

Welcome Home Furry Baby

So you've picked out your kitten (preferably two), now what? ... Let the training begin!

- Soon after the kitten arrives in your home, take him to the veterinarian for an exam, feeding recommendations, and the necessary vaccinations. Use a cat carrier for transporting him, both for his safety and for his sense of security. The carrier should become "standard operating procedure" during any trips away from home.
- Set up a nursery for the baby (or babies if you have adopted two). This should ideally be a small room with an easily cleaned floor. Provide a bed, a litter box, food and water (not near the litter box), items to scratch on, and safe toys.
- Initiate a schedule of feeding, playing, and handling to provide the kitten with the structure of regular activities. Turning on a small nightlight will be his cue that it is "time for bed" and will also help him navigate in the room during the night. Be sensitive to the kitten's need for sleep and watch that children let the baby sleep undisturbed when he is tired out.
- Handle your kitten gently and frequently for short periods of time. During these sessions slowly incorporate touching around the eyes, ears, paws, etc. as if doing a veterinary exam. This will be good practice for the future.
- Work with the kitten in his nursery until he is regularly using his litter box. Gradually expand his territory by letting him explore adjoining rooms under your watchful eye.
- Be prepared for your kitten's sense of adventure and curiosity. Secure dangerous areas like the dryer and washing machine for his safety. Direct the kitten to acceptable play and scratch items and away from unacceptable ones. When the youngster is under three months of age, supervised play is best in areas where he could get hurt or damage something of value to you.
- The more you involve your kitten in activities and interactions with others, the more likely he will respond without fear or defensiveness as he grows older. Always treat him with kindness and respect for his "cat-ness".

Remember that kittens grow up very fast and that patience during these early months will pay off later. And...have fun...it's what kittens do best!

Papa Victoria. Welcome Home Furry Baby. CatsInternational.org. Retrieved September 24, 2013, from http://www.catsinternational.org/articles/all_about_kittens/welcome_home_baby.html.