perform tube-feeding
- Monitor any cats/kittens with a critical status
- Assist with supply management
- Monitor daily/weekly nursery population
- Decontaminate nursery rooms as needed
- Prepare EOD Reports and other reports as necessary
- Interact closely with other APA! directors/managers/teams
- Attend all staff meetings
- Act as a backup feeder as needed

The Assistant Manager will report directly to the Program Manager and will provide a daily EOD Report to the Neonatal Program Manager regarding kittens with a critical status, supply needs, scheduling issues, and any other matters requiring immediate attention.

Job Description: Neonatal Program Med Tech

Purpose: To feed and provide basic care and medical treatment for orphan kittens ranging in age from birth to six-weeks old that are rescued by APA! and brought into the Neonatal Program to be raised to the age of adoption; to feed and provide basic care and medical treatment for pregnant cats and nursing cats and their litters. The Med Tech will learn highly specialized skills for the care of neonatal kittens and will be exposed to animal care in a shelter environment and in a non-profit setting.

Med Techs are responsible for the following duties, and others as assigned:

- Strictly adhere to all established policies, procedures, and protocols
- Follow the strict sanitation regimens set the by APA! Vet Team
- Care for and feed kittens as outlined in the Neonatal Program Protocol Handbook
- Sign the Neonatal Program Participation Agreement
- Work calmly and efficiently when the nursery is at full capacity
- Work under the direct supervision of the Program Manager and Assistant Manager

Med Techs will learn the following skills:

- How to properly feed and care for bottle babies, gruel babies, and nursing moms
- How to administer medications, including oral and subcutaneous meds
- How to recognize symptoms of illness and prescribe proper medication
- How to draw blood used to test for FeLV
- How to tube-feed and when it is necessary to do so

Job Description: Neonatal Program Intern

Purpose: To feed and provide basic care and medical treatment for orphan kittens ranging in age from birth to six-weeks old that are rescued by APA! and brought into the Neonatal Program to be raised to the age of adoption; to feed and provide basic care and medical treatments for pregnant cats and nursing cats with their litters. This is an unpaid position in which the intern will learn highly specialized skills in an aspect of animal care that is not readily available in typical educational settings. The intern will be exposed to animal care in a shelter environment and in a non-profit setting. Upon completion of the internship, the intern will be awarded a Certificate in Neonatal Care, signed by the Neonatal Program

Manager, that outlines the skills they've gained and the time they've committed to the program.

Interns are responsible for the following duties, and others as assigned:

- Commit to a minimum of two months and 15 hours a week with the program
- Strictly adhere to all established policies, procedures, and protocols
- Follow the strict sanitation regimens set by APA! Vet Team
- Care for and feed kittens as outlined in the Neonatal Program Protocol Handbook
- Sign the Neonatal Program Participation Agreement
- Work calmly and efficiently when the nursery is at full capacity
- Work under the direct supervision of the Program Manager and Assistant Manager

Interns will learn the following skills:

- How to properly feed and care for bottle babies, gruel babies, and nursing moms
- How to administer medications, including oral and subcutaneous meds
- How to recognize symptoms of illness and prescribe proper medication
- How to draw blood used to test for FeLV
- How to tube feed and when it is necessary to do so
- Other tasks as necessary

Neonatal Foster Manager Job Description

Basic Function

The basic function of the Neonatal Foster Manager is to lead the APA! Neonatal Foster Program. Key functions of the Neonatal Foster Manager include overseeing Neonatal Foster volunteers, overseeing screening of fosters and foster pleas, helping to manage an ongoing foster database, and creating and maintaining all Neonatal Foster Program documentation.

Reporting Relationships

The Neonatal Foster Manager reports to the Neonatal Program Manager. Duties may differ slightly from this Job Description; all duties are outlined by the Neonatal Program Manager.

The Neonatal Foster Manager oversees Neonatal Foster volunteers.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

General:

- Lead the APA! Neonatal Foster Program.
- Oversee team of volunteers concentrated on the Neonatal foster efforts.
- Oversee foster pleas.
- Match fosters to appropriate litters based on foster experience and environment.
- Recruit and screen fosters; train fosters as needed.
- Provide support for fosters with a team of trained mentors.
- Ensure fosters keep all kitten medical appointments and scheduled spay/neuter surgeries.
- Coordinate with Neonatal Program Manager, Rescue Coordinator, Transport team, and Clinic when new intakes are going straight to foster.
- Coordinate with Nursery and Neonatal Program Manager on kittens/litters in the nursery that are ready for foster.
- Manage an ongoing foster database that is cross-referenced to monitor fosters and kittens.
- Manage transfer appointments from nursery to foster.
- Create and maintain all Neonatal Foster Program documentation which is provided to Neonatal fosters.
- Coordinate with the Cat Foster Team on overall foster program, common fosters, and transition of fostered kittens to the Cat Program at 8 weeks old.
- Provide daily EOD reports to Neonatal Program Manager and Neonatal Foster Team, and weekly/monthly reporting and analysis to APA! Cat Program leadership team.

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- Experience with fostering kittens within Neonatal program (current foster).
- Able to get along well with other volunteers, staff, and fosters.

Neonatal Volunteer Responsibilities & Job Descriptions

Guidelines for Volunteer Feeders

- Volunteers must commit to one 3-hour shift each week; the shift can be the day and time of the volunteer's choosing but must be consistent each week.
- Volunteers must attend training, which consists of a 2-hour introduction to policies and procedures followed by two full shifts shadowing an experienced feeder in the nursery for hands-on training with kittens.
- All trainees must complete training and be prepared to begin their weekly shift in 30 days or less, or they must repeat all training.
- No one under 13 years of age is allowed in the nursery; volunteers aged 16–17 must be accompanied by a fully trained parent or guardian.
- There is no community service credit of any kind awarded in our program.
- It is not a requirement, but we do request that volunteers commit to a minimum of 3 months of volunteering after completing training.
- Trainees must attend the APA! general orientation prior to attending neonatal training and must establish a Volunteer Squared (Vol22) profile.

After a volunteer feeder has completed training and has been approved to feed solo, they will be invited to join our Yahoo group and will receive instructions for scheduling their shifts to begin feeding and receiving group messages. All volunteer feeders must sign the Neonatal Program Participation Agreement.

Weekly Shift

Due to the large number of kittens that come and go in the nursery, and the large number of kittens that reside in the nursery during peak season, the nursery must maintain a tightly controlled schedule. If the nursery schedule is not adequately filled at all times, then kittens will have to be declined and they will be euthanized. Volunteers can schedule more than one weekly shift if they want to and are encouraged to respond when pleas for additional help are sent to the group.

- Each day starts at 6am and ends at 3am. Paid feeders supplement volunteers from 6– 10am and 10pm–3am daily.
- During peak season, it can take up to three feeders per room to care for the kittens in a timely manner.
- Send all shift requests to [email]; you will receive a confirmation email in reply.
- Volunteers select the day/time of their shifts. For example, if a volunteer requests a shift on Mondays from 8–11am, then that shift will be added to the calendar for that volunteer on a recurring basis.
- All feeders must give sufficient notice if they're changing or cancelling a shift.
- If it is 24 hours or more in advance, [email] should be notified as soon as possible so a substitute can be found. Volunteers must make up all missed shifts.
- If it is less than 24 hours in advance, volunteers should text or call both the Nursery Manager and Assistant Manager and send a plea to the group for coverage.

Failure to Appear for a Scheduled Shift

Failure to appear for a shift without notice can be grounds for immediate termination for volunteer or paid feeders.

- If a volunteer feeder cancels a shift without scheduling a make-up shift three times in a row, the feeder will be asked to schedule a different time for their recurring shift. Refusal to do so can result in removal from the program.
- If the one-shift-per-week commitment is not fulfilled, the volunteer may be terminated from the program.

General Duties

Each shift is three hours long. Feeders will learn how to prioritize their time as they gain more experience in the nursery. Volunteer feeders are required to do at least one housekeeping chore before signing out so the nursery stays clean, stocked, and operational.

If feeders would like to come to the nursery to help with housekeeping but not to feed, they need approval from the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager to ensure there are enough feeders scheduled to take care of the kittens.

- Sign in upon arrival. Personal belongings should be left outside of the feeding rooms. Cell phones are allowed, but personal phone calls, texting, and emails should be limited during shifts.
- Ask the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager which room to enter—other feeders are not aware of the nursery's priorities.
- Quickly check for supplies with the feeder who is still in the room. If there is no feeder in the room, quickly grab supplies before starting, being mindful of washing your hands before touching things. Only take fresh supplies from the kitchen or supply room; do not take supplies from other nursery rooms.
- If there are no clean dishes, check the dishwasher.
- If there is no clean laundry, check the washer and dryer.
- Check that there is enough KMR and gruel made to get through your shift. If not, make what you need so that you don't run out in the middle of feeding a litter.
- Wash your hands before beginning to feed and before handling cleaning supplies.
- Check the Feeder Board and start feeding kittens.
- At the end of a shift, all volunteer feeders must do at least one housekeeping chore, usually dishes or laundry. If those two chores are not needed, check with the Nursery Manager or Assistant Manager.
- Upon leaving, sign out and indicate which room you were in and what chore you did.

Paid Feeders

- All scheduling is done through the Nursery Manager.
- Paid feeders have the same basic duties and responsibilities as volunteer feeders. Paid feeders are required to feed kittens until the end of their shifts and are not required to perform a chore before leaving. Paid feeders should, however, clean up after themselves and leave the feeding areas clean and sanitized before leaving.
- Paid feeders use the same feeding and sanitation protocols as volunteer feeders; the only difference is that they feed in different rooms.
- Paid feeders have the same channels of communication as volunteer feeders and operate with the same chain-of-command.
- Paid Feeders work under the same rules and expectations as volunteer feeders and are subject to the same grounds for termination.

Panleuk Feeders

- Panleuk feeders are trained by the Nursery Manager or Panleuk Coordinator on Parvo entrance and exit procedures.
- Panleuk feeders must be experienced feeders who understand that kitten mortality is higher in the Panleuk Ward than in the nursery.
- Panleuk feeders must understand the serious and highly transmissible nature of panleukopenia
- The Panleuk Coordinator manages a feeding schedule on an as-needed basis when there are kittens in the Panleuk Ward and coordinates with the BB Foster Manager to place kittens with a panleuk foster when possible.
- The Panleuk Coordinator will monitor supplies needed in Panleuk Ward.

Job Description: Neonatal Program Feeder

Purpose: To feed and provide basic care and medical treatment for orphan kittens ranging in age from birth to six-weeks old that are rescued by APA! and brought into the Neonatal Program to be raised to the age of adoption; to feed and provide basic care and medical treatments for pregnant cats and nursing cats with their litters.

All feeders must follow established policies and procedures at all times and must be able to work calmly and efficiently when the nursery is at full capacity.

Feeders are responsible for the following duties, and others as assigned:

- Volunteers fulfill a minimum of one 3-hour shift per week on a recurring basis
- Feed kittens and cats according to feeding procedures and sanitation protocols
- Make accurate notes on kittens' Daily Care Sheets and Feeder Board
- Alert nursery management of any health issues needing attention
- Clean kittens' crates (including but not limited to litter boxes) as needed and according to protocols
- Move supplies and food from storage to nursery as needed and in accordance with protocols
- Maintain sanitation in the nursery according to protocols
- Wash dishes and laundry as needed and according to protocols
- Empty trash and recycling containers as needed
- Decontaminate rooms on an as-needed basis if not needed for feeding

Feeders must be able to:

- Lift and carry 20 pounds
- Use food and supplies responsibly
- Bend and stoop to tend to kittens in bottom crates
- Climb a stepladder to reach kittens in upper crates
- Be emotionally able to care for fading kittens and those that pass
- Work well with others
- Follow the established chain-of-command to solve problems if/when they arise

Feeders work under the supervision of the Neonatal Program Manager and Assistant Manager. All feeders must sign a Neonatal Program Participant Agreement in order to work in the nursery.

Volunteer feeders must attend the APA! general orientation and submit the APA! Volunteer Application prior to attending the Neonatal Program training. Neonatal Program training must be completed before feeders can feed solo in the nursery.

Paid feeders complete training as prescribed by the Neonatal Program Manager. Duties may differ slightly from this job description; the Neonatal Program Manager will outline all duties.

Job Description: Neonatal Program Feeder Agreement

Purpose: Caring for neonatal kittens is a delicate task, as they are extremely vulnerable and can easily contract disease and quickly decline in a nursery setting. As such, APA! has strict requirements to ensure that the care these fragile creatures receive is of the highest possible standards. The APA! Neonatal Program could not exist without the dedication of its volunteers and staff, and all nursery feeders must follow the requirements listed below to ensure that the Neonatal Program successfully fulfills its mission to save as many kittens as possible each season.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the related Neonatal Program Job Description and understand reasons for termination. If I do not comply with protocols, I will be given a written warning; after my first warning, the Neonatal Program Manager has the right to remove me from the program. If I miss a scheduled shift without proper notification, I can be automatically removed from the program. If terminated, I will be removed from all Neonatal Program communication groups and will not be allowed to enter the nursery.

Actions that can result in Neonatal Program termination

- Failure to follow job description during shift
- Failure to follow proper sanitation and feeding protocols set by the Neonatal Program Manager
- Administering medications to kittens without authorization from Program Manager
- Untruthful charting and reporting information about kittens
- Failure to attend a scheduled shift without prior proper notification
- Missing three scheduled shifts in a row, or failure to complete a make-up shift for a cancelled/missed shift
- Negativity directed toward another APA! volunteer or staff member
- Conveying private information about kittens/protocols to the public and/or press
- Representing the Neonatal Program or APA! as a whole in a negative way
- Failure to feed any kittens in the nursery needing to be fed, regardless of conditions such as ringworm, illness, etc.

I understand that:

- No one from the public is allowed inside the neonatal ward.
- Family and/or friends are not allowed inside the neonatal ward without prior permission from the Neonatal Program Manager.
- Photos and/or videos are not allowed in nursery without permission of program manager.
- If I do not follow proper protocols, then I risk exposing myself to zoonotic conditions (such as ringworm) and exposing my pets to contagion.
- Any complaints suggestions must be submitted through established communication channels.
- No animals will enter or leave the nursery without permission from APA! staff.

Volunteer Name (please print): _____

Volunteer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Training – Volunteer Feeders

The Training Coordinator works with the Nursery Manager to develop and implement a consistent and thorough training program to ensure volunteer feeders are reliable and committed to the mission of the program, and that they fully understand the policies, procedures, and protocols of the Neonatal Program.

The training team consists of:

Training Coordinator

- Develops training materials for new feeders and updates materials annually; schedules all training classes and coordinates with other classroom trainers; monitors shadow schedule; coordinates roster of trainers to lead shadows
- Develops and manages annual Workshop for Returning Feeders
- Develops and manages annual Workshop for Trainers; trains experienced feeders as they are added to training roster
- Maintains instructional signage in nursery
- Sends Weekly Update email to group to enhance and maintain skills and knowledge base of feeders
- Work with management to ease trainees who are not a good fit for the nursery into other volunteer positions at APA!
- Work with management and APA! Volunteer Coordinator to recruit trainees
- Work with APA! Volunteer Coordinator to ensure Neonatal Program is accurately represented at general orientations
- Maintain Neonatal Program volunteers' Volunteer Squared profiles

Scheduler for shadows

- Maintains training calendar for shadows and communicates with trainees until they graduate to solo feeders

Experienced feeders train shadows in nursery

Job Description: Neonatal Program Training Coordinator

Purpose: To recruit and train neonatal feeders by creating a consistent and thorough training format; lead a team of trainers to ensure new feeders are learning all team policies and procedures and how to properly care for neonates; to ensure the neonatal team is informed of any changes in procedures and to offer additional training as needed to improve feeders' skills.

The Training Coordinator will perform the following activities:

- Update training materials as needed
- Prepare and lead annual Workshop for Returning Feeders
- Prepare and lead annual Workshop for Experienced Feeders/Trainers
- Recruit and train volunteers to be trainers in the classroom and in the nursery (shadows)
- Coordinate with management and trainers to establish training dates

- Post training dates on Facebook, on APA! website, and through other channels as approved
- Ensure conference room is reserved and slide projector is available for class times
- Work with training coordinators who: provide training/program information to potential trainees; maintain class registration and training spreadsheet; and maintain schedule to track trainees' shadow shifts through completion of training
- Represent the Neonatal Program at APA! general orientations for recruitment purposes
- Post pleas for recruits on Facebook, on APA! blogs, and through other media as approved
- Work closely with program management to identify feeders needing help and other training issues needing attention
- Maintain training spreadsheet
- Send weekly update to team with helpful tips and information
- Update and post instructional signage in nursery
- Maintain Volunteer Squared profiles for Neonatal Program volunteers
- Attend all team meetings

Job Description: Neonatal Program Rescue Coordinator

Purpose: To continually coordinate with Austin Animal Center (AAC)—and other shelters that APA! pulls kittens and pregnant and nursing cats and their litters from—and the Neonatal Program Manager and Neonatal Foster Manager to know when kittens can be accepted or must be declined. This is a volunteer position.

The Rescue Coordinator must:

- Commit a minimum of 20 hours per week
- Stay informed about available crate space in the nursery
- Stay informed about available foster capacity
- Arrange immediate transport for litters to be accepted
- Attend periodic meetings with program management
- Work under the direct supervision of the program manager
- Arrange with program manager for a substitute if unavailable
- Be able to work calmly and efficiently during peak season

Job Description: Neonatal Program Volunteer Liaison

Purpose: To build and maintain esprit de corps in the Neonatal Program through ongoing team building and morale-boosting activities in order to foster a positive working environment for all team members, with a focus on volunteers so that the team can retain quality participants, including but not limited to feeders.

