

# FOSTER FAMILY GUIDE

**Cat version**

**THE ARISTOPAWS - [ARISTOPATTES.CA/EN](http://ARISTOPATTES.CA/EN)  
2020 VERSION**



# I. Introduction

Congratulations! You are now a foster family for a cat rescued by The Aristopaws organization. This document will serve as a guide to ensure you have a smooth experience. Be aware that this document does not replace the contract and that the clauses presented in the contract are very important. We suggest that you keep it handy and refer to it if you have any questions about your mandate.

The cat that you are welcoming in your home requires special attention due to its health and the details of its case will be provided to you directly by The Aristopaws. This document will be useful for basic care and important information to be aware of when taking care of a cat.

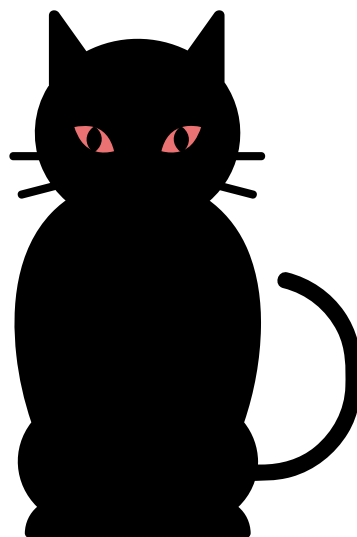
Thank you again for your commitment and enjoy your reading!

The Aristopaws - Foster family section



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### III. Contact and emergency

As you know, The Aristopaws rescues animals that have a more or less serious medical condition. It might therefore happen that certain situations require immediate contact with our organization. Remember that our organization is the legal owner of the animal, which means all medical decisions must be approved by the organization. Here's how to contact us:



**By Messenger, via The Aristopaws official page**



**By email at [familles@aristopattes.ca](mailto:familles@aristopattes.ca)**



**By phone using the number provided in your contract**

#### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

**Please call (438) 815-0840 and press 0**

If the animal's life is at stake, please go immediately to  
*Centre vétérinaire Laval* or *Centre vétérinaire Rive-Sud*



## IV. Welcoming the cat



Here are some tips for welcoming your new furry resident.

### If you already have cats

1. Isolate the new cat in a closed room with all its accessories to let it get used to the new smells. This may take a few days and it's important to ensure the cat doesn't come into contact with your own cats during this period.
2. Site swapping: allow the new cat to explore your house and let your own cat come into the newcomer's room. Each will take its time discovering the other one's scents. Be sure to make it a positive experience with lots of treats, play or pets.
3. Take the tastiest treats you can find and place them in two separate bowls a few meters apart on each side of the closed door. When both cats start to eat, open the door a few centimeters so they can see each other without coming into contact.

Source: <http://educateur.com/>





## IV. Welcoming the cat



### If you already have cats (cont'd)

→ If one of the cats refuses to eat: Move the bowls further apart until they're far enough away for both cats to be comfortable and eat. After this first meal, repeat the experience as often as possible (at least twice a day) leaving the door ajar longer and longer and gradually moving the bowls closer.

One or both of the cats may react aggressively. If they hiss or paw at each other under the door, let them negotiate with each other without intervening.

4. Open the door completely during one of their meals and let the cats interact. Again, it must be the most delicious meal possible to motivate the cat to eat instead of bothering with the other cat's presence. If you absolutely must intervene, do not try to separate them: throw a small cushion in their direction or clap your hands without looking at them.

Source: <http://educateur.com/>



## IV. Welcoming the cat



### If you have dogs

Instead of enclosing the cat in a room, the dog can be isolated in its crate or can be kept on a leash when the cat moves freely around the house. A safe room must still be available so that the little feline can rest away from the dog. Kitty will therefore be free to approach the dog's crate to get acquainted at its own pace.

Feed both cat and dog using positive reinforcement by applying the same method explained above. Be sure to reward your dog for good behaviour, that is when he's calm, respectful and doesn't chase the cat.

Also note that the more high places the cat has in each room of the house, the more comfortable it will be moving around as it will know it can get away from the dog at any time if it needs to.

