THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO

ADOPT

FROM DUPage COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

In this packet you'll find information on your new family member and how to best care for them.
Whether you are a new cat parent or not, we encourage you to flip through to read about...

- The Do's and Don'ts of bringing home a new cat
- Choosing the right cat for you
- Caring for your cat
- Preventing unwanted behaviors
- Declawing your cat
- Dangers of letting your cat outside
- Introductions with other pets
- Tips for kittens
- Fearful cats
- Cat body language
- Pet owner FAQs

If you have any questions, concerns, or just want to give us an update on how things are going, please don't hesitate to reach out via phone, email or Facebook messenger!

You can also stay updated on everything happening at DCAS by following us on social media...

@DuPageCAS @DuPageCAS @DuPageCAS

630-407-2800
animalservices@dupageco.org
www.dupageco.org/animalservices
**DO's and DON'Ts OF BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW CAT**

**DO's**

- Plan ahead and gather supplies
- Make sure everyone in the household is prepared for the addition of a cat.
- Understand that cats can be very independent. The fun of a new pet can only begin once your cat feels safe.
- Designate which room in the home will be set up for the cat to acclimate in.
- Establish who will be responsible for which chores (scooping the litter box, feeding, grooming, etc.). If the chosen person is under 13, make sure a parent or guardian is willing to also provide that care.
- Register your new cat's microchip ASAP
- Pay attention to your new cat's body language and take it slow when you first bring them home. They may seem a little different than they did at the shelter. A new home with new sights, smells, sounds, and people can be very overwhelming at first!
- Plan to take your new cat to the vet within the first few weeks of adopting.
- Prepare for a long term commitment. The average lifespan of a cat is 15-20 years.
- Remove or relocate poisonous house plants in your home to a space your cat will not have access to.
- If you are adopting a kitten instead of an adult, consider adopting more than one.

**DON'Ts**

- Don't expect your new cat to feel comfortable immediately upon arrival. Remember that it will take time for them to feel safe.
- Don't let your cat out of its carrier on the drive home. We know it is tempting but there are several things during a car ride that will scare your cat. It's best to leave them until you get home.
- Don't force interactions with your new cat. Let them come to you. Allow them to show you when they want attention. This will make the bond you create much stronger.
- Don't base your adoption only on how the cat looks. The prettiest cat might not be the one that fits best into your home. Try to look for the specific traits (lap cat, playful, companion for another pet, etc.) you want instead.
- Don't immediately introduce your new cat to other pets in the home.
- Don't leave children alone with your new cat and make it clear pets are not toys.
- Don't get upset or yell if your cat misbehaves.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help! DCAS is here for you to answer any questions you have!
THE CARE YOUR CAT HAS RECEIVED FROM DCAS

VETERINARY CARE
Your cat has been examined by the DuPage County Animal Services veterinarian. At that time, we determine their overall condition and age, if it is unknown, as well as the need for further testing or surgical care. This information is noted on the Feline Medical Record included in your adoption folder. Although we have done a medical exam, we do ask that you take your new cat to your veterinarian within the first two weeks of adopting so they can review the care we have provided and guide you in the future needs of your new companion.

VACCINATIONS AND TESTING
Your cat has received the Feline Rhinotracheitis-Calici-Panleukopenia (FVRCP) vaccine & Rabies vaccine (cats over 3 months of age), and they have been tested for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) & Feline Leukemia Virus (FELV).

PARASITE CONTROL
While we do not test each animal for internal parasites unless symptoms of infection are observed, your cat has still received some medications for parasite prevention. These cover internal & external parasites commonly seen in cats including fleas, ticks, roundworm, hookworm, tapeworm, coccidia, heartworm, and ear mites.

MICROCHIP
Every animal that leaves DCAS receives a microchip because it significantly increases the chances of being reunited with your pet if they were to be lost. The microchip is implanted under the skin in between the shoulder blades. It uses passive radio-frequency identification (RFID). Although it does not provide a real-time location like GPS, it does provide a permanent way for you to be contacted. Think of it as an ID tag that can never get lost or fall off.

Remember to keep your contact information up-to-date with the microchip company when moving or changing phone numbers!
CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAT

Before bringing a new cat home, it is best to think about what type of cat would best fit into your household.

There are several factors to consider:

- **What is your household’s experience level?**
  - Many first-time cat owners believe a kitten is the best option for them. However, kittens require much more attention and a home that can be kitten-proofed (they will get into EVERYTHING). A kitten’s personality develops based on learning and genetics. They may develop a personality you did not plan on or are ready for. An adult cat with the right personality may be easier and more predictable. That being said, if you have the time and are willing to make the commitment, adopting a kitten is a fine choice.

- **Do you have children?**
  - If your children are young (under 12, for example) it is best to avoid cats that are skittish or easily startled by loud noises and sudden movements.

- **What is your home like?**
  - A small apartment may not be the best fit for a young active cat. Likewise, a large multi-room house may not be the best fit for a fearful cat - a lot of space can be overwhelming and they may spend a lot of time hiding.

- **What is your lifestyle like?**
  - Similar to choosing the right cat for your home, you want to choose the right cat for your lifestyle. If your new cat is going to be left alone while you are at work all day, try selecting an older cat that will need less attention. If you often have company over, consider adopting an outgoing cat that will love the extra attention. A shy cat will likely spend a lot of time hiding if you are frequently entertaining guests.

