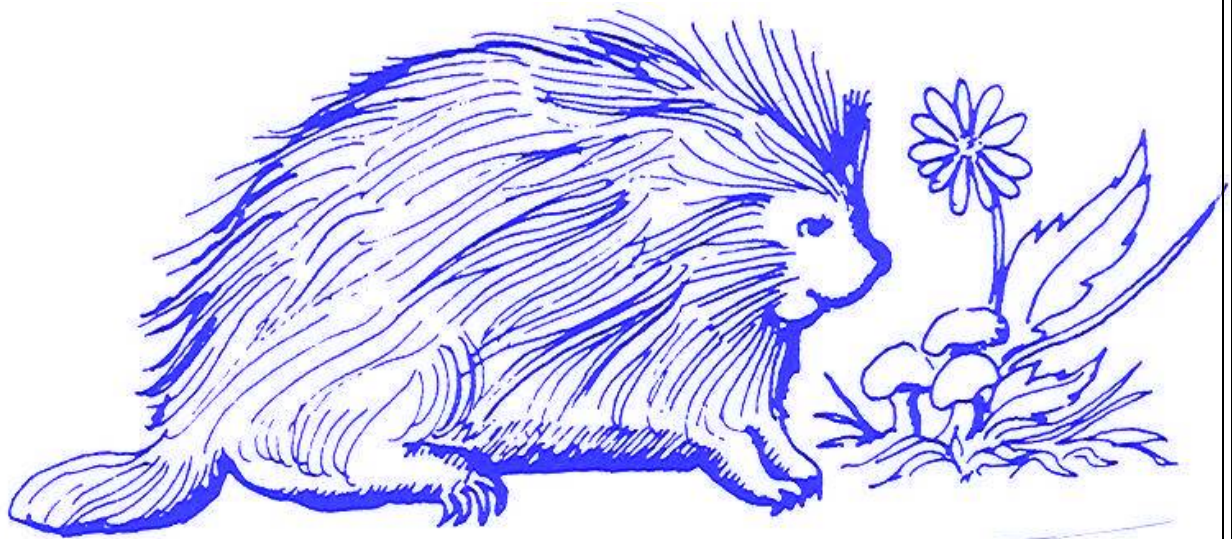


Humane Education Resource Guide



**A Guide For Elementary School Teachers
In New York State**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The lessons in this Guide serve to fulfill the requirements of the New York State Humane Education Law (Article 17, Section 809) as well as the Project Schools Against Violence in Education (Project SAVE) Act which requires instruction in character education for all grade levels.

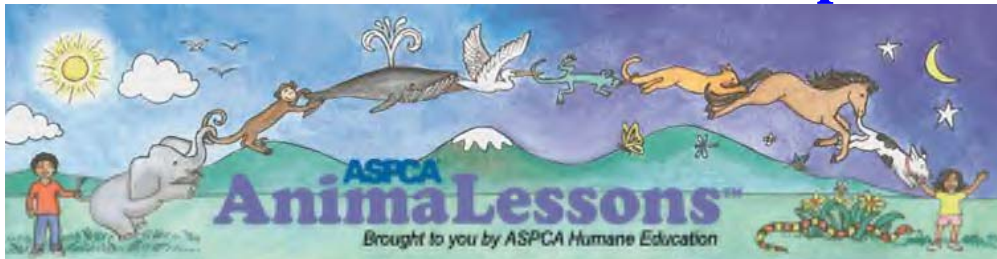
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Thanks for assistance with individual lesson plans or worksheets go to:

- **Farm Sanctuary**
- **Kids and Critters**
- **Living Earth Learning Project (a program of the New England Anti-Vivisection Society).**
- **New York City Department of Education for permitting us to use and update lessons from their 1985 *Humane Education Resource Guide* on**
 - **Animals and Humans Have Similar Basic Needs (page 6)**
 - **Animals in Our Urban Environment (pages 13, 15)**
 - **Wild Animals Do Not Make good Pets (page 23)**
 - **Animal Rights (pages 60 – 64)**
- **New York State Bar Association, Special Committee on Animals and the Law**
- **Peninsula Humane Society**
- **Vegetarian Resource Group**
- **Wildlife Watch**

