

## Quick Socialization Guide

The following are quick, easy, & effective steps you can enact when socializing your kittens, even when you are running low on time! Fearful/semi-social kitties need to learn that being around people = good things, so it's important to take every opportunity to provide positive reinforcement to your foster kitty when they take an ever-so-important step towards welcoming human interaction. Be sure to keep each one of these interactions short & non-invasive, always working at the cat's current level. Short sessions, 5 minutes in length or shorter, several times throughout the day will work better in the long run vs. just one or two longer sessions per day.

- **Drive-By Treating:** Keep a small container of treats on the outside of the door to the foster room. Every time someone passes by, slip a treat under the door and into the room. This will help kitty associate strange noises outside the door with good things! You can even go so far as to jiggle the door handle, or opening the door just a tiny bit before closing it, without entering the room, and tossing a treat under the door before you walk away.
- **Reward for Calming Behaviors:** Any time you see your foster exhibiting a self-calming behavior such as looking away from you, blinking slowly, heavy sighing, stretching out (in relaxation or to sniff), or yawning, offer them a treat! These behaviors are all good self-calming signs. If your foster isn't interested in edible treats, you could offer them some play time with a wand toy or a laser light! For some kitties, having the stimuli - in this case being you - removed is a treat; if they aren't showing interest in edible treats or play, remove yourself from the room shortly after these signs are exhibited. Gradually lengthen the amount of time between seeing these behaviors & rewarding them to slowly increase your kitty's comfort level with you.
- **Reward for No-Hiss/Growl:** Any time you are able to look at/be near your foster kitty and they DON'T growl or hiss at you, give them a reward! Edible treats or play time would be best used in this circumstance.
- **Reward for Sniffing:** Once you get to the point of being able to be in the room with your foster and they stay calm in your presence, we want to reward them for showing even more progress! Any time they reach out to sniff you - making physical contact & *not just* sniffing the air - reward them heavily! A tiny bit of wet food or chicken baby food works great in this circumstance. Stay in their presence until they finish eating, if you can.

These are all basic, quick, easy steps you can take to further your foster's comfort level in a home environment. Again – working with multiple, short sessions throughout the day will go farther in the long run versus one or two lengthier sessions. Try keeping a journal to remind you of how far you've come – being able to look back and see your successes will help on those days where you feel like you're not making any progress! The ultimate end goal for these kitties is to feel comfortable in the presence of their caretaker/household. They may never be the cat that greets you at the door, but that's ok! We just want to get them as close as we can to that point by taking small, daily steps in the right direction.