- **Do you have other pets?**
  - If you have a cat-friendly dog - kittens, confident adult cats, or adult cats that have a history of living with dogs will be your best options. Avoid fearful cats and declawed cats. Be prepared to make changes to your home, such as blocking off the litter box or limiting your dog’s access to certain parts of the house with gates.
  - If you have another cat, it is best to stay within the same age group and match temperaments. For example, if you have a playful, active cat at home, you’ll need to adopt one that can tolerate or enjoy that level of energy. We have cats available for adoption that appear to be friendly with other cats or have a history of living well with them. It’s important to realize that no matter what you choose, it will take time for both cats to adjust and get to know each other.

- **What are you looking for in your new cat?**
  - Always think about specific traits you are looking for in your new companion. Many people want the cat to “choose” them, but the reality is cats are stressed in the shelter and may not show their true personality. Talk to the shelter staff and volunteers. They know the animals best and can point you in the right direction.
BRINGING THEM HOME

Introducing a cat or kitten to a new home can be extremely stressful for them. A cat’s typical reaction to stress is to run and hide. You can ease this transition for them by following a few simple steps.

- **STEP 1:** Choose a room in your house to set up a safe space. Put everything they need in this room (food, water, litter box, bed, toys, scratching post, etc.). Place the food and water bowls as far away from the litter box as possible. A small bedroom, large closet, or bathroom (as long as you close the lid to the toilet) will work. It’s a good idea to set this space up before your new cat arrives home. The limited space ensures your new cat knows where their litter box is and will keep them from bolting out external doors.

- **STEP 2:** After adoption, do not let your new cat out of its carrier until they are in this room. Open the door to the carrier and let the cat come out at their own pace. Often, a cat will remain inside the carrier for several hours. If the cat comes out, it is best to leave the carrier in the room with them. This provides them with a place to hide and a familiar scent. Cardboard boxes are also an easy and cheap way to give your cat a place to hide in their space.

- **Step 3:** Leave the door to this space closed, which gives your cat time to adjust to the smells and sounds of their new home without the additional stress of confronting a new physical environment. Visit frequently with your new cat. These visits can include play, petting, yummy treats or wet food, quietly reading a book, or chatting on the phone. Keep in mind, as a new cat becomes accustomed to you and your family, they may hiss, growl, twitch their tail, or pull their ears back. Do not force interaction with them. It’s best to speak softly to them and give them some more time alone. When they are ready for attention, they will ask for it.

- **Step 4:** When the cat is comfortable with this room (it may take a few days to a few weeks), open the door. Let them set the pace for exploring the rest of their new home. Keep the door of their room open so they can return to the safety of “their room” if they become overwhelmed. If you have other animals in the house, check out pages 14 & 15 for properly introducing them.

CHILDREN AND CATS

Cats can be wonderful companions for a home full of kiddos, but it's still important to prepare for their arrival. Teaching your children to have safe interactions with the cat is essential. Give your cat plenty of time and if they seem uncertain, provide them with a safe hideaway away from the children. Always monitor your children around the new cat. Incorrect play or handling could teach your cat to fear or dislike children. Make sure your children understand that your cat is not a toy, and they should never chase them. Cats can be easily startled by loud noises or sudden movements. Try your best to keep kids calm and quiet while your cat is adjusting to their new home. Many cats do not enjoy being picked up or hugged. Depending on your children’s age, you may need to set ground rules for them to follow when interacting with the cat (no tail pulling, poking, fur pulling, tummy rubbing, etc.).
DAILY CARE

FEEDING
Cats are carnivores, which means they should eat a diet high in animal protein. Whatever brand you choose, make sure to purchase the correct formula for the life stage of your cat because kittens, adults, and seniors have different nutritional needs.

Always provide fresh, clean water, and don't forget to wash their bowls regularly (to eliminate the growth and spread of bacteria).

Some cats graze throughout the day, and some cats eat on a schedule. You may need to try a few different methods to find the best option for you and your cat.

Kittens should have a few meals throughout the day, while adults and seniors can be just fine with one or two meals in a day. The key is ensuring you give the proper daily portions are, regardless of the method. Most food packages will include the recommended daily amount based on your cat's weight. You can also consult your veterinarian if you're unsure.

Remember: obesity is a serious issue that not only causes health conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and osteoarthritis but can also prevent cats from being able to do basic daily tasks like grooming themselves.

GROOMING
By nature, cats are pretty tidy and spend a lot of their time cleaning themselves. Bathing is generally not necessary, but brushing is a great way to reduce shedding around the house and prevent hairballs. Cats with longer coats will require a little extra care because fur can quickly become tangled and painful.

Nail trimming provides many benefits and is required, even if your cat has access to a scratching board. You may find that their nails become quite sharp over time, getting caught in blankets, carpeting, the couch, and you! That's because of the way their nails grow and shed in layers. If neglected, their nails can curl into their paw pads and cause a variety of problems. Nail trimming can often be done easily at home, but if you find that your cat becomes difficult during your attempts, groomers and veterinarians provide that service at a minimal cost.

CANNED OR DRY? WHY NOT BOTH?
You know how everyone reminds you to drink more water, but you really don't want to. Well, telling your cat to drink more water is even less effective, but they need the reminder even more than we do. That's because, biologically, cats have a low thirst drive. Unfortunately, regular dehydration leads to kidney, bladder, and urinary tract diseases. Canned food is a great way to increase their water consumption and prevent urinary issues.
ENRICHMENT

This is just a fancy word for expressing natural behaviors to stay busy, not bored. Each cat is different in the amount of enrichment they need to be happy and healthy. It can also depend on their life stage—kittens typically require more enrichment than adults and seniors, but not always.

Providing enrichment doesn’t necessarily mean that you must always be actively doing something special for your cat. Our homes often passively provide enriching experiences. For example, perching on a windowsill allows cats to watch and listen to birds and squirrels. If that’s not an option, they might enjoy a nature channel on the TV or a fish tank app on your tablet.