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- Careers Working With Animals

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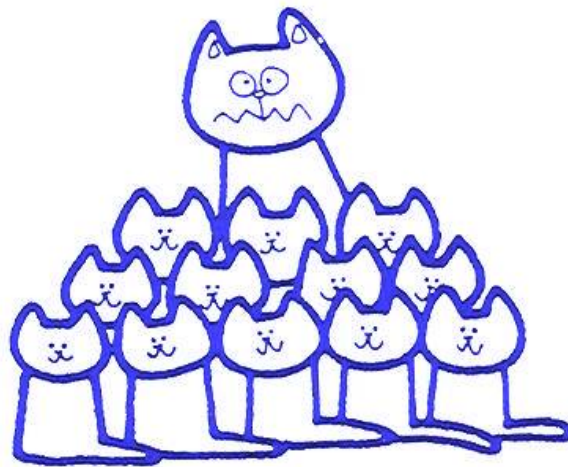
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THE LAW

Section 809.

Introduction in the Humane Treatment of Animals

The officer, board or commission, authorized or required to prescribe courses of instruction shall cause instruction to be given in every elementary school under state control or supported wholly or partly by public money of the state, in the humane treatment and protection of animals and of the importance of the part they play in the economy of nature as well as the necessity of controlling the proliferation of animals which are subsequently abandoned and caused to suffer extreme cruelty. Such instruction shall be for a period of time during each school year as the board of regents may prescribe and may be joined with work in literature, reading, language, nature study or ethnology. Such weekly instruction may be divided into two or more periods. A school district shall not be entitled to participate in the public school money on account of any school or the attendance at any school subject to the provisions of this section, if the instruction required hereby is not given.



Effective July 1, 1995, as amended by L.1994, c. 542.
Originally became a law in 1947.

INTRODUCTION

The New York State (NYS) Humane Education Resource Guide was designed to help teachers integrate Humane Education into their elementary classrooms. Humane Education is the fostering of respect, understanding, compassion and responsibility toward all human beings, animals and the environment. It is an exploration of how we share the world with other living beings. New York State Education Law (Article 17, Section 809) requires elementary students be taught about the humane treatment of animals. This guide offers tools and strategies to fulfill this mandate, enhance existing curriculum, and fulfill NYS Learning Standards in all content areas. Each lesson has clear objectives for both teaching academic content and the affective domain of students.

Given the prevalence of violence in society today, it is more crucial than ever to instill compassion, empathy and tolerance in young people. Studies have shown that there is a direct correlation between violent acts towards animals and people. Additionally, research in Humane Education suggests that children's compassion toward animals is related to their empathy toward humans. The lessons in this guide promote essential character-building traits such as empathy, kindness, respect for others and personal responsibility as well as engage students' interest in learning.

As children develop the cognitive abilities needed to assume the perspective of other humans and animals (empathy), they begin to understand concepts such as fairness and reciprocity. We can nurture empathic qualities and enhance character development by including animal-related issues in the curriculum as suggested by Thomas Lickona, in his book *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*.

Humane Education focuses on a variety of topics and provides teachers with the tools to incorporate these themes into a standards-based curriculum. The lessons in this guide are separated according to animal category and content area so that teachers can easily locate lessons that fit into their curriculum. Animal categories are Companion Animals, Wildlife, and Farmed Animals. Content areas are Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, and Art. The lessons allow students to gain knowledge and understanding of animals through interactive, hands-on activities. Great importance is placed on promoting self-discovery and critical thinking as well as developing leadership skills to put compassion into action. The activities were designed for relevancy to content areas and were field-tested by classroom teachers around NYS. Children's literature was chosen especially for its unique way of contributing to humane themes.

Humane Education can spark students' interest in learning when integrated into the existing standards-based curriculum. We encourage teachers to use the lessons in this guide as a springboard to create their own Humane Education program because it will be most successful when implemented by them on a regular basis.

“Teaching a child not to step on a caterpillar is as valuable for the child as it is for the caterpillar.” –Bradley Miller