The Neonatal Program consists of a large group of disparate people who have joined the team for various personal reasons. The goal of the team is to help APA! and the city of Austin maintain a No-Kill referendum. The goals and expectations of the individuals, however, can be multifaceted, as are their personalities and talents. During peak season, the work of this team is intensely demanding, fast-paced, and emotionally charged; 2–6 people are required to work together comfortably during each shift, in addition to working effectively with other groups within the program (transport, fosters, etc.) and within APA!.

The Volunteer Liaison works closely with program leadership to improve the team dynamic by cultivating a pleasant and productive atmosphere through the following activities:

- Attending team meetings
- Creating/providing open communication within the team and with team leadership
- Help volunteers bond with one another through social interaction
- Being someone volunteers can approach with questions and concerns
- Mediating problems between volunteers and team leadership
- Liaising with team leadership and with APA! leadership as necessary
- Focusing on shared success of the team
- Ensuring volunteers know the donation of their time and energy is appreciated; helping volunteers feel valued and respected
- Team building exercises and events
- Helping to maintain accurate reporting in Volunteer Squared
- Participating in the creation and analysis of team surveys to better judge team morale and areas needing attention in team communication
- Working with team leadership to maintain job descriptions and procedure manuals so that they are current and available to team members as needed

The Volunteer Liaison will inform program management of planned and/or completed team activities and of any issues concerning morale that arise in the Neonatal Ward; issues needing immediate attention will be reported to the Neonatal Program Manager as they arise.

Neonatal Program: Training Guidelines

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Overview

Properly caring for our neonates is an immense task. For our feeders to keep up with demand, the training we provide is an essential first step, and we have to make the best use of the limited time we have to devote to this. With your guidance and direction, our new feeders will learn the skills necessary to move into this role comfortably and effectively. This guide will ensure new feeders are consistently and thoroughly trained and will provide a meaningful experience for both the trainee and the nursery.

Before setting foot in the nursery as a feeder, trainees are invested in our team. Likewise, before trainees have contributed anything to us, we have invested a considerable amount of time and effort into qualifying and teaching them. EFs must show the trainee where everything is and carefully explain how to do each part of each task associated with feeding the kittens, all while keeping the nursery operational and observing the trainee's performance. Your excellent skills in caring for our kittens are the reason you have been invited to the training team.

Please use the following guidelines consistently with each shadow to ensure all training is uniform and comprehensive. Contact *[Managers]* any time you have questions about the training process.

Be mindful of the example you set, both with your shadows and in front of our other feeders. You set the standard for the trainees and for your fellow volunteers.

The Training Process – for the Trainee

- Attend APA! general orientation, register for Volunteer Squared, and submit an APA! Volunteer Application
 - Often must wait a few weeks for orientation, as space is limited
 - Had to pay \$20 to secure a spot
 - Probably had to wait to find a parking space
- Attend 2-hour Neonatal Program class on policies and procedures
 - Probably had to be on a waitlist for training
 - Cannot miss training or be more than 15 minutes late
 - Must complete all training and begin weekly shift in 30 days or less
 - Must sign Participation Agreement before shadowing
 - A lot of information to take in—overwhelming
 - Probably had to wait to find a parking place
- Complete two full shifts (possibly three) shadowing an experienced feeder for hands-on training
 - Must select both shifts within 72 hours of introductory class
 - Cannot miss training or be more than 15 minutes late
 - Must demonstrate ability to follow all protocols and work well with others
 - May have gotten confused—TLAC or Tarrytown?
 - May have gone out of their way to take a shadow at an inconvenient time

We have a carefully developed and regimented training process. We have more trainees than we do trainers or time to train, and we need to keep the nursery on track while we are training, so **our process does not allow for any deviation**. Please keep in mind that both the process and the job itself may intimidate some trainees—it can be a delicate balancing act.

The Training Process – for the Trainer (EF)

- You will be notified when someone has signed up to shadow you. You should **email the trainee ASAP to introduce yourself** and exchange phone numbers so the trainee knows how to reach you.
 - *Example: Welcome to the program! You will be shadowing me in the kitten nursery on this day, this date, this time (am or pm). Please send me your cell number in case we need to communicate—mine is 512-555-5555. I will be watching for you, but you can text if you get here and the door is locked. You may want to wear something old—we use diluted bleach to sanitize and clean. If you think you might be late, please be sure to call. Your training shift is a regular feeding shift for me, so if you are more than 15 minutes late, you will need to reschedule your shadow since I will have to begin feeding kittens by that time. Let me know if you have any questions in the meantime.*
- Starting this season, **you** will have a checklist to go over with the trainee at the end of the shift; they will no longer bring a handout with them. You **must** have your trainer's guide with you when you have a shadow.
- Lead the trainee through Shadow 1 or Shadow 2 according to the guidelines outlined below. Encourage questions while keeping things moving and look for "teachable moments."
- Pay attention to the time; it will take a few minutes to introduce the shadow to the nursery before you start feeding, but try to stay on track so feeding doesn't fall behind—walk and talk! It can't always be helped, but going over your 3-hour shift time is not encouraged.
- Allow a few minutes after the end-of-shift chore has been done to go over the training checklist; ask trainees if they have any questions, particularly about anything you noticed they were not quick to pick up.
- Fill out the End-of-Shadow Feedback form, scan and email it to *[bottle training email]* **in 24 hours or less**. Put the trainee's name and date in the subject line (ex: Jane S 5/20 Shadow 2) before sending.
 - As of now, there is no scanner in the nursery. We had great success with a smartphone app last season called Turboscan (that's what it is called for iPhones, may be different for Androids). There is a free version of this app and it is very easy to use—you just take a photo of the form, then "save as PDF" and send as email.
 - If you do not want to use an app, you can scan and email offsite, as long as it is **within 24 hrs**.
 - Please do not send jpgs (photos), as these files do not always travel well.
 - If you notice any conditions that may inhibit a trainee from working successfully in the nursery, be sure to note this in your feedback.
 - Any behavior that you feel is inappropriate or causes you any concern should be noted.
- For second shadows, trainers will receive feedback from the first shadow. Review it to be sure that all trainees feed bottle babies and do dishes and laundry before going solo.

We strongly discourage cancelling a shift with a scheduled shadow due to time constraints for both the trainee and the team.

If you need to cancel or change your regularly scheduled feeding shift and you **DO NOT have a shadow scheduled**:

- Notify *[Bottle Baby Training email]* so we can adjust the training calendar.
- Notify *[Bottle Baby Scheduler email]* as required for more or less than 24 hours' notice.

If you need to cancel or change your regularly scheduled feeding shift and you **DO have a shadow scheduled**, please let us know as soon as possible—it is very difficult to reschedule the trainee and it disrupts their training, so we will need to find a substitute if possible.

- Notify *[Bottle Baby Training email]* so we can adjust the training calendar.
- Notify *[Bottle Baby Scheduler email]* as required for more or less than 24 hours' notice.

- Do **not** plea to the general group to cover your shift if you have a shadow scheduled—not all feeders are authorized to train. If it is a last-minute cancellation, be sure to notify [*Bottle Baby Training email*] as well as [*Bottle Baby Scheduler email*] so we can take care of the shadow.

We may occasionally ask if trainers are available to schedule extra shifts to take shadows. We realize you may not have additional time to offer—if you can answer these pleas that will be greatly appreciated; if you cannot, then simply do not respond.

If a shadow asks to take pictures, politely tell them taking pictures or videos in the nursery is not allowed. If they persist, explain that feeders should be focused on feeding the kittens so they don't fall behind; note this on the feedback form. You might mention that if they see others taking photos, it is because they are helping with kitten marketing and are authorized to do so. If you are authorized to take photos for the foster team, please do not do so when you have a shadow—it undermines the training process and team policies.

If a shadow asks medical questions that do not pertain to a feeder's duties or to a litter they are working with, explain that volunteers only feed the kittens and that nursery management oversees all the kittens' medical needs; the vets and clinic staff also provide medical attention. If a shadow asks for statistics about our program, questions that do not pertain to what you are teaching, or any inappropriate questions, refer them to [*Manager*] and note this on the feedback form.

Do not give the access code to the building to trainees. They will be given the code once they have selected their shift and have been invited to the BB Yahoo group.

Below is a detailed list of what you need to teach your shadows. It is a long list, but you will find that routine tasks are simply broken down into small steps so that important details are not overlooked. This will help you guide your shadows with ease and to establish good habits from the beginning. Thank you for not deviating from this list. Consistency is necessary so that the training experience is effective and productive from the start.

Shadow 1

It will take a little time to introduce the shadow to the nursery—allow for that extra time so you can stay on track

1. Smile ☺. Welcome trainee and thank them for coming. Have trainee sign in.
2. Remind trainee to log hours in Vol2 from a computer or personal device. Contact Bottle Baby Support with any problems.
3. Point out posted contact info and suggest that trainee put this in their phone before leaving.
4. Discuss community message board—always read upon arrival.
5. Point out office, overflow/intake room.
6. Trainees should leave purses, jackets, etc., outside of feeding room. **No phones** while training.
7. Give trainee a quick tour of the nursery. Look for “teachable moments,” and walk and talk.
8. Have trainee wash hands. Demonstrate proper hand-washing (up to elbows, long enough, nail brush).
9. Explain “all in—all out” system and how it helps prevent and contain contagion; remind trainee that young kittens do not have developed immune systems yet. Point out foot tubs.
10. Explain how to determine which room they should feed using status boards; ask *[Managers]* where to feed but do not ask other feeders, as they will not know the status of every room.
11. Ask the current feeder in the room if they need any supplies before entering the room; if no one else is feeding in the room, explain to trainees that they should ask feeders about supplies when they are present.
12. Briefly go over where supplies are kept in the room where you are feeding. Clean supplies = clean hands.
13. Explain the Feeder Board and how we choose who needs to be fed next.
 - a. Each trainee must feed bottle babies before solo feeding.
 - b. Explain how to prioritize. Do not skip gruel babies or pregnant/nursing cats.
 - c. If there is another feeder in the room, ask them to take singletons so you can feed litters with your trainee.
14. The trainer and the trainee will gather the supplies needed before taking kittens out of their crate.
 - a. Use puppy pads or blankets in bins, explaining that the plastic is cold for kittens. Make sure bin is sanitized before using.
 - b. Take out a couple of syringes, spoons, etc., and have them ready in case you need them while feeding a litter so that you will not have to rummage through clean supplies with contaminated hands.
15. The trainer and the trainee will feed litters together.
 - a. If there are singletons that need to be fed and there is not another feeder in the room, supervise the trainee and let them feed the kitten. Watch the time.
16. As you are feeding, let the trainee know about how long it should take to feed a kitten; try to keep up a good pace and help the trainee understand how to do so.
17. Explain/show how to make KMR and/or gruel, depending on the litter you are feeding.
 - a. When making KMR, point out the posted KMR instructions. Explain ratios.
 - b. When making gruel, point out the posted gruel instructions. Be sure to tell them to never change the ratio that is posted—it is always the same whether for gruel or for syringe gruel.
18. Explain Weigh, Feed, Weigh.
 - a. Point out the posted feeding calculations chart.
 - b. Explain how to fill out the Daily Care Sheets. Have the trainee put their initials with yours on their charts (ex: cm/bs) so it is clear it was a trainee who fed the kitten and who they were shadowing.

19. If bottle-feeding:
 - a. Explain that there are two different types of nipple and when to use which one.
 - b. Show them how to properly position a kitten for feeding; use lap or table pad.
 - c. Explain what to do when kittens will not suckle—syringe-feed if necessary and don't spend more than a few minutes trying to bottle-feed a recalcitrant kitten.
 - d. Keep kittens warm while feeding; reheat the snuggle disc.
 - e. Be sure to clean kitten's face and neck when finished feeding.
 - f. When stimulating, talk about defecation—what's normal and what's not.
20. When syringe-feeding, show them how to hold the syringe; tell trainee not to push KMR or gruel too fast or kitten can aspirate or choke. No nipples on syringes!
21. If gruel-feeding, show them the entire process:
 - a. As you take kittens out of the crate, weigh them and place them in a sanitized bin.
 - b. Put their blanket (if it is being replaced) or puppy pad in the bin along with their food and toys.
 - c. Clean and sanitize the crate while the kittens are eating in the bin.
 - d. Put clean bedding, fresh food and water, and warmed snuggle disc in crate.
 - e. Re-weigh kittens and syringe feed if necessary.
 - f. Be sure to clean kittens before putting them back in the crate.
 - g. Clean and sanitize bin; put it back where it belongs.
 - h. Gruel kittens eating independently should be cleaned and fed in about 15 minutes.
22. Try to work with a ringworm litter if possible.
 - a. Empty crate completely, clean and sanitize with bleach water. Be sure trainee knows to use diluted bleach and not Trifectant to sanitize. Bleach should rest 10 minutes before it is wiped.
 - b. Put kittens in a bin with bedding, toys, and food; weigh them and clean while they eat.
 - c. Discuss gloves—we do not use them because they do not prevent contamination; feeders can use them but must supply their own. Must use diligence not to cross-contaminate.
 - d. Remind them that ringworm is harmless and common but spreads easily and is problematic.
 - e. If ringworm litters are present but you are not feeding them, be sure to discuss.
 - f. If trainee shows any hesitation about ringworm, they can discuss with *[Manager]*. This should be noted on their feedback.
23. When finished feeding a litter, show trainee how to complete the Daily Care Sheet.
24. Be sure the shadow sanitizes properly between litters and washes hands properly.
25. Be mindful of time. Remember, the goal is for shadows to become efficient solo feeders. Coach trainees to stay focused on the task at hand and not to be distracted by all the cuteness.
26. Both trainer and trainee will clean up after feeding, and the trainer should explain the uses of 409, the only approved cleanser (**cleaning**), and Trifectant and bleach water (**sanitizing**). **Clean as you go!**
27. Move on to the next litter. If you can, try to do at least one bottle and one gruel litter during the shift. Both of you should be feeding the same litter. Watch the trainee and coach as needed.
28. At the end of the shift, do a housekeeping chore together.
29. When doing laundry, explain all the steps:
 - a. Shake over trash, place in hamper, shake over trash, place in washer; pack washer loosely. Add bleach to every load. Point out posted instructions.
 - b. Clean dryer lint screen before starting; fold dry laundry and put away neatly.
 - c. Always handle clean laundry with clean hands.
30. When doing dishes, explain all the steps:

- a. Wipe food completely from dishes before placing in bleach water.
 - b. Empty all KMR from bottles before placing in bleach water; rinse if necessary.
 - c. Separate plungers from syringes, nipples from bottle caps before placing in bleach water.
 - d. **Always** hand-wash small syringes, nipples, and bottle caps.
 - e. Rinse bottles thoroughly before washing; they can be hand-washed.
 - f. All dishes should be sanitized in bleach water before they're washed.
 - g. Clean, dry dishes should be put away neatly where they belong. Plungers should be put in syringes before they're put away.
 - h. Always handle clean dishes with clean hands.
31. Update the status boards.
32. Remind the trainee to sign out on the nursery sheet **and** on Vol2.
33. Go over training checklist with the trainee; encourage questions.
34. Send your end-of-shadow feedback within 24 hours. Be sure to give relevant feedback comments.

Shadow 2

Repeat all of "Shadow 1", with the following changes:

1. Ask if there are any questions from the first shadow.
2. Ask if they remember how to choose which room to feed in; offer guidance as needed, giving trainee a chance to make decisions. You want to see what they have learned and what they still need to know.
3. Help trainees gather supplies they will need.
4. Have the trainee choose which litter should be fed next and update the Feeder Board; may need to remind trainee how to use the Feeder Board and how to prioritize.
5. Once the trainee starts feeding, you feed the next litter that needs to be fed. Watch your shadow to be sure they are feeding the kittens correctly. Demonstrate when necessary.
6. Make sure trainees are cleaning kittens' faces and necks after feeding and that kittens and bedding are clean when they are returned to their crates.
7. Encourage questions and offer advice if you see anything that needs correcting.
8. Please be aware of trainee's feeding pace.
9. Gently remind them that they are building their skills to be able to maintain a steady pace.
10. Assure them it is normal to occasionally have some difficult kittens that will take longer, but overall a steady pace is needed to ensure the nursery does not fall behind.
11. At the end of the shift, each of you will do a housekeeping chore.
12. Remind the trainee what chores need to be done; if they aren't sure, they can ask someone.
13. Make sure everything on the training checklist has been covered.
14. Is trainee ready to feed solo?
 - a. If yes, give them handout with instructions to select shift and Vol2 links.
 - b. If not, simply thank them for coming and let them know we will be in touch about selecting a shift; note your recommendation on the feedback form and management will contact the trainee.
 - c. If the trainee is not comfortable feeding solo and would benefit from a third shadow, note this on the feedback form and management will arrange a third shadow.
15. Be sure to note any problems you noticed—unwillingness to follow procedure, can't get the hang of bottle-feeding, handles the kittens roughly, seems very nervous— anything you think might indicate this trainee needs extra coaching or may not be a good fit for the team.
16. Be sure to comment on those trainees who seem to have a special knack for kitten feeding!