Appealing to their smell and taste with different treats like catnip, cat grass, and treat puzzles are also good options. Providing vertical space is often crucial for your cat’s sense of security and relaxation. This could be in the form of a cat tower—which also gives your cat something appropriate to scratch—or even designating a piece of furniture as the cats by placing a soft bed on top.

Overall, providing enrichment does not need to break the bank and relieves many problem behaviors that could arise. An internet search for “cat enrichment” can give you lots of fun, homemade ideas to involve the whole family too. Check page 20 of this packet for even more ideas.

THE LITTER BOX

Thankfully, by nature, cats choose to use the litter box for elimination, but that does not mean there is simply one method for every home. There are a lot of options to consider when finding what works for you and your cat.

As people who share our home with our cat, we have some expectations regarding the box. We might, for example, want to hide the litter box from the main areas of our home (and cover it, too), but cats also have their preferences, and sometimes we have to compromise.

In general, it’s best to have one more litter box than the number of cats in your home. One cat = two litter boxes, two cats = three litter boxes, etc.

When determining location, try to put yourself in the cat’s paws. Privacy is good, but convenience is key. Avoid areas with noisy, scary appliances and cold cement floors. The litter box should also be separate from where your cat eats and drinks. Make sure the area is always accessible to avoid accidentally locking your cat in or out of their bathroom. Keep in mind, convenience benefits you too. If the box is out of sight, it can be easy to forget to scoop!

All litter boxes in the home should be scooped and cleaned regularly. Urine and feces should be scooped out of the box DAILY. How often the litter gets replaced is dependent on how many cats are in the home, how many litter boxes are in the home, and the type of litter you use. The general guideline for clay litter is to replace it completely twice per week. Clumping litter, usually, can be replaced every 1-2 weeks. Use a mild dish detergent to clean the box before putting more litter inside. Strong smelling cleaners (especially those with citrus or ammonia) may turn your cat off from using the box.

Don’t ever hesitate to call DCAS if you need guidance on any of your new cat’s litter box habits.
WHY ISN'T MY CAT USING THE LITTER BOX?

It's important to pay close attention to your cat's litter box habits to identify problems as soon as they begin. If your cat does start eliminating outside of their box, you need to act quickly, as there are several reasons why your cat may have developed litter box problems. Litter box problems can be complex and diverse, but treatment (either medically or behaviorally) can be effective. Some of the reasons your cat has stopped using the box may be due to the following:

- **Your cat is not using the box due to an underlying medical problem.** Taking your cat to the veterinarian should be the first step when you notice any changes in your cat's litter box behavior. Some common problems are urinary tract infections, Feline Interstitial Cystitis, Bladder or Kidney stones, or a blockage. If your cat is suffering from one of these issues, they will require medical attention.
- **Changes in the home can be stressful for some cats.** Moving, a new baby or pet, or even changes in your daily routine can make your cat anxious, causing them to stop using the box. They'll need you to be patient and understanding while they adjust to these changes.
- **The litter box is not being cleaned or scooped often enough.**

- **If your cats are not getting along in the home, it can cause enough stress to cause one or more of them to stop using the box.** If this is the case, provide your cats with multiple sources of food, water, scratching posts, toys, and litter boxes. They will better be able to avoid each other and will not feel the need to compete over resources.
- **There is a chance something upset your cat while they were using the litter box and caused them to form a negative association with it.** You may notice they are hesitant to enter the box, or enter then leave very quickly. One common cause is if it becomes painful for them to eliminate. This could be due to an underlying medical problem or a procedure, such as declawing, that causes this pain.
- **Your cat has developed a preference for litter type, litter box location, or the litter box is too small.**
- **You have not provided enough litter boxes for your household.** (Remember to have one litter box per cat plus one).
- **Your cat can not get to the litter box at all times.** Cats with physical limitations, as well as older age, could be preventing your cat from being able to reach the litter box quickly enough. Or the sides of the box your cat could once easily get over, are now too high for them.
- **Your cat has an aversion to the scent of the litter: most cats prefer unscented, clumping litter.**
- **Your cat’s litter box has a cover or liner that makes them feel uncomfortable.**
- **The litter in the box is too shallow or too deep: most cats prefer one to two inches of litter.**
Cats are naturally inquisitive (it's part of what makes them cute), but that curiosity can also lead to behaviors that may annoy their people. Some examples are; scratching furniture and carpeting, jumping on counters and tables, aggressive play, excessive meowing, and attention-seeking in the middle of the night. Thankfully, there are positive ways to deter these behaviors, if they become problematic.

For many cat owners, "counter surfing" is a bad habit they want to avoid. There are many attractions on tables and countertops for cats, but there are some simple steps you can take to try and avoid this behavior.

- Provide appropriate jumping spaces for your cat. Cats love heights, and providing them with a cat tree or tower may be more desirable than the countertop. You can even hide treats on them to help your cat form a positive association with these surfaces.
- Keep your countertops clean. Crumbs, spills, or food left out makes it very desirable for your cat to jump up for a snack.
- Eliminate chairs or other furniture your cat is using to assist them in reaching these surfaces.
- Try using sticky tape or aluminum foil around the edge of your counter. The texture or sound is undesirable for cats and may deter them from wanting to be there. Just keep in mind this method may disrupt the way you use your counter, be wasteful, and difficult to clean.

