

# Austin Pets Alive! Resource Documents

Job Description Program Director.....	1 - 2
Job Description Feeder.....	3
Volunteer Agreement.....	4
Volunteer Daily Care Sheet.....	5
Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens.....	6
How to Age Kittens.....	7
Medical Chart.....	8
Fading Kitten Protocol.....	9
Bottle Baby Training Worksheet.....	10 - 26
Bottle Baby Nursery Organization Chart.....	27
Neonatal Program - Standard Operating Procedures.....	28 - 77
Bottle Baby Foster Feeding & Care Guidelines.....	78
Bottle Baby Foster Training Recieved.....	79
Foster Team Descriptions.....	80 - 81
Foster - Neonatal Food Recomendations.....	82

## **Job Description Program Manager**

Purpose: To oversee all administrative, operational and reporting functions of the Neonatal Program, which provides basic care and medical attention to orphan kittens, pregnant and nursing cats and their litters that are rescued each year from a five county region, primarily Travis County and the Austin Animal Center, achieving the highest possible survival rate until they are adoptable and able to transfer to the Cat Program; thereby assuring Austin Pets Alive (APA!) can help Austin reach and sustain a No-Kill referendum.

The intake of the Neonatal Program has grown to over 2,000 kittens as of the 2012 season, and is expected to maintain or exceed that number for the foreseeable future. Kittens range in age from newborn to six weeks, but can remain in the program much longer depending on the status of their health; mother cats remain in the program until they are healthy, no longer lactating, and can be spayed and transferred to the Cat Program. Peak season, which can last 6-7 months, sees the highest intakes with as many as 40-50 kittens per week and an in-house population of 60+ kittens, most of which need medical attention and all of which need a consistent feeding schedule of every 2-4 hours, assuring adherence to mandated procedures. In order to manage both the onsite and offsite populations, 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 and the APA! medical team 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 to the critical kittens
- Work with the APA! medical team to establish and enforce adherence to sanitation protocols for general operations and for containment and prevention of contagion
- Supervise a separate quarantine ward for highly infectious diseases, such as panleukopenia
- Supervise the daily operations and management of the nursery, which includes but is not limited to: feeding kittens; medical treatments for the kittens; supply management; staff management; ensure all kittens and cats entering the program have been tested for FeLV and/or FIV; disposition of deceased kittens
- Work with APA! leadership to create an operating budget and operate within it; solicit financial and in-kind donations as needed
- Build team of feeders, primarily volunteers, to be in the nursery 20 hours per day during peak season to provide adequate care for kittens; monitor team morale
- Create and supervise teams within the program such as: Kitten Foster; Pregnant and Nursing Cat Foster; Fund-Raising; Volunteer Recruitment and Training; 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; EOD reporting; weekly accountability of kittens and cats in program
- Work with PASS Manager to accept cats and kittens from the public
- Work with Rescue Manager to accept and transport all kittens and cats to the program; must give final approval for all kittens accepted or declined
- Work with Kitten Foster Manager to stay informed of whereabouts of all kittens in foster, can be as many as 1,000+ cats and kittens in foster at any time; must maintain all administrative records for kittens and cats in foster; mentor fosters and foster team members
- Responds to written and phone inquiries from other shelters and rescue groups across the nation about starting a neonatal program
- Speak at the America Pets Alive! Conference, and other such conferences, to engender interest in and support for neonatal programs
- Responds to the general public about caring for neonates.

## **Job Description Feeder**

Purpose: To feed and provide basic care for orphan kittens ranging in age from birth to six weeks that are rescued by APA and brought to the Neonatal Ward to be raised to the age of adoption; to feed and provide basic care for pregnant cats and nursing cats with their litters until they can be moved to a foster home or to an adoption site.

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 and other duties as assigned:

- Fulfill a minimum of one 2-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 feeding board
- Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant of any health issues needing attention
- Clean kittens' crates, including but not limited to litter boxes, as needed according to protocol
- Move supplies and food from the storage room to the nursery as needed
- Maintain sanitation in the nursery according to established protocols
- Wash dishes and laundry as needed
- Empty trash and recycling containers as needed

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 step ladder 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 the Operations Assistant. Volunteer feeders must sign a Volunteer Agreement in order to work in the nursery.

## Neonatal Program Volunteer Agreement

Caring for neonatal kittens is a delicate task as baby kittens are extremely vulnerable and can easily contract disease and quickly decline in a nursery setting. As such, APA! has very 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, at the same time staff and volunteers both must follow the strict requirements listed below to ensure that the Neonatal Program successfully fulfills its mission to save as many kittens as possible each season.

By my initials and signature below, I acknowledge and agree with the following reasons for termination. I understand that if I do not comply with the protocols, I will be given a written warning. After my first warning, the Neonatal Program Manager has the right to remove my volunteer privileges. If terminated, I will be removed from any Neonatal Program communication groups and will not be allowed to enter the nursery.

\_\_\_ Initial here that you have read and comply with the Neonatal Program Volunteer Job Description.

### Actions that can result in Neonatal Program termination:

- Failure to follow volunteer job description during shift
- Failure to follow proper sanitation and feeding protocols set by the Neonatal Program
- Administering medications to kittens without authorization from Neonatal Program Manager
- Untruthful charting and reporting information about kittens
- Failure to attend a scheduled shift without prior notification
- Negativity directed towards another APA! volunteer and/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

### 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
- 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 or suggestions must be submitted through the established communication channels
- No animals will enter or leave the nursery without prior permission from APA staff

Volunteer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens Based on Weight

(5 grams per 100 grams)

Weight of Kitten Before Feeding	Weight of Kitten After Feeding
60 grams	63 grams
80 grams	84 grams
100 grams	105 grams
120 grams	126 grams
140 grams	147 grams
160 grams	168 grams
180 grams	189 grams
200 grams	210 grams
220 grams	231 grams
240 grams	252 grams
260 grams	273 grams
280 grams	294 grams
300 grams	315 grams
320 grams	336 grams
340 grams	357 grams
360 grams	378 grams
380 grams	389 grams
400 grams	420 grams
420 grams	441 grams
440 grams	462 grams
460 grams	483 grams
480 grams	504 grams
500 grams	525 grams
520 grams	546 grams
540 grams	567 grams
560 grams	588 grams
580 grams	609 grams
600 grams	630 grams
620 grams	651 grams
640 grams	672 grams
660 grams	693 grams
680 grams	714 grams
700 grams	735 grams
720 grams	756 grams
740 grams	777 grams
760 grams	798 grams
780 grams	819 grams
800 grams	840 grams



Weigh—Feed—Weigh





## How to Age Neonatal Kittens



<b>Kitten Age</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
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 ½ -4 ½ 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 ½ lbs



## How to Age Neonatal Kittens



<b>Kitten Age</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
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 ½ -4 ½ 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 ½ lbs

Date:

# Medical Chart

Kitten/Litter:

\*\*\*Medical Chart is for the use of Nursery Manager/APA! medical team only. Feeders are not authorized to administer medications.\*\*\*

FVRCP Vaccine		
Vaccine	Date	Received?
1st		
2nd		
3rd		
4th		

Dewormer		
Dewormer	Date	Received?
1st		
2nd		
3rd		
4th		

### Treatments:

Kitten(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:									
AM									
PM									

Kitten(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:									
AM									
PM									

## Fading Kitten Protocol

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometime one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade away. If not dealt with immediately, it 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
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/Crying out

It is caused by 2 things:

**Hypothermia** (being too cold) and **Hypoglycemia** (not enough blood sugar).

**When this happens, it is vital that you take these immediate steps!**

### **Step 1- Get them warm:**

- Create the “burrito” towel. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving their face exposed only. 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, check on them, etc. - this is very important!** Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.

- Wrap a HEATING PAD turned onto \*low\* around the burrito towel (to avoid burns) as an EXTRA source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place

### **Step 2- Get their blood sugar up:**

Once you get the heat on them,

- Get a bowl or Tupperware and a few tablespoons sugar in hot water.
- Stir it up so you get a sugar water solution - as strong as possible while still pretty runny.
- Using a syringe or your finger give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth.
- If they aren't swallowing, try not to get it down the throat, try to get it on the tongue or gums.
- Set an egg timer or use the stop watch on your cell phone to make sure you are doing it at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 minutes or 10 minutes will not work, it must be every 3 minutes.

### **Step 3 - Call an APA medical technician:**

- At 512-552-2042. Keep kitten with you and continue sugar every 3 minutes. They won't have any extra advice for you that isn't in this handout, but they will need to be made aware of what is going on.

**Sometimes it can take hours for them to come out of it. Once they do come out of it, make sure you contact Casandra and the Med Techs.**

*Keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved by volunteering in the Nursery. Any kitten you've ever taken care of was given a second chance at life BECAUSE of YOU! The Survival Rate with our care FAR surpasses their survival rate in Nature.*



# APA! Bottle Baby Training Worksheet

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>APA Online Application Date:</b>		<b>APA General Orientation Date:</b>	
<b>BB Training Class Date:</b>		<b>Trainer:</b>	
<b>Shadow 1 Date:</b>		<b>with:</b>	
<b>Shadow 2 Date:</b>		<b>with:</b>	
<b>Isolation Shadow Date:</b>		<b>with:</b>	

## How to use this worksheet:

Welcome to your training! This worksheet will help guide you through the plethora of information needed to be an awesome Bottle Baby Feeder.

Please print this out and bring it with you to your Training Class and your Shadows. It's a bit like a checklist. Mark off the procedures you have observed as you go and make the notes you need. Remember: You do not need to learn everything all at once! It will take time. Refer back to this worksheet as you continue your training in Shadowing and mark off the items when you feel you have mastered them.

Don't worry! Not all of the information will be covered in the first class. You'll cover a lot during your shadows. It seems like a lot of info, but relax! Just go with it and know that you will get all the info over time.

## After Your First Class:

Please fill out the Questionnaire on the last page and return it to your Trainer.

After you complete the first class (Part 1), you're ready for Part 2 – Shadowing. A few days after your class, you will be contacted by email and assigned shadow dates with an Experienced Feeder. One of the shadows will be devoted to the Isolation Room in a small group. You can communicate with us during your training process via email:

bottle-training@austinpetsalive.org

Thanks so much for your interest – we look forward to having you on our Amazing BottleBaby Team!

## History of the Bottle Baby Nursery:

Back in 2009, Casandra and Ellen started in the Famous Trailer you see today on SoCo. There were 10 kittens, no sinks, no washing machine or dishwasher... just lots of love and devotion to make Austin a No Kill City.



The Bottle Baby program now rescues hundreds of orphaned kittens, ranging from just a day or two old up to eight weeks of age, fated for euthanasia at Austin Animal Center. We also take pregnant and nursing momma cats with their babies into our program. Some of our kittens are sick or injured when they arrive, so in addition to feeding them we tend to their medical needs. Don't worry; you do not have to be a vet to take care of these little guys. We have a terrific medical team and we have systems in place to get you through all their needs.

The nursery operates 24/7. The day is divided into ten 2-hour shifts. Bottle babies must be fed every two hours; gruel babies (weaned and eating on their own) are fed every four hours. Medications are primarily given twice each day, at 8am and 8pm, but can be given at other times. We ask when you sign up for a shift that you commit to the full two hours—believe me, you won't run out of things to do!

### General Stuff:

- ☺ Stuff happens—please be flexible and go with the flow. The kittens are ALWAYS the priority but they are happily unaware of our policies, our procedures, our routines, and our general likes and dislikes. It's really kind of cute sometimes, albeit frustrating.
- ☺ **We are a team** and we help one another. We all started at the beginning, so please ask if something seems confusing or just not right. Take a deep breath and ask for help if you need it. Understand that mostly things flow quite nicely; but sometimes it can be overwhelming. Before long, you'll be the one helping out the newcomers.
- ☺ Poo-poo will touch you at some point. The three Ps (pee, poop, and puke) will not kill you. Yes, they are gross and may stink; but you will get used to it, when you see the incredible difference you make saving these sweet little kittens!
- ☺ It is OK to talk to the babies; they seem to like it. It is also OK to do their side of the conversation.
- ☺ We have policies and procedures in place for good reasons, but we are open to suggestions. Before you change a procedure, though, be sure to ask. If you have a suggestion, please email:  
  
Take the time to love the babies--they deserve your affection and you deserve theirs.
- ☺ Laugh and have fun—this is a richly rewarding experience!

## Procedures to Master

	Observed	Mastered
<b>Arrival on Shift</b>		
Sign in		
Check Critical board for urgent care		
Check Feeding board		
Check Communication Log		
Determine priorities for your shift		
Gather needed supplies BEFORE start feeding!		
<b>Sanitizing</b>		
Handwashing and antibacterial gel		
Roccal (blue-green disinfectant) or Trifectant (yellow disinfectant), and Bleach		
Surfaces, scales, bins, and all instruments		
Smocks		
Gloves		
Separate supplies for separate litters		
Isolation wards (must leave after working there)		
<b>Formula Preparation</b>		
Dilution ratios (8:1, 4:1, 2:1)		
Bottle labeling (Litter name, dilution, date, time)		
<b>Gruel Preparation</b>		
Applesauce consistency		
Labeling (type of gruel, date, time)		
If for syringe feeding, use blender		
<b>Preparation to Feed</b>		
Feeding stations and supplies ready		
Baskets		
Sanitizing		
Nipple and Syringe choice		
Burrito Wrap / Keeping WARM!		
Warming formula (without nipple) and gruel		
Physical Exam (nose/eye discharge, diarrhea, lethargy, fleas, trouble breathing, signs of aspiration, swollen genitals, ...)		