Training Checklist

- ☐ Sign-in sheet, remind trainee to log hours in Vol2
- ☐ Community bulletin board, important contact information (put in phones now)
- ☐ Where is everything?
 - ☐ Where are supplies? *Remember to always handle with clean hands!
 - ☐ Where is the office? Intake room? Restroom?
- ☐ Prioritize litters for feeding (BBs every 2–3 hrs, G/SG every 4–5 hrs, don't skip moms)
 - ☐ Go over Feeder Board samples
 - ☐ Go over Daily Care Sheet samples
- ☐ Clean, Sanitize, Decontaminate
 - ☐ Wash hands, use nail brush
 - ☐ When to clean with 409, when to clean with wipes or other soap/cleanser
 - ☐ When to use Trifectant, when to use diluted bleach
 - ☐ Clean, sanitize between litters
 - ☐ Smocks, lap pads and table pads, gloves
 - ☐ Briefly explain decontaminating rooms
 - ☐ Always clean after yourself; always do one chore at end of shift
- ☐ Making food, other posted instructions
 - ☐ KMR ratios, labeling containers and bottles
 - ☐ Gruel or syringe gruel, labeling containers
 - ☐ Do not leave empty or nearly empty containers in refrigerator
 - ☐ How much to feed kittens, medical symptoms, FKP, Bite Protocol
- ☐ Bottle babies (feed every 2–3 hours), proper positioning
 - ☐ Which nipples to use
 - ☐ When to syringe-feed
 - ☐ Keeping kittens clean
 - ☐ Weigh, feed, weigh, stimulate
- ☐ G/SG babies (feed every 4–5 hours)
 - ☐ When to syringe-feed, when to transition to independent eating
 - ☐ Keeping kittens clean
 - ☐ Weigh, feed, weigh
 - ☐ How to clean/sanitize crate
 - ☐ Placing kibble, gruel, water, and litter box in crate
- ☐ Keeping kittens warm/heating snuggle discs
- ☐ Don't skip pregnant or nursing cats with litters—should be cared for according to age of kittens
- ☐ Chores
 - ☐ Dishes
 - ☐ Laundry
 - ☐ If those chores are not available, ask management what to do

After final shadow:

- ☐ Point out Nursery Org Chart, "Go-To" Chart, Contact Information, and Procedures Manual
- ☐ Give instructions for selecting shift

Neonatal Training Questionnaire

Name:	
Employer/Occupation:	
Does your employer match charitable contributions or otherwise contribute for employee volunteer hours? Opportunities with the team?	/ Yes / No / Not sure / Other_____
Cell phone number:	
Email address:	
Are you 18 years of age or older?	/ Yes / No / If no, how old are you? _____
Name of parent/guardian if under age 18:	
Did you log in for today's class in Vol2?	Yes / No / If not, was there a problem?_____
*The APA! volunteer application must be submitted before you can train or volunteer onsite.	
Do you intend to shadow (all training must be completed in 30 days or less)?	/ Yes / No / Not sure / Other_____
If you cannot commit to one 3-hour shift per week, are you interested in other volunteer opportunities with our team?	/ Yes / No / Not sure / Other_____
Are you interested in fostering?	/ Yes / No / Not sure / Other_____
How did you hear about training with our program?	
<p align="center">Don't forget to turn in your signed Participation Agreement. Ages 16-17: Parent/guardian must also sign your agreement. You cannot train or volunteer in the nursery without a signed Participation Agreement.</p>	

TRAINERS must email Questionnaires and Agreements to:
[email address]

Congratulations . . .

You have completed Bottle Baby training!

The last step in becoming an “official” Bottle Baby Feeder and team member is to select your weekly shift. Email *[email address]* and let them know what day and time you would like to feed. If you are not sure what shift you want, or if you have some flexibility and would like to be placed where you are most needed, BB Scheduler will help you find a suitable time slot. Once your shift has been selected, you will be invited to the Yahoo communication group.

Thank you—and welcome to the team!



Congratulations on your new APA! pregnant or nursing mama!

Thank you so much for fostering with Austin Pets Alive! Foster families are crucial to our life-saving efforts. We truly appreciate you!

Your mama's name is: _____ A#: _____ Age: _____

For pregnant cats:

Approximate due date: _____. *(Please note that this date is simply an educated guess!)*

When your mama is done giving birth, please [email the Neonatal Foster Manager](#) and your [Foster Mentor](#). We will assign you a litter letter (ex: B7) and you can then give your kittens names that start with your assigned letter!

For nursing moms:

Kittens' info:

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Pay special attention to this/these kittens, as they are most at risk:

Name(s): _____

Why? What to look out for: _____

! Please email your kittens weights to email@email.com FRIDAY!!

every

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Pregnant/Nursing Mom Fostering Overview

This packet is organized into two parts – the first part details our policies and provides info on how the APA! fostering process works; the second part provides instructions for the actual birth of the kittens (if you're taking home a pregnant cat), and provides details on how to care for mama and kittens throughout their stay with you!

Part One:

The #1 thing to remember when fostering kittens is: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH!! The overwhelming majority of kittens who pass away in foster care do so because they were not weighed as frequently as they should have been!

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?: Each foster family is assigned to a **Foster Mentor**. Your Foster Mentor is your springboard, your midwife/nurse, and your kitten therapist, all combined! Look out for their first email to you, as it will include info on scheduling appointments, links to all the important forms you'll need, and info on the entire fostering process. You'll receive this email within 24-48 hours after your training. *Look out for this email address:* email@email.com

NON-URGENT MEDICAL: If your kittens start to show **any** signs of mild-moderate illness – *sneezing, vomiting, mild-moderate diarrhea, not eating, runny nose, goopy eyes, hair loss, going outside litterbox, moderate weight loss (10 grams or less), fleas, etc* – **contact the medical team via email at:**
email@email.com **and CC** email@email.com

Be sure to include: the kittens' A#s, current weights, and a description of their symptoms. Use a descriptive subject! (ex: "Beatrix A12345678 has diarrhea", or "C15 kittens have fleas")

!!! FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT **!!!**
555-555-5555 (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or **555-555-5555** (after hours)

For kittens, a medical emergency includes head slumped/ body limp/ unable to rouse (**Fading Kitten Syndrome**), **diarrhea** that is very liquidy, white, bloody, or black, any **rapid weight loss**, **mouth breathing**, **heavy/labored breathing**, red/brown **urine**, **vomiting and diarrhea** together or within a short timeframe, **seizures**. Any injuries sustained while in foster care also warrant a call to the medical hotline!

WELLNESS / VACCINES:

- Kittens need de-wormer given at **2-weeks** and **4-weeks** old. When your kittens reach this/these ages, please just stop by the clinic at TLAC to pick up your kittens' dose of dewormer. Make sure you know your kittens' APA! names and A#s. You will administer these oral meds at home.
 - At **6-weeks** old, your kittens will need to *come into the clinic* for their first kitten shots – this is the "wellness appointment". Book wellness appointments with our clinic using the [Wellness Appointment Request Form](#).
 - Book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season (summer)!
-

MARKETING / GETTING YOUR KITTENS ADOPTED!: At 6 weeks, kittens' profiles go up on the APA! website and they'll be eligible for pre-adoption. **It is your responsibility, as their foster, to market your kittens through APA!**

- **Submit photos and bios** for your kittens using the [Kitten Information Form](#).
- You will receive emails about upcoming **adoption events** at Petco, Petsmart, etc. Kittens must be at least 6 weeks old, healthy, and vaccinated at least once to attend these events.

ADOPTION!: During “kitten season” (March-September), it can take up to a few weeks (after your fosters have been altered) for kittens to find their forever homes. This is why we require that, when they reach 8 weeks old and have had two rounds of vaccinations, you sign your kittens up on our [Adoption Center Request Form](#). Doing so ensures that your kittens will have a spot in one of our catteries in the case that they are not adopted while in your care!

Until they're cleared to enter the adoption center, the following are your responsibilities as their foster:

- Our adoption team will forward you all adoption inquiries that they've received through our website about your kittens. Please answer these emails promptly, in the order in which they're received.
- You will be responsible for setting up meet and greets with potential adopters! You can do these at your home, or at our Tarrytown cattery.
- Be on the lookout for emails about adoption events. These are generally held on weekends at pet stores such as Petco or Petsmart. Many fosters who stay to promote their kittens, as opposed to just dropping them off, have great success at these events!

Please ask your Foster Mentor if you have any questions about the adoption process!

SPAY/NEUTER: Kittens cannot come in for their **spay/neuter surgery** until they weigh **2lbs (906g)** and **are at least 8 weeks old**. Kittens who have their mama *generally* reach 2 pounds around 8 weeks old!

- Use the [Spay/Neuter Appointment Request Form](#) (included in your initial Foster Mentor email) and book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season.
- If your kitten is sick or injured, please check with the Med Techs before making an appointment.

GRADUATION: When your kittens turn 8-weeks old, regardless of whether they are ready for **their** spay/neuter surgery, they will graduate into the Cat Program. This means:

- You will receive a welcome email from the Cat Foster Team (email@email.com)
This person will now be your first point of contact for any and all foster-related questions.

GETTING MAMA CAT ADOPTED:

Mom will stay in the Neonatal Program until she's spayed. The sooner her kittens are no longer nursing, the sooner she can be spayed; **she must not be allowed to let her kittens nurse for 2 weeks before her spay**. Her milk must dry up before surgery because the mammary glands are located so close to the incision site. You have a couple of options for dealing with this:

- **You can separate mama from her kittens** when you see that the kittens are eating enough gruel/kibble to maintain (and gain!) their weights (generally around 7-8 weeks). This ensures that mama is able to come in for her spay appointment around the same time that her kittens are being spayed/neutered. If you are in a hurry to get mama into the adoption center so you can foster more kittens, this is the best choice.
- **Let kittens nurse from mom until they're adopted, or mama kicks them off.** A lot of fosters find it very difficult/heartbreaking to separate mama from her kittens. If you're one of these fosters, do not despair! Allowing mom to nurse her kittens well after they require it is not going to cause any harm. Just keep in mind that the longer you allow mama to nurse, the longer you'll have to wait until she's able to be spayed. If you're in no rush to get rid of mama cat, this is the best option.

Basics for getting mama ready for adoption:

- [Schedule a spay appointment](#) for at least **2 weeks after separation** from kittens.
- [Sign her up for the adoption center](#). She'll need a few days in foster to recover from her spay.
- Don't forget to [submit photos and bio](#) for her so that she can find her forever home as well!

Program Contacts:

- **Staff Name** Neonatal Foster Manager: bbfostermanager@austinpetsalive.org
- **Staff Name** Assistant Neonatal Foster Manager: bbfostermanager@austinpetsalive.org
- Neonatal Foster Mentor Team: bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org
- **Staff Name** Cat Foster Manager: cat-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org
- Cat Foster Mentor Team: cat-foster-coordinator@austinpetsalive.org

Cheat Sheet Table:

2 weeks old	4 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 1st de-wormer	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 2nd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens <i>should</i> be ready to wean onto gruel
6 weeks old	8 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 1st FVRCP vaccine and 3rd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Photos and bios due <input type="checkbox"/> Available for pre-adoption on our website <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens should be eating independently <input type="checkbox"/> Request a spot for your kittens in the adoption center	<input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATION! Kitten moves from Neonatal Program to Cat Program <input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 2nd FVRCP <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for S/N surgery when 2lbs & healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for entrance to adoption center: <i>ONLY IF 2+ VACCINES HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED</i>
10 weeks old	12 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 3rd FVRCP booster	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 4th (final) FVRCP booster and rabies vaccine

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Supplies Needed

Pregnant/Nursing Mom: Required Supplies

- ☐ High quality canned kitten food for mom and to wean babies
- ☐ Hard kitten food for mom and to wean babies — Royal Canin Mother & Babycat (recommended)
- ☐ Bottle kit with nipples in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Powdered KMR formula in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Electric heating pad that **does not** shut off automatically
- ☐ Empty room/bathroom to isolate mom and kittens
- ☐ Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- ☐ Litter box & non-clumping litter
- ☐ Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)

We will provide: oral syringes, a “[rice sock](#)” for transportation, informational handouts, and all necessary medications and treatments.

I have read & understand the list of supplies needed to foster neonatal kittens. I have all required supplies at home and/or will purchase the foster supply kit from the nursery. I understand that if I do not have these items, I will not be able to take kittens home.





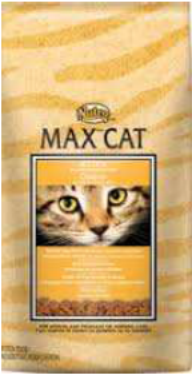


Foster signature

Date

Trainer signature

Date

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Food Recommendations

Kittens age 0-4 weeks		<p>BB Formula: PetAg KMR® powder formula mixed 2:1 (2 parts water to 1 part powder). Serve warm.</p> <p>Each kitten should take in 5cc (or 5 grams) for every 100 grams of body weight at every feeding.</p> <p>This will only be necessary for underweight or rejected kittens.</p>
Kittens age 3-8 weeks (once canine teeth have begun to come in)	 	<p>Start putting out wet food mixed w/ water to an <i>applesauce consistency</i> when kittens are around 4-weeks old.</p> <p>This is the start of the weaning process – they should learn to eat on their own by watching mama!</p>
	 	<p>Kibble: Once your kittens have their canines, have kibble available at all times, along with a bowl of water.</p> <p>Royal Canin Babycat is what we feed kittens at the nursery as it's highly palatable and the extra-small kibble size is ideal for weaning kittens.</p> <p>Again, any brand of <i>premium</i> kitten kibble will do.</p>
Supplements for syringe gruel & gruel kittens	 	<p>Baby food: Mix ~tablespoon of baby food with gruel or kibble for finicky eaters! Also useful for encouraging new gruelies to eat on their own. Buy plain baby food with no spices. Ingredients should only be turkey/chicken and turkey/chicken broth.</p> <p>Tomlyn Nutri-Cal: Great for underweight kittens. Follow instructions on bottle and add appropriate amount to syringe gruel or gruel.</p>

Pro-tip: Adding a bit of plain canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling!) to gruel or syringe gruel can help with minor diarrhea/loose stool.

Part Two:

Pregnant Cat Guidelines

Thank you so much for fostering a pregnant cat! This can be one of the most memorable, educational experiences that you'll ever have. Please read on to find an outline of what to expect during mama cat's pregnancy and what you need to do to prepare for her delivery.

Required supplies for pregnant/nursing moms:

- A box or tub large enough for mama to lie down and stretch out, such as an under-the-bed plastic storage tote. Mama should be able to get in and out easily, but kittens should not be able to get out.
- Electric heating pad that does not shut off automatically
- High quality canned **kitten food** for mom (and to wean babies)
- Hard **kitten food** (kibble) for mom (and to wean babies) — we recommend Royal Canin Babycat
- Bottle kit with nipples in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- Powdered KMR formula in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- Empty room/bathroom to isolate mom and kittens
- Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- Litter box and non-clumping litter
- Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)

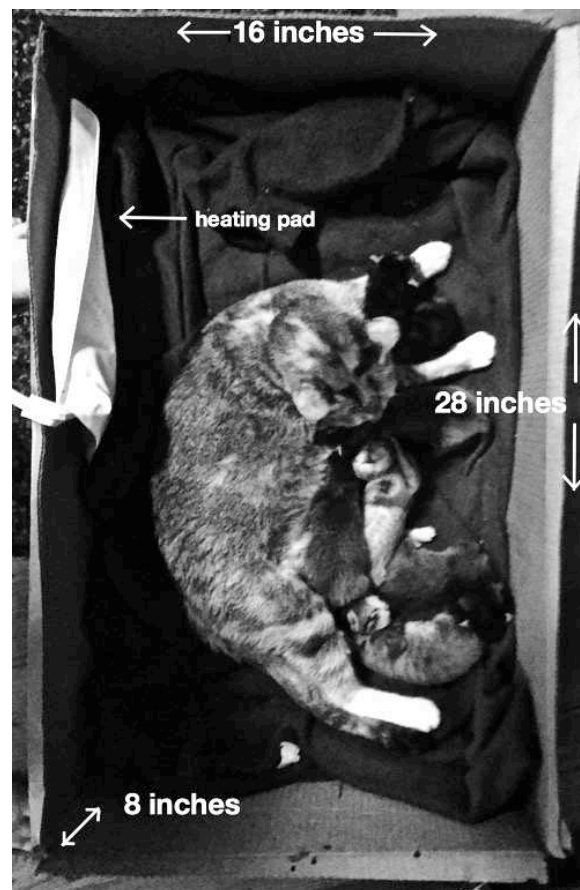
Preparation for birth of kittens:

The gestation period for cats is between 9 and 10 weeks. A couple of weeks before your cat is due to deliver, you need to prepare a “nesting box” – a safe and secure place for mama to deliver and care for her kittens. Mama cat should be isolated in a quiet area to get used to her surroundings for awhile so she feels safe and secure for the birth. During the couple weeks leading up to her kittens' birth, mama cat might exhibit some strange and/or uncharacteristic behaviors – some cats may become extremely affectionate, while others might become aggressive or fearful. Just remember that mama's hormones are raging during this time, so any out of the ordinary behavior is generally no cause for concern.

Pregnant cats should eat up to 4 times their normal amount of food and **should be eating kitten food for the duration of their pregnancy and while nursing kittens.**

Setting up a nesting box:

- There are many options for nesting boxes. You'll need a box that's wide enough to accommodate a heating pad on one side, while leaving room for mama to nurse on the other side without lying on the heating pad.
- Line a box with blankets or towels. The box should be high enough off the ground so that mama can get in and out easily, but her kittens cannot – 8-12 inches tall or somewhere around this height is ideal.



