



BE A KITTEN HERO!

BEST FRIENDS ANIMAL SOCIETY SCOUT PATCH PROGRAM

Every year, especially in the spring, communities across the nation brace themselves for the incoming litters of kittens that will be born. Shelters and rescues rely on volunteers and neighbors to help care for the young kittens, coming together to help achieve a time when “oopsie” litters are no longer something we must worry about.

This earned fun patch will help girls discover what challenges kittens face, connect with the importance of being a part of the solution, and take action by stepping up to care for a kitten in need. The program has three sections:

1. **DISCOVER** where the kittens are coming from.
2. **CONNECT** and learn directly from your local experts, leaders, and supporters.
3. **TAKE ACTION** within your community!

We recommend the number of activities to earn the patch per level as below:

- **Daisies & Brownies:** complete at least 3 activities, one from each section.
- **Juniors & Cadettes:** complete at least 4 activities, including each section.
- **Seniors & Ambassadors:** complete at least 5 activities, including each section.

We have compiled a Pinterest Board (<https://www.pinterest.com/bfas/>) where you can find ideas on how to complete the patch requirements, and on the last page you will find a summary of links found throughout this curriculum.

Patches are \$3 each and are available for pickup at the Best Friends West L.A. Lifesaving Center. **Leaders: Please compete [this patch survey](#) to receive your patch pickup confirmation and instructions (<https://tinyurl.com/kittenhero>).**

Program Contact: Christine Colvin, National Community Engagement Coordinator,
ccolvin@bestfriends.org

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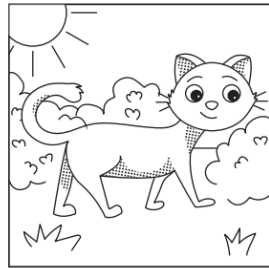
BE A KITTEN HERO!

First things first – WELCOME! Thank you for joining us as we work together to save the lives of kittens and cats in your community! Watch this one-minute video by clicking the orange phone to the right or [HERE](#).

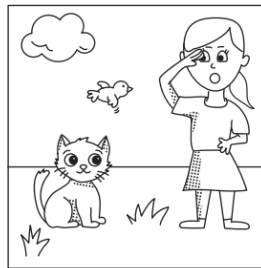


Section 1: DISCOVER where the kittens are coming from.

- **Activity A: Age This Kitten!**
 - Do you know how to tell how old a kitten is? A couple ways to make a good guess is by looking at the little creature’s ears, belly, and teeth.
 - Check out the Pinterest board for kitten aging tools!
 - Once you’ve learned a bit about guessing the age of a kitten, take another look at the welcome video and as a group decide how old all of the different kittens you saw might be.
- **Activity B: Mama cats have a lot of work to do to take care of their kittens!**
 - Visit our Pinterest board to access a coloring page we made for you! It tells the story of how a mama cat will leave her litter to go “shopping,” and signs to look for to know if she’ll be coming back shortly.
 - Here’s a sample of the coloring pages – all three pages can be found at the end of this curriculum in addition to our Pinterest board.



The first thing to remember is that the mama cat could be out searching for food. She must keep herself well-fed so that she can feed her kittens enough milk for them to grow healthy. Even if the kittens are teeny tiny, the mama cat might be away for hours.



Without touching the kittens, find an adult to help you decide if they are in danger. If the kittens are injured, have an adult help you take them to a veterinarian right away.

