



Chandler 350620: What to Expect

Chandler is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Chandler is a sweet and sensitive boy who is ready to find his forever home. He may be timid at first, but once he feels safe, he loves being pet, eating yummy treats, soaking up sunshine sprawled out on his window perch, and playing with toys. Chandler may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, but with patience and time to build trust, he will form a strong, loving bond with his person.

Chandler came to OHS because changes in his family's living arrangements made it impossible for them to keep him. When Chandler arrived at OHS he displayed fearful, shy behavior that would present itself as hiding, hissing, and swatting if staff got too close to him. Because of the high stress he was experiencing, the decision was made to place him in our Behavior Modification Program. The environment in the BMOD program is better suited at helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, increased enrichment, and dedicated one-on-one time with our team, we were able to help him decompress and learn more about his personality.

Chandler was very nervous during his first two weeks in BMOD, spending most of his time tucked away on his cat tower, quietly observing us with wide, cautious eyes. If anyone came too close, he would hiss and retreat, making it clear that he was feeling frightened. We respected his boundaries, spoke to him gently, and offered treats to help him build positive associations with people. Before long, he began to relax and grow more comfortable in our presence. He also discovered a love for wand toys. As we swept the toy through the air, Chandler would stalk, pounce, and proudly capture it with great enthusiasm. Over time, he learned that visits from people meant good things—tasty treats, fun play sessions, and gentle interactions—and he began to look forward to seeing us each day.

Whenever other cats walked past his kennel, Chandler would watch them with curiosity and often come forward to greet them. Seeing his interest in feline companionship, we began introducing him to the other cats in the program. These interactions helped his confidence and bravery blossom even further. Chandler loves spending time with other cats, happily following them around and playing with toys alongside them. Watching the staff interact with his feline friends also helped him become more trusting of people. He gradually started approaching us to sniff our hands, then leaned in for gentle pets. Today, Chandler adores affection—he seeks out attention with sweet headbutts, purrs contentedly during petting sessions, and has grown into a loving, affectionate companion.

Chandler is now very comfortable in our care and can often be found relaxing on his favorite window perch, where he enjoys soaking up the sunshine while watching birds, squirrels, and the world go by. What Chandler needed most was a quiet environment and the opportunity to observe people at his own pace before building trust and confidence. Although he still startles easily from time to time and may briefly run to a safe spot, he recovers quickly with gentle reassurance. He has shown tremendous progress here, and we know that in the right home he will flourish even more. Chandler will thrive in a calm, patient household that allows him time to settle in and build confidence. Because he enjoys the company of other cats so much, he will also need a feline companion to cuddle, play, and share his new home with.

His new family should expect that he will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce him to new things slowly. Chandler typically flees, hisses and swats when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide him with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for him to relax in, such as his own hidey bed. Hiding spots that are confined to a tight spot and out of reach from you will make it difficult to build a bond with him. The room you set him up in will be the catalyst for how quickly he acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Chandler to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can he get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with him? If it's a laundry room or bathroom will the constant in and out of people and noises associated with these rooms be too much for him? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in his hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Chandler while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Chandler will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

Here's how to help Chandler during your first months together:

This step is crucial in helping Chandler acclimate to his new home. Confine Chandler to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Chandler with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure he cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide him with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like his cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We're here to help!

We want Chandler to be successful in his new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email the BMOD cat trainers at bmodcat@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Chandler 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!