- You can offer more than one option with blankets in one corner and a box in another area.
- You can also place mama cat with her nesting box in a bathroom or small room with some light.
- You can even put the box in a bathtub, if using a bathroom, but be sure to cover the drain.
- Have heating pad only under blankets on one side of the box – your mama cat may be too warm if she has no other place to cool off.
- *Note:* Your mama cat may ignore the box until it's time for labor. If this is the case, just put her in it when the kittens are coming. She'll usually take to it just fine!

Medical Emergencies to watch out for leading up to labor:

- **Any vaginal bleeding** during pregnancy is not normal and suggests that she is having a miscarriage. If this is occurring late in pregnancy (the 8th week) she may be delivering the litter prematurely and a cesarean section is likely necessary.
- **Greenish, foul-smelling discharge** can be a sign of a uterine infection – if you see this alert the med techs immediately at: email@email.com

*****Please note that if either of these two things occurs around the time of mama's due date, it is likely just an indication that labor is imminent – usually within 24 hours! *****

!!! FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT **!!!**

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (24/7 after hours)

Labor

Several hours (and perhaps a whole day) of restlessness, grooming, nesting, pacing, panting, and crying indicates that labor has begun. Mama cat may purr during labor and when feeding her new kittens. When labor begins, there will be some brownish fluids, and a small amount of blood. Babies can be born head first or feet first (breach), and will be delivered in a thin amniotic sack, which usually breaks during birth. As soon as the kitten emerges from mama's birth canal, she should immediately bite/pierce the sack, and begin cleaning the kitten to encourage him/her to breathe. **If she does not do this, you will need to step in and break the sack, as the kitten is at risk of suffocating within seconds.** Wipe away the mucus and amniotic casing from the kitten's mouth and nose – once you do this, the kitten should cry out! At this point, the kitten is still attached to the placenta, which will be passed within a few minutes. Once the placenta is passed, the mother will bite the umbilical cord to cut it. Sometimes mama can take awhile to bite the cord, especially if other kittens are already out and nursing, so feel free to help her by tying the cord with string/floss and cutting it with a pair of sterile scissors. Usually, the mother will then eat the placenta.

Kittens are usually born every 10 minutes to 1 hour. **If mama is having contractions for longer than 2 hours** in between kittens, this could mean that a baby is stuck in the birth canal, which can be deadly for mama and all remaining kittens in utero. **If this happens, you need to call the appropriate emergency number immediately**, as mama will likely need an emergency C-section!

Some mama cats prefer to give birth in a dark, quiet place, far away from human contact, while others prefer to have their human right beside them, giving them pets and soothing them through this difficult process! She will generally let you know what she'd like – just pay attention to her body language and such.

****** If any kitten is stillborn, remove it from the nesting box as soon as possible. (This is very common.)

Once kittens are born and mama is nursing, she may like some food, which can be placed near her head, so she can eat without disrupting the kittens.

Medical Emergencies during/immediately following delivery:

- If at any point you see a **red protruding membrane (like an earthworm)** from the kitten's belly, this is actually its intestine & is a medical emergency
- **Dystocia** – Intense contractions for 60 minutes without a birth
- **Retained Placenta** – if the placenta is not passed, it can cause infection

Caring for New Mom & Kittens

Kittens generally **weigh between 80-120 grams** when they're born. Any kitten born **smaller than 70 grams** is at serious risk of fading away and will likely need to be supplemented with KMR and kept on a heating pad, separate from its littermates, until he/she weighs about the same as his/her littermates.

It is *not uncommon for the smallest kitten (runt) to pass away shortly after birth* – this is just nature running its course. There's often not much we can do. Oftentimes mama will set this runt aside from her healthy kittens to allow it to pass peacefully, so she can care for her kittens who are thriving. If a kitten is born weighing under 65 grams, there is often not much we can do – remember that this is the reason cats have so many kittens – some are just not fit to make it in this world.

It is possible that the new mother will want to move her kittens frequently. This is okay, as long as there is always a heating pad for the kittens to get to and the area is somewhat sequestered and free of hazards. More than likely, she is doing this in an effort to keep her babies safe. You can set up a few clean places with bedding ahead of time so the mom has safe options if she does move them.

Weigh newborn kittens twice a day – this is mandatory! If the mom seems protective or is moving her babies, wait until the day after they are born to weigh them. If she is comfortable with you there, place the scale right next to her while you weigh the babies. You should be seeing an average weight gain of 10 grams per day. If the weights stay steady for more than a day or you see a drop in weight, please contact your Foster Mentor at: email@email.com Even a small amount of weight loss in a kitten under one week old can be deadly, so please don't hesitate to reach out!

APA! Neonatal Foster Program – Caring for Neonatal Kittens

*** **The two most important rules of Kitten Club:** Kittens must be **WARM** and have **FULL BELLIES** at all times! ***

The Basics

- Kittens must be kept in a safe and secure spot, and isolated from other pets (to prevent illness) for 7-10 days.
- Kittens must have access to a **heating pad (on low setting) at all times.**
- Do not give kittens baths unless absolutely necessary. If kittens get wet, they must be blow-dried until they are completely dry. Young kittens can very easily become hypothermic. As an alternative, use a hypoallergenic baby wipe to clean dirty kittens.
- You are required to keep track of kittens' weights, bowel movements, medications, and other health issues on your Daily Care Sheets.

For any questions or concerns about your kittens' weights or general development, please contact your Foster Mentor at email@email.com

Kitten Developmental Milestones

- Eyes open at 7-10 days (eyes will be blue until kittens are 6-7 weeks old).
- At about 2 weeks, they will start crawling around (can inch around as early as 4 days).
- At 3-4 weeks, they'll start to play with each other. The ears will start to stand up, and teeth will begin to come in.
- At 3-5 weeks, it's time to start the weaning process – kittens should be well on their way to eating independently and using the litter box.
- At 6 weeks they should get their first vaccinations from APA!, and go up on our website for pre-adoption.
- At 8-12 weeks, and/or whenever kittens have reached 2lbs (906g), they can be spayed or neutered, and go to their forever homes!

Setting up a Habitat as Kittens Age:

As the kittens get older, they're going to want to explore outside their nesting box – this generally happens around 4 weeks old! This is perfectly fine, but we want to make sure kittens are not allowed to stray too far from their mama and their heating pad!

Bathtubs are often great for this stage. Keep the heating pad available at all times, but still make sure that the kittens can move off of it. Place a small bowl of kibble, a saucer of gruel, and a stable, flat-bottomed cup of water in an accessible spot, away from their bedding.

At this point, the kittens will also want to play with toys! Feel free to give them plenty of plush dolls, balls, bells, etc. Just make sure there's nothing they could accidentally swallow or get tangled up in!

Kittens should be introduced to the litter box around 4 weeks old as well! They will generally learn from mama, so this process shouldn't be too messy! Fill a very shallow litter box (a box top or baking tin is fine) with non-clumping litter, and place it in an accessible spot away from the food dishes.

Around 6 weeks old, kittens will likely begin door-dashing and trying to escape whatever enclosure they're confined to. If you would like to give them free run of your home, please do so with extreme caution. Kittens can and will get into everything. Never leave them unsupervised, particularly when there are other pets and/or roommates where you live! Also, remember that the more space they have, the less likely they are to find their litter box!

Most importantly, especially once they are over ~4 weeks old, make sure you socialize your kittens as often as possible! This is crucial to their development – they need to learn to love humans! Introduce them to friends, children, other cats, friendly dogs, etc., but **always** make sure they're in a controlled environment and are being closely supervised.

Common Household Hazards for Kittens

Even the most experienced fosters sometimes overlook household hazards. The following is a list of things that we have seen cause injury to kittens.

- **Rocking chairs** - keep out of the kittens' area
- **Reclining chairs** - kittens can easily crawl inside
- **Toilets** - keep lids closed at all times
- **Bathtubs** - keep water drained at all times
- **Doors** - make sure that kittens are not behind doors that are being opened
- **Exits** - keep unscreened doors and windows closed at all times when not in use
- **Outdoors** - do NOT allow kittens to go outside, NO EXCEPTIONS!
- **Other cats** - can sometimes be asymptomatic carriers of viruses that are more harmful to kittens, or can be too aggressive with kittens
- **Dogs** - all dogs (but especially large dogs) can easily injure a kitten, often accidentally
- **Washers and dryers** - kittens can crawl inside of the machines unnoticed or get stuck behind them
- **Other appliances** - make sure that kittens cannot crawl behind or under refrigerators, ovens, etc.
- **Holes** - make sure any holes in drywall or cabinetry are plugged or blocked
- **Small objects** - rubber bands, strings, paperclips, and other small objects can be accidentally ingested
- **Chemicals** - make sure they are put away
- **House plants** - many are poisonous to cats, make sure they are out of reach
- **Electrical cords** - can be sprayed with bitter apple, covered with tape or "cord covers" to prevent chewing

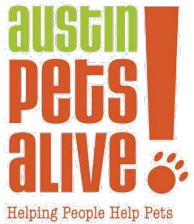
In the unfortunate event that one of your kittens has died, for any reason, please **contact us right away**. Please do not be embarrassed or afraid to reach out – these things happen. Kittens are fragile creatures, and unfortunately some of them are just not equipped to make it in this world.

Use the following chart to determine who to contact:

<p>If a Kitten UNDER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>
<p>If a kitten UNDER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately. CC email@email.com</p> <p>email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten's name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately. CC cat-foster-email@email.com and email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten's name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>

Fading Kitten Syndrome

You are **not** receiving this handout because Fading Kitten Syndrome is a common occurrence, but rather because if you ever encounter this condition, **YOU** will need to take action **IMMEDIATELY**. The worst thing you can do for a fading kitten is to take him/her to your vet – most kittens will not survive the car ride. **YOU** are this kitten's best chance at making it.



Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten “crashes” and begins to fade away. Kittens under 3 weeks old and/or kittens who are, or were recently sick, are most susceptible to FKS. Oftentimes, it occurs in kittens who have been eating poorly, and losing, or, not gaining, weight. This is why it is **VITAL** that you weigh your kittens every time they're fed. *Although it is rare, FKS can also occur in healthy kittens at any age.*

Symptoms of FKS:

- Extreme lethargy — unable to stand or hold head up, not responding when touched
- Body feels cool to the touch (not just insides of ears – all over)
- Panting or gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out in distress

If you see these symptoms, it is crucial that you take the following steps NOW:

Step 1: GET KITTEN WARM

Grab your heating pad and a towel. Place the towel over the heating pad, and place kitten on top of towel. Roll heating pad up to create a “kitten burrito” – like you're swaddling an infant. Leave the kitten's face exposed, and do not remove kitten from the burrito even if he/she struggles and cries to get out! Make sure the heating pad is still on the **low** setting.

* If you don't have a heating pad, (fosters are now *required* to have a heating pad) you can either:

- a) Keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap it around the “burrito” towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don't remove the “burrito” towel.
- b) Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends so it doesn't spill out. Throw them in the microwave for 3 minutes. Keep them next to the kitten on the outside of the burrito towel. Every 30 minutes reheat one sock and leave the other next to the kitten so she doesn't cool off.

Step 2: GET KITTEN'S BLOOD SUGAR UP

Grab a small bowl and fill it with either corn syrup (Karo, etc), or sugar water. The more sugar content, the better. Make sure you have your syringe handy. Warm the contents up in the microwave for a few seconds until the liquid is a bit above room temperature. You will administer this sugar water (with the syringe) to the kitten while he/she is in the burrito. **Give the kitten about 1 drop every 3 minutes.**

Step 3: CALL MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (after hours)



Supplementing Protocol for Nursing Kittens

Thank you so much for fostering a nursing mom and kittens with Austin Pets Alive! We truly appreciate you!

When it comes to nutrition for neonatal kittens, mom's milk is best! And your kittens are the lucky ones who arrive at APA! with a mom. They're getting extra immune support and nutrition that orphans don't get. What's more, nursing kittens cause mom to produce hormones that stimulate milk production. It's a virtuous cycle!

You've heard it before: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH! Well, in the case of nursing kittens, weighing too frequently can make it seem like a kitten needs to be supplemented when in fact she does not. What matters is a kitten's weight gain (or loss) over a 24-hour period (this is different than with orphans!). If your nursing kittens are healthy, they only need to be weighed once a day.

We want to do all we can to encourage kittens to nurse. Supplementing can disrupt the virtuous cycle, causing moms to not produce enough milk, and kittens who are bottle/syringe fed are at risk of aspirating formula (see below). Nevertheless, there are certain instances when it may be necessary to supplement nursing kittens to give them a boost until they are gaining weight on their own, such as upper respiratory infections, insufficient milk production from mom, too much competition from siblings at the milkbar, and premature birth (kittens weighing under 70 g).

Because we want to avoid supplementing if at all possible, always contact your mentor before beginning to supplement!

You'll remember from training that you can give your mom a day or so alone with her kittens before weighing them for the first time. Moms produce colostrum for roughly 24 to 48 hours before they begin producing milk, and it is essential for kittens to nurse at this stage because of the immune support that colostrum provides. You may see a slight weight loss (a couple grams) the first day or two. This is normal and no reason to panic. **However, if you are concerned that a kitten is losing too much weight or have any other questions, email your mentor!**

The goal of supplementing is right in the name. It is intended to give the kitten a boost until the kitten begins gaining weight from nursing, not to replace nursing. We therefore only supplement twice a day and discontinue supplementing once the kitten begins to gain weight again.

We supplement kittens with PetAg powdered KMR® formula (kitten milk replacer). Because an abrupt switch from the mother's milk to KMR® formula can be hard on the kitten's digestive system, we start supplementing with a ratio that is more dilute than what the label calls for:

Ratio of water to KMR®	Time
8 to 1	2 feedings
4 to 1	2 feedings
2 to 1	Until kitten is gaining weight from nursing or can be syringe fed gruel, as the case may be

Ideally, you will only be supplementing at the 8:1 ratio since the goal is to get the kitten to gain enough weight on its own just from nursing.

How to make formula:

Feed PetAg KMR® powdered formula from bottle and/or oral syringe. Mix powdered formula (unless otherwise advised) with water at the correct ratio (see table above). Shake well or blend to dissolve lumps! Store mixed formula in the fridge up to 48 hrs.

All kittens must eat 5% of their body weight at each feeding. All kittens must be weighed before and after feeding!

Feeding instructions:

- Warm formula up in the microwave until it is warmer than body temperature but not hot. Make sure to stir or shake to eliminate any hot spots. The kitten also needs to be kept warm during feeding and should be wrapped up in a towel or blanket, and preferably on a heat source like a heating pad set to Low.

- Feed kitten upright or on belly in a prone position, NOT on his/her back like a human infant!

- Gather kittens' feeding charts and some warm towels.

- Bottle-feed the kitten first. Some kittens take a while to latch on, so be patient! If kitten does not gain its 5% via the bottle, proceed w/ syringe feeding. Only use 1mL syringe.

Watch for formula coming out of kitten's nose or a rasping "wet" cough. This is called aspiration, which means the kitten has ingested formula into her lungs and is in danger of "drowning." If

one of your kittens is aspirating, you need to do two things:

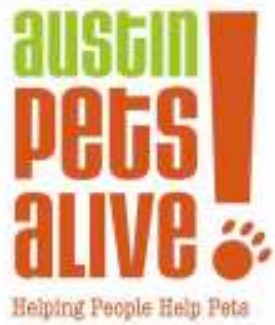
1. Immediately email email@email.com and email@email.com

2. Wait for about an hour to make sure all of the formula has come out of the kitten's nose and then continue feeding.

- Weigh kitten periodically throughout feeding process – the kitten is only done eating when she has gained her 5%.

- Thoroughly clean off any formula on kitten's fur and dry kitten off. (Formula will stick and is very hard to remove if it dries and is also painful for the kitten!)

- Weigh and record after-food weight!



Congratulations on your new APA! foster kittens!

Thank you so much for fostering with Austin Pets Alive! Foster families are crucial to our life-saving efforts. We truly appreciate you!

You have the _____ litter. Age: _____

Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____

They are eating _____.

They must be fed every _____ hours / _____ hours overnight.

- ☐ They need to be weighed at each feeding.
- ☐ They need to be weighed _____ x / day.

They have been consistently eating on their own. Y / N

☐ Stimulation -or- ☐ Litterbox

Medical needs / goals:

! Please email your kittens weights to email@email.com every FRIDAY!

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Fostering Overview

The #1 thing to remember when fostering kittens is: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH!! The overwhelming majority of kittens who pass away in foster care do so because they were not weighed as frequently as they should have been!