Cats meow for several reasons. It is one of the ways they communicate with us. They may be meowing to say hi, ask for something, or tell us that something is wrong. If you feel like your cat is meowing excessively, check with your veterinarian to rule out any medical concerns. If there is no medical reason for your cat’s vocalizations, try to determine why your cat is acting this way. If it’s just to say hi, there isn’t much you can do to change that. (You just happen to have a cat that is really happy to see you). If they are doing it for attention, you can teach them that you will only pay attention to them when they are quiet. Sometimes, cats can cry because they are lonely and need a companion or to spend more time with you.

Most importantly, DO NOT scold or hit your cat for meowing. It might stop your cat at that moment, but it will not have a lasting effect on their meowing behavior. Instead, your cat will just become fearful of you, and that stress could lead to even more undesirable behaviors.
Establish a routine and stick to it! You do not need to feed your cat first thing when you wake up. Make some coffee, or take a shower, for example. Feeding them first will only lead your cat to associate the reward of being fed with you getting out of bed and begin waking you earlier and earlier.

Cats need exercise no matter their age. Daily playtime with you (for most cats two or more 20-minute play sessions) will make your bond with them closer and help tire them out so they sleep better at night.

Mental stimulation: Don’t let your cat sleep all day! Check pages 7 & 20 to learn more about enrichment!

Try sleeping alone. Give your cat their own room at night if they are keeping you up, or close your bedroom door. As hard as it may be, ignore them if they are crying on the other side of the door. It may take weeks for them to get used to sleeping alone.

Some behaviors, such as waking you up in the middle of the night, are normal as far as the cat is concerned. However, we often describe this as a "bad habit." It’s natural for young cats to be more active at that time, but it can be annoying to be woken up by your cat pouncing on you for play as soon as you fall asleep, or waking you up at 4 AM for breakfast. Luckily, there are easy ways that do not involve punishment to solve this behavior.

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- Cats need exercise no matter their age. Daily playtime with you (for most cats two or more 20-minute play sessions) will make your bond with them closer and help tire them out so they sleep better at night.
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Scratching, furniture, or people, is an issue for most cat owners. However, it is a vital natural behavior that cats need to express. Because of this, it should not be completely discouraged, but instead encouraged in the appropriate places.

Cats scratch to: remove the dead outer layer of their claws, leave their visual and scent mark on their "territory", stretch their bodies, and even express their excitement when you come home. Cats DO NOT scratch your furniture or drapes to be vindictive. Providing a more appealing alternative, like a cat tree, is typically enough to redirect their attention. If they are damaging your furniture, place the scratcher next to the object they are repeatedly using. You can entice them by sprinkling some loose catnip on it, playing with your cat around the scratching post, and giving your cat treats when they use (or even just sniff) the post. Once they are regularly using the scratching post, you can slowly move it to its normal location in your home.

Observe your cat’s scratching style. This will help you choose a cat tree or scratching post they will enjoy. Each cat is different in what they prefer (vertical, horizontal, angled, carpet, twine, cardboard, etc.). You may have to experiment with a few different types before you find the one your cat likes best. Whichever option you choose, make sure that it is sturdy and does not wobble.

Check out the next page to find out why declawing your cat is NOT a solution to their scratching.
DCAS does not recommend getting your cat declawed. We believe that declawing your cat can lead to both behavioral and medical complications. It is usually seen as a "quick fix" solution that can cause major problems in the future. To understand why declawing your cat can lead to future issues, you need to know why their claws are so important in the first place. A cat's paws support their whole body and help the cat balance. The paws (including the claws) contain scent glands, blood vessels, and nerves. Cats use their claws to perform many natural and instinctual behaviors such as stretching, exercise, playing, grooming, kneading, communication, stress relief, and defense.

Many believe declawing is "just removing the claws," but it is actually a major surgery involving several amputations. To ensure the claws do not grow back, the first joint and bone on each toe (from which the claw grows) must be removed. Since declawing a cat is a procedure that changes the shape of a cat's paws, it causes a significant amount of pain. Even after the cat has fully healed, there is still a risk of complications such as balance impairment and muscular weakness. If the procedure is done incorrectly there is a risk of claws growing back or infection from bone fragments that leads to a significant amount of more pain.

Additionally, declawed cats can develop litter box issues. They may associate pain they feel when covering their waste after the procedure with the litter box itself. They then seek out a less painful place for elimination (such as the carpeted floor, bathtub, or pile of clothes). Because their aversion to the litter box is a result of pain, it can be a difficult behavior to change.

**ALTERNATIVES TO DECLAWING**

- Make the objects in your home that are inappropriate for scratching unattractive to your cat. There are plenty of things that annoy cats to deter them from scratching up carpet or furniture. Some swear by aluminum foil (the sound and texture is unappealing). Other options are plastic wrap, double-sided sticky tape, sandpaper, or vinyl carpet runners (with the knobbly side up) placed on the furniture or floor your cat would stand to scratch.
- **Regular nail trims**
  - With the right equipment, a little patience, and some practice, it's not as hard as you may think. Nails that are kept trimmed cause less damage to furniture. Cat's nails are clear so it is fairly easy not to cut too deep.
- **Vinyl nail caps** - talk to your veterinarian about nail covers. This way if your cat does scratch something, they do not do any damage.
  - These are temporary and will need to be replaced as your cat sheds the outer layers of their nails (about every 4-6 weeks).
Avoid getting in the habit of saying hello or goodbye to your cat right next to the doorway. Instead, designate a spot away from the door for all greetings and departures. This should be a spot in your home your cat particularly likes such as a perch on their cat tree. When you enter the home after being gone for some time walk directly to that spot before saying hello to your cat. Say goodbye to your cat in this spot as well and distract them with a treat or toy when you leave.

You can make the exits of your home unappealing to your cat by placing aluminum foil or double-sided sticky tape on the floor.