- **Activity C: What is a community cat?** Research and define the following terms and answer the following questions:
 - Community cat (what is the difference between a community cat, a stray cat, and a “feral” cat?)
 - Community cat colony:
 - Community cat caregiver:

- TNR or Trap-Neuter-Return (how does TNR help keep local cats healthy and cared for?)
- Resource exhaustion (how does resource exhaustion affect the population of a colony?)
- Vacuum effect (how does TNR help prevent the vacuum effect?)
- Ear-tip or tipped ear:
- Spay and neuter:
- What does a community cat need to be healthy and happy?
- **Activity D: Learn what it means to be a foster caregiver** and see why it is so helpful to step up this way.
 - What is the definition of being a foster for a kitten?
 - How old do you think you need to be to become a foster caregiver with a rescue or shelter?
 - What activities can you do if you might not yet be old enough to sign up yourself to foster for a rescue or shelter? (Hint, there are LOTS AND LOTS of things!)
 - Brainstorm ideas about how everyone in a household can help be a part of the foster animal's care while the adult takes on the responsibility becoming the "official" foster with the organization. There's a role for everyone in the family, and the kittens will love the enrichment each person provides!
- **Activity E: Meet a local kitten** and make them a star!
 - Choose a kitten that's available for adoption on your local animal shelter or rescue organization's website and write a creative story about the kitten's background or an adventure that they have.
 - Think about capturing the kitten's personality; a great bio is a very important part of finding the right home for a pet!

Section 2: CONNECT and learn directly from your local experts, leaders, and supporters.

- **Activity A: Take a tour** of your local animal shelter or a rescue organization and meet a staff member or volunteer who works with cats. Ask them questions like:
 - How many cats come in every week?
 - What's a supply for cats that you need more of?
 - How can kids my age get involved in helping the cats and kittens who are cared for by the shelter?

-- Not sure where to go? Here's a list and map of Best Friends Network Partners:
[Network Partners Map](#)

- **Activity B: Speak to a kitten foster caregiver** and ask them what it is like to take care of such young cats.
 - Ask them questions like:
 - What supplies are needed?
 - How do you find the families who will adopt your foster kittens?
 - What do you wish people knew more about fostering kittens?
 - Need help finding a foster to speak to? We can connect you to a Best Friends Animal Society kitten foster! Let us know by reaching out to samanthab@bestfriends.org
- **Activity C: Learn about a kitten’s body language** and how to read the signs that they may be friendly, scared, or angry. What kind of ways can you interact with an animal that is showing these emotional signs?

CAT BODY LANGUAGE

Cats communicate with their eyes, ears and tails. By understanding how cats communicate you will be better able to predict and understand what a cat is feeling.



Content and friendly

Ears are up, forward and slightly outward.
Pupils are normal.
Tail is held high.



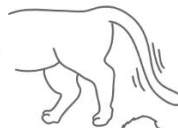
Alert

Ears are slightly rigid.
Eyes are wider.
Tail is slightly raised and may have a soft curve.



Annoyed/defensive

Ears are turned outward and flattened.
Pupils are dilated.
Tail is horizontal or down and twitching from side to side.



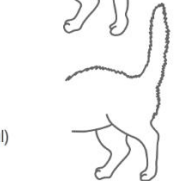
Anxious/fearful

Ears are turned back and down.
Pupils are fully dilated.
Tail is curved and puffed out.



Aggressive and fearful

Ears are flattened to head.
Pupils are greatly dilated.
Tail is straight up. (Aggressive)
Tail is straight up and puffed out. (Fearful)



- <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/cat-body-language-communication-and-expression>
- Take what you just learned about cat body language and pretend to be a kitten, communicating your mood with cat body language! See if your friends understand what you’re trying to tell them without using your words.

- **Activity D: Observe a cat** for 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes in the afternoon, and 10 minutes in the evening. What are they doing? Watch their ears, their eyes, their tail.
 - Did they seek attention from you?
 - How did they react if you interrupted their nap?
 - Were they playing with something? If so, what was it? What kind of play were they doing? (Running around doing “zoomies”, pouncing on another kitten, batting a fuzzy toy off a table?)
- **Activity E: Learn about community cats in your area!**
 - Go to a local shelter, rescue, or community cat caregiver or group in your area and ask them about caring for cats in your community. Ask them questions such as:
 - Do we have a TNR program in our area?
 - If yes:
 - How much does it cost a caregiver to get each cat in their colony spayed or neutered and vaccinated?
 - How many lives has this program saved?
 - How has this improved the lives of the cats, caregivers, and shelter/rescue workers?
 - If no:
 - Why not and what can we do to start one?
 - Does the community want a TNR program (include different perspectives such as lawmakers, community cat caregivers, shelter/rescue workers, and members of the public that may have different opinions)?
 - Has the community expressed the need for TNR to the decision makers in your community? Who are those decision makers (lawmakers, city council, animal services, etc.)?
 - Are there not enough resources like money or veterinarians? How could this be improved? For instance, TNR may save a city or county money in the long run by lowering the number of kittens that animal control must take in and care for.
 - What resources are there in our community for caregivers and community cats?
 - Is there financial assistance for spay, neuter, and vaccines?
 - Is there a pet pantry for assistance with cat food costs?
 - Is there a vet willing to take in community cats for veterinary care such as illness or injury? And is there financial assistance for this?