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET YOUR KITTENS HOME:

- ☐ Get your kittens settled into their **habitat**. Make sure they have a **heat source**!
 - ☐ Be sure to kitten-proof their area, and watch out for any **common household hazards**.
 - ☐ **Feed and care** for your kittens as instructed, referring back to the Feeding/Care Guide.
 - ☐ **Record** their weights and make notes about progress on the Daily Care Sheet.
 - ☐ Spend time **playing** with your kittens and **socializing** them, if they're old enough!
 - ☐ Give kittens plenty of time to **rest**. They will sleep much of the day—this is normal.
-

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?: Each foster family is assigned to a **Foster Mentor**. Your Foster Mentor is your springboard, your midwife/nurse, and your kitten therapist, all combined! Look out for their first email to you, as it will include info on scheduling appointments, links to all the important forms you'll need, and info on the entire fostering process. You'll receive this email within 24-48 hours after your training. Look out for this email address: email@email.com

NON-URGENT MEDICAL: If your kittens start to show **any** signs of mild-moderate illness – *sneezing, vomiting, mild-moderate diarrhea, not eating, runny nose, goopy eyes, hair loss, going outside litterbox, moderate weight loss (10 grams or less), fleas, etc* – **contact the medical team via email at:** email@email.com **and CC** email@email.com

Be sure to include: the kittens' A#s, current weights, and a description of their symptoms. Use a descriptive subject! (ex: "Beatrix A12345678 has diarrhea", or "C15 kittens have fleas")

!!! FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT **!!!**

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (after hours)

For kittens, a medical emergency includes head slumped/ body limp/ unable to rouse (**Fading Kitten Syndrome**), **diarrhea** that is very liquidy, white, bloody, or black, any **rapid weight loss**, **mouth breathing**, **heavy/labored breathing**, red/brown **urine**, **vomiting and diarrhea** together or within a short timeframe, **seizures**. Any injuries sustained while in foster care also warrant a call to the medical hotline!

WELLNESS / VACCINES:

- Kittens need de-wormer given at **2-weeks** and **4-weeks** old. When your kittens reach this/these ages, please just stop by the clinic at TLAC to pick up dewormer. **Make sure you know your kittens' APA! names and A#s.** You will administer these oral meds at home.
 - At **6-weeks** old, your kittens will need to *come into the clinic* for their first kitten shots – this is the “wellness appointment”. Book wellness appointments with our clinic using the [Wellness Appointment Request Form](#).
 - Book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season (summer)!
-

MARKETING / GETTING YOUR KITTENS ADOPTED!: At 6 weeks, kittens' profiles go up on the APA! website and they'll be eligible for pre-adoption. **It is your responsibility, as their foster, to market your kittens through APA!**

- **Submit photos and bios** for your kittens using the Kitten Information Form.
 - You will receive emails about upcoming **adoption events** at Petco, Petsmart, etc. Kittens must be at least 6 weeks old, healthy, and vaccinated at least once to attend these events.
-

ADOPTION!: During “kitten season” (March-September), it can take up to a few weeks (after your fosters have been altered) for kittens to find their forever homes. This is why we require that, when they reach 8 weeks old and have had two rounds of vaccinations, you sign your kittens up on our Adoption Center Request Form. Doing so ensures that your kittens will have a spot in one of our catteries in the case that they are not adopted while in your care!

Until they're cleared to enter the adoption center, the following are your responsibilities as their foster:

- Our adoption team will forward you all adoption inquiries that they've received through our website about your kittens. Please answer these emails promptly, in the order in which they're received.
- You will be responsible for setting up meet and greets with potential adopters! You can do these at your home, or at our Tarrytown cattery.
- Be on the lookout for emails about adoption events. These are generally held on weekends at pet stores such as Petco or Petsmart. Many fosters who stay to promote their kittens, as opposed to just dropping them off, have great success at these events!

Please ask your Foster Mentor if you have any questions about the adoption process!

SPAY / NEUTER: Kittens cannot come in for their **spay/neuter surgery** until they weigh **2lbs (906g) and are at least 8 weeks old**. Kittens who have their mama *generally* reach 2 pounds around 8 weeks old, but, for orphans, it can be as late as 10-12 weeks! Kittens must be healthy (excluding ringworm) to come in for surgery!

- Use the Spay/Neuter Appointment Request Form (included in your initial Foster Mentor email) and book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season.
 - If your kitten is sick or injured, please check with the Med Techs before making an appointment.
-

GRADUATION: When your kittens turn 8-weeks old, regardless of whether they are ready for **their** spay/neuter surgery, they will graduate into the Cat Program. This means:

- You will receive a welcome email from the Cat Foster Team (email@email.com)
-

*****If you are not taking home a mama cat, please skip the following section.*****

MAMA CAT: Mom will stay in the Neonatal Program until she's spayed. The sooner her kittens are no longer nursing, the sooner she can be spayed; **she must not be allowed to let her kittens nurse for 2 weeks before her spay**. Her milk must dry up before surgery because the mammary glands are located so close to the incision site. You have a couple of options for dealing with this:

- You can separate mama from her kittens when you see that the kittens are eating enough gruel/kibble to maintain (and gain!) their weights (generally around 7-8 weeks). This ensures that mama is able to come in for her spay appointment around the same time that her kittens are being spayed/neutered. If you are in a hurry to get mama into the adoption center so you can foster more kittens, this is the best choice.
- A lot of fosters find it very difficult/heartbreaking to separate mama from her kittens. If you're one of these fosters, do not despair! Allowing mom to nurse her kittens well after they require it is not going to cause any harm. Just keep in mind that the longer you allow mama to nurse, the longer you'll have to wait until she's able to be spayed. If you're in no rush to get rid of mama cat, this is the best option.

Getting mama ready for adoption:

- Schedule a spay appointment for at least **2 weeks after separation** from kittens.
- Sign her up for the adoption center. She'll need a few days in foster to recover from her spay.
- Don't forget to submit photos and bio for her so that she can find her forever home as well.

KITTEN MILESTONES:

2 weeks old	4 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 1st de-wormer	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 2nd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens <i>should</i> be ready to wean onto gruel
6 weeks old	8 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 1st FVRCP vaccine and 3rd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Photos and bios due <input type="checkbox"/> Available for pre-adoption on our website <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens should be eating independently <input type="checkbox"/> Request a spot for your kittens in the adoption center	<input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATION! Kitten moves from Neonatal Program to Cat Program <input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 2nd FVRCP <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for S/N surgery when 2lbs & healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for entrance to adoption center: <i>ONLY IF 2+ VACCINES HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED</i>
10 weeks old	12 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 3rd FVRCP booster	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 4th (final) FVRCP booster and rabies vaccine

Program Contacts:

- **Staff Name** Neonatal Foster Manager: email@email.com
- **Staff Name** Assistant Neonatal Foster Manager email@email.com
- Neonatal Foster Mentor Team: email@email.com
- **Staff Name** Cat Foster Manager: email@email.com
- Cat Foster Mentor Team: email@email.com

*** FOSTERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RETURN KITTENS TO THE NURSERY! ***

- Once your kittens have exited the nursery, they have been exposed to a ton of outside germs. Bringing them back to the nursery puts our entire population of kittens at risk. Kittens have extremely weak immune systems, especially newborns, which we always have a lot of. *An outside bug can literally put dozens of lives at risk.*

Neonatal Foster Program -- Feeding Guidelines

At the nursery, we divide kittens into 3 categories for fostering:

Feeding stage:	Age range:	Weight range:	Feeding frequency:
Bottle babies	0 to ~4 weeks	90 to 400 grams	Every 2-3 hours 4-5 hours overnight
Syringe gruel	3 to ~6 weeks	300 to 700 grams	Every 4-6 hours 6-8 hours overnight
Gruel/Kibble	5 weeks and up	700 grams and up	Every 4-6 hours 8-10 hours overnight

The most important thing to remember when caring for kittens is to **WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH!** The *vast majority* of kittens who pass away in foster care do so *because they were not weighed as consistently as we require*.

Making sure your kittens are getting enough to eat is your most important duty as a foster! So, below are in-depth instructions on how to feed kittens according to their age and size, as well as info on issues to look out for during each stage of your kittens' growth. **Your foster mentor will be inquiring about your kittens' stools, so make sure you're keeping an eye on this!**

Bottle Babies

How to make formula:

Feed PetAg KMR® powdered formula from bottle and/or oral syringe. Mix 2 parts water to 1 part powdered formula (unless otherwise advised). Shake well to dissolve lumps! Store mixed formula in the fridge up to 48 hrs.

All kittens must eat **5% of their body weight** at each feeding. All kittens **must be weighed** before and after feeding!

Feeding instructions:

- Formula should be fed warm, preferably with kitten wrapped up in towel or blanket.
- Feed kitten upright or on belly in a **prone** position, **NOT** on his/her back like a human infant!
- Gather kittens' feeding charts and some warm towels.
- Bottle-feed the kitten first. Some kittens take awhile to latch on, so be patient! If kitten does not gain its 5% via the bottle, proceed w/ syringe feeding. **Only use 1mL syringe.**
- Watch for formula coming out of kitten's nose or a rasping "wet" cough. This is called **aspiration** – it means the kitten has ingested formula into her lungs and is in danger of "drowning". If one of your kittens is aspirating, you need to do two things:
 1. Immediately email email@email.com and email@email.com
 2. Once no more formula is coming out of kitten's nose, **continue feeding.**
- Weigh kitten periodically throughout feeding process – the kitten is only done eating when she has gained her 5%.
- Thoroughly clean off any formula on kitten's fur and dry kitten off. (Formula will stick and is very hard to remove if it dries and is also painful for the kitten!)
- Weigh and record after-food weight!
- After each meal, **stimulate kitten** w/ cotton ball or non-alcoholic baby wipe to help with urine/stool bowel movement. The kitten will not always have to go, but it is *crucial* that this step is performed after every feeding. *Failure to stimulate orphan kittens can lead to serious illness and/or death.*

Syringe Gruelies

Bottle babies should be switched to syringe gruel when they reach 3.5-4 weeks old (when their canine teeth begin to grow in). Instead of KMR, kittens will now eat **premium** (only available at pet stores) canned kitten food mixed w/ water and blended to a smooth paste.

It is important to note that the syringe gruel phase is, essentially, nothing more than a layover between nursing (formula or mama's milk), and weaning (eating independently). So, at this stage, you should make sure your kittens always have access to kibble, gruel, (canned food w/ water), and a **bowl of water**, as eventually they will decide to go it on their own!

Until that magical day, though, you will need to step in! Remember that just because you see your kittens eating on their own, this does not mean that they're eating *enough* independently to maintain their health. Too often, fosters assume that because they've witnessed their kittens eating kibble or gruel from a bowl, those kittens don't need to be syringe fed anymore. ***This is not the case – and failure to follow the steps outlined above can lead to serious illness and/or death of kittens.***

How to make syringe gruel:

You will need a **blender**. Blend approximately one can of food with 1/3 to 1/2 can water (double, triple, etc as needed). Your syringe gruel should be about the consistency of a milkshake, and you should be able to easily draw it up into a syringe.

Again, kittens must eat **5% of their body weight** at each feeding. Kittens **must be weighed** before and after feeding.

Feeding instructions:

- First, give your kitten the opportunity to eat independently! Offer kitten warmed up gruel and kibble in separate plates or shallow bowls. If kitten shows no interest after awhile, proceed with syringe feeding.
- With syringe in your dominant hand, use your non-dominant index finger and thumb to grip the kitten's head at her temples. Tilt kitten's head back at about a 45-degree angle, using your palm to gently force kitten into a seated position.
- Draw warmed syringe gruel (microwave to a bit above lukewarm temp – no more than 5-10 seconds) into 10mL syringe.
- Insert syringe into **side** of kitten's mouth. *Do not put syringe directly in front of kitten's mouth* (even if she tries to position herself this way!) as kitten could very easily choke.
- Slowly plunge syringe gruel into kitten's mouth, removing the syringe every few seconds to allow her to swallow.
- Weigh kitten periodically throughout feeding process – the kitten is only done eating when she has gained her 5%!
- Always thoroughly clean off any gruel on the kitten's fur. Dry kitten off well.

Gruelies

This is the last stage of kitten rearing – rejoice! When your kittens begin eating enough gruel and kibble on their own to **gain weight consistently everyday**, you're well on your way to throwing those syringes out! Don't get too excited yet, though – your kittens will still need to be syringe fed if they're not able to eat 5% of their bodyweight on their own. The switch from syringe gruel to gruel/kibble is not a magical "aha!" moment on your kitten's part – it's a process you'll both need to work through very thoughtfully!

Once you see that your kittens are gaining around 5% of their bodyweight on a daily basis, for at least 5 days, you can begin to weigh them twice a day, instead of every time they eat. **NEVER go more than 24 hours without weighing your kittens – weight loss is the number one reason kittens pass away in foster care!**

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Supplies Needed

Bottle Babies: Required Supplies - (*starter kit available for \$50*)

- ☐ [Bottle kit](#) with nipples (can be purchased from APA! for \$5, when available)
- ☐ [Powdered KMR formula](#) (can be purchased from APA! for \$20/lb, when available)
- ☐ [Electric heating pad](#) that **does not** shut off automatically
- ☐ Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)
- ☐ [Digital scale](#) (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- ☐ Non-alcoholic baby wipes

Bottle Babies: Optional Supplies

- ☐ [Pedialyte](#) (unflavored)

Gruel/Syringe Gruel Babies: Required Supplies - (*starter kit available for \$50*)

- ☐ Electric heating pad that **does not** shut off automatically
- ☐ High quality [canned kitten food](#) (we will provide you with a few cans to start with)
- ☐ Hard kitten food (kibble) — [Royal Canin Mother & Babycat](#)
- ☐ Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)
- ☐ Empty room/bathroom to isolate kittens
- ☐ Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- ☐ Shallow litter box & non-clumping litter
- ☐ Blender or food processor (*syringe gruel only*)

Gruel/Syringe Gruel Babies: Optional Supplies

- ☐ [Human baby food](#) (chicken or turkey w/ no onions, garlic, or spices)
- ☐ [NutriCal](#) — nutritional supplement for weight gain

Pregnant/Nursing Mom: Required Supplies

- ☐ High quality canned kitten food for mom and to wean babies
- ☐ Hard kitten food for mom and to wean babies — [Royal Canin Mother & Babycat](#)
- ☐ Bottle kit with nipples in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Powdered KMR formula in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Electric heating pad that **does not** shut off automatically
- ☐ Empty room/bathroom to isolate mom and kittens
- ☐ Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- ☐ Litter box & non-clumping litter
- ☐ Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)

We Will Provide: oral syringes, a "[rice sock](#)" for transportation, informational handouts, and all necessary medications and treatments.

I have read & understand the list of supplies needed to foster neonatal kittens. I have all required supplies at home and/or will purchase the foster supply kit from the nursery. I understand that if I do not have these items, I will not be able to take kittens home.




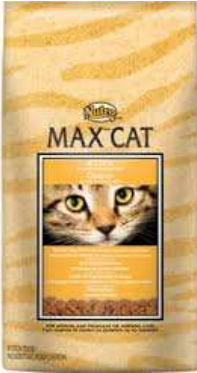


Foster Signature

Date

Trainer Signature

Date

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Food Recommendations

Kittens age 0-4 weeks		<p>BB Formula: PetAg KMR® powder formula mixed 2:1 (2 parts water to 1 part powder). Serve warm.</p> <p>Each kitten should take in 5cc (or 5 grams) for every 100 grams of body weight at every feeding.</p> <p>The nursery sells formula for \$20 per pound. Bottle and nipple sets are \$5.</p>
Kittens age 3-8 weeks (once canine teeth have begun to come in)		<p>Syringe gruel = canned food blended to milkshake-like consistency and warmed.</p> <p>Gruel = canned food mixed to applesauce-like consistency and served warm on a plate.</p> <p>Any brand of premium kitten food is fine, but we recommend Nutro as it's high quality and cost effective!</p>
	 	<p>Kibble: Once your kittens have their canines, have kibble available at all times, along with a bowl of water.</p> <p>Royal Canin Babycat is what we feed kittens at the nursery as it's highly palatable and the extra-small kibble size is ideal for weaning kittens.</p> <p>Again, any brand of <i>premium</i> kitten kibble will do.</p>
Supplements for syringe gruel & gruel kittens	 	<p>Baby food: Mix ~tablespoon of baby food with gruel or kibble for finicky eaters! Also useful for encouraging new gruelies to eat on their own. Buy plain baby food with no spices. Ingredients should only be turkey/chicken and turkey/chicken broth.</p> <p>Tomlyn Nutri-Cal: Great for underweight kittens. Follow instructions on bottle and add appropriate amount to syringe gruel or gruel.</p>

Pro-tip: Adding a bit of plain canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling!) to gruel or syringe gruel can help with minor diarrhea/loose stool.

MAKE SURE YOU'RE WEIGHING YOUR KITTENS AFTER EVERY FEEDING TO ENSURE THAT THEY'VE GAINED THEIR 5%!

APA! Neonatal Foster Program – Caring for Neonatal Kittens

*** **The two most important rules of Kitten Club:** Kittens must be **WARM** and have **FULL BELLIES** at all times! ***

The Basics

- Kittens must be kept in a safe and secure spot, and isolated from other pets (to prevent illness) for 7-10 days.
- Kittens must have access to a **heating pad (on low setting) at all times.**
- Do not give kittens baths unless absolutely necessary. If kittens get wet, they must be blow-dried until they are completely dry. Young kittens can very easily become hypothermic. As an alternative, use a hypoallergenic baby wipe to clean dirty kittens.
- You are required to keep track of kittens' weights, bowel movements, medications, and other health issues on your Daily Care Sheets.

For any questions or concerns about your kittens' weights or general development, please contact your Foster Mentor at email@email.com

Kitten Developmental Milestones

- Kittens typically weigh about 90-110 grams at birth; they should gain about 100g/week.
- Eyes open at 7-10 days (eyes will be blue until kittens are 6-7 weeks old).
- At about 2 weeks, they will start crawling around (can inch around as early as 4 days).
- At 3-4 weeks, they'll start to play with each other. The ears will start to stand up, and teeth will begin to come in.
- At 3-5 weeks, it's time to start the weaning process – kittens should be well on their way to eating independently and using the litter box.
- At 6 weeks they should get their first vaccinations from APA!, and go up on our website for pre-adoption.
- At 8-12 weeks, and/or whenever kittens have reached 2lbs (906g), they can be spayed or neutered, and go to their forever homes!

