

Single Kitten Syndrome

*It is the policy of Animal Talk Rescue that kittens 5 months old or younger are adopted out in pairs/multiples unless another suitable kitten or young cat is already in the home.
This is healthiest for you and your kittens.*

If you've ever raised a litter of kittens or adopted a pair of them, you know how much they play together. Some of this play is painful, as confirmed by the yowling and complaining that occurs. The kittens bite and scratch each other, sometimes quite hard. All the while they are learning from one another that this behavior is not the best way to make friends! If they're lucky enough to have a mom cat around and she hears the ruckus, she will often give a warning "that's enough of that" to the kittens and they settle down.

In order to become well-socialized cats, kittens need to learn appropriate behavior from one another. A human is not a substitute for a feline companion. You can provide attention and love but there is simply no way you can replicate the play behavior of the species. If they don't learn limits in their play as youngsters, they often develop inappropriate playful aggression. In other words, it may be cute when a kitten attacks your ankles when you walk by or playfully nips at your fingers while you're playing. It will be much less cute, not to mention annoying and painful, when your cat is full grown.

Single kittens adopted into homes without other young cats frequently develop behavioral problems. Kittens are often returned to shelters because of litter box problems. Litter box habits are learned at an early age and kittens actually play a large part in teaching each other how to faithfully go to the proper place when nature calls.

Kittens are also returned because of aggressive play biting. Cat behaviorists now believe that kittens raised without kitty companionship transfer the playful biting behavior, which is so important in developing proper manners, to their humans. To prevent these problems, and to encourage the general well-being of the kitten, ATR has adopted a policy of not placing any single kitten under the age of five months into a home without another kitten or young cat.

Two kittens playing together is one of the most entertaining activities in the world, both for you and for the kittens. Having two cats will also ensure that they are not lonely when you are away from home. A lonely cat can become neurotic and will sometimes let his/her owner know about their unhappiness by destructive behavior or inappropriate urination. This is not something most people would like to risk.

Animal talk Rescue will not place a single kitten under the age of five months into a home without an appropriate playmate. This is not a strategy for placing more kittens and cats. It's about the future of the individual kittens, their habits and their happiness. Many people have been skeptical about adopting two kittens rather than one only to thank us later for sticking to our policy. The rewards are great.

If you feel you are unable to care for two kittens, we strongly encourage you to consider one of the wonderful adult cats needing a home. Many of these are young mothers and scarcely more than kittens themselves. They're still very playful and entertaining and have learned good kitty manners from being around other cats.

Remember, the difference between a cat and a kitten is only about six months. A happy cat can bring you joy and companionship for twenty years or more. It's well worth laying a good foundation in their early months. The payback is tremendous.