- What other resources might a community cat and their caregiver benefit from?
- How many colonies and caregivers are there and what percentage have been fully TNR'ed? If this is unknown, perhaps you could help collect this data!

Section 3: TAKE ACTION within your community!

- **Activity A: Be a Foster caregiver for kittens!**
 - Reach out to your local shelter or rescue and, with adults from your family or troop, offer to become a foster caregiver for them.
 - Bonus awesomeness is you'll likely get to help find the kitten their forever home – HOW AMAZING IS THAT?!
 - Alternate option: Use a plush or toy animal that you have at home to practice the responsibilities of being a foster caregiver. Maintain a schedule and check list for two days to make sure that you're providing the care that they need, including knowing when to feed, rest, give medicine, or socialize.
- **Activity B: Bring attention to your community's kittens!**
 - Record a kitten fostering PSA (public service announcement) video.
 - Write a script, record the message, and put it out there for fellow animal lovers to find.
 - If you choose to post the video online, work with your parents or guardians. Social media safety is important! Be mindful of any social media platform age restrictions.
 - Here's more info about how to put together your PSA!
 - [https://bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Kitten Hero How to create a PSA ver2.pdf](https://bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Kitten%20Hero%20How%20to%20create%20a%20PSA%20ver2.pdf)
 - Create a flier about what to do when someone finds kittens and share the flier with friends, family, and your community.
 - Think about places where people share stories and find information
 - Community bulletin boards, gathering places, and public spaces might be good spots for you to put up your flier (with permission, if needed)
 - We've got flier examples on the Pinterest board for you!
 - Ask your local shelter or rescue if you can practice your kitten photography on-site!
 - Learn about what aspects make for a compelling photograph (focus, framing, background, etc.), and see if they want to use your photos to help create bios.
 - Learn about the importance of animal photographs and bios as a component of the foster/adoption process, helping to publicize available kittens to potential adopters.

- Tips for building outdoor shelters: <https://alleycatadvocates.org/communitycat-care-center/creating-winter-shelters/>
- Spread the word about community cats!
 - Send a pop-up community cat kindness card from (page 11 of this activity book: https://www.lakesanimalfriendship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LAFS_2021_ExtPkg_AHO_v12_WEB.pdf) to write a kind message to someone while highlighting community cats.
 - Make posters for your school or neighborhood to share what you've learned about community cats.
 - This can include information on what community cats are, how TNR works, and how to help community cats in your area.
 - You can also include information for those who don't want community cats on their property- here is some information on humane deterrents that can keep cats safely away from areas where they are not welcome:
 - <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/solutions-cat-related-issues>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMywPSBD7CQ>
- Help collect data on community cats in your area- with your parent or guardians' permission you could post on Nextdoor or a neighborhood Facebook page to see who is caring for community cats in your area and how many are spayed/neutered. You can also collect and post information on resources in your area for these kitties and their caregivers!

YOU DID IT!

YOU ARE A KITTEN HERO!

The kittens in your community are meowing their thanks for your efforts in helping to make sure they're safe, healthy, and cared for. Best Friends Animal Society would love to hear all about how your patch project went – we may just want to give you a shout out in our magazine!