	Observed	Mastered
<b>Weighing Techniques</b>		
Sanitize container		
Techniques to hold still (blowing, etc.)		
Accuracy, comparison to earlier weights, properly note losing weight		
<b>Bottle Feeding</b>		
Keep the kitten WARM for feeding and meds!		
Positioning to prevent aspiration		
How to encourage		
Patience		
<b>Gruel Feeding</b>		
Using the bin for feeding and holding while cleaning cage		
Getting them interested (and when to exceptionally use baby food)		
Allowing for messiness!		
Cleaning kittens		
Sanitizing after use		
<b>Syringe Feeding</b>		
When to use		
Consistency		
Avoid dependence		
<b>Stimulating</b>		
Cotton balls and water		
Record details		
<b>Cage Cleaning</b>		
Changing linens (shake out!)		
Litter boxes		
Kibble and water bowl		
Snuggle discs or heating pads		
<b>Charting</b>		
Date, Time, Weight before AND after, stimulation, initials		
Comments		
Feeding Board		
Urgent issues		

	Observed	Mastered
<b>Moving on to next litter</b>		
Sanitizing!		
Change smock		
Double check charting		
Return supplies to basket		
Count your kittens!		
<b>End of Shift</b>		
Note all urgent issues on board		
Make sure Feeding Board and charts are updated		
All dishes in dishwasher		
Laundry		
Put away all supplies correctly		
Leave the Nursery as you would like to find it!		
Make relevant notes in the Communication Log		
Sign Out		

**Medical Issues**

- Fading Kitten Protocol (URGENT! – see appendix)
- URI
- Weight Loss
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- RingWorm (see Appendix)
- PanLeuk (see Appendix)
- Who to contact for what (see Appendix)

## Housekeeping

	Observed	Mastered
<b>Dishes</b>		
Rinsing		
Syringes		
Unloading dishwasher		
<b>Laundry</b>		
Shake out (before putting in Bin AND before machine)		
Anything wet should go directly into machine, not bin		
Detergent and bleach		
Cleaning dryer filter		
Putting away linens correctly		

## Other Procedures

	Observed	Mastered
<b>Medications</b>		
Med charts on front of folder (see appendix)		
8am and 8pm, but always check!		
Common Meds (amoxicillin, Zithromax, etc.)		
Measuring (0.1cc vs. 0.01cc)		
Drops (eye, mouth)		
Injections and tube feeds for Med Techs Only		
<b>Nebulizing</b>		
Solution chamber		
Snuggle disc or heating pad		
Timing		
Drying off kittens after		
<b>Ringworm Precautions</b>		
<b>Pan Leuk Precautions</b>		
<b>FeLV vs. FIV Knowledge</b>		
<b>Kittens who pass away</b>		
<b>Intakes</b>		

## **Know Where to Find What (and when to use it!):**

---

- Sign In Sheet
- Lock Box
- Critical Board (as well as list of Supplies needed)
- Feeding Board (one per room)
- Powder Milk
- Kitten food and Kibble
- Litter
- Scoops
- Dishes
- Daily Care sheets
- Protocols / Handbook
- Bottles & Nipples
- Syringes
- Snuggle Discs and Heating pads
- Bedding, Linen, Toys
- Smocks
- Paper Towels
- Baby Wipes
- Cotton Balls
- Puppy Pads
- Roccal or Trifectant, & Bleach
- Laundry and Dishwasher detergent
- Clean and Dirty laundry locations
- Emergency Numbers



## Other Ways to Help

---

Monetary contributions to APA! specifically for the nursery.

- ☺ Donations of supplies: paper towels, laundry soap, dish soap, masking tape, scales, snuggle discs, blankets and towels, baby wipes, gloves, litter, hand sanitizer...and so much more! On the Critical Board, there is a list of what's currently needed and you'll also see messages on the Yahoo BB Group. Or just ask!
- ☺ Food—dry food, wet food, formula, baby food. Please be sure that donated food is the brand approved for use in the nursery before purchasing.
- ☺ Donate soft drinks to sell to volunteers and staff—we use the proceeds for the nursery.
- ☺ FOSTER! Check with our foster coordinator to be able to care for these cuties right at home.

[apafosterhomes\\_Cats@yahoogroups.com](mailto:apafosterhomes_Cats@yahoogroups.com)

- ☺ Keep the calendar—and the kittens' bellies—full!



**We really do appreciate your coming to this training class  
and hope to see you feeding kittens soon!**

## Extra Notes:

---

# SAMPLE DAILY CARE SHEET

## BOTTLE BABY DAILY CARE SHEET

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Description:</b>
<b>A#:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>
<b>Admit Date:</b>	<b>Admit Weight:</b>
<b>Age at Admission:</b>	<b>Diet and Notes:</b>

Date	Time	Weight b4 food	Type of Food	Amount Taken	Weight aft food	Stim? Y N	Output ⊗ U F Abn ⊗ U F Abn	Init
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								
							⊗ U F Abn	
Notes/medicines given:								

# SAMPLE MEDICATION CHART

## MEDICATIONS

1

Animal Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_

Medication \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency \_\_\_\_\_

8am														
12pm														
4pm														
8pm														

2

3

Animal Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_

Medication \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency \_\_\_\_\_

8am														
12pm														
4pm														
8pm														

4

5

6

Animal Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_

Medication \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency \_\_\_\_\_

8am														
12pm														
4pm														
8pm														

7

8

9

Animal Name/Number \_\_\_\_\_

Medication \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment for \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency \_\_\_\_\_

8am														
12pm														
4pm														
8pm														

10

11

# Fading Kitten Protocol

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometime one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade away. If not dealt with immediately, it 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
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/Crying out

## When this happens, it is vital that you take these immediate steps!

It is caused by 2 things:

**Hypothermia** (being too cold) and **Hypoglycemia** (not enough blood sugar).

## Step 1- Get them warm:

- **Create the “burrito” towel.** Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving their face exposed only. 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, check on them, etc. - this is very important!** Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.

- Wrap a HEATING PAD turned onto **\*low\*** around the burrito towel (to avoid burns) as an EXTRA source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place

## Step 2- Get their blood sugar up:

Once you get the heat on them,

- Get a bowl or Tupperware and a few tablespoons sugar in hot water.
- Stir it up so you get a sugar water solution - as strong as possible while still pretty runny.
- Using a syringe or your finger give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth.
- If they aren't swallowing, try not to get it down the throat, try to get it on the tongue or gums.
- Set an egg timer or use the stop watch on your cell phone to make sure you are doing it at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 minutes or 10 minutes will not work, it must be every 3 minutes.

## Step 3 - Call an APA medical technician:

- At 512-552-2042. Keep kitten with you and continue sugar every 3 minutes. They won't have any extra advice for you that isn't in this handout, but they will need to be made aware of what is going on.

Sometimes it can take hours for them to come out of it. Once they do come out of it, make sure you contact Casandra and the Med Techs.

**Keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved by volunteering in the Nursery. Any kitten you've ever taken care of was given a second chance at life BECAUSE of YOU! The Survival Rate with our care FAR surpasses their survival rate in Nature.**

## **Ring Worm Precautions**

Ringworm is a fungus related to athlete's foot, not actually a worm.

- **Signs & Symptoms:** Irregularly shaped areas of fur loss; the skin in these areas will usually appear rough and scaly and often the bald patch is round
  - **Treatment:** Veterinary care, including dips and/or oral medications
  - **Transmission:** Very contagious to other cats, dogs, and people, but usually requires close contact with the infected animal or its bedding
- 1) Use bleach mixed at 1:10 on any surface that you or the cats touch. (bin, scale, table, pen, microwave, snuggle disk, refrigerator, your arms etc.) Leave it on for 10 minutes and then wipe down with paper towels.
  - 2) Bleach needs to be discarded after 48 hours so please label it with date and time made; often there will be spray bottles already prepared of bleach solution--use that
  - 3) Always wear gloves and a long surgical gown when handling kittens with or suspected to have ringworm.
  - 4) The litter scoop for ringworm kittens is labeled with black sharpie. Do not use these supplies with other kittens and do not use non-labeled supplies with ringworm kittens.
  - 5) Any soft toys should be discarded so please use only pom-poms or toys labeled to be one time use.
  - 6) Don't forget to give them cuddles!
  - 7) If you develop similar patches, you may have contracted ringworm. Not to worry! You can treat it with an over the counter lotion, such as Tinactin, and cover with a Bandaid when you come into the nursery so you do not spread it.

## **PanLeuk Precautions**

- **Signs & Symptoms:** Fever, diarrhea, lethargy, vomiting, loss of appetite
- **Treatment:** Veterinary care, including fluid therapy and antibiotics
- **Transmission:** Very contagious to other unvaccinated cats, especially through contact with infected feces or vomit but also bowls, hands, clothes, etc...

For cats that are obviously ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea, lethargy, not wanting to eat:

- **Isolate** sick kittens from those that are not exhibiting the above symptoms--- consult with Casandra or a leader before moving any kitten into the isolation room!
  - Isolation should be in a different room, accessed by only approved handlers.
  - Handlers should wear gloves and gown for each cage that are changed in between kennels/litters
  - A dilute (1 part Clorox: 32 parts water) should be available as a mandatory foot bath at the entrance of the isolation areas.
  - Use ½ cup Clorox in each load of laundry- do not overpack washer to ensure that all bedding is adequately washed.
  - Isolation room should have its own fridge, supplies, bowls and food to prevent cross contamination with healthy room.
    - Do not bring anything out of Isolation and into healthy area unless going straight to dumpster or washer.
    - Never put anything on floor outside room unless sprayed off with Clorox spray.
    - Do not stack dirty laundry outside room, must stay in room until washer is empty and then go straight into washer.
  - Wash hands immediately after leaving Isolation and spray off handles of faucet after use with Trifectant or dilute Clorox.
  - Do not move from Isolation into healthy room. After feeding Isolation kittens, volunteers must go straight home and wash clothes before returning.

## **BB Nursery FAQs**

### **Q: Where do these kittens come from?**

A: The Austin Animal Center (AAC). They let us know when kittens are scheduled to be euthanized and we rescue them and find them a foster or if not, they come into our nursery.

Most people found them in bushes or their yard and assume they are abandoned. However the mom may not be far. If this happens to you, leave them alone for awhile to check that the mom does not come back for them.

### **Q: How many kittens do we save?**

A: In 2011, we saved 1100+ kittens. In the current 2012 season, by September we have already saved 1500+, and still counting!

### **Q: Does the Nursery ever close?**

A: Kitten season is usually from March til November, so we close down from December to February (though we are still here preparing for the next season!). From March – November, the Nursery functions 24 hours a day and 7 days a week non-stop!

### **Q: Are my pets at home safe if I am in contact with sick kittens in the Nursery?**

A: Our Protocols should protect you and your pets at home if you follow them carefully. Our sanitation protocols are designed to prevent cross-contamination in the nursery where we have unvaccinated kittens whose immune systems are not fully developed, so don't let the techniques scare you. If you wash your hands often, change smocks between litters and your pets at home are vaccinated, they should be safe. Ringworm is most contagious, but bleach is very effective for killing it. So be sure to follow the sanitation protocols faithfully!!

### **Q: What is the difference between FIV and FeLV?**

A: FIV is similar to AIDS, but only for cats. It is spread through blood via deep puncture wounds or sex. The virus can only survive a short time outside of the host, so it does not spread easily. Cats can live a full life with proper treatment.

FeLV (Feline Leukemia Virus) is a retrovirus is a common infection for cats and is always fatal and shortens life expectancy to 2-4 years. It is passed via saliva (e.g. grooming). However, the retro virus is unstable and dies quickly. It is easily destroyed by most disinfectants.

### **Q: What is Pan Leuk (PL) and why is it quarantined?**

A: Panleukopenia (sometimes called feline distemper) is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted via direct contact and feces. If untreated, panleukopenia is almost always fatal. Unfortunately, the virus can survive in the environment for up to a year. Other unvaccinated cats can become infected with panleukopenia simply by being in places where an infected cat has been. This is why we have an isolation room for kittens with PL. A bleach

solution is the best way to disinfect areas that may have been contaminated. The vaccine for panleukopenia is considered extremely effective. For more information, you can look up this website:

<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&S=0&C=0&A=1983>

**Q: How much should the kitten eat and how can I be sure?**

A: The general rule is to give 5cc of formula or syringe gruel per 100g of body weight. The way to verify if they have gotten enough is to compare their weight before feeding and after (but before stimulation). For example, if a kitten weighs 200g, you will want feed him 10cc and then check to be sure his weight increases by 10g.

**Q: What do I do if a kitten vomits or has diarrhea?**

A: Check to see if the kitten is already on meds for it. If not, alert Casandra or Sara. Make a note on the Feeder Board, in the Vomiting/Diarrhea chartbook as well as in the kitten's chart. If Casandra or Sarah are in the nursery, you can ask them, but it is not considered urgent unless accompanied by other symptoms. Clean up the kitten with warm baby wipes and dry the kitten well. Of course, clean the bedding and cage also.

