



Foster Info & Application

The purpose of this document is to give you an *overview* to help you and your family as you consider fostering for CatzRus. Once you join the team, you will receive more comprehensive training.

How to Apply to be a Foster Parent:

Read this document carefully. Once you feel you are ready to commit to fostering, please complete the application section and email it to brenda@catzrus.co.za. Please also send a WhatsApp to Brenda on 084 542 7251 to ask me to check my email (I check WhatsApp more often than email!)

Here's what some of our Foster Parents say about fostering for CRU:

~ I still can't believe we get to do this. I've always felt so sad when I see homeless cats and kittens. To be part of a group that really makes a difference is just amazing! The best part is watching the kittens 'come alive' in our home as they learn to trust and as they get the care they need to thrive.~

~ The best feeling is watching the little kitten that you nurtured and helped thrive instantly click with their forever human. ~

~ The moment when the little soul you helped is getting ready to leave you on their forever adventure is both the happiest and the saddest moment in your life. And you do it again and again, because your few tears are someone else's years of joy! ~

~ Is it hard to give up your fosters? Yes. It's very hard. But what's even harder is knowing that keeping one kitten means one less space to help another one. ~

~ In animal rescue it sometimes feels like we are only reaching the tip of the iceberg, but for each little one we help, we change their entire future. There is no better feeling than knowing we are changing so many lives for the better. ~

An overview of CatzRus

CatzRus is a foster-based pro-life registered rescue organisation. We are a team of volunteers who take needy cats and kittens into our own homes until we can find suitable forever families for them. Even our board members are unpaid volunteers and have their own full-time jobs outside of CatzRus.

We have a number of vets who recognise the good work we do and kindly offer their services to us pro-bono. Our focus area (where we believe we can do the most good) is orphaned and abandoned kittens who are young enough to tame and rehome.

We have various procedures and policies that have been carefully and thoughtfully developed over a number of years. In order for us to be a rescue team that works well together, we all need to be familiar with these
– so please read on!



What will I be expected to do as a foster volunteer?

Obviously **kitten-care** will be your primary responsibility. This will involve providing age-appropriate food, daily fresh water, cleaning the environment and litter box(es). During potty-training, kittens are especially fussy about litter-box cleanliness. You will need to monitor their health and let us know *quickly* about *any* concerns. They will need to be taken to the vet for vaccinations, de-worming and any other health issues. By spending as much time with them as possible you will help them learn to love and trust humans. Be prepared to play lots and laugh lots!

We ask that you **keep the kittens separate** from your own family pets, especially at first. Be aware that you will be bringing un-vaccinated kittens into your home. Your own cats should be up-to-date with their booster shots. Please be very careful if you have dogs. Even if they are used to cats, they can react differently to kittens. We've had kittens killed by 'cat-friendly' dogs.

Regarding costs and vets: Vet bills are covered by CatzRus – but **only** if you use our vets and speak to us before any out-of-the-ordinary vet visits. We have vets scattered around Pretoria. You will need to be willing to drive to the CatzRus vet who is closest to you (vet list available on request). You will need to be able to pay for cat litter and kitten food (we prefer Royal Canin / Hills (dry kibbles only – wet food causes runny tummies). We will share out any donations, but we can't guarantee that we'll be able to help with kitten food. We also cannot cover transport costs to and from the vet.

Communication with the CatzRus board members is very important. We also like it when our foster volunteers are active on the WhatsApp groups, sending occasional updates. You will need to be able to send and receive pictures and info by WhatsApp in order to be an effective member of the team.

Admin is an essential part of any effective organisation and you will need to be willing to do the necessary. All our documents are available on Google Drive. You will be sent the link once you join the team. Basically, you will need to complete an intake form at each intake. Each kitten has an A4 'CatFacts' form that tracks foster and adoption info and is sent to the board at adoption. You will need to interact with adopters and get them to fill in our adoption documents, and gather info from them.

Follow-up is very important. After adoption, you will need to make sure the cat is fully vaccinated, sterilised by 6 months and that the microchip is transferred into the name of the adopter. The foster process is only complete once all this has been done. Follow-up is actually quite fun, because you also get update photos of your baby in their new home.

Some FAQ's

1. What do I do if someone asks me to help with a homeless cat or kittens?

Once it becomes known that you are part of a cat rescue organisation, expect people to come to you with lots of cats and kittens that need to be rescued, fostered and re-homed. Unfortunately we cannot save them all, and the board members get the tough job of deciding where to use our resources for the greatest good. We ask that you contact one of the board members privately (not on the WhatsApp groups) and discuss the request with them. They keep track of our capacity. Our treasurer has the final word. Please do not scour Facebook or the internet for needy kittens because we already get more requests than we can handle.