Offer your cat plenty of alternatives. Cats are natural hunters and even when all meals are provided to them, they will still try to give in to that urge. Pages 7 & 20 have great tips on using your cat’s natural instincts to keep them satisfied and not find it necessary to go outdoors.

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DANGERS OF LETTING YOUR CAT OUTSIDE

There are multiple risks of letting your cat outdoors. All DCAS adoptable cats should be kept inside after you have brought them home. While it might seem like some cats want to go outside, it is safest for you and your cat to create a stimulating environment for them inside. Cats that are allowed outside by their owners, on average, live a shorter lifespan than cats kept inside. Some of these dangers include:

- Catching diseases such as Feline Leukemia, FIV, and Feline Distemper
- Catching parasites or infections such as fleas, ticks, mites, or ringworm
- Fights or attacks from other animals such as other cats, coyotes, loose dogs, foxes, raccoons, or getting sprayed by skunks
- Coming into contact with life-threatening chemicals such as antifreeze or rat poison
- Getting trapped or injured in a neighbors garage or window well
- Being stolen or mistreated
- Being hit by a car
- Increased chance of ending up at your local animal shelter
  - Cats can easily travel several miles from home and have a hard time finding their way back
  - It’s estimated that 3.4 million cats are brought to animal shelters nationwide!

PREVENTING ESCAPES

For some cats, transitioning to a new home and an indoor-only lifestyle may be an adjustment. This is especially true if the cat was found outside as a stray or has lived outside in the past. Other cats find "door dashing" to be a fun game and can easily trip their owners rushing out the door. Here are some tips to keep your new cat safe:

- Avoid getting in the habit of saying hello or goodbye to your cat right next to the doorway. Instead, designate a spot away from the door for all greetings and departures. This should be a spot in your home your cat particularly likes such as a perch on their cat tree. When you enter the home after being gone for some time walk directly to that spot before saying hello to your cat. Say goodbye to your cat in this spot as well and distract them with a treat or toy when you leave.
- You can make the exits of your home unappealing to your cat by placing aluminum foil or double-sided sticky tape on the floor.
- Offer your cat plenty of alternatives. Cats are natural hunters and even when all meals are provided to them, they will still try to give in to that urge. Pages 7 & 20 have great tips on using your cat’s natural instincts to keep them satisfied and not find it necessary to go outdoors.

In the event your cat does get outside, make sure all your cat’s microchip information is correct and have them wear a breakaway collar with an identification tag.
When it comes time for both cats to meet face-to-face it is up to the cats to take the next step. Owners need to be aware that a little hissing, swatting, and chasing is to be expected, and to only intervene if it goes too far. Treats, toys, and yummy wet food go a long way toward creating a positive emotional experience during these introductions, not to mention they create a nice diversion should hissing or swatting occur. After completing this cautionary introduction period, hopefully, no intervention will be needed.

Be patient and give both cats plenty of time to adjust. Hissing and growling are normal first reactions (it's how they communicate). For the most part, you can let the cats work out their relationship on their own, with little interference from you. You should, however, intervene if one cat is hurting the other or constantly chasing them. Do not scold your cats if they are not getting along right away. Do not get in the middle of a cat fight. It can be dangerous and you will likely get bit. The best thing to do is startle them with a loud noise and then give them praise when they become distracted. Cats feed off of our energy so if you become anxious, they are likely to as well. Be sure to give equal praise and attention to the new cat and the resident cat.

It can take 2 weeks, 2 months, or longer for the cats to establish their relationship and live peacefully together in your home.

Introducing a new cat or kitten to the family can be difficult, but well worth the effort in the end! Setting up the "safe room" for your new cat (described on page 6) will make this process as smooth as possible. All cats benefit from a gradual transition. It is important to have the new cat spend at least a few days in this space regardless of how quickly they adjust. After your new cat has settled in, remove the carrier or bed and trade it for one that your resident cat has been using. These items hold each cat's scent and they are then allowed to investigate. This serves as a subtle introduction between them.

For the next several days, it is not uncommon for your resident cat to be unhappy with the new addition to the household. They may demonstrate this by hissing and growling at the room where your new cat is. Over time your cat will become accustomed to the new scents and begin to linger around the door.

The isolation period is important for both cats. During this time your new cat will acclimate to the new environment and all the sounds and smells that come with it. It helps your resident cat get used to another cat's scent in their territory.

We recommend next giving each cat the chance to switch living environments. For one to two hours a day, the new cat should be allowed to roam the house, while giving your resident cat the chance to explore your new cat's "safe room." This is another unique way to introduce both cats to each other's scents. Once the cats are back in the respective territories you can further their relationship by placing their food bowls on either side of the door.

When it comes time for both cats to meet face-to-face it is up to the cats to take the next step. Owners need to be aware that a little hissing, swatting, and chasing is to be expected, and to only intervene if it goes too far. Treats, toys, and yummy wet food go a long way toward creating a positive emotional experience during these introductions, not to mention they create a nice diversion should hissing or swatting occur. After completing this cautionary introduction period, hopefully, no intervention will be needed.

Be patient and give both cats plenty of time to adjust. Hissing and growling are normal first reactions (it's how they communicate). For the most part, you can let the cats work out their relationship on their own, with little interference from you. You should, however, intervene if one cat is hurting the other or constantly chasing them. Do not scold your cats if they are not getting along right away. Do not get in the middle of a cat fight. It can be dangerous and you will likely get bit. The best thing to do is startle them with a loud noise and then give them praise when they become distracted. Cats feed off of our energy so if you become anxious, they are likely to as well. Be sure to give equal praise and attention to the new cat and the resident cat.