Source: <http://educateur.com/>



## V. Basic care



### Food

The Aristopaws will tell you what food and how much to give to your foster cat. It is very important to follow our instructions because diet is an essential element in maintaining good health or can even be a treatment. Also make sure kitty always has access to fresh water because cats need a good amount of water to maintain good kidney function. As for food dishes, these must be in a different place from the litterbox and the sleeping area.

### Litter box

The choice of litter is up to you unless otherwise advised by The Aristopaws (for example in the presence of an open wound). The litter box should be large enough and high enough to ensure the cat can't spill too much sand over the side. Cats prefer a litter box without a cover, a covered litter box is the equivalent of a chemical toilet for us! Place the litter box in a quiet location but avoid putting it in a closed space such as a wardrobe as cats like to see any potential dangers coming.





## V. Basic care



### Grooming

A sick cat can stop grooming, so you have to pay special attention to the condition of its fur. First, it's important to brush a cat regularly to remove as much dead hair as possible to avoid hairballs. It's also important to prevent knots in the coat which can be very painful. If you think kitty needs a bath or professional grooming, please let us know quickly. Never give a bath to a cat without veterinary advice as it can be extremely stressful for them.

### Play and stimulation

You can enrich your foster cat's environment for a small price using cardboard boxes for example. It's important to play with kitty for several minutes at least twice a day just before meals to provide physical and mental stimulation and reinforce your bond. Be sure to choose toys that are safe for cats; we can advise you on this.



## V. Basic care



### Nail trimming

To avoid small needles piercing your thighs when kitty wants to be petted, it's important to trim its nails regularly. How often depends on each cat, but you should usually do it every 4 to 8 weeks.

It's very important to use a nail clipper specifically designed for cats to avoid accidents. There's a vein and a nerve in each of the cat's claws, so you must be careful not to cut them too short. You can see the vein on a white claw, but you can put a light under the claw to make it more visible. The claw has to be cut just before the vein.

If you cut the nail too short and it bleeds, you can apply pressure with a pinch of cornstarch or styptic powder available in pet stores.

Always remember to reward kitty with a treat after each nail clipping session.



## VI. Safety



There are many hazards around a house and it's important to keep them in mind to avoid accidents. First, more than fifty plants are considered toxic for cats and these must remain out of access. You can visit the [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org) website to know which plants are toxic. Also keep medication out of reach as some can be fatal.

Keep electric wires – a favorite chew toy for our felines – out of reach, as well as chemical products. Always close the washer and dryer door as cats tend to sneak in, and this can be a deadly trap.

Don't let your foster cat play with small objects it could swallow such as rubber bands, strings, or dental floss. Plastic bags are also very dangerous.



## VI. Safety



### Toxic food for cats

- Macadamia nuts
- Grapes and raisins
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Onions
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Alcohol
- Pits and seeds
- Chewing gum

\* Giving table food is strictly forbidden. If the cat eat one of the foods listed above, it is important to contact us IMMEDIATELY.



## VI. Safety



Toxic plants for cats:

1. Narcissus
2. Holly
3. Lily
4. Ivy
5. Mistletoe
6. Morning Glory
7. Foxglove
8. Potatoes
9. Yew
10. Ricin
11. Oleander
12. Rhododendron
13. Poinsettia
14. Tobacco
15. Tulip
16. Dieffenbachia
17. Kalanchoe

\*For a complete list of toxic plants, visit:  
<http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>



## VI. Safety



If you are welcoming a stray cat:

Never forget that the cat you just welcomed has possibly ever only known life outside and is probably still longing to get back out there. Never underestimate a cat's ability to find a way out. It won't hesitate to jump impressive heights or take apart window screens. During the first few weeks, make sure it doesn't have access to places where it could easily sneak out.

If the cat is not socialized to people, it might want to find a place that is completely out of your reach. You must therefore examine carefully every corner of the place where it will be kept in order to ensure it won't have access to holes leading between the walls or in the attic spaces. You wouldn't believe what a cat driven by fear can do





## VII. Health



### Feline immunodeficiency virus (or Feline AIDS)

It is the equivalent of HIV in cats although less devastating. FIV cannot be transmitted to people and 1 to 5% of cats are carriers. An incurable disease, the virus weakens the immune system making the cat more susceptible to infections.