Leaders: submit this patch program completion form to receive details on getting your troop's patches: www.tinyurl.com/kittenhero Feel free to give feedback and ideas so we can continue to grow and improve our programming!

LINK SUMMARY

- **Pinterest board:** <https://www.pinterest.com/bfas/>
- **Patch completion survey:** www.tinyurl.com/kittenhero
- **Welcome Video:** <https://bestfriends.widen.net/s/d6phqvbskv/girl-scouts-foster-patch-welcome-video>
- **Coloring pages:** <https://bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Girl%20Scout%20Coloring%20Pages.pdf>
- **Best Friends Animal Society Resource Page:** <https://resources.bestfriends.org/>
- **Best Friends YouTube Channel:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuZUSKAxEB_1l9hBpxEK_zQ
- **Network Partners map:** https://bestfriends.org/network-partners-map?_ga=2.191713006.536441375.1672421767-2026508671.1631218107
- **Bio Writing:** <https://heartsspeak.org/pet-bio-writing-interview-strategy-infographic/>
- **Braided cat toy tutorial:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZa1Ut_diAA
- **Build a community cat shelter tutorials:**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8WKpIrhEvM>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpW69fNzjc>
 - <https://www.alleycat.org/resources/how-to-build-an-outdoor-shelter/>
 - <https://alleycatadvocates.org/communitycat-care-center/creating-winter-shelters/>
- **Community cat kindness card:**
 - https://www.lakesanimalfriendship.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LAFS_2021_ExtPkg_AHO_v12_WEB.pdf)
- **Kitten shower how-to:** <https://network.bestfriends.org/proven-strategies/covid-19/fundraising/virtual-kitten-shower-guide>
- **Cat body language:** <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/cat-body-language-communication-and-expression>
- **Foraging mat info:** <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/eOY30Qfn8YY?feature=share>
- **PSA How-To:** https://bestfriends.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/Kitten_Hero_How_to_create_a_PSA_ver2.pdf
- **Humane cat deterrents:**
 - <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/solutions-cat-related-issues>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMywPSBD7CQ>

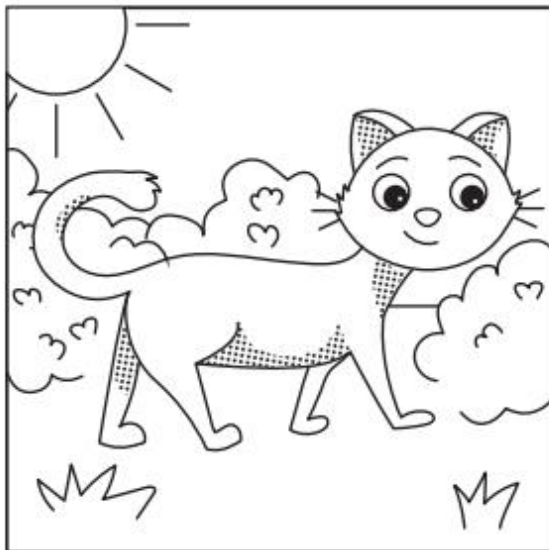
What to Do if You Spot Kittens Outside



Presented by

Best Friends Animal Society

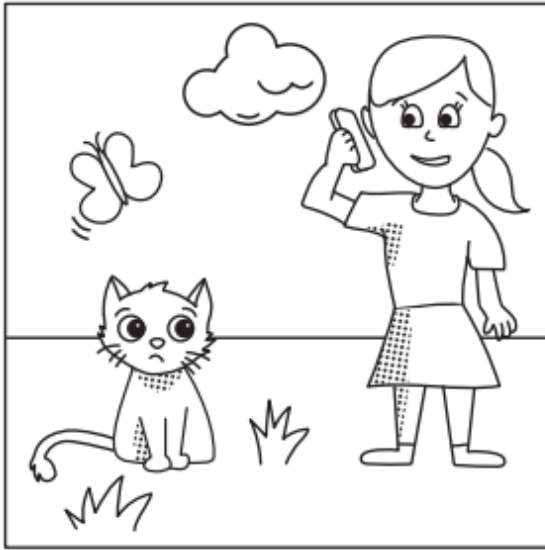
When you're outside exploring or playing with friends, it's possible that you could find a litter of kittens alone without a mama cat. If you think the kittens might be in danger, you may want to scoop them up and care for them or take them to the nearest animal shelter. But before you do that, wait and follow this guide because the kittens might not be in danger at all.