**Q: What do I do if the kitten won't eat or gain weight?**

A: Make sure the kitten is warm enough as you are trying to feed him. Make sure the formula or gruel is warm as well. For gruel babies, you can try babyfood (plain chicken or turkey with no other ingredients like garlic, vegetables, sauce, etc.). If you are still having trouble you will need to force feed.

**Q: How do I force feed?**

A: With a syringe, whether formula or gruel. Use a smaller syringe for formula and a bigger one for gruel – just be sure the gruel is thin enough to go through (a blender is good for this). ALWAYS be careful not to let the kitten aspirate (get food or liquid into the lungs). If the kitten is mouth-breathing, do NOT force feed! Please let Casandra know asap. Hold the kitten upright rather than on it's back, and squirt small amounts into the mouth and let them swallow.

**Q: Why do we dilute the formula 8:1, then 4:1, then 2:1?**

A: This is to avoid diarrhea when the kitten arrives into a new environment. It has nothing to do with age. We can't be sure what it has been eating before, so we introduce the formula gradually: 8:1 for the first 4 feedings, 4:1 for the next 4 feedings, then 2:1 after that.

**Q: How do we know when a kitten is ready to eat gruel rather than formula?**

A: If a kitten has teeth (usually the incisors first), they can usually move on to gruel.

**Q: What do we feed the Mom cats?**

A: Momma cats who are nursing need more nutrition, so we feed them kitten kibble and wet kitten food to meet their needs.

**Q: What do I do if we run out of something?**

A: First look carefully in the storage room and cupboards. If you can't find it, write what is needed on the "What We Need" section of the Critical Board. If you see we are running low on something, please write it on the board so that we don't actually run out.

**Q: What do I do if new kittens arrive in the Nursery?**

A: Find out if they've been tested in the Med Clinic. If not, put "not tested" sign on cage. That way we all know they still need to be tested.

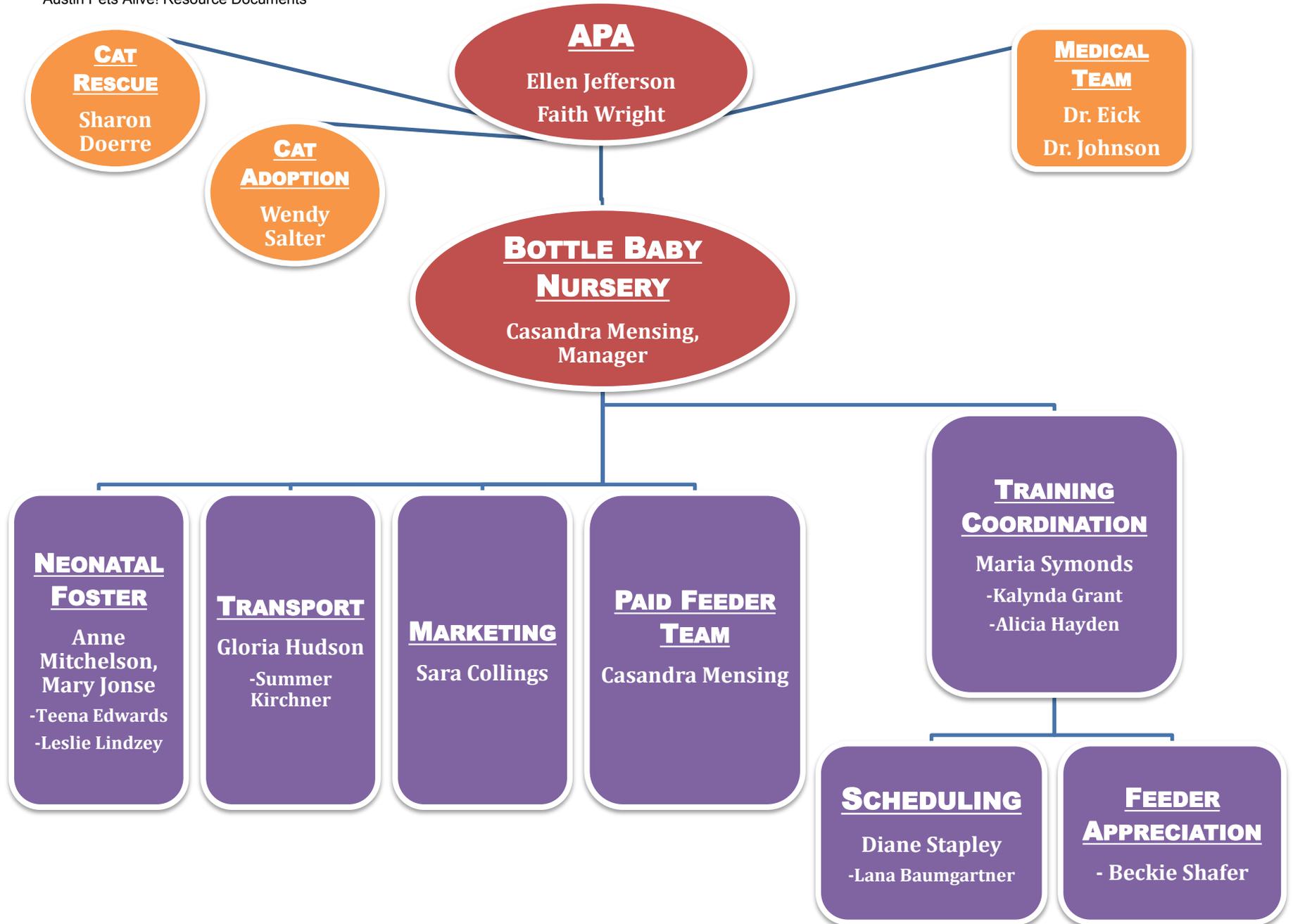
- Find a clean cage (for Gruel Babies) or Carrier (for Bottle Babies. Make sure it is well cleaned with bleach. To determine which kind they are, look for teeth/incisors which will be Gruel Babies. If they do not have teeth, they are Bottle Babies. Prepare the cage with clean, dry blankets with a warmed-up snuggle disc.
- Get a basket and label it with a piece of masking tape with the Litter number (you'll find the next available litter number to use at the bottom of the Critical Board – just be sure to update it for the next litter arrival).
- Set up a chart. You can find the empty folders and Daily Care Sheets in the filing cabinet beneath the Feeder Board. Use the Kennel Card in the box they arrived in and fill out one Daily Care Sheet per kitten (A#, name, etc.). Put the Kennel card and Intake Forms into the new chart.
- Weigh the babies and record on the new Daily Care Sheet.
- Feed the babies! Gruel babies should get a plate of gruel, a bowl of kitten kibble, a bowl of water, and a litter box. Bottle Babies should be started on 8:1 formula to help them adjust and avoid diarrhea.

## APA BB Training Questionnaire

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Preferred contact email:</b>	
<b>Preferred phone contact:</b>	
<b>Volunteer Application/Waiver?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Online (date)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hard Copy</b> (please give to your Trainer)
<b>Can you commit to at least one 2 hour shift per week (except for vacations, family matters, etc.) a week in advance?</b>	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b>	2) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>How many hours a week would you like to work in the BB Nursery?</b>	
<b>Do you intend to Shadow?</b>	
1) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes, as soon as possible</b>	2) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes, within the next 2-3 months</b>
3) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not sure</b>	4) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>If you are planning to Shadow right away, please indicate days and times you would be available:</b>	

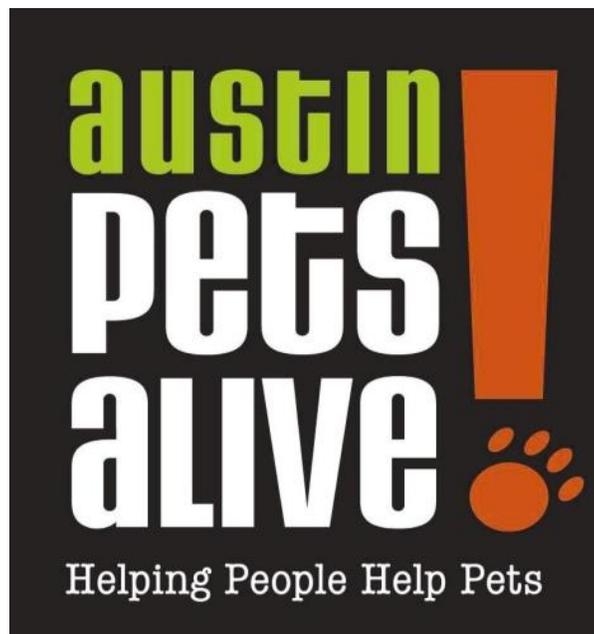
<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>		
<b>TF</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Fax Date</b>

**Trainers: Please fax to : 512 647 6468 IMMEDIATELY after class  
(fax machine in the lobby) – THANKS!!**

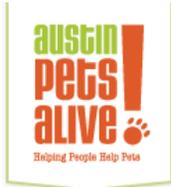


# NEONATAL PROGRAM

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



**Updated February, 2013**



## NEONATAL PROGRAM

To help accomplish the goal of a No-Kill referendum in the city of Austin, the Austin Pets Alive! Neonatal Program was developed in 2009 to rescue orphaned kittens from shelters that do not have the human, physical or financial resources to care for them and would otherwise euthanize them. The program feeds and cares for the kittens until they are old enough to be spayed or neutered and join the cat program for adoption. In addition to feeding and housing the kittens, any medical needs they have are taken care of by the medical team. The program also accepts pregnant cats and their kittens when born, and nursing cats with their litters.

The goal of the program is to grow with the needs of the organization and the community in such a way as to be able to accept all kittens the local shelters cannot keep; to provide the highest possible level of care in order to achieve the highest possible survival rate so that these cats can be adopted into permanent homes. Due to the fragile nature of neonates, the special needs of mother cats and their litters, and the large number of animals taken in, the Neonatal Program has had to develop procedures specific to the needs of the kittens and in accordance with veterinary practices, as well as create its own system of teamwork to facilitate this goal.

As the 2013 kitten season begins, Austin celebrates its two year anniversary of being a No Kill city, a status the bottle-baby team has greatly contributed to. The APA! Neonatal Program has achieved such success that it is now a model for rescue groups around the country as they integrate neonates into their own programs and work to achieve No-Kill status in their own communities.

## **POLICIES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES**

The following policies and procedures have been created to provide the best possible care for our kittens, and to provide a positive and effective environment for our volunteers to work; they have also been designed to follow veterinary practices which we are required to adhere to.

The life of animals in a shelter environment can be vastly different from what most pet owners are used to at home. The APA! Neonatal Program operates with the best interests of its kittens in mind at all times—and under veterinary supervision. Adherence to these policies will be strictly enforced.

Section 1	COMMUNICATION BBT Yahoo Group, Team Roster, Organizational Chart
Section 2	FAQ's, WHERE TO FIND THE INFORMATION YOU NEED
Section 3	FEEDER RESPONSIBILITIES Scheduling; Duties; Job Description; Volunteer Agreement; Paid Feeders
Section 4	INTAKE PROCEDURES
Section 5	KEEPING KITTENS WARM
Section 6	BOTTLE-BABIES Feeding; Stimulation; Tube Feeding; Suckling; General Care
Section 7	GRUEL-BABIES Weaning; Feeding; General Care
Section 8	PREGNANT & NURSING CATS
Section 9	RINGWORM, FLEAS & PARASITES
Section 10	HEALTH & MEDICAL Symptoms & Illnesses; Medications; Panleukopenia; Vaccinations
Section 11	FADING KITTEN SYNDROME
Section 12	DECEASED KITTENS
Section 13	BITE PROTOCOL
Section 14	SANITATION PROTOCOLS Feeders; Crates & Supplies
Section 15	DISHWASHING & LAUNDRY
Section 16	STAGES OF KITTEN DEVELOPMENT

## 1. COMMUNICATION

### BB Yahoo Group

The Bottle Baby team communicates as a group through our Yahoo group, APA Bottle Baby Program, <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/bottlebaby/>. The Yahoo group allows us to post messages that the entire group can see and therefore engage in a group discussion. Messages are made and sent through your personal email to [bottlebaby@yahoogroups.com](mailto:bottlebaby@yahoogroups.com). You must be invited to the group before you can be a member and send or receive messages.

- Only active feeders and bottle baby leaders are accepted to the Yahoo group.
- Messages sent to this email address go to everyone in the group; if you want to send a private email to one of the bottle baby leaders or to a fellow feeder, be sure to use their private email address or send to that person individually from the Yahoo group.
- When you receive a group post and wish to reply, consider first if you want to reply for the entire group to read or if you prefer to send a private response.
- The Yahoo group is a convenient way to communicate with everyone about life in the nursery. Conversations within the group are allowed, and can be an effective and efficient means of group discussion. While you are encouraged to use the Yahoo group, please remember it is a public forum and should not be used as a means to express discontent about nursery operations. This should be used as a positive and friendly forum for group discussion.
- Be thoughtful about the content of your messages. There are as many as 100 people on this group at any time, and not everyone wants to hear sad or distressing news from the nursery. Never send group messages about fading or deceased kittens. If you need information about how to deal with these circumstances, ask a fellow feeder or contact the appropriate person (see team roster).
- If you are having problems with nursery operations or with other feeders, you can seek guidance from the Volunteer Liaison, the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant. Messages that create dissension in the nursery will not be tolerated and can be cause to terminate your posting privileges.