It is transmitted by contact with infected blood, so mostly through bite wounds especially during fights among stray cats.

Screening is done in a vet clinic, requires only a few drops of blood and the results are known within 10 minutes.

To date, there is no effective vaccine against FIV. A vaccine was available for a time but several studies have shown it to be ineffective and so it was removed from vet clinics.



## VII. Health



Symptoms indicating a possible emergency:

1. Difficulty breathing
2. Excessive bleeding
3. Loss of consciousness
4. Inability to urinate
5. Excessive diarrhea and/or vomiting
6. Convulsions
7. Open wounds
8. Burns
9. Inability to move
10. Sudden excessive vocalizing

Trauma:

**Hit by a car** → Possibility of internal injuries, go to an emergency vet clinic. Be cautious, a cat in pain may bite.

**Burns** → If accompanied by loss of skin or redness, seek immediate treatment from a vet. Watch out for electrical burns.



## VII. Health



Trauma (cont'd):

**Head or neck injury** → Keep the cat's head and back straight and bring it immediately to a vet.

**Open fracture** → Wrap the wound with a clean cloth and use a rolled up newspaper or magazine to create support during the trip to the vet clinic.

**Penetrating object** → Leave the object in place and seek immediate treatment from a vet.

**Hemorrhage** → Apply pressure with a clean cloth and contact a member of The Aristopaws to assess the severity.



## VII. Health



### Frequent medical conditions:

#### 1. Gastrointestinal

**a) Vomiting** → There are several possible causes such as a hairball, new food, pain, digestive disease, etc. Notify us each time your foster cat vomits. If vomiting is excessive or you find fresh blood in it, bring it immediately to a vet.

**b) Loss of appetite** → A cat must eat every day! If kitty doesn't eat for 24 hours, its liver can quickly be damaged. Notify us as soon as possible if your foster cat fails to eat the recommended amount of food.

**c) Constipation** → Food and being overweight are the most common causes. Several signs can accompany constipation such as loss of appetite, lethargy and vocalization around the litter box. Contact our team if you think your foster cat is constipated.



## VII. Health



Frequent medical condition (cont'd):

**d) Diarrhea** → Changing food is a common cause of diarrhea. Please notify us promptly.

### 2. Eyes, ear and skin

**a) Eyes** → An eye condition can deteriorate quickly. Signs to watch for are discharge, closed eye or redness. It is essential to make the cat wear a cone collar as soon as the first signs appear to prevent the condition from worsening.

**b) Ear** → Head shaking, excessive pawing at the ears or the presence of discharge in the ears can be signs of otitis, which can be very uncomfortable for the cat.

**c) Skin** → There may be different types of skin lesions. If your foster cat tends to lick or scratch the affected area, you must prevent it from doing so.



## VII. Health



Frequent medical conditions (cont'd):

### 3. Urinary system

**a) Urinary tract infections** → Relatively common in cats for several reasons, it is a condition to be treated as quickly as possible. Signs include frequent attempts to urinate, blood in the urine, urinating outside the litterbox (often in comfortable locations such as a bed or a carpet), urinating small amounts, crying out while urinating, etc.

\*Watch out for **URINARY BLOCKAGES** which can be fatal in a matter of hours. If your cat makes several trips to the litterbox, check if it is straining or is able to urinate. The signs are similar to those of a urinary infection, so it is very important to contact us IMMEDIATELY so that we can assess the situation. It happens almost exclusively in males but is not impossible in females. Some people may believe their cat is constipated because it is straining when in the litter, so be sure to take these signs seriously so as not to miss anything!





## VII. Health



Frequent medical conditions (cont'd):

### 4. Respiratory system

**a) Cough** → If you think your foster cat has a cough, please let us know as soon as possible. Any source of respiratory irritants such as textile deodorants, air fresheners, second-hand smoke, etc. should also be removed from the house.

