



Eunice 357235: What to Expect

Eunice is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Eunice is a sweet, playful girl who is ready to find her forever home! She may be timid at first, but once she feels safe and secure, her charming personality begins to shine. She loves tasty treats, basking in the sunshine on her window-side cat tower, snuggling with other cats, and showing off her impressive high leaps while playing with her favorite toys.

Eunice was found as a stray in a neighborhood alongside her four siblings. Several kind-hearted community members worked together to provide the kittens with care and socialization until they were ready to come to Oregon Humane. Once at the shelter, some of the kittens, including Eunice, displayed shy and fearful behaviors such as darting away, cowering, hiding, and showing tense body language. Because the busy, noisy shelter environment was stressful for some of the kittens, and keeping the litter together benefited their overall well-being, we welcomed them into our Behavior Modification Program (BMOD). This program provides an environment better suited to helping cats and kittens feel comfortable in the shelter, with larger kennel spaces, window access, increased enrichment, and dedicated one-on-one time with our team. These accommodations gave Eunice the opportunity to decompress and allowed us to learn more about her unique personality.

Eunice was worried and overwhelmed during her first few days in BMOD. She spent much of her time hiding on her cat tower, snuggled up with her siblings, quietly watching us with wide, cautious eyes. If anyone approached too closely, she would dart away, letting us know she was frightened and needed space. We respected her boundaries, spoke to her softly, and offered tasty treats to help her form positive associations with people. With the comfort of her siblings, the opportunity to observe other cats in the program, and a gentle, patient approach from staff, Eunice gradually grew more confident. Soon, she began venturing out to explore, happily romping around with her siblings and making friends with other kitties in the program.

We soon discovered just how much Eunice loves playtime! Waving feather wand toys through the air and tossing rolling balls and stuffies for her to chase helped bring out her playful side and encouraged her to engage more confidently with us. It was wonderful to watch her come out of her shell and blossom into the sweet, happy, playful girl we knew she could be!

As Eunice grew more comfortable with us, she also began discovering that gentle touch could be enjoyable. When she feels safe, she now accepts soft scratches along her cheeks, neck, and back. Her future family should be prepared to give her time to settle in at her own pace, using gentle, positive interactions and respecting her boundaries as she continues to become more comfortable with handling.

Eunice also loves Churu treats and cozy, soft blankets, where she can often be found snuggled up with her feline friends after a play session. She has met several kitties in the BMOD program outside her sibling group and has befriended every one of them! Eunice truly thrives in the company of other cats. Whether she's playing with her feline friends or peacefully relaxing alongside them, their companionship helps her feel safe, secure, and confident. Because of this, Eunice will do best in a calm, patient home with a friendly resident cat and a family who will give her the time she needs to settle in at her own pace.

Her new family should expect that she will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce her to new things slowly. Eunice typically flees and hides when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide her with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for her to relax in, such as her 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 her. The room you set her up in will be the catalyst for how quickly she acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Eunice to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can she get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with her? 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 her? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots, it will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in her 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 Eunice while in her hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Eunice will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

This step is crucial in helping Eunice acclimate to her new home. Confine Eunice to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Eunice 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.). Instead, provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Eunice 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 a toy or treats. 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 Eunice is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Eunice 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 Eunice time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Eunice the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Eunice 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 Eunice 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 Eunice 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. Eunice 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 Eunice 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 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 Eunice 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!