Cats: Body Language 101

Signs of a FRIENDLY cat:
- Ears up
- Eyes open wide with small pupils
- Tail up, quivering, or...tail up with tip tilted
- May rub against you
- Eyes could alternatively be squinty and purring.

AGGRESSIVE cat:
- Ears flat against head
- Crouched body posture as if ready to pounce
- Growling/ hissing/ spitting
- Pupils dilated
- Possible swatting to keep you away.

Signs of a SCARED or UNSOCIAL cat:
- Cat may seem immobile in the cage, or backing away or up cage walls
- Flight risk
- Pupils dilated or eyes closed
• Ears out  
• Clenched body posture with tail held close to the body  
• Tail low and fluffed out  
• Quick flicking of tail  
• Facing away from you and/or hiding in litter box.

Signs of a FRUSTRATED cat:  
• Consider if over stimulated vs. under stimulated  
• May be pacing in the cage  
• Very vocal  
• In your face  
• Tail whipping high in air  
• Flight risk  
• “Light-switch”, watch for sudden changes

These are movement characteristics and not adequately represented in pictures.
Look at the full picture being presented by the cat when reading body language – many signals overlap.