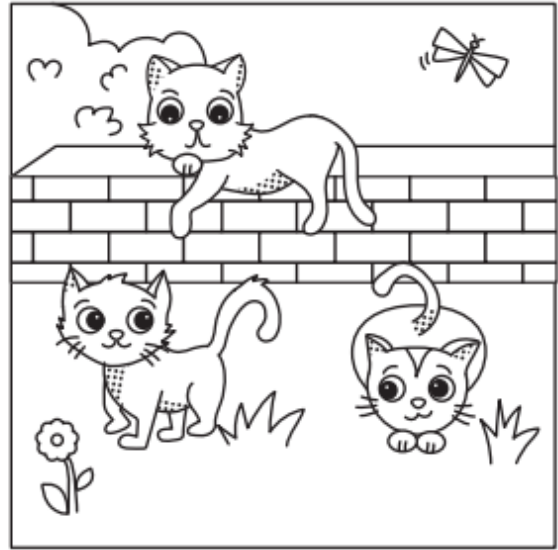
The first thing to remember is that the mama cat could be out searching for food. She must keep herself well-fed so that she can feed her kittens enough milk for them to grow healthy. Even if the kittens are teeny tiny, the mama cat might be away for hours.



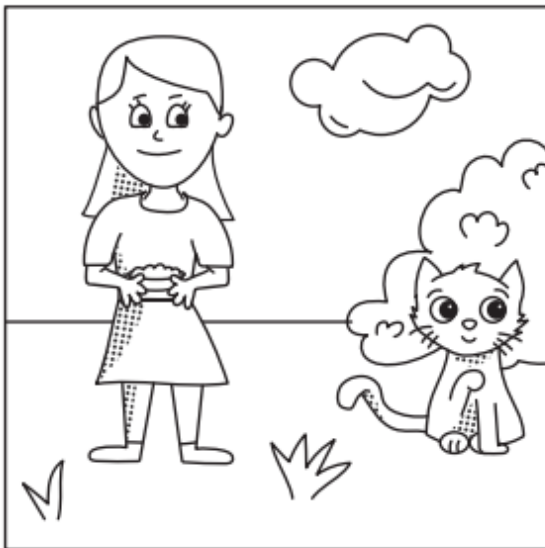
Without touching the kittens, find an adult to help you decide if they are in danger. If the kittens are injured, have an adult help you take them to a veterinarian right away.



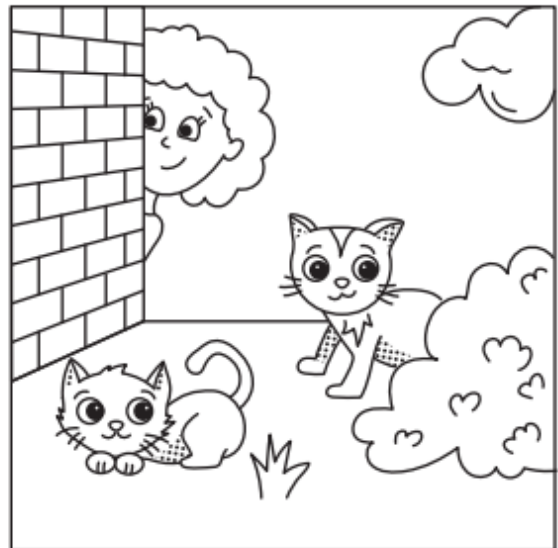
If the kittens look sick, dirty, wet, underweight or dehydrated, have an adult call a local rescue organization or community cat program to get advice on what you should do to help the kittens.