**Other means of group communication:**

- The Volunteer Liaison is here to maintain open lines of communication in the nursery. An informational email will be sent on the first of each month, and other times as necessary, to announce changes in policies or procedures and to make general announcements concerning nursery events, etc. It is each individual's responsibility to read these emails and respond to them as needed.
- Volunteers are welcome to communicate any operational or management concerns to the Volunteer Liaison for assistance.
- Team meetings will be scheduled periodically. The Administrative Assistant will send an email through the group to announce meetings. It is each individual's responsibility to read these emails and respond accordingly.
- The Training Coordinator will send a group email to alert feeders when there will be a training class in the nursery.
- When group emails are received from the Volunteer Liaison, the Training Coordinator or the Administrative Assistant, please consider before replying if a group reply or a direct reply is appropriate.

## NURSERY ROSTER as of February, 2013

**Please be respectful of everyone's personal information and time away from the nursery.  
If your matter is not urgent, email the person first.  
If your matter needs immediate attention but is not critical, send a text message before calling. Call the appropriate person to help you in an emergency situation.  
*NEVER give out contact information to anyone other than BB team members!***

Name	Phone	Email Address
Neonatal Program Manager -		
Operations Assistant -		
Administrative Assistant -		
Volunteer Liaison -		
Training & Recruitment -		
Rescue Manager -		
Nursing/Preg Cat Foster Mgr -		
Kitten Foster Manager -		
Foster Mentor Manager -		

Marketing & Social Media

Fundraising

### **Authorized to administer medications, injections, and sub-cu fluids authorized to tube feed:**

Name	Phone
------	-------

### **Emergencies:**

Name	Phone
------	-------

## **2. FAQs, Where to find the information you need:**

### **I'm in the nursery; now what? (Section 3)**

Feeding kittens is, of course, the main reason you are here. However, in order for life in the nursery to flow smoothly and to be able to maintain a hygienic environment, there are other chores required of every feeder, during every shift. When you do not do your part, you create an unfair burden on others.

### **How do I schedule a shift? (Section 3)**

Email [bb\\_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bb_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org). In order to maintain a workable flow of feeders in the nursery, every feeder is asked to commit to a minimum of one two-hour shift per week.

### **How do I communicate with the team or with team leadership? (Section 1)**

Most of your questions can be answered by the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant or the Volunteer Liaison. If you are unsure who you need to contact, check the team roster or the organizational chart. You can also refer to the “go to” chart posted in the nursery.

### **What do I do if I am unhappy or confused about nursery operations? (Section 1)**

Contact the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant, or the Volunteer Liaison for guidance; see the “go to” chart, the team roster or the organizational chart for the appropriate person to contact.

### **Who do I contact in an emergency? (Section 1)**

If you have a medical emergency with a kitten in the nursery, contact the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant or the clinic.

**If an emergency concerns your personal safety, call 911 before attempting to call anyone from APA or the Bottle Baby Team, especially if it is outside normal business operating hours.**

### **How many kittens do we save?**

We rescued over 2,100 kittens in 2012—a huge increase over the 1,130 kittens saved in 2011! We never know how many kittens we will see in a season, but we expect the number to remain well over 1,500 for the foreseeable future. Feline mating is seasonal and is enhanced by mild weather conditions during the winter months.

### **Where do these kittens come from? (Section 4)**

APA rescues kittens, pregnant cats, and nursing cats and their litters that would otherwise be euthanized from local shelters. APA does not take animals directly from the public.

**Does the nursery ever close? (Section 3)**

Kitten season is usually March through November; so we close when the last kitten leaves in December and reopen when we have enough litters to require housing them the following season. During our hiatus, we have a few volunteers and staff in the nursery preparing for the upcoming season. From April through September, the nursery effectively functions 24 hours a day/7 days a week with primarily a volunteer force.

**Are kittens in the nursery healthy? (Section 10)**

Many of the kittens we take in are sick and sometimes injured. Most of these kittens have been found out in the elements, 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. These young kittens do not have fully developed immune systems, or fully developed digestive systems, and so commonly bring illness with them. They are evaluated at intake and treated for any known illnesses or injuries at that time.

**Will my pets at home be safe from what is in the nursery? (Section 9, Section 10)**

If your pets are current on all 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, however, that your pets could contract an illness if their own health is compromised in some way or if they are not vaccinated, or if you do not follow all sanitation protocols.

**Who do I tell if I see fleas or other parasites? (Section 9)**

All animals have fleas and frequently have parasites. While these are normal and almost unnoticeable in older animals, they can cause serious illness, even life-threatening in some cases, to very young kittens. If noticed, bring these conditions to the attention of the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant.

**What do I do if a kitten vomits or has diarrhea? (Section 10)**

Check to see if the kitten is already on medication; if not, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. Make a note on the Feeding Board and on the kitten's chart. Clean the kitten with warm baby wipes and dry the kitten well. If there is feces in the crate or on the kitten's bedding, clean completely and replace with clean bedding.

**Are nursery cats and kittens vaccinated? (Section 10)**

If kittens are four weeks and one pound at intake, they will be vaccinated in the clinic before coming to the nursery. Kittens will not be vaccinated for rabies until they are three months of age. Mature cats are vaccinated at intake.

**Why is it so important to keep kittens warm? (Section 5)**

Very young kittens cannot regulate their 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.

**How much should a kitten eat? (Section 6, Section 7)**

The general rule is to give 5cc of formula or syringe gruel per 100g of body weight. The way to verify if they have gotten enough is to compare their weight before feeding and after (but before stimulation). For example, if a kitten weighs 200g, you must feed him 10cc and then check to be sure his weight increases by 10g. “WEIGH, FEED, WEIGH” is the mantra of the nursery feeder.

**What do I do if the kitten won't eat or gain weight? (Section 6, Section 7, Section 8)**

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 Feeding Board. Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant of any change in the kitten's eating habits.

**How do I force feed? (Section 6, Section 7)**

Use a syringe, whether formula or gruel (a small one for bottle babies and a larger one for gruel babies), to force feed the kitten. Some take to this easily, others do not. Always be careful not to let the kitten aspirate (get food or liquid into the lungs). If the kitten is mouth-breathing, do not force feed as this can lead to choking. Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant right away if a kitten chokes or aspirates. Hold the kitten upright rather than on its back, and squirt small amounts into the mouth, allowing them to swallow.

**Why do we dilute the KMR 8:1, then 4:1, then 2:1? (Section 6)**

This is to avoid diarrhea when the kitten arrives into a new environment. We can't be sure what kittens have been eating prior to their arrival here, so we introduce the formula gradually so as to disrupt their systems as little as possible.

**How do we know when a kitten is ready to eat gruel rather than KMR? (Section 7)**

If a kitten has teeth (usually the incisors first), they can usually move on to gruel. If a bottle baby begins to chew on the nipple and clearly wants more substantial food, it is probably ready to be weaned.

**What do we feed the pregnant and nursing cats? (Section 8)**

Mother cats need more nutrition, so we feed them kitten kibble and wet kitten food to meet their needs. If a mother cat is not lactating but is still housed with her babies, we have cat food for mature cats that we will feed her. We always feed the Royal Canin Baby Cat food when the kittens are old enough to eat on their own since they will eat from their mothers' bowls.

**What do I do if I am bitten? (Section 13)**

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 Feeding Board and on the crate so that caution can be used by feeders 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 are aware that the possibility is ever present.** The procedure to follow if bitten is posted in the nursery and in the operations manual, and should be followed precisely.

**What do I do if I run out of something? (Section 3)**

If you have looked where the needed item is normally kept and cannot find it, check the storage room. If what you need is not there, then we may be out of it. Do not take any items or food from one nursery room and use it in another room. Write the item that is needed on the bulletin board and tell the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.

**Can I bring my pets or fosters to the nursery with me? (Section 3)**

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

### **3. FEEDER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Most of our feeders are volunteers, but we also have paid feeders; both must attend training before feeding in the nursery. After a trainee has completed the training class and two shadows, and has been approved to feed solo, the new feeder will be invited to join the Yahoo group and will be given instructions on how to schedule their shifts so they can begin feeding and receiving the group posts.

There is a copy of the Feeder Job Description and the Volunteer Agreement at the end of this section. If you are uncertain about priorities or duties, check with the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant.

#### **Scheduling**

Due to the large number of kittens that come and go in the nursery, and the large number of kittens that are residing in the nursery during the peak season, the nursery must maintain a very tight and controlled schedule. If the Nursery Manager does not have a schedule of filled shifts at least two weeks out, then kittens will have to be declined from the shelters who call us to rescue them and they will be euthanized. In order to prevent this from happening, volunteers must commit to a one shift per week minimum and must designate that shift on a recurring basis. Volunteers are allowed, and encouraged, to feed as many shifts per week as they can, and are encouraged to sign up when pleas for additional help are sent to the group or occasionally as they can fit them in; more than one shift can also be added to the calendar on a recurring basis.

- Each day is broken into 10, two-hour shifts, starting with 6:00am and ending with a shift at midnight-2:00am. During peak season, there is someone at the nursery almost 24 hours per day, going beyond this time frame.
- During peak season, it can take up to six feeders per shift to effectively feed the kittens in residence (ideally, bottle babies are fed every two hours and gruel babies every four hours). This is obviously a large demand, and it is understandably difficult to fill this need with volunteers alone. 2013 will be the first season that the Neonatal Program starts with paid feeders to supplement the volunteers. Paid feeders are placed on the calendar when volunteers are not available.
- The Operations Assistant manages the calendar. Shift requests should be sent to [bb\\_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bb_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org); a confirmation will be sent back.
- If the shift you want, for example, is Mondays, 8:00am-10:00am, then that shift will be added to the calendar as yours on a recurring basis. If you need to change that shift time, notify BB Scheduler as soon as possible so the calendar can be updated.
- The Operations Assistant will post a copy of the calendar each day in the nursery.

- Paid feeders ordinarily fill time slots late at night and early in the morning. The program has a limited budget for paid feeders, though, and relies mainly on volunteers to feed the kittens.

#### **Failure to appear for a scheduled shift**

- If you must cancel your shift for any reason with less than 24 hours notice, text or call the Nursery Manager and/or the Operations Assistant AND send a plea to the group so your shift does not inadvertently go unfilled.
- If you must cancel a shift with more than 24 hours notice, contact [bb\\_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bb_scheduler@austinpetsalive.org).
- If a feeder fails to show for a shift with sufficient or no notice, a written warning will be issued; if this happens three times, it is grounds for termination from the program.
- If the one shift per week commitment is not fulfilled, this can be grounds for removal from the Yahoo group and possibly for termination from the program.

#### **Nursery structure**

The nursery consists of five areas: Nursery A, Nursery B, Nursery C, overflow area, and a storage room. The nursery has a total capacity of 45 crates; the overflow area has a capacity of five crates. The storage room is where we store supplies until they are needed. This plan has been created to follow veterinary standards which we are mandated to adhere to, and is designed to help prevent the spread of contagion and to contain contagion when present.

- We operate on what is termed “all in—all out.” When litters arrive, they will be placed in a nursery until that room is at capacity; then litters will be placed in the next room until it is filled and so on until all three rooms are filled.
- No kittens will be removed from one nursery and put into another one at any time. Kittens are only moved when they are released to foster or to cattery.
- All furnishings, supplies, food, etc. are to be used in the nursery they are assigned to and will not be used between nursery rooms at any time.
- Nursery A, Nursery B and the overflow areas will use the sink and dishwasher in the kitchen. Nursery C will use the sink and dishwasher in Nursery C.
- Laundry will not be combined for washing. Laundry from each room will be washed together and then replaced in the room it came from.
- Cats and kittens are not to roam free in the nursery. Be sure they are secure in their crates at all times.
- Feeders should not bring their personal pets or any foster animals into the nursery area at any time without prior approval from the Nursery Manager.

## **Duties**

Each shift is two hours, which goes by quickly. There is a lot to do when the nursery is full of kittens. The main priority is to feed the kittens, but there are housekeeping chores that must also be done by everyone in order for the nursery to function. Feeders will learn how to prioritize their time as they gain more experience in the nursery. All feeders should do at least one housekeeping chore before signing out so the nursery can stay clean, stocked and operational. If you are uncertain where or how to begin or end your shift, ask the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant or a more experienced feeder for guidance. If you would like to come to the nursery to help with housekeeping but not to feed, that would be most appreciated but should be first approved by the Operations Assistant to be sure there are enough feeders scheduled to take care of the kittens.

- Sign in upon arrival. Keep your cell phone handy in case someone needs to contact you concerning a nursery matter, but limit personal phone calls during your shift.
- Determine in which nursery area you will be feeding.
- Quickly check to make sure there are enough supplies on hand to get through your shift. If something is needed, check the storage room. Do not take supplies from other nursery areas. Get supplies before you begin feeding.
- If there are no clean dishes, check the dishwasher.
- If there is no clean laundry, check the washer and dryer.
- Check if 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 you start feeding.
- Use hand sanitizer between litters. Wash hands between litters if a sink is available. Wash hands if they come into contact with feces, urine or vomit.
- Always wear gloves when feeding; change between litters. Dispose of after use.
- Check the Feeding Board and start feeding kittens.
- At the end of your shift, do at least one housekeeping chore: dishes; laundry; sweep and/or mop; empty the trash and/or the recycle container; replenish supplies from the storage room; make KMR or gruel for the next feeder; other chores as needed.
- Sign out upon leaving.

