



## Annette 276490: What to Expect

**Annette is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Annette is a sweet, playful girl once she gets to know a person, but she will be scared at first. Annette needs a quiet home with a patient, calm person. She will make an excellent companion for someone who has the time to commit to helping her come out of shell. Once she does, you'll see what a sweet, affectionate, and playful girl she is.

Annette came from another shelter with her 3 kittens. All we're placed into a foster home where Annette could finish raising her babies. While in the foster home, she was an excellent mother to her kittens, but did display shy, fearful behavior to the foster parent. Once back at OHS, she continued to display fearful behaviors towards people and loud noises. She would display this behavior by being crouched low in the back of her kennel, dilated eyes, and darting when staff attempted to handle her. It was then decided to place her in the Behavior Modification program to allow time for her to acclimate and work with her on her fearful behavior.

During the time in BMOD, Annette has flourished. Annette does well when people speak softly to her and go slow with their movements. She first showed an interest in eating Chorus which helped to build a positive association between people and food. Annette also showed an interest in wand toys, and this was a great way for the team to build a relationship with her. As time went on, she began to trust the team more and will now readily engage with staff, enjoys being pet and loves to play with toys.

We are unsure if Annette would enjoy living with another cat. She may do ok with another cat that is happy to co-exist, but we don't believe she will do well with a cat that wants to rough and tumble play with her.

You'll need to introduce her to new things slowly and be committed to giving her the time she needs to her new home. It may take her several weeks or even longer for her to feel comfortable with new surroundings. Once she settles in, you'll see that she loves treats and toys and enjoys pets.

Annette may hide, hiss, growl, swat or even bite if you try to pet or handle her before she is comfortable. You'll need to develop a relationship with her before attempting to pet her or trying to pick her up. Use treats and play time with interactive toys (like feather toys) to help build trust.

### **Here's how to help Annette during your first months together:**

**Confine Annette to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Annette with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure she cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

**Spend time with Annette in her room.** Don't force her out of her hiding spot. Instead, encourage her to come out on her own using happy talk, offering treats or toys. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing her to come out on her own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Annette is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

**Continue to provide a safe space.** Even when Annette has started exploring the rest of the house, give her a safe space that she can retreat to. When she is in her safe space, insist that guests leave her alone and try to ignore her yourself. That way, when she comes out, you can reward her bravery with your attention.

**No visitors (at first).** Allow Annette time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Annette the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Annette seems curious or interested, have the new person toss her treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

**Practice crate training.** Leave her carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of her normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so she can go in and out on her own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten her. You can also clicker train her to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Annette get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

**Visiting the vet:** Unless it's an emergency, give Annette time to bond to you before taking her to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if She already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Annette is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow her to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know her and watching her come out of her shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

## **We're here to help!**

We want Annette to be successful in her new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Erika at [erikas@oregonhumane.org](mailto:erikas@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Services Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Annette now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!