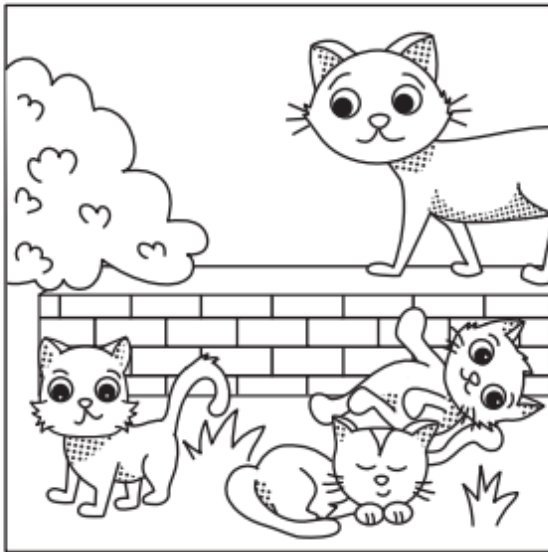
If they are clean, dry and healthy, leave them alone and wait to see if the mama cat returns. Move them only if they are in danger and, if you do move them, make sure to place them in a place where the mama can easily find them.



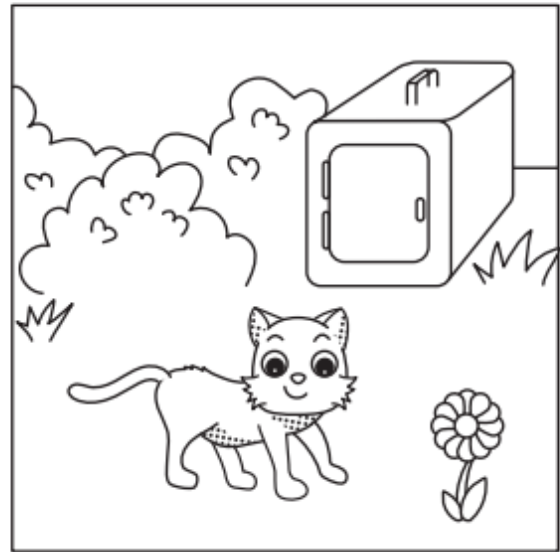
You may think it will help the mama come back if you leave her some food. But please don't leave any food near her kittens. Mama cats always keep their kittens away from food sources to protect them from other cats and dangerous predators.



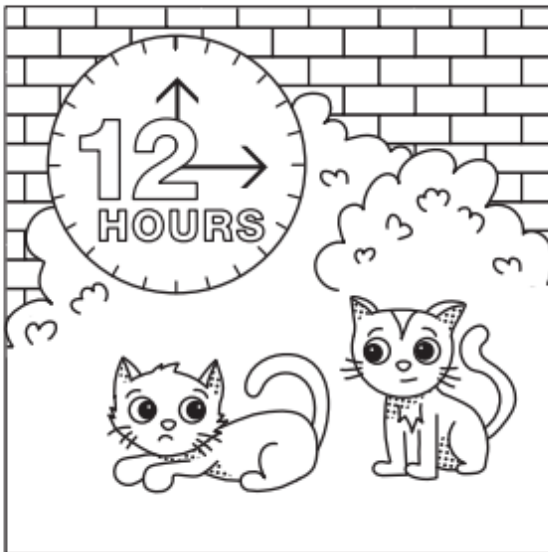
Try to stay as far away from the kittens as you can while keeping an eye out for their mom. The mama cat may shy away if she feels people are too close.



If the mama returns, it means that the kittens are safe! Leave them with her because she feeds them her milk, which is packed with nutrition and antibodies.



Once the kittens are weaned from their mama and eating on their own for about four weeks or are big enough for surgery (between two and three months old), humanely trap the whole family so they can be spayed or neutered.



If the mama cat does not come back after 12 hours, have an adult call a local shelter or rescue organization.



Thank you for your kindness to the animals and for helping to protect community kittens and cats.