## **Paid feeders**

- All scheduling and payroll questions are to go through the Nursery Manager.
- Paid feeders have the same duties and responsibilities as volunteer feeders.
- 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.

## **Austin Pets Alive!**

### **Job Description -- Neonatal Ward Feeder**

Purpose: To feed and provide basic care for orphan kittens ranging in age from birth to six weeks that are rescued by APA and brought to the Neonatal Ward to be raised to the age of adoption; to feed and provide basic care for pregnant cats and nursing cats with their litters until they can be moved to a foster home or to an adoption site.

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 and other duties as assigned:

- Fulfill a minimum of one 2-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 feeding board
- Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant of any health issues needing attention
- Clean kittens' crates, including but not limited to litter boxes, as needed according to protocol
- Move supplies and food from the storage room to the nursery as needed
- Maintain sanitation in the nursery according to established protocols
- Wash dishes and laundry as needed
- Empty trash and recycling containers as needed

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 step ladder 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 the Operations Assistant. Volunteer feeders must sign a Volunteer Agreement in order to work in the nursery.

## Neonatal Program Volunteer Agreement

Caring for neonatal kittens is a delicate task as baby kittens are extremely vulnerable and can easily contract disease and quickly decline in a nursery setting. As such, APA! has very 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, at the same time staff and volunteers both must follow the strict requirements listed below to ensure that the Neonatal Program successfully fulfills its mission to save as many kittens as possible each season.

By my initials and signature below, I acknowledge and agree with the following reasons for termination. I understand that if I do not comply with the protocols, I will be given a written warning. After my first warning, the Neonatal Program Manager has the right to remove my volunteer privileges. If terminated, I will be removed from any Neonatal Program communication groups and will not be allowed to enter the nursery.

\_\_\_ Initial here that you have read and comply with the Neonatal Program Volunteer Job Description.

### **Actions that can result in Neonatal Program termination:**

- Failure to follow volunteer job description during shift
- Failure to follow proper sanitation and feeding protocols set by the Neonatal Program
- Administering medications to kittens without authorization from Neonatal Program Manager
- Untruthful charting and reporting information about kittens
- Failure to attend a scheduled shift without prior notification
- Negativity directed towards another APA! volunteer and/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

### **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
- 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 or suggestions must be submitted through the established communication channels
- No animals will enter or leave the nursery without prior permission from APA staff

Volunteer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. INTAKE PROCEDURES

APA, as a matter of policy and under our contract with the City of Austin, does not take animals directly from the public. When exceptions are allowed, kittens enter our program under PASS (Positive Alternatives to Shelter Surrender). Primarily, our kittens come from the city shelter, Austin Animal Center. If AAC receives kittens or nursing or 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. We can accept kittens from Travis, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays and Williamson counties; however, when we are at peak capacity we accept almost solely from Austin Animal Center. We cannot house kittens from outside of the five county region in our facility at this time; if we do accept kittens from outside this area, they must go directly to foster. Ideally, all kittens go to a foster home at intake or within a week or so.

### **When AAC (or another shelter) receives kittens**

- The Rescue Manager is alerted that there are kittens needing transport to APA.
- The Rescue Manager confirms we can accept the kittens and then sends out a plea for someone to transport the kittens to the clinic.
- Kittens are taken directly to the clinic, where the medical team will evaluate the kittens' overall health—they will prescribe medication if needed, and treat them for fleas and parasites.
- If kittens are four weeks of age and one pound of body weight, the clinic will vaccinate the kitten before bringing it to the nursery; however, kittens are not vaccinated for rabies until they are at least three months of age.
- If a foster is available to take the kittens, they are passed to the foster. If not, the kittens are taken to the nursery.
- Litters in our program are identified by an alphabetical numbering system. The first litter of the year is A1, and then 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, and so on. This has proven to be an efficient way to keep track of the kittens and the litters for administrative purposes.
- The person transporting the kittens is given the privilege of naming them. If the transporter does not name them, then the foster will. If the kittens come into the nursery, they will be named by the feeders that are there at the time.
- Kittens are placed into a crate and a file is started for recording their progress. Accurate record-keeping is essential.
- There are several other administrative tasks associated with the intake of a kitten that are done by the Nursery Manager.

Kittens are housed in three different areas in the nursery, designated Room A, Room B and Room C; there is also an overflow area to 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.
- New litters are not put in a room once it has reached capacity until all of those litters have left the nursery and that room has been cleaned and decontaminated so that it is ready for the next influx litters. This is referred to as “all in, all out.” This is done to prevent cross-contamination of transmissible contagions.
- Empty cages should be clean and ready for incoming litters. Please see Section 10 for steps to properly clean crates and supplies.

#### **When kittens arrive in the nursery**

- If the kittens arrived 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 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; then 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.
- If kittens arrive in a cardboard carrier, break it down and dispose of it in the recycle bin unless it is soiled; if 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 soiled, clean them gently, making sure they are completely dry before placing them in a crate.
- If the kittens are very small, less than 2½ - 3 weeks, they should be placed in a carrier or hamster cage with clean bedding and a heated snuggle disc, which is then placed inside a crate. Small kittens can crawl away from their heat source in too large of a space, or slip through the bars on the crate door, so they are kept in the carrier as a precaution.
- See Section 6, 7 or 8 for feeding instructions.
- If the kittens are older, they can be placed in the crate without the extra precaution of a carrier or hamster cage. Place a heated snuggle disc and clean bedding with them.

- If the kittens are older than 4 weeks or so and are either eating on their own or ready to transition to gruel, place a litter box and some food in the crate with them. Please see Section 5 for feeding instructions.
- Put the litter number on the crate to identify it.

### **Paperwork and record-keeping**

- Using the chart holder identified with the crate, put the litter's file and anything else that belongs to the litter in it.
- Start a file for each litter and write the litter number on it. Start a Daily Care Sheet for each kitten in the litter, making sure to write the A# on the chart. If the kittens were started on meds by the clinic, attach a med sheet to the front of the file.
- If the paperwork from AAC happens to be with the kittens, leave it in the file you start and the Nursery Manager will remove it later. Write the kitten's name on the AAC paperwork as well as on their Daily Care Sheet.
- Add the litter to the Feeding Board.
- Identify each kitten. If they look alike, put a dot of pet paint on their heads. If pet paint is not available, you can make a mark with a Sharpie pen inside the kitten's ear. Be sure to note this on the kitten's chart.
- Weigh each kitten and write down the weight.
- Feed the kittens as soon as possible; they probably have not eaten in a long time. See either Section 3 or Section 5 for feeding and care instructions.
- Update the Feeding Board.
- Accurate and timely record-keeping is essential. Follow all steps of record-keeping even if it seems redundant.

## 5. KEEPING KITTENS WARM

A kitten's body temperature ranges about 102-104. Kittens under three weeks of age cannot regulate their body temperature—they have littermates and a mother to help them maintain necessary body warmth. It is crucial to keep the kittens' crate 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 much lower than that of a kitten and the kitten's body temperature could continue to fall. If their body temperature falls too low, they can begin to fade and may not survive.

- Place a heated snuggle disc in a snuggle cover or cover with a layer of towel or blanket wrapped over it in the kittens' crate.
- Snuggle discs are heated for 4-5 minutes in the microwave, based on microwave wattage, and will stay warm for hours. Heat only when they are cool as too much heating can deteriorate them.
- They should be checked at each feeding to be sure they are still warm.
- If a snuggle disc is not available, use a heating pad set on low. Be certain it is not an automatic shut-off type of thermostat 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 wet. Wet or damp bedding can chill the kittens in spite of their having a 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, inspect to determine if it is fading. If so, immediately begin the fading kitten protocol; see Section 8.
- If a kitten feels cold but is not determined to be fading, warm it immediately by wrapping the kitten in a towel and then place 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 while 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. Kittens cannot properly digest food when they are cold, so reheat if it gets cold.
- **Your body heat is lower than the kitten's, so never try to warm a kitten with your own body heat as it will not work and the kitten's body temperature will plummet.**

## **ALTERNATIVE HEAT SOURCES**

### **Rice Socks**

A sock filled with rice and warmed in the microwave can be used to keep babies warm, but will only stay warm up to an hour. The rice socks can easily be overheated and must be checked carefully before placing in a carrier with kittens so they do not get burned.

- **This is not an approved means of keeping kittens warm in the nursery.**
- This is a heat source that is used primarily for transport so kittens do not become chilled during a car ride.
- If a rice sock is used, throw away the rice when finished and launder the sock; there is no way to effectively sanitize the rice once it is used.
- Rice and socks may be kept in the storage room so that fosters will have something to take with them when they pick up kittens, and are also available in foster packets.

### **Heating Pads**

- There are heating pads in the nursery to use for fading kittens, or when a snuggle disc is not available.
- Heating pads are not preferred for use in crates. If a heating pad is used, make certain it is not one with an automatic shut-off thermostat; these heating pads can 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 HEATING PADS LAYING OUT IN THE NURSERY.**

**NOTE: Snuggle discs are the property of the nursery and should never be taken out of the nursery by volunteers, staff or fosters. If someone should come to the nursery and ask to borrow one, politely refuse and refer the person to the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. Heating pads also belong to the nursery and should not be loaned to anyone without approval from the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.**

**If someone needs to keep kittens warm while transporting, they can make a rice sock (which does not need to be returned to the nursery) if rice and socks are available. Foster packets are available that fosters can purchase if need be; otherwise, fosters must provide their own heat source for kittens in their care.**

## 6. BOTTLE BABIES

Kittens without moms will need to be bottle-fed until they are ready to be weaned and eat on their own. It is imperative that all kittens are consuming enough food at each feeding to insure proper nutrition and weight gain. Ideally, kittens are fed about every two 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 KMR (Kitten Milk Replacement). We use a powder KMR mix that we make as needed since it keeps better. Open bags of KMR should be kept in the refrigerator before and after mixing.

Unfortunately, cow's milk and other types of milk replacements are not nutritious enough for our kittens; they will slowly starve to death on it. 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 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.
- The first four feedings are at a ratio of 8:1, eight parts water to one part KMR.
- The second four feedings are at a ratio of 4:1, four parts water to one part KMR.
- All other bottle feedings are at a ratio of 2:1, two parts water to one part KMR.
- When mixing KMR, use a measuring cup to mix the amount you need.
- KMR clumps badly, so stir thoroughly. Clumps can clog the nipples and prevent the kitten from getting its food; some of the small ones can lodge in the kitten's throat.
- After mixing, store in a covered container in the refrigerator. Label the container with the ratio 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, so should be thrown out after 48 hours.
- Do not leave mixed KMR out while feeding. Bacteria can grow quickly, so put it back in the refrigerator after filling bottles.
- Use only clean bottles and nipples. Label all bottles with the litter number; the ratio of KMR; 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 mixed on a different day. If there are no clean bottles, thoroughly wash the bottle and nipple before re-using; remember to put a new label on the bottle, do not write over an old one.

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 a mom cat. One position is simply to place the kitten on its stomach on a towel or cloth on which it can cling.

### **Bottle-feeding techniques**

- Open the mouth gently with the tip of your finger and slip the nipple in. Once your kitten gets the hang of it, they will search out the nipple enthusiastically! You will feel a "vacuum effect" when the kitten gets into suckle mode.
- To keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach, hold the bottle at a 45-degree angle, keeping a light pull on the bottle.
- The kitten should be allowed to suck at its own pace.
- If a kitten refuses to take the nipple or won't suckle, try rubbing it on its forehead or stroking its back. This replicates the activity of a mother cat's cleaning and can effectively stimulate the kitten to nurse.
- Sometimes a kitten is simply picky; there are two kinds of nipples, one shorter and one longer, so try different nipples to see if they prefer one over the other.
- Kittens have been known to accidentally suck formula into the lungs. This is called aspirating. Kittens are pretty good at clearing the milk from the lungs on their own—you will see milk coming out the kitten's nose. If this happens and the kitten has stopped breathing, hold the kitten upside down until it stops choking. Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant 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 bottle care**

- Identify the litter that needs to be fed. Update the feeding time on the Feeding Board with the time you start to feed the litter, not after feeding, making sure to use the correct color pen for that day.
- Feed only one litter at a time.
- Get the litter's feeding charts out of the file. Write the date and time you are feeding each kitten on their Daily Care Sheet.