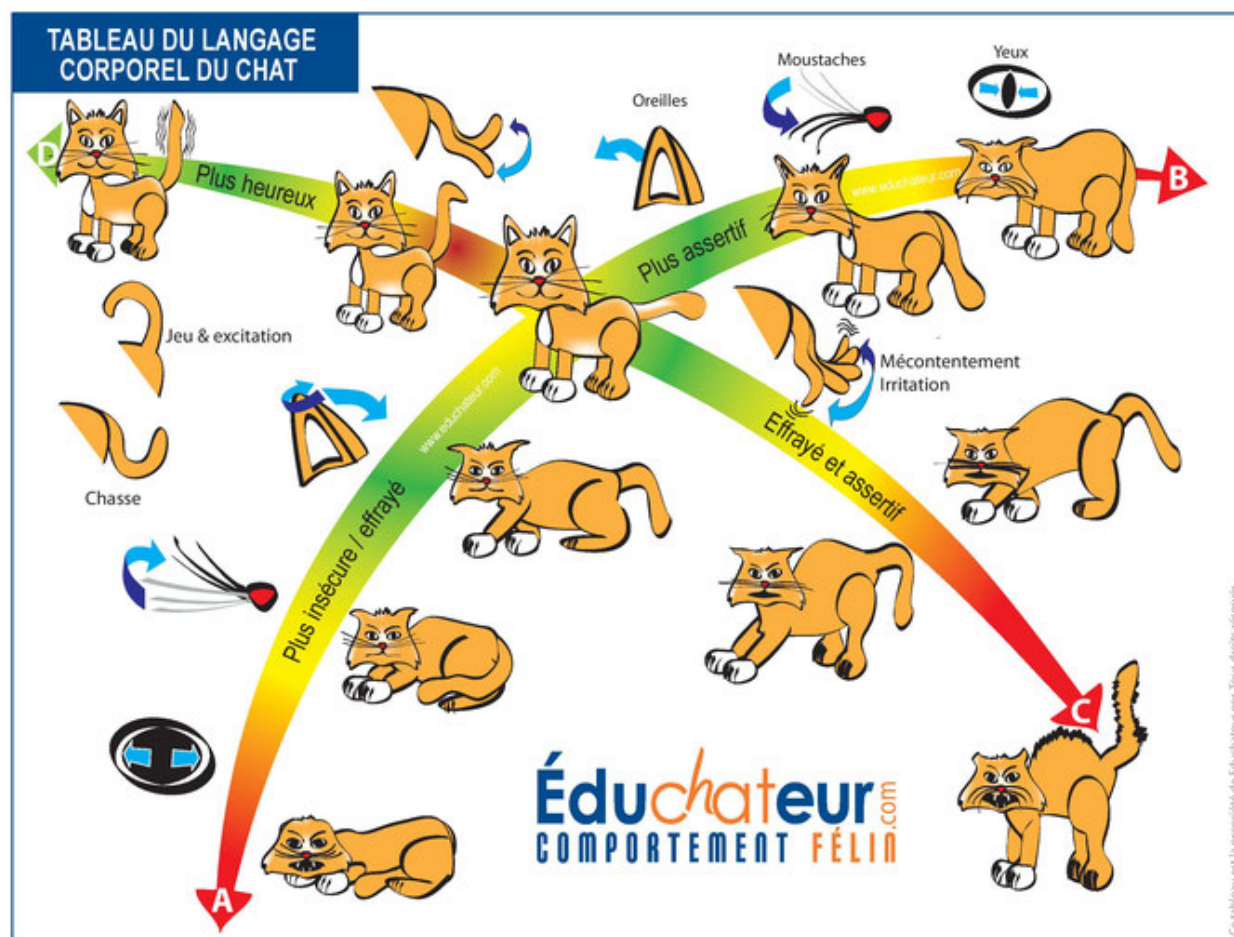
**b) Sneezing** → Abnormally frequent sneezing may be the sign of a respiratory condition. If they also include nasal discharge, it is important to note the colour.