It can take 2 weeks, 2 months, or longer for the cats to establish their relationship and live peacefully together in your home.
Introducing a new cat to the family dog is similar to introducing them to other cats. Your new cat should go right into their "safe room" when you arrive home from adopting them. Your dog must know basic obedience before you bring a cat home (ESPECIALLY if your dog has never been had cats in the home with them before).

Once your new cat is acclimated, have a family member take your dog outside. You can let your new cat out of their safe space and explore the home while your dog is not there. If no one can take the dog on a walk or outside during this time, you can have your pets swap spaces. Your cat can explore the rest of the house at their own pace and your dog can sniff and explore your cat’s safe room.

Once your cat is comfortable in most areas of your house (you may need to have them swap places a few more times) you can try introducing them. It is best to have your cat in an area that the dog is unable to get to such as putting up a baby gate in the hall or doorway. You should also leave a leash attached to your dogs collar so you can easily pull them away if they become too excited or try to chase your new cat. The gated off area allows your cat a safe place to go if they feel uncomfortable around the dog. Do not force the animals to interact and let them go at their own pace.

Praise and encourage both animals for any friendly or positive behavior you observe. If your dog is lunging, growling, or extremely focused on your cat, put the cat back in their room and try again another day. Keep these initial introductions brief and repeat this process many more times as your pets become accustomed to living with one another.

Unsupervised interactions between the dog and cat should only happen after you have observed them interacting positively several times and you feel certain they will not harm each other. Never leave a kitten under 4 months alone with a dog. They are fragile, and your dog can easily hurt them (even if they are just trying to play).

If your dog is constantly staring at the cat, or the door separating them from the cat, try to distract them. You can get them to break their focus with treats, a happy voice, or gently leading them away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, offer them some treats. Continue to repeat this process until your dog is no longer focused on the cat or the door.

It is unlikely your dog and cat are going to become best friends (but not impossible). More likely, they will learn to coexist peacefully with each other.

**WARNING SIGNS**
If your dog continues to remain overly focused, does not take their eyes off the cat despite your efforts, completely ignores you, or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, it may be a dangerous match. If you are committed to making the relationship work, you may need the professional help of a trainer or behaviorist.
EXTRA CARE FOR KITTENS

Like puppies (or children), kittens can cause a good amount of damage to themselves, your belongings, and your home when left unattended. We know it is almost impossible to watch over them 24/7 (even with how cute they are). This page has a few extra precautions to take when bringing these little ones into your home.

Kittens learn a great deal from their mothers. You can take on her role and in some ways act like the "mother cat." For example, if your kitten gets into something they are not supposed to, momma cat does not punish or yell. From your kitten's perspective, that would just startle them. Mother cats pick up their kittens and move them to a more appropriate spot. Gently pick up your kitten and pet them when you put them down where they are supposed to be. This is very effective for kittens that begin scratching furniture. Place them on or next to their scratching post and praise them when they use it.

Kittens will use the litter box by instinct, but you can encourage them by placing them in the box after a meal or play session.

Kittens require exercise, socialization, and mental stimulation. Kittens between two and six months of age are growing rapidly and have 3 times as much energy as an adult cat. They need plenty of kitten food to keep up with their growing bodies and plenty of outlets for their energy. You may want to consider adopting two kittens to provide that for each other.

Many people use their hands when they play with their new kitten. But, this can lead to a behavior that stays with them into adulthood.

The larger teeth of an adult will definitely hurt a lot more than little kitten teeth. It's best to prevent this behavior by always using toys instead. If your kitten starts biting or scratching you during a play session, redirect their attention to a toy.

Environmental enrichment, through play and training, makes a healthier kitten and, an easier to live with adult cat. Active cats are less anxious, sleep more, and maintain a healthy weight. Regular active play, like with a wand toy, as well as multi-level cat trees can provide this. Check out page 20 for more ideas for providing your kitten with enrichment.

You will need to "kitten proof" your home before giving them access to your whole house. Clean up strings, rubber bands, ribbons, hair ties, paper clips, tacks, and other small items that could easily be swallowed. It may be necessary to put childproof locks on cabinets. Cover exposed wire, put childproof plugs in any unused outlets, and tie up blind and curtain cords. We recommend moving any breakable items from tables and shelves (you'll be surprised at how fast and high they can climb). It is also important to be cautious using recliners and when closing the dishwasher, washing machine, and dryer. Kittens get into EVERYTHING.

All kittens under four months of age will require additional preventative medical care. This includes a series of vaccinations and dewormers to prevent your kitten from catching diseases such as distemper, feline leukemia, or internal parasites. It is important to get your kitten to your veterinarian to check what additional medical care they recommend. If you choose a kitten from DCAS the rabies vaccination is included in the adoption fee and an appointment will be scheduled at the time of adoption. Kittens over four months of age are fully vaccinated prior to adoption but it is best to still bring them to your veterinarian shortly after adoption.
Some cats and kittens, like those that are a part of the Bashful Buddies program at DCAS, are going to need a little more patience and extra care to feel comfortable in their new home. Here are a few helpful tips if you decided to open your home to a shy cat.

Fearfulness in cats can be due to their genetic predisposition, a traumatic event (like losing their family and ending up in a shelter), or lack of socialization in their previous home.

These cats need to have their own "safe room" (described on page 6). When you first bring them home, put them in this safe space and let them come out of the carrier when they are ready. Never attempt to pull them out of the carrier or other hiding spot. At first, they might not approach you. Avoid staring at them, they can perceive it as a threat. They will ask for attention when they are ready. Start off only petting their face and neck. Full body pets can be invasive and we want to start slow. Just spend as much time in that room as you can doing other activities (bring your laptop or read a book). This shows them you are not to be feared and build their trust by not forcing interaction. You can even leave a radio or television on in the room with the volume low. This will expose them to the normal sounds of your home and drown out other scarier noises.