Setting up a Habitat

For Bottle Babies: Any medium sized bin, tub, crate, or carrier that measures around 20"x15"x15" (the size of a regular cat carrier) makes a great habitat for un-weaned kittens. Something that's easy to clean is usually best (like a Rubbermaid storage bin). Place the heating pad (set on low) flat on one side of the containment area, and make sure that there is room for kittens to move off the heating pad if they get too warm. Cover the bottom of the containment area with a blanket or towel. Feel free to place stuffed toys and plenty of soft fleecy things in the habitat for the kittens to snuggle with.

For Syringe Gruel & Gruel Babies: Once kittens are able to crawl out of their bin or ready to use a litter box, you can move them to a bigger space. Bathtubs are often great for this stage. Keep the heating pad available at all times, but still make sure that the kittens can move off of it. Place a small bowl of kibble, a saucer of gruel, and a stable, flat-bottomed cup of water in an accessible spot, away from their bedding. Fill a very shallow litter box (a box top or baking tin is fine) with non-clumping litter, and place it in an accessible spot away from the food dishes. At this point, the kittens will also want to play with toys! Feel free to give them plenty of plush dolls, balls, bells, etc. Just make sure there's nothing they could accidentally swallow or get tangled up in!

For Kittens Age 6 weeks and Up: At this age, kittens will likely begin door-dashing and trying to escape whatever enclosure they're confined to. If you would like to give them free run of your home, please do so with extreme caution. Kittens can and will get into everything. Never leave them unsupervised, particularly when there are other pets and/or roommates where you live! Also, remember that the more space they have, the less likely they are to find their litter box!

Most importantly, especially once they are over ~4 weeks old, make sure you socialize your kittens as often as possible! This is crucial to their development – they need to learn to love humans! Introduce them to friends, children, other cats, friendly dogs, etc., but **always** make sure they're in a controlled environment and are being closely supervised.

Common Household Hazards for Kittens

Even the most experienced fosters sometimes overlook household hazards. The following is a list of things that we have seen cause injury to kittens.

- **Rocking chairs** - keep out of the kittens' area
- **Reclining chairs** - kittens can easily crawl inside
- **Toilets** - keep lids closed at all times
- **Bathtubs**- keep water drained at all times
- **Doors** - make sure that kittens are not behind doors that are being opened
- **Exits** - keep unscreened doors and windows closed at all times when not in use
- **Outdoors** - do NOT allow kittens to go outside, NO EXCEPTIONS!
- **Other cats** - can sometimes be asymptomatic carriers of viruses that are more harmful to kittens, or can be too aggressive with kittens
- **Dogs** - all dogs (but especially large dogs) can easily injure a kitten, often accidentally
- **Washers and dryers** - kittens can crawl inside of the machines unnoticed or get stuck behind them
- **Other appliances** - make sure that kittens cannot crawl behind or under refrigerators, ovens, etc.
- **Holes** - make sure any holes in drywall or cabinetry are plugged or blocked
- **Small objects** - rubber bands, strings, paperclips, and other small objects can be accidentally ingested
- **Chemicals** - make sure they are put away
- **House plants** - many are poisonous to cats, make sure they are out of reach
- **Electrical cords** - can be sprayed with bitter apple, covered with tape or "cord covers" to prevent chewing

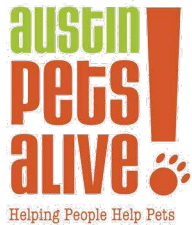
In the unfortunate event that one of your kittens has died, for any reason, please **contact us right away**. Please do not be embarrassed or afraid to reach out – these things happen. Kittens are fragile creatures, and unfortunately some of them are just not equipped to make it in this world.

Use the following chart to determine who to contact:

<p>If a Kitten UNDER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>
<p>If a kitten UNDER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately. CC email@email.com email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten’s name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately. CC cat-foster-email@email.com and email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten’s name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>

Fading Kitten Syndrome

You are **not** receiving this handout because Fading Kitten Syndrome is a common occurrence, but rather because if you ever encounter this condition, YOU will need to take action IMMEDIATELY. The worst thing you can do for a fading kitten is to take him/her to your vet – most kittens will not survive the car ride. YOU are this kitten's best chance at making it.



Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten “crashes” and begins to fade away. Kittens under 3 weeks old and/or kittens who are, or were recently sick, are most susceptible to FKS. Oftentimes, it occurs in kittens who have been eating poorly, and losing, or, not gaining, weight. This is why it is **VITAL** that you weigh your kittens every time they're fed. *Although it is rare, FKS can also occur in healthy kittens at any age.*

Symptoms of FKS:

- Extreme lethargy — unable to stand or hold head up, not responding when touched
- Body feels cool to the touch (not just insides of ears – all over)
- Panting or gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out in distress

If you see these symptoms, it is crucial that you take the following steps NOW:

Step 1: GET KITTEN WARM

Grab your heating pad and a towel. Place the towel over the heating pad, and place kitten on top of towel. Roll heating pad up to create a “kitten burrito” – like you're swaddling an infant. Leave the kitten's face exposed, and do not remove kitten from the burrito even if he/she struggles and cries to get out! Make sure the heating pad is still on the **low** setting.

* If you don't have a heating pad, (fosters are now *required* to have a heating pad) you can either:
a) Keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap it around the “burrito” towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don't remove the “burrito” towel.
b) Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends so it doesn't spill out. Throw them in the microwave for 3 minutes. Keep them next to the kitten on the outside of the burrito towel. Every 30 minutes reheat one sock and leave the other next to the kitten so she doesn't cool off.

Step 2: GET KITTEN'S BLOOD SUGAR UP

Grab a small bowl and fill it with either corn syrup (Karo, etc), or sugar water. The more sugar content, the better. Make sure you have your syringe handy. Warm the contents up in the microwave for a few seconds until the liquid is a bit above room temperature. You will administer this sugar water (with the syringe) to the kitten while he/she is in the burrito. **Give the kitten about 1 drop every 3 minutes.**

Step 3: CALL MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (after hours)

Prognosis

We generally have a high success rate with these kittens if you follow the above steps! The process can take hours, so be prepared to administer the steps outlined above for anywhere from one to three to even five hours.

We DO NOT recommend you rush your foster kitten to the vet for many reasons:

You have the motivation to sit right there with them and make them your top priority. A vet clinic has multiple patients who need help and won't be able to give your kitten the 100% undivided attention you can give them.

Your kitten will continue to be cold/hypoglycemic on the way to the vet, in the waiting room, and in the hospital while they try to determine what is wrong, etc. Most kittens won't last long enough for them to begin treatment.

Dr. Jefferson at APA! created these protocols based on what would be done if she saw these patients in a her clinic. Most clinics would do the same thing – try to keep the kitten warm and get their blood sugar up. There isn't much else you can do.

Keep in mind that it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of this state and start acting normally again. Don't give up! Once they do come out of it, make sure you contact the med techs to discuss what could have possibly caused them to fade in the first place, and make sure we have the kitten on all the right medical treatments for any illnesses they have that may have caused it.

Unfortunately, even if you've employed all of the steps outlined above to a tee, some kittens just won't make it. Cats get pregnant very easily, and have A LOT of kittens, specifically because they are so fragile. If a kitten passes in your care, don't blame yourself – these kittens would have had about a 0% chance of surviving if it wasn't for you. Send us an email if your kitten has passed and focus on taking the best care of his/her littermates.

Thank you for everything you do, fosters!

Supplementing Protocol for Nursing Kittens

Thank you so much for fostering a nursing mom and kittens with Austin Pets Alive! We truly appreciate you!

When it comes to nutrition for neonatal kittens, mom's milk is best! And your kittens are the lucky ones who arrive at APA! with a mom. They're getting extra immune support and nutrition that orphans don't get. What's more, nursing kittens cause mom to produce hormones that stimulate milk production. It's a virtuous cycle!

You've heard it before: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH! Well, in the case of nursing kittens, weighing too frequently can make it seem like a kitten needs to be supplemented when in fact she does not. What matters is a kitten's weight gain (or loss) over a 24-hour period (this is different than with orphans!). If your nursing kittens are healthy, they only need to be weighed once a day.

We want to do all we can to encourage kittens to nurse. Supplementing can disrupt the virtuous cycle, causing moms to not produce enough milk, and kittens who are bottle/syringe fed are at risk of aspirating formula (see below). Nevertheless, there are certain instances when it may be necessary to supplement nursing kittens to give them a boost until they are gaining weight on their own, such as upper respiratory infections, insufficient milk production from mom, too much competition from siblings at the milkbar, and premature birth (kittens weighing under 70 g). *Because we want to avoid supplementing if at all possible, always contact your mentor before beginning to supplement!*

You'll remember from training that you can give your mom a day or so alone with her kittens before weighing them for the first time. Moms produce colostrum for roughly 24 to 48 hours before they begin producing milk, and it is essential for kittens to nurse at this stage because of the immune support that colostrum provides. You may see a slight weight loss (a couple grams) the first day or two. This is normal and no reason to panic. *However, if you are concerned that a kitten is losing too much weight or have any other questions, email your mentor!*

The goal of supplementing is right in the name. It is intended to give the kitten a boost until the kitten begins gaining weight from nursing, not to replace nursing. We therefore only supplement twice a day and discontinue supplementing once the kitten begins to gain weight again.

We supplement kittens with PetAg powdered KMR® formula (kitten milk replacer). Because an abrupt switch from the mother's milk to KMR® formula can be hard on the kitten's digestive system, we start supplementing with a ratio that is more dilute than what the label calls for:

Ratio (water to KMR®)	Time
8:1	2 Feedings
4:1	2 Feedings

2:1	Until kitten is gaining weight from nursing or can be syringe fed gruel, as the case may be
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Ideally, you will only be supplementing at the 8:1 ratio since the goal is to get the kitten to gain enough weight on its own just from nursing.

How to make formula:

Feed PetAg KMR® powdered formula from bottle and/or oral syringe. Mix powdered formula (unless otherwise advised) with water at the correct ratio (see table above). Shake well or blend to dissolve lumps! Store mixed formula in the fridge up to 48 hrs.

All kittens must eat 5% of their body weight at each feeding. All kittens must be weighed before and after feeding!

Feeding instructions:

1. Warm formula up in the microwave until it is warmer than body temperature but not hot. Make sure to stir or shake to eliminate any hot spots. The kitten also needs to be kept warm during feeding and should be wrapped up in a towel or blanket, and preferably on a heat source like heating pad set to Low.
2. Feed kitten upright or on belly in a prone position, NOT on his/her back like a human infant!
3. Gather kittens' feeding charts and some warm towels.
4. Bottle-feed the kitten first. Some kittens take a while to latch on, so be patient! If kitten does not gain its 5% via the bottle, proceed w/ syringe feeding. Only use 1mL syringe.
5. Weigh kitten periodically throughout feeding process – the kitten is only done eating when she has gained her 5%.
6. Thoroughly clean off any formula on kitten's fur and dry kitten off. (Formula will stick and is very hard to remove if it dries and is also painful for the kitten!)
7. Weigh and record after-food weight!

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Watch for formula coming out of kitten's nose or a rasping "wet" cough. This is called aspiration, which means the kitten has ingested formula into her lungs and is in danger of "drowning." If one of your kittens is aspirating, you need to do two things:

1. Immediately email bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org and medtechs@austinpetsalive.org.
2. Wait for about an hour to make sure all of the formula has come out of the kitten's nose and then continue feeding.

Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens Based on Weight			
(5g food per 100g body weight/1g per 20g body weight)			
Weight of Kitten Before Feeding	Weight of Kitten After Feeding	Amount of Food Consumed	NOTES
60	63	3	
80	84	4	
100	105	5	
120	126	6	
140	147	7	
160	168	8	
180	189	9	
200	210	10	
220	231	11	
240	252	12	
260	273	13	
280	294	14	
300	315	15	
320	336	16	
340	357	17	
360	378	18	
380	399	19	
400	420	20	
420	441	21	
440	462	22	
460	483	23	
480	504	24	
500	525	25	
520	546	26	
540	567	27	
560	588	28	
580	609	29	
600	630	30	
620	651	31	
640	672	32	
660	693	33	
680	714	34	
700	735	35	
			WEIGH ~ FEED ~ WEIGH

Canned Email Responses Cat & Kitten Foster Programs / Neonatal

Retired Mom Welcome Email:

Thank you so much for fostering this retired mom! Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. It is not uncommon for mom to become a bit engorged as her body adapts to not having any kittens to feed. You can offer her a heating pad to lay on or a warm wet washcloth as a compress if she is receptive to it. There is also a chance that she will go into heat at some point so it is very important to watch doors and windows so she is not able to dash outside. Thank you again!

Welcome to the APA! Kitten & Cat Foster Program!

About your foster

She has received *[insert care to date]*. She needs *[insert remaining needs]*.

You can go ahead and book a spay appointment now using [\[SPAY/NEUTER Appointment Request Form\]](#). The surgery date needs to be at least 2 weeks from separation from kittens. It is very important for the mama's milk to be completely dry prior to surgery. This time period will allow for the mom to be safely spayed.

She can then be signed up for the cattery as well [\[Adoption Center Wait List\]](#). As long as she is healthy and signed up at least one week prior to her spay appointment, she is eligible to be pulled from the clinic after surgery and go straight to the adoption center.

Illness/Injury

IF YOU ARE HAVING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT *[insert 24-hr phone number]*.

If your foster cat starts to show any signs of illness (sneezing, vomiting, mild-to-moderate diarrhea, not eating, runny eyes/nose, hair loss, urinating out of the box, losing weight, fleas, uncontrollable trembling, etc.), contact the medical team via email: *[insert email(s)]*.

Please include: a description of their symptoms, amount of any weight loss, if they are still eating, and if you have noticed any change in their activity level.

Adoption/Marketing

Your foster cat can attend our weekly adoption events. Events will be announced via email. Please make sure you are receiving your emails from our mailing list.

Fosters are the best source for marketing material. Please go to [\[Cat Info Form\]](#) to submit updated pics and bio. For more detailed information on marketing your cat, please refer to [\[Foster Guide to Cat Marketing\]](#).

You may post your cat on Craigslist, Reddit.

Here are the links for Austin:

<http://www.reddit.com/r/texaspets> or <http://www.reddit.com/r/austinclassifieds>

Or via Facebook, Twitter, email to friends/family/co-workers. Advertise your kitty!

Please confirm you received this email and let us know how she is doing now. We will be touching base with you every couple of weeks, but please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Thank you so much for fostering this former momma cat!

Nursing kittens graduation from neonatal program:

We wanted to email to thank you for fostering this mom and her babies!

The kittens are moving into the next phase of the foster process as they turn 8 weeks old and "graduate" from our program. This means they are of the age to be adopted and move into the cat foster team side of the foster program. You will have a new foster mentor assigned to help you. Their email is: cat-foster-coordinator@austinpetsalive.org. They will be there to answer any questions you have and will send reminders/information to you. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have until you receive the welcome email from the cat foster team.

Please let the cat foster manager (cat-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org) know if you are going out of town and need a temporary foster.

Mom will remain in the neonatal program until she has been spayed. Please remember to allow 2 weeks for her to dry up prior to her surgery date. If you haven't done so already, mama cat needs photos and a bio on the website so potential adopters can see her. She can also be signed up on the adoption center waiting list.

Important Links:

[Adoption Center Request Form](#)

[SPAY/NEUTER Appointment Request Form](#)

[WELLNESS Appointment Request Form](#)

Kitten Marketing Links:

[Kitten Form](#)

[The little guide](#)

Cat Marketing Links:

Please go to [[Cat Info Form](#)] to submit updated pics and bio. For more detailed information on marketing your cat, please refer to [[Foster Guide to Cat Marketing](#)].

You may post your cat on Craigslist, Reddit.

Here are the links for Austin:

<http://www.reddit.com/r/texaspets> or <http://www.reddit.com/r/austinclassifieds>

Thank you so much! We hope your kittens find their forever home soon and you are able to foster new kittens soon!

Nursing mom moving her nest email:

Moms will move kittens when they are seeking out a more sheltered, private space. They often like a space that's dark, and hidden away somewhat. So, if you can rig up a spot that she may feel safer in, anything with sides and a roof but where you can still access her babies to weigh them. The top of a plastic dog crate (if you have it) is perfect, or a box with a sheet wrapped around the top to create a roof (mamma will need a doorway cutout to enter/exit the nesting box). You can provide further privacy by hanging a makeshift curtain over a space she has already chosen.

Also, if she is moving them to the same spots each time, you can put out an additional heating source there, so if she does move them and you are not there all the babies will stay warm.

Nursing mom welcome email:

Thank you so much for fostering this family! How are they settling in? Is mom caring for her kittens? Kittens gaining every day? We'll be your foster mentor until they reach their 8 week milestone. Please confirm you received this email and let us know how they are doing. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Important notes about Nursing moms

Please give your foster cat some time to adjust to her new surroundings. Her hormones may be running high and her behavior a bit unpredictable. Please give her space and keep her away from resident pets as she will be very protective of her kittens. If your foster cat is a bit unsocial, hissy, or scared, you may need to give her more space and time before you can handle her kittens. Please use your best judgment when approaching her and email us if you have any concerns or questions.

Welcome to the APA! kitten team!

Please "star" or save this email, so that you can refer back to this information!