- Feeders do not administer medications, but should check to see if a medication is past due. If so, let the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant know.
- 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.
- Fill the bottle about 2/3 full. Label the bottle with the litter number, the ratio of KMR, the date and time the KMR was made—NOT the date/time you are filling it.
- Replace the KMR in the refrigerator; it should never be left out as bacteria can form.
- With the cap and nipple OFF, heat the bottle in the microwave. Start around 10 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. Put on the nipple.
- Make sure you have a clean scale. See Section 10 for sanitizing instructions.
- Wash hands and use hand sanitizer between litters. Wear gloves when feeding.
- If there is a smock in the kitten's bin, wear that; if not, get a clean one to wear while feeding. Cover your lap with a towel or clean puppy pad while feeding kittens.
- 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, making 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 have consumed a minimum of 5g per 100g of body weight. If it did, then record the weight and update the Daily Care Sheet.
- If the kitten is sated and has consumed an adequate amount of food, stop feeding it. 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 person and return it to the refrigerator.
- When a bottle needs to be washed, empty any remaining KMR in the trash; 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. Kittens rely on scent and instinct—and a mother—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 syringe care**

- Weigh the kitten so that you know how much it needs to consume.
- Fill a clean 1cc syringe with warmed KMR.
- Syringe a few drops into the kitten's mouth. Wait for the kitten to swallow and then keep doing this until the kitten has consumed a sufficient amount.
- Kittens should consume a minimum of 5g per 100g of body weight. This breaks down to 1g per 20g of body weight. If a kitten weighs 132g, it will need to consume 7g of food (5g for the first 100g, 1g up to the next 20g of weight, 1g up to the next 20g of weight).
- **NOTE: 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 know if the kitten is eating, and how much, is to weigh the kitten, then feed, then weigh. Always weigh, feed, weigh.**
- Be sure to gently clean any KMR off of the kitten's fur and face.
- When finished syringe feeding, remove the plunger from the syringe and place them in the dishpan to soak. Syringes should later be washed carefully by hand and not put in the dishwasher as they can get loose and melt or clog the dishwasher motor.

### **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), a cotton ball or cotton pad (can be dampened 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 a day.
- Make note of diarrhea or any indication of diarrhea; alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant if the kitten is not already being treated for diarrhea.
- Record the kitten's elimination on the Daily Care Sheet, noting anything abnormal.

### **Look at the kitten's urine and feces and make sure they look normal**

- If there is blood in the urine or feces, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. Record on the kitten's Daily Care Sheet and on the Feeder Board.
- Dark yellow or brownish yellow urine can indicate serious dehydration or bilirubin in the urine; record this on the kitten's Daily Care Sheet and alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant right away.
- Intense yellow urine indicates the kitten is not getting enough fluid from its diet. Make sure the kitten is getting enough water to drink and that it is eating enough.
- If the kitten has not defecated for a couple of days and its belly is bloated, it may be constipated. This can be a serious condition; alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant right away.

When a kitten is transitioning to gruel, or already has, put a litter box in the crate. Once the kitten is using his litter box, there is no need to stimulate him any longer.

### **Tube Feeding**

If a kitten is sick, it can become too weak to eat on its own or 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 the stomach lining, and if the tube goes down the wrong way, the kitten's lung can fill with fluid and the kitten can drown. Tube feeding can prove fatal if done incorrectly. If a kitten needs to be tube fed, the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant will do it.

- **Feeders are not authorized to tube feed kittens.**
- **All tube feeding will be done by the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- If no one is available to tube feed a kitten outside of business hours, contact the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.
- Be sure to update the kitten's Daily Care Sheet when it is tube fed.
- If the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant is not available to tube feed a kitten but the clinic is open, call them and ask if you can take the kitten to them for a vet or a med tech to feed the kitten. Be sure to update the kitten's Daily Care Sheet.
- Kittens must be stimulated after tube feeding the same 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 kind of 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, penis hanging out, etc.; this can become a serious problem. If that occurs, please contact the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant 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**

Since water drives all of our metabolic functions, you can see why adequate hydration is essential. When a kitten is not getting enough water in its diet or if it is vomiting, has diarrhea or other illness, it can become dehydrated. Just as with people and all living things, proper hydration levels are critical to good health.

- If you believe a kitten is dehydrated, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant for further evaluation.
- If a kitten is dehydrated, subcutaneous fluids (fluids injected under the skin) will be administered by the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.
- Feeders are not authorized to administer subcutaneous fluids.
- Feeders should not give kittens Pedialyte unless approved by the Nursery Manager. Pedialyte given orally to a kitten won't cause any harm, but 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 not used within three days.

## 7. GRUEL BABIES

Gruel babies are kittens who have outgrown the bottle. At about 3 ½ 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 a bottle baby.

When the litter is ready to transition from the bottle to gruel, place them in a bin with a shallow saucer of warmed gruel and let them “discover” it. Some will take to it right away, others not so much—but they will be curious at least initially. 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 feed them and stimulate them. At this point, put a litter box in their crate to let them start going to the bathroom on their own. Put a small dish of gruel and small bowl of water in the crate with them so they can begin to eat on their own. This can take a while, but it is important to let them try. You can also try giving them some kibble; they may take to one more readily than the other.

### **Making gruel**

- Gruel is made with canned food and water mixed together until it reaches an applesauce consistency. An applesauce consistency ensures the kittens are getting enough water in their diet while giving them proper nutrition. If the gruel is too watery, it will not have enough nutrients in it.
- Always store gruel in a covered container in the refrigerator. Do not leave gruel out in the work area after filling bowls or plates for the kittens as bacteria can grow.
- The nursery uses Merrick canned kitten food and Royal Canin Baby Cat kibble. These are the only approved kitten foods to be used.
- There should always be canned kitten food in the storage room; however, if there is none, Nutro Max Cat canned kitten food can be used. This brand is often donated by volunteers and the public. If used, it should be slowly mixed in with the Merrick brand food to prevent diarrhea.
- If the nursery is out of the approved canned food and there is no chance of having any brought to the nursery in time to feed your litters, use what is available. Be sure to alert the Operations Assistant if you notice the nursery is low on food!
- Changing the brand or type of food can temporarily cause diarrhea.

- Fill a dish the appropriate size for the litter with gruel—do not overfill. Warm the gruel in the microwave; check it 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 hours to ensure their blood sugar stays up. You can go 6-8 hours, but preferably no more, overnight but not during the day.
- Identify the litter needing to be fed; update the Feeding Board.
- Feed only one litter at a time. Clean a bin to put the kittens in while they eat gruel.
- As always, wear a smock and gloves when handling the kittens.
- You can 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 two or three meals or more before they really 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 his tongue or teeth. Be patient; the weaning process takes time.
- 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 the crate if they are clean.
- Clean the crate, making sure to wipe off all feces and food particles. Use 409 and wipe completely. If the kittens have diarrhea, URI, ringworm or other illness, follow cleaning with a thorough wiping of disinfectant or bleach water.
- Clean the litter box; if it is a disposable box and is soiled through, dispose of it and replace with a clean box and clean litter.
- Use a litter scoop from the bleach soak. After using, spray with disinfectant and wipe clean before returning to the bleach soak.
- 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 the kitten's stomach. Dust can also coat kittens' lungs.
- Clumping litter can be introduced after six weeks of age.
- Check the bedding in the crate and replace it with clean bedding if it is wet or soiled.
- Shake all laundry in the trash before placing in the laundry hamper. Leaving dried food or feces on the laundry can allow contagion to spread and can attract flies.

- Check the snuggle disc and replace it with a warm one if it is cold, making sure to sanitize the fresh disc before warming. Sanitize the previously used disc before putting it away where it belongs.
- If the toys were dirty, put them in the dishpan or in the laundry to be washed and put some clean toys in the crate.
- Check to see if the kittens are eating on their own.
- If the kittens have been gaining weight regularly and are eating, you can weigh them and put them back in their clean crate.
- If the kittens are losing weight, or not eating enough by themselves, supplement them by syringe feeding and return them to their crate.
- Place some gruel and some kibble in the crate along with a small bowl of water.
- Be sure to update the Daily Care Sheets.
- Clean and sanitize the bin and replace it where it belongs so it can be used again.
- Sanitize the food preparation area 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 may not be eating due to illness or other reasons. 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 will like baby food—it is pure meat, which their instinct will respond to—but it should only be used to help the kitten eat the right food by itself. Baby food should never be used simply because it is easier or more convenient for the feeder.

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

Since water drives all of our metabolic functions, you can see why adequate hydration is essential. When a kitten is not getting enough water in its diet, or if it is vomiting, has diarrhea or other illness, it can become dehydrated. Just as with people, and all living things, proper hydration levels are critical to good health.

- If you believe a kitten is dehydrated, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant for further evaluation.
- If a kitten is dehydrated, subcutaneous fluids (fluids injected under the skin) will be administered by the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.
- Feeders are not authorized to administer subcutaneous fluids.
- Feeders should not give kittens Pedialyte unless approved by the Nursery Manager. Pedialyte given orally to a kitten won't cause any harm, but offers no real benefit. 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 not used within three days.

## Suckling

It is common for kittens to suckle on one another. They do this for a variety of reasons which can easily be summed up as "it feels good," but kittens typically suckle on their siblings when they are seeking comfort and sometimes when they are hungry. This is harmless unless you notice that this kind of 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 sucking activity is not causing problems such as redness, irritation, penis hanging out, etc.; this can become a serious problem. If that occurs, contact the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. 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.

---

**Kittens are never allowed to roam freely in the nursery.**



**Be sure they are secure at all times.**

## 8. PREGNANT & NURSING CATS

Since pregnant and nursing cats with their litters can require a great deal of care and attention, they are part of the Neonatal Program. Most of our pregnant and nursing cats go to foster and never even come to the nursery, but we do occasionally house them here. Usually, a mother cat can take care of herself and her babies; but if they 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 demands on the time of the foster. When a mother cat does not have milk, or does not produce enough milk to feed her litter sufficiently, the 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 mom is not lactating**

- Some mother cats may be a little nervous when someone takes her babies away; but they usually get used to nursery activity fairly quickly and are happy for the attention. Be gentle when approaching her babies.
- If a mother cat is feral or has shown signs of aggression or extreme nervousness, this should be noted on the Feeding Board and on her crate. If you are unsure how to approach kittens with a feral mother, check with the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant for guidance.
- If the kittens are not weaned, they should be fed every two hours the same as orphan bottle babies. The procedure is the same for weighing, feeding, and sanitation.
- If the kittens are eating on their own, they should be weighed two or three times daily to ensure they are gaining weight and progressing normally.
- Update the Daily Care Sheets and update the Feeding Board.

### **If mom is lactating:**

- Some mother cats may be lactating but not making enough milk, so we must monitor their kittens for proper growth and development.
- Kittens should be weighed two or three times daily to ensure they are getting enough to eat and gaining weight appropriately.
- If kittens are gaining weight, update their Daily Care Sheets with their current weights and any necessary notes, and update the Feeding Board.

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

**Always:**

- Clean out the litter box and refill litter as needed with non-clumping litter.
- Clean the interior of the crate and replace soiled or wet bedding. Be sure to clean any feces or food matter out of the crate completely.
- Never allow a mother cat to roam about the nursery. Mother cats must remain in the crate at all times, which can make cleaning tricky but not impossible.
- After feeding the kittens, give mom fresh food and water. If the mother cat is not eating, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant so they can monitor her. Pregnant cats and nursing moms need extra nutrition during this time so they are given kitten kibble and wet food since it contains extra nutrients.
- If Mom is not eating or is a picky eater, try different canned cat foods to see what she will eat.
- If Mom is not lactating, or if the kittens have been weaned and are no longer with the mom, feed her kibble for grown cats.
- 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 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.

**Cats and kittens are never allowed to roam freely in the nursery.  
Be sure they are secure at all times.**



## **9. RINGWORM, FLEAS & PARASITES**

### **RINGWORM**

Ringworm is not a worm but 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 to humans and other species. Ringworm in an individual cat is a nuisance; however, ringworm in an animal shelter can lead to almost unmanageable outbreaks, thousands of dollars in diagnostic and medical costs, the possibility of spread to adopters and staff, and an intolerable blow to shelter status in the community. It is vital to have a consistent and effective strategy to prevent and manage this problem.

When kittens and cats in the nursery have ringworm, it should be noted on their crate and on the Feeding 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, but animals less than one year old and geriatric animals are at the highest risk. Cats are at greater risk than dogs.
- Animals with conditions that compromise the immune system such as FIV, FeLV, pregnancy and lactation, malnutrition, or anti-inflammatory drugs, cancer, and stress can be at higher risk.
- Animals with preexisting conditions that compromise grooming, and those with external parasites such as fleas, are at increased risk.

### **How is ringworm spread?**

Ringworm is most often spread from contact with an infected animal or a contaminated environment, and therefore is likely to be a serious problem in a shelter. Ringworm is very durable in the environment and if left untreated can persist for months in carriers, furniture, carpets, dust and so on, and can infect animals housed in a contaminated environment. Ringworm can be spread readily on grooming implements, contaminated toys and bedding, or by humans on 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 signs. 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 will usually appear rough and scaly and often the bald patch is round.
- Full body dipping or spot treatment with a lyme sulfur dip is quite effective, but does take some time to eradicate the fungus.
- Care must be taken when dipping kittens that they do not get chilled.
- Kittens under the age of six weeks should not be dipped.
- Medication prescribed by the veterinarian, Itraconazole, is sometimes used, but not for 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 the Feeding Board.
- Use bleach mixed at a ratio of 1:10, one part bleach to ten parts water, on any surface that you or the cats touch—bin, scale, table, pen, microwave, snuggle disk, refrigerator, your arms, etc. Leave it on for 10 minutes and then wipe down with paper towels.
- Dishes used in crates with ringworm should be soaked in diluted bleach before washing either by hand or in a dishwasher.
- Always wear gloves, a smock and sleeves when handling kittens with, or suspected to have, ringworm.
- Wear gloves when handling laundry used with litters with ringworm.
- Bleach needs to be discarded after 48 hours so please label it with date and time made.

