

## **Bringing a Cat Home from HSCC**

When a cat leaves HSCC, they are experiencing a big transition in their life and will need your help to feel secure. It is important to allow your cat to have time to get to know you, your household, and routine at their own pace. Here are some tips to help that transition go smoothly.



**Start with a safe room.** Starting your cat off in a “safe room” can ease the transition to a new home. It can be a small bedroom or bathroom, and should include a litter box and food/water, along with a bed or area where the cat can hide. If the cat is hiding, give them more time. If the cat is confident and coming out to greet you, s/he is ready to explore more of the home.

**Allow a slow transition time.** Cats can be very sensitive to changes, and the new people, animals, and smells can be very overwhelming. It can take several weeks for your new cat to become fully comfortable and show their true personality.

**Keep your household calm for the first week.** Spend time getting to know your cat and allowing your cat to get to know you. Inviting people over to meet your new cat will go best after a week or two of settling in.

**Follow a schedule right away.** Cats are creatures of habit and feel most comfortable when their schedule is predictable. Try to keep things like feeding times, exercise time, and bedtime consistent.

**Be your cat’s voice.** Speak up and advocate when your cat seems uncomfortable with others and tell people what to look for and how to read their body language.

**Enrichment is key.** Providing stimulating activities like interactive playtime, high places to climb to, window perches, and food puzzles will help your cat feel less anxious and aid in the bonding experience with you.

**Use only reward-based training.** Using aversives like spray bottles or physically punishing your cat will add to their fear of the new environment and you. Reward them for doing things you want them to do, and ignore or redirect behaviors you do not want.