We do not support or enable back-yard breeding. Wherever possible we ensure the mother cat gets sterilised. We are not equipped to deal with adult cats or feral kittens too old to tame. CatzRus will help whenever and wherever we can within the scope of our mission. To help some properly, we cannot say 'yes' to them all. Wherever possible we work with our sister rescue organisations for trapping and releasing of ferals and other kitty needs outside our scope.

2. Will I be able to choose how many and how often I foster?

We don't split litters because they need their siblings for proper social development. We do not mix litters if possible, to minimise the spread of diseases. You'll be able to volunteer to take in a kitty family when your home is open. Watch the Noticeboard group and volunteer when you are able to.

3. What are the chances of me getting 'stuck' with my kittens if no-one wants to adopt them?

If you take nice photos, and keep communicating with us when your kittens are adoption-ready, you will not struggle to re-home them. We re-home ±300 cats and kittens each year. The adult mom-cats can take a bit longer to find homes, but even there, we don't struggle too much. We have a strong advertising network and pass on all the 'leads' on our 'adoption leads group'. You then send photos of your kittens to potential adopters. If they are interested, you take it from there.

4. Will I need to invite strangers into my home to view the kittens?

Yes – but we have a very comprehensive adoption application form that you will ask potential adopters to fill in before coming to visit you. By the time they have gone to that effort, and you have spoken on the phone, you will feel you know them. Do not give out your address before you are comfortable. You could ask a friend or family member to be present for the visit if you wish.

5. Isn't it hard to give away the kittens? I'm not sure I could do it...

We probably get this question the most! Yes – but it's even harder knowing that there are kittens out there who need help. Each time you give away a kitten, you can help the next one. Please Google the KittenLady's videos on 'Foster Failing' and 'Goodbye is the goal of fostering'. She says it best!

6. How long will the kittens stay with me?

Our adoption age is around 12 weeks, depending on vet advice and board approval.

7. What if one of my foster kittens gets sick or injured or even dies?

As fun and rewarding as fostering can be, it also involves a lot of hard work and the potential for some serious heartache. Kittens, especially bottle babies, are very fragile. While we will do our best to give sickly kittens to experienced stay-at-home foster parents, there will be times when your kittens are ill. Diarrhea is a common ailment. You will need to clean a lot of litter boxes! You are quite literally taking these kittens' lives into your own hands. If you work full-time, there may be days that your work day will need to be flexible enough that you can either take them with you, or come home at lunch time to check on them. We will support and help you as much as possible, but you need to be flexible and resilient enough to cope with some of the tough times that will inevitably come with the foster territory. Also, please note that the ultimate responsibility for the cats/kittens remains with CatzRus we reserve the right to make decisions for their good if necessary.

8. What if I need to go away in the middle of fostering?

If possible either don't volunteer to foster over that time, or let us know well in advance when you will need a foster baby-sitter. If you have a sudden emergency, we will make a plan.

9. What equipment will I need?

A room or a large pet tent in which they can be isolated from other family pets, especially at first. A secure cat carrier for transport to and from the vet. Age appropriate food (Kitten milk or Royal Canin or Hills dry kibbles) and bowls or bottles. Cat litter and litter boxes. You will need enough litter box space that the whole kitty family can hold bathroom parties with some space to spare. You'll understand once you experience it... We suggest F10 veterinary disinfectant for cleaning, especially if there is diarrhea or other illness. You will need barriers on your windows and doors to prevent escapees – kittens can squeeze through the smallest spaces. It happens often – be aware! We suggest covering carpets in a kitten room with sheets or towels for easy cleaning. Toys are fun, but be aware of dangers such as strings that can entangle kittens. Cheap toys are best!

10. What about fund-raising?

We have various initiatives during the year such as raffles. Our big annual fund-raiser is a cat theme art show. We hope you will be able to participate and help with some fund-raising too.

We hope you will find fostering and saving lives with CRU incredibly rewarding and fun!

Submission of the foster application implies that you have read and understand the above and that you will read our other info documents and will strive to be a 'team player' who will work together with us for the good of CatzRus and any cats and kittens that will come into your care.

CatzRus Foster Application (Please attach a copy of your ID and proof of residence.)