### **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 environment. 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 meant for older cats can kill a kitten, so if you find fleas or flea dirt on kittens of any age, let the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant know so she can properly treat the kitten.
- Neonates are not usually given a bath because it can dangerously drop their body temperature.
- Over-the-counter treatments are not used in the nursery because they are less effective and 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 the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant 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, have the kitten checked by the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant so it can be evaluated and treated.
- Do not clean the kitten's ears without first checking with the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. 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, but 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 protruding from its anus or what looks like rice. Indications of worms are a large belly, diarrhea and an inability to gain weight. If you see signs of worms, alert the Nursery Manager or the Operations Assistant. 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 can invade a kitten's digestive system and cause diarrhea. These are contagious and can be spread through feces. These parasites are easily treated with oral medications.

Parasites can cause digestive problems for the kitten, as well as diarrhea. Diarrhea can be quite 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.

## 10. HEALTH & MEDICAL

Bottle babies and young kittens 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. The neonatal ward has many policies and procedures in place to keep our kittens healthy, to make the volunteer experience a pleasant and rewarding one, and to ensure the health of the pets of our staff and volunteers. Please follow all protocols carefully.

### **Alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant if any of these symptoms are noticed:**

- Aspiration (milk coming out of nose during feeding)
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- 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
- Behavior that is unusual compared to normal behaviors

### **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. These colds are very common in shelter cats. Sneezing, runny nose and/or eyes, fever and loss of appetite are common symptoms. URIs are treated with antibiotics. If kittens are having difficulty breathing, they may also need to be nebulized. Be especially certain to keep kittens warm until recovered. URIs are very contagious to other cats and kittens through direct contact, and they can be airborne. Feeders should be especially diligent about sanitation protocols when tending to sick kittens and should wash hands after handling kittens with URI.

## **FeLV and FIV**

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) can suppress the immune system, cause cancer or cause other serious illnesses in susceptible cats. FeLV is fatal and the life expectancy of an infected cat is 2-4 years. FeLV is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, as well as urine, feces and milk from infected cats. The virus can also be transferred from a bite wound, during mutual grooming, through shared use of litter boxes and feeding dishes, and from a mother cat to her kittens while in utero or during birth. Cats and kittens with FeLV should be isolated from other nursery animals and it should be noted on the litter's crate and on the Feeder Board. Young kittens testing positive for FeLV are tested again when a little older to confirm the result of the first test, which commonly gives a false positive because 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 established protocols, when carefully adhered to, should limit the possibility of transmission in or out of the nursery.

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 in spite of 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 Feeding Board.

Mature cats and kittens six weeks and older are combo tested for FeLV and FIV at intake at APA. All kittens are tested for FIV. 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 these to their babies during birth.

FeLV and FIV positive kittens and cats are adoptable. FeLV kittens can be placed in the APA FeLV sanctuary to await adoption so that they can be isolated from healthy animals but still be available to the public. FIV kittens can be placed in the cattery to await adoption.

## **Panleukopenia**

Panleukopenia, sometimes called feline distemper, is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted via direct contact with saliva, vomit and feces, and it is easier to transmit than one may think. Panleukopenia can also be transmitted by an infected mother cat to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating to deal with because the virus can survive in the environment for up to a year. 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 at intake since the test will not show positive until the virus is shedding. Vaccinated cats and kittens will sometimes have a false positive from the Parvo test. Symptoms of panleuk are 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 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. Once they have been approved to comingle 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. The panleuk ward is physically separated from the nursery and has its own team of feeders who work solely in the panleuk ward; these feeders are not allowed to feed in the nursery, and nursery feeders are not allowed to go into the panleuk ward at any time, for any reason. If a nursery kitten is diagnosed with panleuk, or even possible panleuk, the entire area must be decontaminated.

- To clean all crates, supplies and everything that was touched by or near infected kittens, use bleach diluted with water at a ratio of 1:32, one part bleach to 32 parts 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 to be used.
- 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.
- 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.
- Wearing gloves and a smock, place laundry loosely in the washer; if it is packed too tightly, the laundry will not be washed thoroughly.
- After the wash has completed, leave in the washer and put the laundry through a second wash before drying.
- 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 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 to be 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**

- Feeders are not authorized to give medications or injections.
- All medications and injections will be administered by the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant or other authorized person.
- There will be a medication chart attached to the file of any litter taking medications. Check the chart and alert the proper person if a kitten has missed a dose.

## **Nebulizing**

When kittens contract respiratory infections or other illness, and have trouble breathing, a nebulizer is placed in their crate to administer a medicated mist they inhale when breathing, 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.
- Some crates have electrical outlets at the top near the ceiling. Try to plug the nebulizer in where it will not pose a walking hazard 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 other type of fluid in the nebulizer.
- If there is no nebulizer solution in the refrigerator, ask the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant. If they are unavailable, go to the clinic and ask for some. Be sure to clearly label new bags of nebulizer solution with a Sharpie pen.
- Never leave nebulizer solution out of the refrigerator; it must be refrigerated or it loses efficacy. If solution is left out and allowed to become warm, it will have to be disposed of.
- Fill the reservoir with nebulizer solution. Do not overfill.
- Put a towel or blanket over the door to the crate 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 a sick kitten. This can lead to hypothermia and cause the kittens to fade.
- Update the kittens' Daily Care Sheet and the Feeding Board that they have been nebulized, at what time and for how long.
- When the litter no longer needs to be nebulized, clean and sanitize the nebulizer and return it to its proper place.

## **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.

- If any eye discharge is noticed, and the kitten is not currently being treated for any eye issues, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant 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 betadyne, 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 a clean gauze or cotton so as not to contaminate the water or solution.
- Wear gloves when cleaning a kitten's eyes.

If a kitten has something more serious than simple conjunctivitis, other eye medications or treatment may be required. In that case, the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant will apply the medication and treat the kitten's eyes. Shelters often see kittens whose eye infections or injuries will leave them partially or completely blind, in some cases even requiring 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. Kittens living in a shelter have a different schedule for vaccinations since they do not have a mother, and 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.

## 11. 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. There is no clear cause or 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, re-hydration 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, not enough blood sugar. You must get the kitten's body temperature up and raise its blood sugar or it will die.

### 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 we have dextrose or glucose in the nursery, that can be used as well as sugar or Karo. If we have dextrose, it will be in the refrigerator.
- Whatever the sugar source may be, take care not to contaminate anything by double-dipping syringes.

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

We generally have success with these kittens if you follow the above steps. 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.

## 12. DECEASED KITTENS

It is never easy to lose a kitten, and it affects each of us differently and personally. 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 that many 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. Every kitten we take in is worth every bit of effort we have to give, and we have gained national recognition for that effort.

### If a kitten passes while in your care

- Make sure the kitten has passed. If you are not sure, check with the Nursery Manager, the Operations Assistant 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 zip lock 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 you do not properly identify the kitten, someone will have to inspect the kitten later on to determine its correct identity, so please be sure this is done correctly.
- Place the kitten in the freezer.
- Remove the kitten's Daily Care Sheet from the file and place it in the notebook where all incoming/outgoing kittens are recorded. Record the kitten as deceased.
- **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.
- **If this was the only kitten in the litter**, remove the bedding, food dishes, toys, etc. from the crate.
- 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 or Operations Assistant that the kitten has passed.

When you arrive for your shift and find a kitten is gone from the nursery, please refrain from asking other feeders if the kitten has passed or from openly checking the incoming/outgoing chart to see if kittens have 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.

### **13. BITE PROTOCOL**

The following is the APA Bite Protocol and is the procedure 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 severe, call 911.
3. Report the bite to the Nursery Manager or to Ellen Jefferson at [ellen.jefferson@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:ellen.jefferson@austinpetsalive.org) the same day as the incident.
4. Did the bite break the skin?
  - a. If no, no further action is required.
  - b. If yes, did it puncture or scratch?
    - i. If scratched, watching for redness or infection should be sufficient.
    - ii. If punctured, person will need oral antibiotics. Please see 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 not treated immediately and can even cause loss of function. If the animal has rabies, a bite can cause death to the human as rabies is 100% fatal.

Although, APA is not responsible for medical bills associated with bites, we can often direct you on what to do after a bite occurs, 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 resulting consequences of not taking appropriate action.

## 14. SANITATION PROTOCOLS

Due to the fragile nature of our kittens, the Neonatal Program has many procedures regarding sanitation in place to protect their health. These protocols will also help keep our feeders from transmitting contagion from the nursery to their personal pets; but of course, feeders are advised to have their pets vaccinated as the possibility of transmission always exists. Some of these protocols have been mandated by the APA veterinarian because we are required to operate in accordance with veterinary standards. All protocols will be strictly enforced.

### Feeders

- Wash hands at the beginning of each shift. It is also advisable to wash hands between litters when a sink is available.
- Sanitize hands between litters with alcohol-free hand sanitizer.
- Spray disinfectant in the nursery can be sprayed on your clothing and hands.
- If you come into direct contact with feces, urine or vomit, wash hands thoroughly.
- Wear gloves when handling kittens. Dispose of gloves when finished with the litter.
- Be careful handling kittens and anything in their crate that may be contaminated, with or without gloves on, and then handling clean supplies and food.
- You do not need to change gloves between kittens; change between litters.
- Wear smocks between litters. The smocks can be used with the same litter until soiled. When soiled, shake any solid matter from the smock into the trash and place it in the laundry hamper.
- If kittens have ringworm, wear long-sleeved smocks or pull-on sleeves.
- When feeding kittens, 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 soiled, shake any solid matter from the towel into the trash and place it in the laundry hamper.

### Work surfaces, feeding supplies

- 409 Cleanser is the only approved cleanser for the nursery.
- Clean work surfaces with 409 when soiled, and then wipe down with disinfectant or diluted bleach.
- Surfaces can be cleaned with Clorox wipes, or other cleaning wipes. These are not to be used in place of disinfectant.
- Bleach diluted at 1:10 ratio, one part bleach to ten parts bleach, can be used in place of disinfectant.
- All surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected between litters. This includes but is not limited to: scales, pens and markers, snuggle discs, work surfaces, 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 dish pan to soak, and wash before using again.

### **Carriers, cages and collapsible crates**

- 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 away to prevent the possible spread of contagion.

### **Nursery areas**

- When cleaning supplies are needed, check the storage room. If we are out of something, inform the Operations Assistant.
- Like other supplies in the nursery, cleaning supplies are not shared between the nursery rooms. Do not take brooms, mops, cleaners or disinfectants, or any other supplies, from one room to another.
- If litter and food spills on the floor, sweep and/or mop to clean sufficiently.
- 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.
- Trash cans with covers will be used in all nursery rooms. Keep trash covered so we don't attract flies, and also to keep bad odors contained as much as possible.
- When trash cans are full, remove the full trash bag and replace with a clean one. Take trash outside to the dumpster at the end of your shift.
- When the recycle containers are full, remove the full bag and replace 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.

### **Laundry and Dishes—see Section 15**

## 15. DISHWASHING & LAUNDRY

### Dishwashing

**It is the responsibility of all nursery staff and volunteers to make sure dishes are washed every day. All feeders are required to wash dishes when needed.**

- Each nursery room has its own dishes; they should not be comingled with dishes from other nursery rooms for washing.
- Nursery rooms A and B and the overflow room will use the dishwasher and sink in the kitchen; nursery room C will use the dishwasher and sink in that room.
- Each room will have its own dish pan for soaking dirty dishes before washing.
- Each dish pan will be filled with bleach and water at a ratio of 1:30, bleach to water.
- Try not to leave dishes soaking in the bleach too long. When there are enough dishes to load the dishwasher, rinse them and start the dishwasher.
- Pull apart syringes and plungers, bottle caps and nipples before placing in dish pan.
- Pour remaining KMR out of bottles in the trash before placing in dish pan.
- Wipe off any gruel from dishes in trash before placing in dish pan.
- Hand-wash all syringes, nipples, bottle caps—do NOT put in dishwasher.
- Rinse all dishes well to remove any solid material—food particles can clog the dishwasher and cause damage.
- If dishes are rinsed properly, there should be no need to put anything through the garbage disposal in the kitchen. Take particular care that small syringes, nipples, etc., do not accidentally fall into the disposal as this can cause damage.
- There is no garbage disposal in the nursery sink. Do not wash any type of solid matter, no matter how small it is, down the sink as this can clog the pipes.
- It is NEVER, under any circumstances, allowable to put litter pans or litter scoops in any dishwasher. Litter pans and scoops can be cleaned outside if necessary.
- When cycle is done, carefully inspect the dishes for proper cleaning. If any dishes still have food residue on them, rewash by hand.
- Put away clean dishes in labeled areas carefully so that other feeders can find clean dishes easily and quickly.
- Remember that APA staff and volunteers besides the BB team use the kitchen for preparing their meals. Be respectful and keep the kitchen counters and sinks clean at all times.
- Any food or beverages brought in for human consumption should be put in the kitchen refrigerator and not in any nursery refrigerator.

