

KITTY LITTER BOX PROBLEMS

Litter box problems can be incredibly frustrating to deal with, but there are a lot of actions we can take to help troubleshoot the situation. 90% of the time, if the cat is not using the litter box it is due to stress, we may see this when a cat first comes into a foster home and then as they decompress it ends.

Always consult with your case manager about litter box issues, if the cat is not toileting at all, if there is blood or if they are straining to toilet this could be a larger issue - please let us know right away.

Step one - clean litter box

The first steps are to make sure that the litter box is appealing to your cat. We want to aim to keep their litter box as clean as possible – scooping at least once a day.

Step two - add a litter box

We can also add an extra litter box. Cats will often like to wee in one litter box and poo in the other. Add one litter box per cat, plus one additional.

When placing multiple litter boxes, place them in different locations. If they are touching the cat may see this as one large tray.

Step three - change litter type & box location

If this doesn't resolve the issues, we need to look at litter type, litter box location and type. We can try different types of litter, try moving the litter box to different locations (where is the cat toileting outside of the litter box?) and even try changing the style of litter box your cat is using.

Step four - happy home with enrichment

We want to be sure that we're meeting our cats basic needs as we know that most litter box issues are related to stress. We do this through enrichment.

Enrichment is just a fancy word for meeting your cats needs.

Play – Learn what your cats play style and try to engage in play with your cat for a few minutes, a couple of times, morning and night. To replicate the natural hunting, feeding, grooming, sleeping cycle, feed your cat with an enrichment activity after your play session. Cats need to scratch, so provide lots of different options. Some cats prefer vertical scratches while some prefer horizontal scratches.

Safety – Our cats need access to lots of high spaces – cat trees, window shelves/hammocks, windowsills etc. Lots of cats actually feel a lot safer when they're up high. We also need to offer our cats lots of "hides" as a safe space. We can use things like calming spray/diffuser to help make these spaces feel even safer for our cats.

Food – the easiest way to add enrichment to an animals life if through their food. The first step is to ditch the food bowl and make meals fun.

Step 5 - calm support

Using calming aids like Zylkene and Feliway can support the cats to use litter boxes.

Step six - vet

Once all the above has been tried for 1-2 weeks we need to see a vet

