

Cat Socialization Guidelines

Thank you, for coming out to the Southside SPCA and participating in cat socialization. Cat socialization is meant to be fun for you and your new feline friend. So here are a few tips and reminders to make your time together as enjoyable as possible.

Entering the Room

- As you first approach the cat room look through the window and observe the behavior going on before you enter
 - If the cats are behaving normally go right in
 - If you notice anything unusual like fighting, an injury, or a sick cat find a shelter staff member and report it immediately
- When you walk into the cat room please enter one person at a time. Open the door slowly using you knee as a guide (This will prevent any cats from leaving the room)
- Never turn your back on any animal when entering and when you are inside, close the completely door behind you

While in the Room

- The cats are very friendly and their first reaction will be to find out who you are. Crouch down slowly let you hand(s) go limp. Let the cat(s) sniff your hand
- If the cat feels comfortable around you it will rub up against your or maybe even give you a lick
- If a cat gets scared their first response will be to “freeze, flee, or fight”
 - If a cat freezes back away slowly or do not try to engage it anymore
 - If the cats flees please do not chase it or yell at it
 - **If the cat tries to fight please do not hurt it.** Try to back away as slowly as possible. If this doesn't work leave the cat room and talk to a shelter staff member about the encounter
- If the cat feels comfortable around you, you may now pet or brush it. You may sit on the floor or stand for this, it's up to you
- There should be toys, combs, and brushes in the room but if you cannot find them ask a shelter staff member to direct you to the supply room
- While you are petting the cat(s) some liked to be talked to
- When petting scratching under the chin, behind the ears, and right over the tailbone feels very nice
- If you notice a sick or injured cat please report this to a shelter staff member immediately

- Do not bring outside food or drink for the cats. Some of these cats have certain food allergies and may become sick as a result
- If a cat does manage to escape the cat room approach it only if you think you can catch it safely. If you think you or the cat might sustain injuries find another volunteer to help or find a shelter staff member.

Cat Responses

- When a cat feels that you are trustworthy it will lay on it's back showing it's stomach.
 - **Do not rub the stomach of any cat. Cats do not like this. This might result in scratches or bites**
- Do not pick up any cat that you are not familiar with.
 - Some cats are simply not comfortable being picked up
 - You might get unintentionally hurt by a cat trying to get down
 - Being picked up may provoke the "Three F's"
- If a cat is sleeping please do not wake it up. You may startle it and it might react by "freezing, fleeing, or fighting"

Exiting the Room

- When you leave the cat room try to leave it as tidy as possible. Clean the hair off the brushes and put them in the trash, also put the toys and brushes back where you found them.
- When you exit the cat room leave the same way you entered. With you back towards the door open it slowly and slip your body out. Your knee should be the last thing to leave the room and your back should never be to any of the animals.