



Play is vital for foster cats' wellbeing. Whether their stay is long or short, physical and mental stimulation helps them thrive. Engaging toys satisfy natural instincts like hunting and exploring while keeping them active. Below are toy suggestions to create a fun, enriching environment for your foster cat!

Interactive Toys

- **Feather Wands & String Toys:** These toys mimic the movement of prey, triggering the cat's natural hunting instincts. Using these toys engages your foster cat in interactive play, but be sure to supervise them to avoid them accidentally getting tangled or ingesting any pieces.
- **Laser Pointers:** A laser pointer can engage your foster cat in energetic, high-speed chases. Be sure to finish the session with a tangible toy they can "catch" to avoid frustration.

Solo Toys

- **Chase Toys:** Lightweight balls, springs, or stuffed mice satisfy hunting instincts through batting and carrying.
- **Catnip Play:** Offer catnip-stuffed toys or "marinated" soft toys (soak in catnip overnight). Note: Not all cats respond, and overstimulated cats may react strongly.
- **Puzzle Feeders:** Combine meals with mental stimulation using store-bought or DIY versions (see our handout for ideas).

Playtime Tips

- **Create a Routine:** It can be helpful to set aside specific times to play (before or after a meal, before bed, right when you wake up) and create a daily routine.
- **Vary the Play:** Use different toys and games to keep your foster cat's interest high. Switch out toys regularly, and keep some hidden to rotate into and out of their playtime.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Praise and offer treats when your foster cat engages with toys. Positive reinforcement helps them associate play with rewards, encouraging them to interact more.

Monitor Play and Keep It Safe

Always supervise playtime, especially when using interactive toys like string or laser pointers, to ensure your foster cat's safety. After play sessions, store toys away safely so your foster cat doesn't accidentally ingest small parts or chew on something they shouldn't.



Enrichment isn't just about toys—it's about creating an environment where your foster cat feels mentally and physically stimulated.

Scratching Posts & Pads

Scratching is essential for cats—it maintains claws and stretches muscles. Offer various scratchers (sisal, cardboard, or carpet) to protect furniture. The foster team provides cardboard scratchers (one per cat, as they can't be disinfected) and sometimes donated carpeted ones when available.

Climbing & Hiding Spaces

- **Vertical Space:** Install shelves, cat trees, or window perches for climbing and observing - this builds confidence and security.
- **Hiding Spots:** Offer cozy beds, boxes, or tunnels for safe retreats. Ask the foster team for extra beds if needed!

Window Views

Create a secure viewing spot for bird/squirrel watching—great entertainment for fosters! Ensure windows are escape-proof.

DIY Enrichment

- **Paper Bags & Boxes:** Cats love exploring paper bags and boxes! Leave a few around and watch your foster cat have a blast.
- **Hide-and-Seek Treats:** Hide treats or kibble inside puzzle feeders or in various spots around the room to encourage natural foraging behavior.
- See our DIY Cat Enrichment handout for more DIY puzzle feeders and toys!

Mental Stimulation & Training

- **Training:** Use treats to teach commands (sit, high-five) in short 1-2 minute sessions, building to 5 minutes.
- **Scent Enrichment:** Offer cat-safe herbs (catnip, silvervine) or request foster team scents (prey/calming varieties). We provide safe scent options and usage guidance.

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