**\*IMPORTANT!** If your foster cat seems to have respiratory issues, **contact us immediately**. Also look at its gums; if they're turning **purple or blue**, it is important to go immediately to an emergency centre as this indicates your cat isn't getting enough oxygen.



# VIII. Behaviour

## Understanding body language



Source: <http://educhateur.com/>



## VIII. Behaviour

### Scratching in appropriate places

Scratching is an essential act for a cat. They like to use scratching posts that are stable and long enough for them to stretch their bodies. Each cat has preferences in terms of material, such as cardboard, sisal rope or carpet.

If your cat scratches in inappropriate places, you can use double-face tape or aluminum foil. We advise against using home-made or pet store repellent as they may harm the cat.

Note that The Aristopaws has a strict policy **against declawing** and that we will not recommend this practice under any circumstances. If you wish to know why, please feel free to ask us.



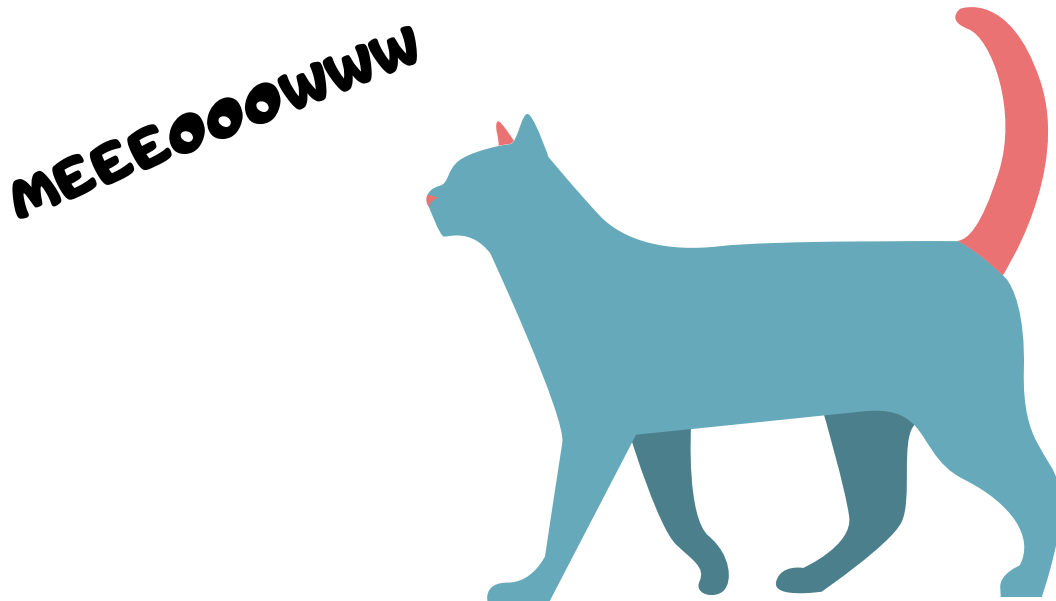
Source: <http://educateur.com/>



## VIII. Behaviour

### Nocturnal vocalization

The first step is to make sure your cat doesn't have a health issue that might be causing this behaviour. Once this is excluded, this behaviour should be completely ignored. Any form of attention will reinforce the behaviour: sighing, calling it, throwing a toy, talking, throwing food, getting up to open the door, etc. You may have to completely ignore your cat's meowing for more than 14 days for this behaviour to stop.



Source: <http://educhateur.com/>



## IX. Useful links

If you'd like to learn more about cats, their health and behaviours, we've provided some helpful and trusted links below:

Centre vétérinaire Laval (under Cat Info)

<https://www.cvlaval.com/en>

Éduchateur

<http://educhateur.com/en>

SPCA Montreal

<https://www.sPCA.com/en/category/tips-and-advice/>

Intersand

<https://www.intersand.com/en/blog/>

Royal Canin

[https://www.royalcanin.com/ca/en\\_ca/cats/health-and-wellbeing](https://www.royalcanin.com/ca/en_ca/cats/health-and-wellbeing)

Hill's

<https://www.hillspet.ca/en-ca/new-pet-parent/cat>