## Laundry

**The APA cleaning staff will come to the nursery a couple of times each day to help keep laundry done. However, it is the responsibility of all nursery staff and volunteers to make sure the laundry is washed, dried, folded and put away properly every day—we cannot rely solely on the cleaning staff.**

- Try to check the washer after each shift to make sure no wet laundry is left too long. Wet laundry left too long can mildew.
- Each nursery room has its own laundry items. Laundry from each room is to be kept separate and returned to the room it came from when clean.
- Shake out all laundry into the trash before putting into the hamper. No solid matter should be left on laundry in the hamper.
- Solid matter left on laundry can attract flies and spread contagion.
- Put soft toys in the washer; put hard toys in the dishwasher. Hard toys can get caught in the washer and cause damage.
- Shake laundry into the trash a second time before putting in the washer. Solid matter can damage the washer.
- Pack laundry in washer loosely; do not overfill. This can prevent laundry from being sufficiently washed.
- Use one cup of bleach with every load of laundry.
- If used rice socks are being washed, throw away the rice before placing the socks in the hamper. Do not wash socks with rice in them.
- Check the lint filter in the dryer before starting and clean when necessary.
- Always clean the lint filter after taking out dried laundry.
- Fold laundry and store properly where it belongs so others can find it easily.

The nursery does several loads of laundry every day, which is far more laundry 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 our washer and dryer, so please be diligent about proper usage.

## 16. STAGES OF KITTEN DEVELOPMENT

A kitten is born deaf and blind. The ears of the kitten 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 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.

- 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.
- If eyes seem to be pus-filled or sealed shut, alert the Nursery Manager or Operations Assistant.
- 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.

## APA Neonatal Foster - Feeding & General Care Guidelines

Category	Kitten Age	Frequency of Feedings	Max. Time Between Feedings
I	0-2 weeks	Every 2 hours	3-4 hours overnight
II	2-3 weeks	Every 3 hours	4-5 hours overnight
III	3-4 weeks	Every 4 hours	5-6 hours overnight
IV	4-6 weeks	Every 4-5 hours	6-7 hours overnight
V	6+ weeks	Every 6-8 hours	10 hours overnight

Age	Weight Range*	Feeding Guidelines
At birth	90-110g	KMR Formula from bottle or oral syringe. Mixed 2 parts water to 1 part formula. (Newborns transition from 8:1 -> 4:1 -> 2:1 over the first week). Formula should be warmed, and kitten wrapped up and warm.
1 week	180-220g	Feed kitten upright or on belly, NOT on their back. Approximate amount per feeding: 1 week => 3-4 cc's per 100 gram of body weight 2 weeks => 5 cc's per 100 gram of body weight 3 week => 5-6cc's per 100 gram of body weight  Stimulate kitten w/ cotton ball or non-alcohol baby wipe to help with urine/stool movement. Keep area clean & dry after stimulation.
2 weeks – 4 weeks	220-400g	
4 weeks - 6 weeks	400-700g	
7 weeks – 8 weeks	700-900g	Transition to gruel (wet food mixed with water). Serve warmed. Provide bowl of kitten kibble and fresh water at all times. Many transitioning kittens enjoy warmed baby food (chicken, turkey, w/ no spices, onion or garlic) on a shallow dish. Syringe feed gruel (puree it to a smooth paste) when needed to maintain appropriate weight gain. As kitten begins to use the litter box, stimulation is no longer needed.
8weeks+	800g and up	Kitten should be eating wet food and kibble on own. Kitten should be using litter box.
Lactating Momma & Kittens		Feed lactating mother a high quality wet kitten food. Have a bowl of dry kitten kibble and water available at all times. You do not need to stimulate the kittens, as the mother does it. Nursing kittens can start to eat some gruel and kibble at 3-4 weeks. Provide a litter box with non-clumping litter near kittens at 3-4 weeks.

\* Weight ranges are averages, and kittens may be underweight. More important is for the kitten to gain weight consistently with each feeding.

### Care Guidelines

- Keep kittens in a **safe** and secure spot, isolated from other pets for up to 10 days.
- Keep kittens **warm and dry** at all times. Provide a heat source – heating pad, snuggle disc, rice with sock. Do not give babies a bath unless you can be certain the kitten will be 100% warm & dry afterwards.
- **Weigh kittens** using a digital food scale (grams). Frequency: bottle babies 3x/day, gruel babies 2x/day, nursing babies 1-2x/day. Keep track of weights. You may need to weigh kitten more if sick, underweight, etc.
- For mild/occasional diarrhea, mix unflavored Pedialyte and/or Acidophilus into formula. Canned pumpkin can be mixed into gruel.

### Kitten Developmental Milestones

- Kittens weigh about 3 to 4 ounces at birth (90-110g); they should double their body weight in the first 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 in 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 they will develop teeth.
- At 4-5 weeks they will start weaning & be ready for "gruel" (a combination of water or formula with canned kitten food) and kitten kibble (once they have their teeth). They will start using the litter box.
- At 6 weeks they will get their first vaccinations from APA!
- At 8 weeks and 2lbs. kittens can be spayed/neutered & are ready for adoption.

For any questions or concerns about your kitten's weight or general development, please contact the Neonatal Program Foster Mentors at [bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org)

For any signs of illness, (sneezing, diarrhea, not eating, runny eyes or nose, hairloss, urinating out of the box, losing weight, flea infestation, etc), request an illness exam using the [Wellness Appointment Request Form](#).

**CALL THE CLINIC HOTLINE at 512-552-2042 for Medical Emergencies (fading kitten, vomiting, white/bloody/black diarrhea, rapid weight loss, labored breathing, red/brown urine). This hotline is staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week.**

## Bottle Baby Foster Training Received

Frequency of feeding depending on age:

0-2 weeks: every 2 hours, overnight 4 hours

2-3 weeks: every 3 hours, overnight 5 hours

3-4 weeks every 4 hours, overnight 6 hours

4-6 weeks: every 4-5 hours, overnight 6-7 hours

6+ weeks: every 6-8 hours, overnight 10 hours

### Basic Bottle Feeding

-How to mix KMR

-What ratio kitten is taking (4:1, 2:1, etc)

-Mix in Pedialyte if kitten has diarrhea

-Mix in Acidophilus if kitten has diarrhea

### Stimulation (if Bottle Baby)

-Use cotton ball, non-alcohol baby wipe, or wash cloth to stimulate

-Keep area clean & dry after stimulation

### Basic Gruel Feeding

-How to mix gruel

-How to clean messy gruel eaters

### Syringe Feeding

Weighing- Weigh bottle babies 3x a day, gruel babies 2x a day and keep track of weight

-May need to weigh kitten more often if kitten is sick, underweight etc.

### Heat source available

-Heating pad

-Snuggle Safe

-Sock with rice etc.

Baths- Do not give babies a bath unless you can be certain the kitten will be 100% warm & dry afterwards. Always make sure kitten is 100% dry after bathing!

Medical Emergencies- Contact the APA medical technicians at 512-552-2042 if you see:

-Head Slumped/body limp/unable to rouse (Fading Kitten Syndrome)

-Diarrhea that is white, bloody, black or has worms in it

- Not eating - Weight loss- should lose no more than 5 grams between feeding

- Lethargic

- Heavy/labored breathing

- Red/Brown Urine

- Flea infestation

- Vomiting and diarrhea (Pan Leuk Virus)

E-Mail med techs with other less urgent concerns at [medtechs@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:medtechs@austinpetsalive.org)

### Quarantine/ Isolation

- isolate your incoming kittens from any other cats/kittens/fosters in the home for 10 days.

I have been trained on all of these topics by a member of the Bottle Baby Team. I have read & understand this document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foster Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Trainer Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Neonatal Foster Manager – (Name)**

25-30hrs/week, up to 35hrs/week during peak season and planning times.

- Leads the APA program of fostering up to 1400 neonatal kittens and 100 pregnant/nursing mom cats into over 400 foster homes each season.
- Oversees a team of 5+ volunteers concentrated on these efforts
- Coordinates with Rescue, Transport, Clinic on incoming litters going straight to a foster.
- Coordinates with Nursery on litters in the nursery and ready for foster
- Manages an ongoing foster database, and oversees the plea'ing for fosters, verifying of fosters, and matching of fosters to appropriate litters.
- Manages the transfers appointments and training for new fosters taking kittens.
- Creates and maintains all foster program documentation that are provided to the neonatal fosters..
- Coordinates with the Cat Foster team on overall foster program, common fosters, and transition of kittens to the cat program at 6 wks old
- Provides daily EOD reports to neonatal foster team, and weekly/monthly reporting and analysis to APA cat leadership team.

### **Neonatal Foster Mentor Manager – (Name)**

10hrs/week, up to 15hrs/week during peak season and planning times.

- Manages the APA program of mentoring over 400 fosters who take in up to 1400 neonatal kittens and 100 pregnant/nursing moms each season.
- Oversees a team of up to 6 foster mentors who manage the [bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org) emails and provide foster support.
- Sends welcome email with litter information, important reminders, and required actions
- Assigns mentors to the fosters for additional follow-up throughout the process.
- Focus and feedback on priority fosters including BB fosters, medical needs fosters, large litter fosters etc.
- Communicate with Neonatal Foster Manager on status of fosters/kittens/mentor program.

### **Neonatal Foster Mentors – need to fill with approx. 5 experienced fosters**

5-7hrs/week for each of the experienced fosters

- Answer the [bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org](mailto:bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org) email address on scheduled shifts, providing mentoring support and answering fosters questions.
- Email assigned priority fosters 1-2x/week to check on kittens eating, weighing, medical concerns, ringworm etc.
- Communicate with Mentor Manager on status of fosters/kittens.

### **Neonatal Database Records Coordinator – (Name)**

5-10hrs/week

- Maintaining an up-to-date neonatal database of all incoming litters, and matching/keeping records updated in Petpoint.
- Coordination with Nursery Manager on records updates for litters in the nursery
- Coordination with Foster team on records updates for litters

### **Pregnant/Nursing Mom Foster Coordinator – (Name)**

15hrs/week during peak of nursing mom season

- Coordinate the APA program of fostering over 100 pregnant/nursing momma cats each season
- Maintain a database of nursing mom fosters, lining up fosters in advance of the season
- Match incoming pregnant/nursing moms to ready fosters
- Provide mentoring support/follow-up to fosters throughout the nursing mom process
- Coordinate with Nursery Mgr and Neonatal Foster Mgr on the addition of incoming BB's with open nursing moms
- Coordinate with Neonatal Database Records on maintain Nursing Moms records in Petpoint / Neonatal Database.

### **Neonatal Foster Pleas / Matching Coordinator – (Name)**

5-7hrs per week during peak of neonatal season

- Role will focus on ready to go kittens in the nursery, and/or kittens already in foster needing moving.
- Coordinate with Neonatal Foster Manager on litters ready to be plea'd /matched to fosters.
- Gather up to date photos and litter information, then create and send foster pleas
- Assist w/ matching of litters to the fosters, and follow-up communication with fosters to confirm transfers
- Assist with additional screening of new fosters , and matching to older kittens /transfers from other fosters.

**Neonatal New Foster Transfers/Training Helpers– need to have 3-4 people who can cover on an as needed basis**

1-2hours per week as needed

- Experienced nursery feeders/fosters willing to do transfer appointments (30-40mins) for NEW fosters taking kittens.
- Involves a thorough review and training on kitten care and the key steps of the fostering process
- Also to help lead occasional group training for new fosters wanting to do BB's

**Project/Other Help Needed:**

**BB Foster Packets – need 1-2 people to take this on**

- Coordinate with fundraising team to secure funding/supplies to put together foster packets to sell (at cost) to new fosters of Bottle Babies. The packet would include: formula, bottle/syringe sets, heating pad (non-auto shut off), digital scale, small litter box, fleece blanket, etc
- Assemble packets and have available in the nursery storage for new BB foster transfers.

# APA Neonatal Foster Program – Food Recommendations

Here's what we're usually feeding the neonatal kittens in our nursery:

Kittens 0-3 weeks	Kittens 3-6 weeks (once their teeth have come in)		
			
<p>FORMULA – mixed 2:1 (2 parts water to 1 part formula. Serve warmed Kitten should take in 5cc's for every 100grams of body weight, per feeding.</p> <p>KMR is available through the nursery at \$12/pound. Bottles/nipple sets are \$1.50</p>	<p>GRUEL - Canned kitten food mixed with formula or water until applesauce consistency. Serve warmed</p> <p>SYRINGE GRUEL - Gruel that has been pureed until completely smooth with no lumps. Serve warmed</p> <p>Any brand/flavor of high quality kitten-specific wet food is fine, we have good success with the kittens liking the taste of Max Cat.</p>	<p>KIBBLE – Have kitten kibble available at all times, along with a bowl of fresh water as well.</p> <p>Royal Canin Babycat (Stage 1) is an ideal kibble for the 3 week old kittens who have just got their teeth in and need to learn to eat on their own. It's the tiniest of kibble, and is like 'candy corn' to the little ones!</p> <p>By 5-6 weeks old, you can transition to any good quality brand of kitten kibble, such as Nutro Max Cat, or Iams Pro Active Health.</p>	<p>BABY FOOD – Transitioning kittens (3-4 weeks old) that are learning to eat by themselves usually enjoy warmed baby food</p> <p>Use chicken or turkey that has NO onion, garlic, or spices.</p> <p>Baby food can be served on a shallow dish, or given by syringe where needed.</p>

- Adding a bit of canned pumpkin to the gruel or baby food can help with minor diarrhea/loose stool
- Nutri-Cal kitten supplement by Tomlyn can be added to gruel or baby food to provide an extra calorie boost for those kittens slow to gain weight.

**WEIGH YOUR KITTENS BEFORE AND AFTER EVERY FEEDING TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE GAINING WEIGHT WITH EACH FEED!!!**