Contact Details

| | |
|---|--|
| Full name: | |
| ID number: | <small>(Please attach a copy of your ID)</small> |
| Contact Number: | e-mail address: |
| Alternative contact person: <small>(This is essential. If the unthinkable happens and you fall ill or are in an accident, we need to be able to contact someone to gain access to the kittens)</small> | |
| Physical address (where the kittens will be kept): <small>(Please attach a copy of your Proof of Residence. No foster cat or kitten may be transferred to another location or person without CatzRus permission)</small> | |

Fostering Experience

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Why do you want to be a foster parent? | | |
| What age kittens will you be comfortable with fostering: | | |
| Bottle babies (New born ±0–4 weeks) | | |
| Weaning/weaned kittens (±4–7 weeks) | | |
| Older kittens (7–13 weeks) | | |
| Mommy and babies | | |
| Will you be the primary caregiver to the foster kittens? | Yes | No |
| Do you have a full-time job? | Yes | No |
| If yes, who will be taking care of foster kittens when you are at work? | | |
| Do you have any experience in fostering kittens? | Yes | No |
| Do you have any experience in medicating kittens? | Yes | No |
| Do you have any experience in bottle feeding kittens? | Yes | No |

Other Pets

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| Do you have other pets? | Yes | No |
| Number of Cats | | |
| Number of Dogs | | |
| Please indicate age and breed (or size) of your dogs: | | |
| Other (specify) | | |
| Will your existing pets adapt to fostering? <small>(Please think this through carefully. We have had foster kittens killed by dogs.)</small> | | |
| Do any of your pets have health issues? | Yes | No |
| Specify: | | |
| Are their vaccinations up to date? | Yes | No |
| Are your cats and dogs sterilised (spayed or neutered)? If not, please give reasons. | Yes | No |

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|--|-----|----|
| | | |
| Have you had any cat-related diseases in your home? (FIV, Leukaemia, FIP, Panleukopenia, ringworm, ear mites, snuffles etc.) | Yes | No |
| Please give details and dates | | |

Home and Family Environment

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Do you have children? _____ If so, what are their ages? | | |
| Will they understand to be gentle with tiny foster kittens? | Yes | No |
| Do you have a comfortable room/space where foster kittens can be kept separate if necessary. | Yes | No |
| Do you have permission and support from your landlord / house-owner / housemates / spouse / partner / family to keep foster kittens on the premises for an unspecified duration of time? | Yes | No |
| Once you volunteer to take in a foster litter, will you be willing and able to keep and care for the cat(s)/kitten(s) until they are adopted? (Usually within a few weeks, but sometimes longer.) | Yes | No |
| Do you have reliable transport and a secure cat carrier for vet visits? | Yes | No |
| Can you handle stressful situations (like kittens getting sick/dying) | Yes | No |
| Do you understand that you will work with people (fellow volunteers, potential adopters, etc.) too? Will you be willing to allow potential adopters to visit the kittens in your home? | Yes | No |
| Will you be able to participate on the WhatsApp groups, do the necessary admin, and send photos and updates of your foster kittens to help facilitate adoptions? | Yes | No |

Signature of Foster Applicant

Having read, understood and considered all of the above, I would like to apply to foster for CatzRus.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Spouse/partner/housemate/parent Indemnity

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| I _____ (your name and relationship to the applicant) support the above applicant in their wish to become a foster parent for CatzRus. I understand that we will become responsible for these little lives for the duration of their stay with us and that they will need a great deal of time and attention in order to thrive. I note that there will be some financial implications in terms of food and cat litter. I agree to keep any kitty family that we volunteer to take in for as long as is necessary, until they can be adopted. I realise that any medical emergency will need to be prioritised and I understand that, while CatzRus will do everything possible to support us through a kitty illness or injury, some heartache might be involved in being a foster volunteer. I thus confirm that I will not hold CatzRus responsible for the emotional state of and time spent by my spouse/partner/housemate/child in caring for foster kittens. | | |
| Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____ | | |

Landlord Permission (Please ask if you would like us to write a letter to your landlord)

If you do not own the place you are currently staying in, we will need you to confirm with your landlord that you are allowed to keep kittens on the premises for an undetermined, yet temporary, period of time.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| I (Landlord, house owner, housemate, spouse, partner) | | |
| hereby declare that I give permission for kittens to be fostered on this: | | |
| premises for an undetermined period of time (temporary). | | |
| Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____ | | |

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding the above.

We are POPI Act compliant. Our Policy is available on request or at www.catzrus.co.za. By signing, you give us permission to store and use your data as laid out in our policy.