Please find attached the Feeding and Care Guidelines, Pregnant/Nursing Mom Fostering Overview, Feeding Chart, Medication Chart, and the Fading Kitten Syndrome Protocol. We have also attached a Kitten Worksheet for you. We recommend you fill out and print this worksheet, post it near the kittens and update it after each dewormer is given and each wellness appointment. If you have any questions about anything at any point, please feel free to email us, the neonatal foster mentor team: [\[Insert email Here\]](#)

Our job is to make sure you have needed information and that you know you can contact us for assistance at any time. The mentor team consists of very experienced bottle baby fosters who can assist you with any feeding issues and fostering concerns. Never hesitate to reach out—we are here to help!

We understand that this email contains a LOT of information, but please review it thoroughly. The kittens are counting on you! :)

About your foster

Please note your fosters' information and keep their A# handy, as you will need it when dealing with the medical team:

You have:

On *[insert date]* Mom received her rabies and FVRCP vaccination, flea treatment, and dewormer. She will need an FVRCP booster starting *[insert date]* and no later than *[insert date]*.

The kittens medical needs:

- 2 weeks old: Due for a dose of dewormer. _____
- 4 weeks old: Due for a dose of dewormer. _____
- 6 weeks old: Due for their first wellness exam, bio and photos on website, can be signed up for adoption center waitlist. _____
- 8 weeks old: Can be spayed/neutered if 2 pounds and healthy, booster vaccine 2 weeks from 6 week wellness. _____

Let us know if any of their data is incorrect (sometimes kittens are older/younger than originally thought and the sex can be wrong too!) so we can get our records correct.

When you agree to foster a nursing or pregnant cat please understand that we may ask you to add one or more orphan kittens to your mama's litter. It is a vital part of the Nursing Mom program as well as the goal of APA! to keep these tiny kittens thriving. It can be a time sensitive issue and we can work with you and our transport team to make it happen.

For Nursing Moms:

- Please keep them in a calm and quiet atmosphere with a couple options for a nest box if possible. The more private it can be the better.
- Provide a warm space for mama but also somewhere she can go to cool off.
- A good diet is essential for healthy babies. Please remember to provide your mama with kitten kibble and water at all times as well as some yummy wet food daily.
- Please remember to weigh the kittens twice a day, preferably at the same time of day so that if one of them starts to lose weight we can immediately take steps to prevent them from going downhill.
- Keep an eye out for suckling amongst the kittens. This often occurs around the genitals and can be harmful to the kitten.
- Keep an eye on the mama's nipples for mastitis (more below), an infection of the mammary gland that requires veterinary care.

Mastitis

Please keep an eye on mama cat's nipples for any redness, swelling, or hot temperatures. This could be a sign of mastitis, an infection in her mammary glands, which can be very dangerous to mama cat. Please email the [\[insert email link\]](#) with your observations immediately and a picture of the mama's nipples if able. This is not common but can happen. It's super easy to check: whenever you weigh the kittens, give mama a belly rub and peek at her nipples.

Weight Tracking

Beginning Friday, 2/10, we're asking that you send an email to the Bottle Baby Foster Mentor Team (bbfostermmentor@austinpetsalive.org) every Friday with each of your kittens' names and weights. Please send these emails by 9pm every Friday so the records can be updated. It is not necessary to send us the weights of your mama cats. Of course, if you have a pregnant kitty who hasn't had her kittens yet, you can start sending us these emails after the kittens are born.

Feeding & Care

Please, please weigh your kittens consistently and make sure they are gaining on average 10 grams/day. Loss of weight is one of the first symptoms of illness.

If you need recommendations on setting up a habitat for your mom and kittens, just let us know! They should always have plenty of clean blankets and a constant heat source, as well as space to move away from the heat should they get too warm.

Are they settling into their environment? Where have you decided to keep them?

Reminder that your APA! foster kitties must be isolated from your own pets and from other APA! fosters for 10-14 days, and for the entire time they are in foster if you have indoor/outdoor cats. APA! foster kitties must be kept indoors. NO exceptions!

Medical Needs

The kittens will need dewormer at 2 and 4 weeks old. Please email [\[Email Link\]](#) to request dewormer. Please reference their A numbers, names and weights in the email. They will confirm a pick up time and you can pick it up at your convenience from the medical clinic. At 6 and 8 weeks they can receive dewormer with their wellness appointments.

They will need 4 FVRCP immunization shots every 2 weeks. Their first one is due at 6 weeks. Please send the appointment request 5-7 days early to make sure they stay on schedule. They get their shots even if ill at the time.

To request a wellness (vaccination) appointment: [WELLNESS Appointment Request Form](#)
Important: In order to be admitted to the adoption center, your kittens must have had at least two vaccines! Not taking care of vaccines promptly will cause them to lapse, losing effectiveness and putting the kitten at risk of deadly disease.

Illness/Injury

IF YOU ARE HAVING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT *[Insert phone number]*.

For kittens, this includes head slumped/body limp/unable to rouse (see attached Fading Kitten Syndrome Protocol), diarrhea that is very liquidy, white, bloody or black, any rapid weight loss, mouth breathing, heavy/labored breathing, red/brown urine, diarrhea and vomiting together or within a short time frame, seizures.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR KITTEN IS "FADING": Please start the Fading Kitten Syndrome Protocol ASAP while you are calling the medical team. (Print it out and have it easy to find). If your kitten(s) start to show any signs of illness (sneezing, vomiting, mild-to-moderate diarrhea, not eating, runny eyes/nose, hair loss, urinating out of the box, losing weight, fleas, uncontrollable trembling, etc.), contact the medical team via email: [\[Email Link\]](#).

Include: a description of their symptoms, amount of any weight loss, if they are still eating, and if you have noticed any change in their activity level.

We recommend the kittens be kept in a small area when you are not with them to help keep them safe. They are so small that they can get in places you cannot imagine, and even experienced fosters sometimes overlook common household hazards. Injuries sustained while in foster care are considered urgent and warrant a call to the medical hotline. Kittens are very fragile, and their condition can change suddenly. Please let us know if any pass while under your care.

Spay/Neuter

Once the kittens reach 6 weeks and appear on track to be 2 lbs at 2 months, please go ahead and request their spay/neuter appointment ([SPAY/NEUTER Appointment Request Form](#)).

After you have a date for their spay/neuter appointment, please put them on the Adoption Center waiting list ([Adoption Center Wait List](#)). If they have been pre-adopted, this is not necessary.

Adoption/Marketing

Your kittens can attend our weekly adoption events as pre-adopts at 6 weeks if they are healthy and up to date on their shots (5 days after their first FVRCP). Events will be announced via email. Please make sure you are receiving your emails from our mailing list. Fosters are the best source for marketing material of mom and the kittens. Please submit photos and a description for our website:

For information on submitting Marketing Materials for kittens please see [The Little Guide](#). Please go to [Kitten Form](#) to submit pics and bio.

You may post your cat on Craigslist, Reddit.

Here are the links for Austin:

<http://www.reddit.com/r/texaspets> or <http://www.reddit.com/r/austinclassifieds>

Thank you so much! We hope your kittens find their forever home soon and you are able to foster new kittens soon!

8 Week Milestone

When your kittens turn 8 weeks old, regardless of whether they are ready for spay/neuter, they will graduate into the Cat Program. At this point, you will receive a welcome email from the Cat Foster Team. Mama cat will remain in the neonatal program until her spay surgery. Please keep in mind that while they will no longer be part of the Neonatal Program, we will still be happy to help answer any questions you may have!

Getting Momma Cat Adopted

Mom will stay in the Neonatal Program until she's spayed. The sooner her kittens are no longer nursing, the sooner she can be spayed; she must not be allowed to let her kittens nurse for 2 weeks before her spay. Her milk must dry up before surgery because the mammary glands are located so close to the incision site. You have a couple of options for dealing with this:

- You can separate mama from her kittens when you see that the kittens are eating enough gruel/kibble to maintain (and gain!) their weights (generally around 7-8 weeks). This ensures that mama is able to come in for her spay appointment around the same time that her kittens are being spayed/neutered. If you are in a hurry to get mama into the adoption center so you can foster more kittens, this is the best choice.
- Let kittens nurse from mom until they're adopted, or mama kicks them off. A lot of fosters find it very difficult/heartbreaking to separate mama from her kittens. If you're one of these fosters, do not despair! Allowing mom to nurse her kittens well after they require it is not going to cause any harm. Just keep in mind that the longer you allow mama to nurse, the longer you'll have to wait until she's able to be spayed. If you're in no rush to get rid of mama cat, this is the best option.

Basics for getting mama ready for adoption:

- [Schedule a spay appointment](#) for at least 2 weeks after separation from kittens.
- [Sign her up for the adoption center](#). She'll need a few days in foster to recover from her spay.
- Don't forget to [submit photos and bio](#) for her so that she can find her forever home as well! For more detailed information on marketing your cat, please refer to [Foster Guide to Cat Marketing](#).

Please confirm you received this email and let us know how they are doing now. We will be touching base with you every couple of weeks, but please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Thank you so much for fostering this family!

Pregnant mom welcome email:

Thank you so much for fostering this pregnant mama! How is she settling in? We'll be your foster mentor until the kittens reach their 8 week milestone and mama cat is spayed. Please confirm you received this email and let us know how she is doing. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Important notes about Pregnant Cats:

Please give your foster cat some time to adjust to her new surroundings. Depending on how far along she is, her hormones may be running high and her behavior a bit unpredictable. Please give her space and keep her away from resident pets during her pregnancy. Once she gives birth she will be very protective of her kittens and will need to stay isolated the entire time. If your foster cat is a bit unsocial, hissy, or scared, you may need to give her more time post birth to handle and weigh her kittens. Please use your best judgment when approaching her and email us if you have any concerns or questions.

Welcome to the APA! kitten team!

We hope your new mama kitty is getting settled in with you and that you are enjoying her!

Please "star" or save this email, so that you can refer back to this information!

Please find attached the Feeding and Care Guidelines, Pregnant/Nursing Mom Fostering Overview, Feeding Chart, Medication Chart, and the Fading Kitten Syndrome Protocol. We have also attached a Kitten Worksheet for you. We recommend you fill out and print this worksheet, post it near the kittens and update it after each dewormer is given and each wellness appointment.

If you have any questions about anything at any point, please feel free to email us, the neonatal foster mentor team at [\[Email Link\]](#).

Our job is to make sure you have needed information and that you know you can contact us for assistance at any time. The mentor team consists of very experienced bottle baby fosters who can assist you with any feeding issues and fostering concerns. Never hesitate to reach out—we are here to help!

We understand that this email contains a LOT of information, but please review it thoroughly. The kittens are counting on you! :)

YOUR FOSTER

Please note your fosters' information and keep their A# handy, as you will need it when dealing with the medical team.

She received her rabies, and FVRCP vaccination, as well as flea treatment, and dewormer at intake on *[insert date]*. She will need a booster FVRCP starting *[insert date]* and no later than *[insert date]*.

When you agree to foster a nursing or pregnant cat please understand that we may ask you to add one or more orphan kittens to your mama's litter. It is a vital part of the Nursing Mom program as well as the goal of APA! to keep these tiny kittens thriving. It can be a time sensitive issue and we can work with you and our transport team to make it happen.

For Pregnant Moms:

- Please keep them in a calm and quiet atmosphere with a couple options for a nest box if possible. The more private it can be the better.
- Provide a warm space for mama but also somewhere she can go to cool off.
- A good diet is essential for healthy babies. Please remember to provide your mama with kitten kibble and water at all times as well as some yummy wet food daily.
- This link has some great information on pregnant cats and birth:
<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=1738>

For Nursing Moms:

- Continue doing the above once the kittens are born.
- *Remember to weigh the kittens twice a day*, preferably at the same time of day so that if one of them starts to lose weight we can immediately take steps to prevent them from going downhill.
- Keep an eye out for suckling amongst the kittens. This often occurs around the genitals and can be harmful to the kitten.

General Sanitation Protocols

Overview

Due to the fragile nature of our kittens, the Neonatal Program has many sanitation protocols in place to protect their health and to prevent and contain contagion. These protocols also help keep our feeders from transmitting contagion from the nursery to their personal pets, though feeders are advised to have their pets vaccinated as the possibility of transmission always exists. The Neonatal Ward operates under the supervision of the APA! clinic staff. All protocols are strictly enforced.

Feeder Cleaning

- Wash your hands at the beginning of each shift and between litters.
- Using hand sanitizer is allowed, but it is not part of nursery sanitation protocol due to its very limited effectiveness. Hand sanitizer may be used but never in place of washing hands. The nursery does not routinely provide hand sanitizer.
- If you come into direct contact with feces, urine, or vomit, wash your hands thoroughly. Scrub under your fingernails with the provided brushes and disinfectant.
- Be careful when handling kittens and anything in their crates that may be contaminated and then handling clean supplies and food.
- Change smocks between litters. One smock can be used with the same litter until it is soiled. When a smock is soiled, shake any solid matter into the trash and place it in the laundry hamper.
- If kittens have ringworm, be extra diligent about touching things. Wash your hands more frequently.
- When feeding kittens, always cover your lap with a towel or a clean puppy pad. As with smocks, towels can be used with the same litter until soiled. When a towel is soiled, shake any solid matter into the trash and place it in the laundry hamper.

Work Surfaces and Feeding Supply Cleaning

- 409 cleanser is the only approved cleanser for the nursery, as it will cling to and remove organic matter that other cleansers will not.
- Clean work surfaces with 409 when soiled, and then wipe down with disinfectant or diluted bleach. 409 cleans but it does not disinfect.
- Surfaces can be cleaned with Clorox wipes or with other cleaning wipes. **These are not to be used in place of disinfectant.**
- Bleach that is diluted at a 1:10 ratio, bleach to water, can be used in place of Trifectant. Diluted bleach must always be used when working with ringworm.
- All surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected between litters. This includes but is not limited to: scales, pens and markers, snuggle discs, work surfaces, and chairs.
- Once a utensil has touched the food of one litter, it should not be used to mix food for another litter. If it does, that food cannot then be shared amongst other litters. Clearly label the food for that litter and put it back in the refrigerator.
- Once a spoon or other dish has been used for one litter's food, do not use it for another litter—wipe off any solid matter in the trash, place it in the dishpan to soak, and wash before using it again.

Carrier, Cage, and Collapsible Crate Cleaning

- Clean thoroughly with 409 cleanser.
- Spray completely with diluted bleach; let soak for 10–15 minutes, then wipe clean.
- Spray with disinfectant, wipe clean, and put away in storage room.
- Empty carriers and cages should not be left out in the nursery; always sanitize and put them away to prevent the possible spread of contagion.

Nursery Area Cleaning

- When cleaning supplies are needed, check the storage room. If we are out of something, inform the Assistant Manager.
- Like other supplies in the nursery, cleaning supplies are not shared between rooms. Do not take brooms, mops, cleaners, disinfectants, or any other supplies from one room to another.
- If litter or food spills on the floor, sweep and/or mop until sufficiently clean.
- If liquid spills on the floor, clean it up right away to prevent injuries, as well as to keep the area clean.
- Put any trash that is recyclable in the recycle container.
- Keep trash emptied so we don't attract flies and so we can keep bad odors contained as much as possible.
- When trash cans are full, remove the full trash bag and replace it with a clean one. Take trash outside to the dumpster at the end of your shift.
- When the recycling containers are full, remove the full bag and replace it with a clean one. Take recyclable trash outside to the dumpster at the end of your shift.
- The APA! cleaning staff will take our trash out in the mornings; however, it is the duty of all feeders to take trash out as needed during the day. Do not let full trash bags sit in any area of the nursery.

General Dishwashing and Laundry Protocols

Equipment Overview

The nursery does several loads of dishes and laundry every day, which is far more than these appliances were built to do. These appliances were a gift to our team, and it is up to us to take care of them and use them correctly. The BB team does not have a budget for repairing or replacing appliances, so please be diligent about proper usage.

Dishwashing

- Each room has a dish bin for sanitizing dirty dishes before washing them.
- Each dish bin will be filled with bleach diluted at a ratio of 1:32, bleach to water.
- Separate syringes from plungers and bottle caps from nipples before placing them in the dish bin.
- Pour any remaining KMR out of bottles and rinse before placing them in the dish bin.
- Wipe off any gruel from dishes into the trash before placing them in the dish bin.
- Hand-wash all syringes, nipples, and bottle caps—do **not** put them in the dishwasher.
- We do not have traditional plumbing in the nursery—we have sump pumps, which require extra care. Do not wash any type of solid matter, no matter how small it is, down the sink, as this can clog the pump.
- Put away clean, dry dishes neatly where they belong so that other feeders can find them easily and quickly.

Laundry

- Shake out all laundry into the trash before putting it into the hamper. No solid matter should be left on laundry in the hamper, as it can attract flies and spread contagion, and can also clog the washing machine filter.
- Before taking dirty laundry to the washer, check to see if the washer is available. If it is in use, do another chore.
- Shake laundry a second time over the trash before putting it into the washer.
- Put dirty laundry in a laundry bag and take it to the washer. Load the washer to capacity before starting. Items should be placed loosely in the washer and not packed in tightly. Put the laundry bag in the washer with the laundry to be washed.
- Never leave dirty laundry sitting out in the washer area.
- Put soft toys in the washer; put hard toys in the dishwasher. Hard toys can get caught in the washer and cause damage.
- Use one cup of bleach with every load of laundry.
- If rice socks are found in the laundry, throw them away—we do not reuse them.
- Always wash your hands before handling clean laundry, wet or dry.
- Always clean the lint filter in the dryer before starting.
- Fold laundry and properly store it where it belongs so others can find it easily.