Food can usually be used as a bonding tool. When you are in the room spending time with your cat, give them yummy wet food or treats. At first, place them near your cat's hiding spot and move to the other side of the room. You can slowly move the food or treats closer to you until they will take it directly from you. Make sure everyone in the home is working with your new cat in the same way.

Once you allow your cat access to the whole house, ALWAYS leave the door to their safe space open. It is best not to move the litter box for a little while. If they get frightened or overwhelmed they will most likely retreat to this space and it's good to keep the box nearby.

Most fearful cats will bond strongly with their owners, but some will remain shy with strangers for their life. Provide your cat with plenty of cozy hiding spots when you have guests over. If you are having a party or noisy work done at your house, confine your cat to the safe room.

Always do your best to pay attention to their body language and react accordingly. The next few pages show examples of how to interpret "cat talk."

Patience is KEY! Once you have built a solid relationship with your scaredy-cat, they will return the favor with plenty of love!
During those first few months, you and your cat are going to get to know each other. Cats use nonverbal and verbal communication. Understanding how your cat is communicating will help smooth the transition into your home and build a lasting relationship with you and your family. Spending plenty of time observing your cat in different situations can give you a sense of what your cat is feeling. Each cat is an individual and will express things a little differently. Look for clues provided by the look in their eyes, the tone of their voice, the position of their ears and body, and the motion of their tail. Always look at the entire body of the cat and take into consideration what is going on around you.

HOW CATS COMMUNICATE

TAIL POSITION AND MOVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tail Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly, content</td>
<td>Non-threatening, but unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrashing, angry or excited, easily irritated</td>
<td>Peaceful, not aggressive or threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooked, friendly but unsure</td>
<td>Bristled, angry or threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrashing, angry or excited, easily irritated</td>
<td>twitching, alert, interested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EYES, EARS, AND WHISKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELAXED</td>
<td>Eyes: Closed to open, pupils normal slit size&lt;br&gt;Ears: Normal, forward&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: normal, forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANXIOUS</td>
<td>Eyes: Wide open, pupils dilated&lt;br&gt;Ears: Partially flattened&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: normal to forward or back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALERT</td>
<td>Eyes: Open, pupils normal slit size&lt;br&gt;Ears: Normal or erected to front or back&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: normal, forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEARFUL</td>
<td>Eyes: Open, pupils fully dilated&lt;br&gt;Ears: Fully flattened&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TENSE</td>
<td>Eyes: Wide open, pupils partially dilated&lt;br&gt;Ears: Erected to front or back&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: normal, forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERRIFIED</td>
<td>Eyes: Open, pupils fully dilated&lt;br&gt;Ears: Fully flattened, back on head&lt;br&gt;Whiskers: back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PURR: Generally, a purring cat is a happy cat. However, sometimes a cat will purr to comfort themselves, so they could also be purring if they are feeling stressed out. Pay attention to their body language to determine how your cat is feeling.

TRILL: This means your cat is curious. Cats will sometimes trill when they are interested in something and may make this noise before exploring.

MEOW: If your cat is requesting something (like food or pets) they will hold their head high, keep their front feet together and make this noise.

CHIRP: Cats who are hunting prey will chirp. In a home, cats will often chirp when acting playful.

HOWL: A howling cat is telling you something is wrong. They could be feeling sad, stressed, confused, or afraid.

GROWL: A growl is a warning sign from your cat before they take further action against the thing that is scaring them, such as swatting or biting.

HISS: If your cat is feeling threatened, they will hiss to communicate they are scared.

YELP: Cats may yelp to express physical pain.

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Keeping cats happy and healthy sometimes means more than just providing them with a comfortable home and plenty of food. It is also important to enrich your cat's environment. Cats have natural instincts to forage and hunt. There are easy ways to keep them entertained so they do not end up bored or causing trouble. It's simple to do even if you live in a small apartment or a tight budget.

Foraging is when a cat will go in search of food. One way to play off this natural behavior is to divide your cat's meal into smaller portions and place them in different locations around your home. Your cat will have to go searching for their food. This is also a great trick if you have a cat that eats too quickly.

There are a variety of different food and treats puzzles you can purchase for your cat, such as these:

There are several DIY versions you can make yourself. Use toilet paper rolls by folding in the ends and putting treats inside. Put food or treats inside a muffin tin, ice tray, or egg carton and cover the top with pieces of crumpled paper, cardboard squares, or toys.

Check out foodpuzzlesforcats.com for more ideas.

It's no secret cats love boxes. Anytime you have an extra box, give it to your cat. They can be used as beds, tunnels, and mazes. If you're feeling creative, you can hang toys on the inside and cut various holes in the sides for your cat to play in. You can also hide treats in the boxes for your cat to find.

Looking out a window can provide hours of entertainment for your cat (it's like their version of television). Provide your cat with a spot near a window for endless enrichment. You can make it even more fun for your cat by attaching a suction cup bird feeder to their window. Just be sure to leave the window closed so excited cats do not try to go through the screen.

If it is an option to do so, provide your cat with a "catio" or cat patio. It is a safe, enclosed space outside they can enjoy nice weather and watching nature without all the risks of letting them outside unattended. Or you can bring the outdoors in with a cat grass plant (available at most pet stores).