Nursery Decontamination Protocol

Unless otherwise stated on the checklist, *ALL* of the following must be completed:

1. 409 spray and wipe down. Be sure to get into all cracks and crevices and to remove any and all organic matter. *409 is only used when organic matter is present.*
2. Diluted bleach soak for 10 minutes then wipe clean. This must be completed three times for each item so that there is a total of three 10-minute soaks. Multitasking is your friend! Spray multiple items at once so you are not waiting for soaks to finish.

Check each item as completed :

409	Bleach Soak			Item	Notes
	1st	2nd	3rd		
				Cages	Clean walls, top, bottom and cage door/handles
				Feeding Bins	Lids, sides, outside and bottom
				Feeding Tables	Tops, underneath and legs
				Chairs	Seat, back, legs, bottom -- be sure to get everywhere!
				File Holders	Wash in sink, spray with diluted bleach, dry upside down on towels
				Snuggle Discs	same as file folders
				Heating Pads	Use care with cord
N/A				Baby Wipe Warmer	Use care with cord
				Scales	Bowls: bleach soak, then washed in dishwasher Electronic part: don't drench with liquid
				Counters/Cabinets	Cabinet fronts, drawer fronts
				Sink	Get the sides, edges, basin and faucet
N/A				Soap Dispensers	Every Exterior surface, towel hook next to dispenser
N/A				Used Dishes	Soak in diluted bleach, then wash in dishwasher
N/A				Laundry	Used laundry must be removed and washed. In some circumstances unused laundry will need to be washed; check with nursery manager. Hamper: decon with 409 cleaner
				Microwave	Clean every surface inside and out, including plate and handle. Decontaminate counter underneath the microwave
				Refrigerator	Inside shelves and all outer surfaces, handles, front and sides; clean floor underneath and behind fridge.
N/A				Blender	Use care with buttons and cord
N/A				Nebulizers	Soak tubing and mouthpiece, rinse thoroughly. Spray paper towel with diluted bleach
				Pet Carriers	Be sure to get door and all surfaces, inside and out
N/A				Pens, Dry Erase Markers, Sharpies	No 409 cleaning needed
N/A				Windowsills	Dust and wipe down with bleach solution
N/A				Floors	Sweep and Mop with Bleach solution
N/A				Trash	Remove and take out of facility

Upper Respiratory Infections Quick Reference Guide

Medication Regimen

1. **Doxycycline (100 mg/ml)**: Dose is 0.05cc / pound PO SID x 7-10 days
2. **Azithromycin (40 mg/ml)**: 0.10cc / pound PO SID x 5 days, then once every 3rd day for 3 more doses.
3. **Baytril**: Severe URI with severe congestion. Dose is 1 "hub" diluted in at least 3cc LRS SQ SID x 5 days, then recheck.

Nebulizing is used in conjunction with an antibiotic for severe URI's (REFRIGERATE)

Nebulizer Solution Mixture

- Sodium Chloride (1000 mL bag 0.9%)
- 40cc Dexamethasone (20 if Dex SP)
- 20cc Gentamicin Sulfate
- 20cc Albuterol

Nursery Panleuk Protocol

1. Give the fluids and baytril warmed (warm by placing in ziploc/warm water or by putting under heat disc/heating pad, test on skin prior to injection)
2. Give the polyflex and cerenia into the fluid hump
3. Give cerenia SID SQ at following doses:
 - a. <1.0 pound then give 0.05 mL
 - b. 1 - 2 pounds then give 0.10 mL
 - c. >2 pounds give 0.04 mL/lb
4. Give panacur/marquis po sid x 3 days starting at intakeOur protocol is Baytril 0.02/lb mixed with 10cc LRS/lb SID; polyflex (ampicillin) SQ 0.1cc/lb BID and Cerenia 0.1cc/lb SID for vomiting. 5 day treatment

Kitten Intake Guide - 2018 Quick Reference Guide

FVRCP: Needed if kitten weighs at least 1 pound

FELV Test: All kittens up to 5 weeks old

FELV/FIV Combo Test: Kittens 5 weeks and older

FELV Serum Test: Only needed if FELV or Combo Test is positive

Pen-G: (6:1 dilution) 0.25cc SQ SDD

Strongid: 0.20cc per pound after eyes are open

Flea Meds: Capstar (10 mg/ml) 0.10cc per 100 grams

Praziquantel: Kittens with fleas over 4 weeks old

Weight (in Grams)	Dose of Praziquantel (75 mg/ml)
350-400	0.03cc
401-525	0.04cc
526-650	0.05cc
651-800	0.06cc
801-900	0.07cc
901-1000	0.08cc

Lyme Dip Preparation Quick Reference Guide

Combine:

- 1. 3.5 mL Lyme Dip (roughly 1 teaspoon)**
- 2. 60 mL water (about 1/4 cup)**

Treatment:

Spot treat ringworm kittens once a week.

Notes:

- Mixture is good for 48 hours once combined. Since we spot treat once a week, discard mixture after treatment.
- Remove any rings or jewelry as the mixture is caustic

Diarrhea Medications Quick Reference Guide

Medications

Pen-G (6:1 dilution):

0.25cc SQ SID x 3 days

Panacur:

0.2cc/pound PO BID x 5 days

Marquis Paste:

0.2cc/pound PO SID x 3 days (used with Panacur)

Metronidazole:

If diarrhea is bloody

0.05cc/pound PO BID x 7 days (REFRIGERATE)

Compounding Instructions Quick Reference Guide

FLEAS

Compounding Capstar to (10mg/ml)

1. Cut 1 pill (confirm its strength is 57mg nitenpyram)
2. Crush ½ pill with mortar and pestle
3. Combined crushed ½ pill with 2.8cc solution in a sterile medicine bottle. Solution should be a mixture of Feline Solution and Karo syrup (50:50 is fine)
4. Stir well and store in refrigerator with proper labeling- Expiration in 14 days

Dose is 0.1cc/# PO single dose

CALICI

Ulcers in mouth, lameness

Move litter to overflow; start Famvir, Sucralfate, and Baytril (if severely congested)

Compounding Famvir to (90mg/ml)

1. Crush 1 pill (125mg/ml) with mortar and pestle
2. Combine crushed pill with 1.38cc solution in a sterile medicine bottle. Solution should be a mixture of Feline Solution (0.7cc) and Karo syrup (0.7cc).
3. Stir well and store in the refrigerator with with proper labeling- Expiration in 14 days

Dose is 0.05 cc/# PO BID x 7 days

Compounding Sucralfate to (500 mg/ml)

1. Crush 1 pill (1 gram) and add 1.5 mL of Feline Solution and 0.5 mL of Karo Syrup

Dose is 0.15 cc/# PO BID x 7 days

Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens Based on Weight			
(5g food per 100g body weight/1g per 20g body weight)			
Weight of Kitten Before Feeding	Weight of Kitten After Feeding	Amount of Food Consumed	NOTES
60	63	3	
80	84	4	
100	105	5	
120	126	6	
140	147	7	
160	168	8	
180	189	9	
200	210	10	
220	231	11	
240	252	12	
260	273	13	
280	294	14	
300	315	15	
320	336	16	
340	357	17	
360	378	18	
380	399	19	
400	420	20	
420	441	21	
440	462	22	
460	483	23	
480	504	24	
500	525	25	
520	546	26	
540	567	27	
560	588	28	
580	609	29	
600	630	30	
620	651	31	
640	672	32	
660	693	33	
680	714	34	
700	735	35	
			WEIGH ~ FEED ~ WEIGH



THE MISSION OF THE NEONATAL PROGRAM

The mission of the Neonatal Program is to meet the needs of the organization and the community by accepting all kittens, pregnant cats and nursing cats with their litters that local shelters and rescue groups cannot care for and to provide the best possible care in order to achieve the highest possible survival rate so these cats can be adopted into permanent homes; and in so doing, support the APA! mission of a No-Kill status in the city of Austin while supporting shelters across the nation in achieving and maintaining a No-Kill status in their communities.

Thank you for choosing to spend part of your valuable time at the 2018 American Pets Alive! Conference learning about our Neonatal Program. Wherever you might be in the bottle baby process—just starting to think about it, already taking in a few litters or you have a program that is growing—we hope our experience thus far will be of value to you.

There will be a Masterclass on Monday at 1:00pm, Bottle Baby Kittens: From Nursery to Foster and tours of our nursery on Tuesday that you may want to attend as well.

You are encouraged to consider an apprenticeship offered through Maddie's Fund. You can find information online: <http://www.maddiesfund.org/neonatal-kitten-apprenticeship.htm>.

You are welcome to contact us at any time for guidance and information:

Casandra Mensing, Neonatal Program Director	casandra.mensing@austinpetsalive.org
Gloria Hudson, Neonatal Program Manager	Gloria.hudson@austinpetsalive.org
Emily Ramirez, Neonatal Program Foster Manager	bbfostermanager@austinpetsalive.org

We ask that you hold questions until the end of the presentation. On the pages following are some topics we will not cover in detail today.

INTAKES

Every kitten aged 1 day thru 6 weeks that comes into our program receives:

- FeLV tested, blood drawn from the vein in the neck
- Pen G injection for secondary bacteria infections, 0.25cc SQ (1cc of Combo Penicillin mixed w/6cc of LRS)

For kittens under 2 weeks the above plus:

- Capstar if fleas are present

For kittens over 2 weeks:

- 0.1cc per pound of body weight of Strongid for worms; continue every 2 weeks x 4
- 1 drop of topical flea prevention

For kittens 4 weeks and older (must weigh at least 1lb):

- First FVRCP vaccination, then boosters every 2 weeks for a total of four
- Any signs of bloody diarrhea or vomiting during intake will result in a parvo test to check for panleuk
- Praziquantel for kittens with fleas

All neonatal kittens are combo tested (FIV/FelV) during spay/neuter at approximately 8 weeks of age and a weight of 2 pounds.

KITTEN DEVELOPMENT

- Kittens weigh approximately 90-100g at birth and should double their birth weight in about a week.
- Within a couple of days of birth, kittens will begin to hear muffled sounds.
- At about 3-5 days, the umbilical cord will fall off.
- At about 7-10 days, the eyes will begin to open. Kittens are usually born with bluish eyes; they will stay blue until the kittens are about 6-7 weeks old, but true color won't settle in until the kitten is about three months old.
- At around two weeks old, kittens will start moving around more often, crawling and standing more.
- Around 3 ½ weeks of age, the teeth will begin to break through the skin. Also around this time, the ears will start to stand up.
- Teeth should be fully in around 4 weeks. Once the incisors are in, kittens can eat kitten food and start using a litter box.
- Kittens will start to gain weight rapidly around 4-5 weeks.
- By six weeks, they are beginning to regulate their body temperature.

FADING KITTEN SYNDROME

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade. This can occur with kittens who have a mother as well as those who do not, so watch for mother cats pushing away a kitten and not caring for it. If not dealt with immediately, this can result in death.

Symptoms

- Low body temperature; the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme lethargy; not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet, can't hold its head up
- Gasping for breath; mouth-breathing
- Meowing, crying out

When a kitten is fading, two things are happening: hypothermia, being too cold, and hypoglycemia, not enough blood sugar.

Take immediate action

- Get them warm. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving only their face exposed. Their whole body—tail, ears, and paws--should be in the towel, only nose and mouth exposed. **Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust them or check on them.** Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.
- Wrap a heating pad set on low around the burrito towel (to avoid burns) as an extra source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place.
- The kitten's body cannot warm itself with only a towel; you have to apply extra heat. Your own body heat won't work because it is lower than what a kitten's should be.

As soon as the kitten is warmed, you will need to work on raising its blood sugar

- Put some sugar in warm water OR use Karo Syrup in a syringe to give the kitten three drops every three minutes.
- If the kitten is not swallowing, try rubbing some Karo or sugar-water on its gums and tongue.
- Be sure you are administering the sugar every three minutes and not longer.
- If you have dextrose or glucose in the nursery, that can be used as well as sugar or Karo.
- Whatever the sugar source may be, take care not to contaminate anything by double-dipping syringes.

Keep in mind, it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of it and start acting normally again. Know that even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment for fading kittens, some of them still won't make it.

Medical Symptoms and Conditions

When to call for URGENT help and when to WAIT until morning



URGENT Medical Issues: Call or Text *MANAGER* and/or *ASST MANAGER* immediately

- ♦ Fading kitten: cold, lethargic, unable to stand
- ♦ Mouth-breathing
- ♦ Aspirating (milk coming out of nose) AND choking/unable to breathe
- ♦ Head slumped in food or water bowl
- ♦ Unable to swallow
- ♦ Seizures
- ♦ Intense pain
- ♦ Bleeding profusely
- ♦ Vomits multiple times in a row and cannot hold down food
- ♦ Behavior that seems extremely out of the ordinary

NON-URGENT Medical Issues:

*****Note on chart and feeder board so managers or med staff can evaluate**

- ♦ Aspirates (milk comes out nose) but can breathe normally afterward
- ♦ Vomits but is able to hold down food
- ♦ Diarrhea
- ♦ Sneezing
- ♦ Coughing
- ♦ Eye infection
- ♦ Straining to urinate or defecate
- ♦ Losing weight
- ♦ Decreased/no appetite
- ♦ Twitching
- ♦ Unsteady walking or walking in circles
- ♦ Hair loss
- ♦ Bloated belly
- ♦ Worms in feces
- ♦ Skin lesions
- ♦ Fleas, ear mites, other external parasites

Please use your best judgment when deciding if a symptom needs immediate care.

Is it life threatening or can it wait until morning?

Manager and/or Assistant Manager contact info

Clinic or other emergency contact info

Medical questions about non-life-threatening conditions can be emailed to:

Manager and/or Assistant Manager contact info

Clinic or other related contact info

Following is an example of an EOD (End of Day) report sent by the nursery manager daily to the team's Data Administrator, Rescue Coordinator, Foster Team (manager/mentor coordinator/pregnant & nursing cat coordinator), Program Assistant Manager and various others who need this information:

From: **Casandra Mensing** <casandra.mensing@austinpetsalive.org>

Date:

Subject: Nursery EOD (date)

From AAC (Austin Animal Center):

H21 litter: approx 4 1/2 weeks

A690064 Hudley, M, white and black

A690063 Humberto, M, black and white

**In Room B; Healthy!

I21 litter: approx 7 days

A690068 Iglesia, F, brown tabby

A690067 Icarus, M, white

**In Room B; Healthy!

J21 singleton: approx 3 1/2 weeks

A690062 Jeepers Peepers, M, black and white

**In Room B; suckled on penis-on Amoxi. Was brought in with the H21s but is half their weight and of course suckling on him so we separated.

To Foster:

I20 to Tyler Olsen

Xeric and Xiang to Carolyn Eurritt

Deceased: None

Critical:

Elk- dehydrated, lost weight today due to lack of feeders:(

Freida- dehydrated but gaining weight overall despite the long gaps in between feeding.

ROOM COUNT:

Room A: CLOSED- 5 litters need foster

Room B: OPEN- 12 empty cages

Room C: CLOSED- 13 litters inside

Overflow: CLOSED--Needs decon!

Feeding Bottle Babies

Bottle Babies should be fed every 2-3 hours and must consume a minimum of 5g per 100g (5%) of body weight. Refer to posted feeding charts for calculations.

Let them eat as much as they can on their own; if they do not eat enough on their own, then syringe-feed them.

If kittens have been syringe-fed previously, always try bottle feeding first; then syringe-feed if necessary.

Weigh kittens before feeding and then after to get an accurate measure of how much they have consumed.

Weigh ~ Feed ~ Weigh

Stimulate after feeding and weighing.



When mixing KMR, break up clumps so they don't clog nipples. When straining clumps out of KMR, break them up and stir them back into the KMR so the nutritional value remains intact. Using blender balls helps.

For bottle babies, mix KMR at a ratio of

- first four feedings, 8:1 (8 parts water:1 part KMR).
- next four feedings, 4:1 (4 parts water:1 part KMR).
- Remaining feedings, 2:1 (2 parts water:1 part KMR).

Only make enough 8:1 and 4:1 to feed current litters.

Large quantities of 8:1 or 4:1 are not needed.

Label all food with what it is, the date and time it was made. Label all bottles with the litter number, ratio, and the date and time it was made, not when filled.

***Sample of reminders posted in all feeding rooms.
NOTE: Ratio of water to canned food may vary depending on the brand of food you use.

FEEDING GRUEL KITTENS

Weaned kittens should be fed every 4-5 hours and must consume 5g per 100g of body weight (5%) until they are eating completely on their own.

To make gruel, mix 2 cans food with 1 can water, a ratio of 2 parts food to 1 part water. This will ensure that kittens are getting sufficient nutrition and hydration in their diet.

Adding more water will dilute the nutritional value. Adding less water will not provide proper hydration.



When making gruel for syringe feeding, the ratio remains the same. The only difference is that syringe gruel will be pureed in a blender so it will flow through a syringe.

Kittens transitioning to independent eating will need to be monitored to ensure they are gaining weight appropriately. If they have access to food 24/7 and are gaining weight steadily, they do not need syringe-feeding.

If a gruel kitten loses weight for three consecutive feedings, it will need to be syringe-fed until it is eating sufficiently on its own.

Kittens being syringe-fed gruel must gain 5g per 100g of body weight; use posted feeding chart for help with calculations.