Researchers believe catnip targets feline "happy" receptors in their brain. However, when eaten, catnip has the opposite effect and mellows your cat out. You can get loose catnip or catnip toys but remember that a little goes a long way. Too much and your cat could get overstimulated.
HOW DO I PROPERLY SWITCH MY CATS FOOD FROM ONE BRAND TO ANOTHER?
Switching from the food your cat is currently eating to another should be a gradual process. If you change to a different kind of food too quickly, it could cause your cat’s stomach to hurt and result in diarrhea. It is best to allow seven days for a smooth transition. On the first day, it should be 75% old food and 25% new food. Each day gradually decrease the amount of old food and increase the amount of new food. By the sixth day, the ratios should be reversed and by day seven you can use only this new food.

HOW OFTEN DOES MY CAT NEED TO SEE THE VET?
Adult cats should visit a veterinarian at least once a year for routine checkups and vaccinations. Kittens may need more visits for additional vaccines or care. Cats are very good at hiding their pain or discomfort and it could take the trained eye of a veterinarian to know if something is wrong. Many believe indoor-only cats are not exposed to the same risks as outdoor cats, meaning it is not as important to stay up to date on shots. However, ALL CATS do need to stay vaccinated to protect you, your family, your cat, and any other pets in the home.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CAT NEEDS A DENTAL CLEANING?
Signs that it is nearing time for your cat to get their teeth cleaned are bad breath, visible buildup or tartar, red and swollen gums, your cat is pawing at their mouth, you have noticed sudden weight loss or change in appetite, they have difficulty eating, or they are frequently drooling. Check with your veterinarian if you notice any of these symptoms.

IS IT SAFE TO GIVE MY CAT HUMAN FOOD?
Cats have a different digestive system than humans. This means some foods that are safe for people can be harmful to your pet. Take some time to familiarize yourself with foods that can be very dangerous to cats such as chocolate, milk and dairy products, grapes, raisins, onions, garlic, and anything containing caffeine or alcohol. However, many human foods are safe for your pet in moderation. Human food should not be your cat’s main source of nutrients and should only be given rarely as a treat. Always consult a veterinarian before giving a pet with any health concerns (diabetes, weight issues, liver or kidney problems, etc.) any human food.

SHOULD I GET PET INSURANCE?
Pet insurance can be beneficial to help you cover expensive medical care in the future. There are many different types of insurance and it is best to do some research on your own to determine what is best for you and your pet.

IF YOU EVER HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT CARING FOR YOUR CAT, DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT DCAS!
DCAS SHELTER & ENRICHMENT WISHLIST

This is a list of the items we use most at the shelter. Donations may be dropped off during normal business hours.

You can also send a donation from home! Visit Amazon.com to make a purchase from the DuPage County Animal Services Wish List http://a.co/cwdZJom

DuPage County Animal Services
120 N County Farm Rd.
Wheaton, IL 60187

Monday & Thursday
8:00am—7:00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
8:00am—4:30pm

Saturday
8:00am—2:30pm

GENERAL ITEMS:

- Blankets & comforters (new or gently used; no sheets or pillows, please)
- Top-loading pet carriers
- Martingale-style dog collars (all sizes)
- Soft dog treats & training treats (e.g. Wellness Pure Rewards Turkey Jerky)
- Powdered kitten milk replacement formula
- Small animal baby bottles
- Freedom No-Pull Harness (sizes Large and X-Large) & Freedom Leashes (available on Amazon.com or WigglesWagsWhiskers.com)
- Long-lasting dog chews (e.g. bully sticks; USA-made only, please)
- Pet stain and odor remover (e.g. Nature’s Miracle)
- Disinfecting wipes
- Paper towels
- Canned adult cat food (any brand)
- Canned adult dog food (any brand)

Daily enrichment helps improve the quality of life of the animals in our care. These are items that encourage the shelter animals to explore, learn, and engage.

- Bottle caps
- Peanut butter
- Ground cinnamon & nutmeg
- Catnip
- Lavender & chamomile essential oils
- Cream cheese
- Vanilla, peppermint, or almond extract
- Plastic buckets
- Empty water bottles
- Kong toys
- Plastic eggs
- Nylabones
- Fleece
- Yarn
- Empty yogurt containers
- Rope toys
- Tennis balls
- Squeeze cheese
- Cereal boxes
- Toilet paper & paper towel tubes
- Slow feeder food bowls
- Lickimats or Lick pads
- Snuffle mats
- Canned tuna
- Pipe cleaners
- Cardboard scratching boards
- Aluminum foil
- Wafer style ice cream cones
Dear Adopter:

Thank you for adopting from DuPage County Animal Services. DuPage County Animal Services is proud to be a part of the Hill’s Food, Shelter & Love™ program and we feed all our pets Hill’s Science Diet.

We suggest that you continue feeding your new pet Hill’s Science Diet.

There are many benefits to keeping your pet on Hill’s Science Diet:
- Continuity and consistency of food helps avoid the stress of switching
- While feeding Science Diet, you are offering your pet:
  - Vet’s #1 choice to feed their own pet
  - Clinically proven benefits
  - Superior nutrition with visible results
  - Precisely balanced nutrition for every life stage and special needs
  - Natural ingredients, no artificial colors, flavors or preservative
  - Made in Hill’s USA facilities (dry foods)

We are providing you a transition bag of Hill’s Science Diet for your new pet. The transition bag is approximately 1 week’s worth of food. There is also a $5.00 coupon for your first purchase of any Hill’s pet food product.

We also suggest that you visit Hill’s New Pet Parent website where you can access the following:
- Your “Best Friend Guide”
- Identify the best product for your new pet
- Additional coupons worth more than $20

Thank you again for adopting from DuPage County Animal Services and when you choose Hill’s Science Diet, you help our shelter and the Hill’s Food, Shelter, & Love™ program!