

Companion Animal Care

Fostering a Responsible Attitude Towards Guardianship

Grades: Pre-K - 1

Objectives: Objectives:

Affective:

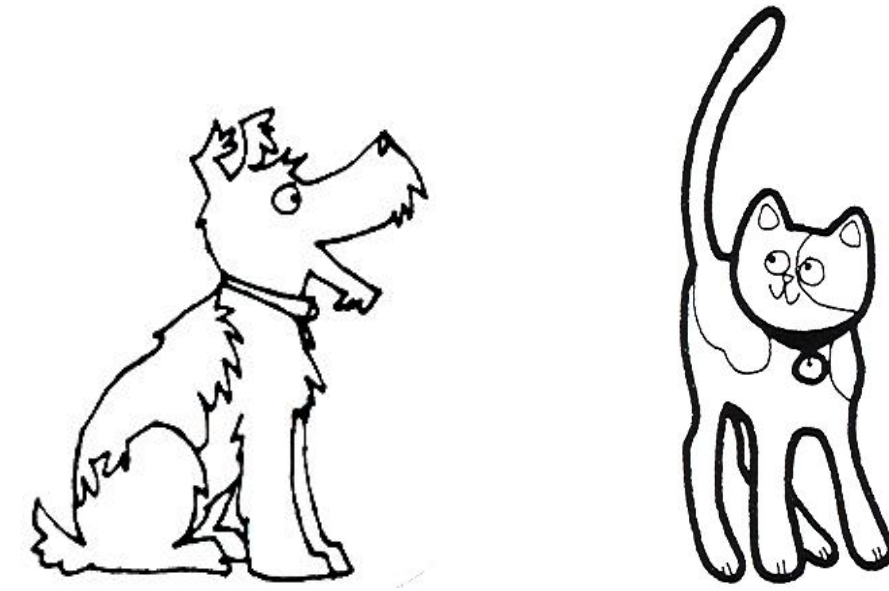
- Students will give examples of responsible companion animal care.
- Students will understand the difference between companion animals and wildlife.

Academic:

- Students will listen to acquire information and understanding.
Students will acquire and transmit information.

Materials: Leash, food and water bowls, stuffed toy animals, toys for cats, dogs, and other companion animals, animal hair brush, collar and tags, dog license, litter box, scratching post, photographs and pictures of people and their companion animals depicting similar emotions, paper, crayons, magic markers, blocks, assorted kinds of paper, post-its, index cards, magazines (to cut out pictures).

Motivation: Have students bring in pictures of their companion animals or pictures of companion animals from magazines. Clip-art you can use is included as part of this lesson.



Procedure:

Day 1

Mini-Lesson:

- 1) Have students show pictures of their companion animals to the class and share some information about them.
- 2) On a large piece of paper write “*Companion Animals.*” On a second sheet write “*Not a Companion Animal.*” (See small group activity #1)
- 3) Brainstorm what it means to be a companion animal (the difference between domestic and wild animals).

Small-Group Activity:

- 1) Individual or small groups of children will cut out pictures of animals from magazines.
- 2) They will place these pictures into two stacks -- animals that can be companions and animals that cannot be companions.

Summary for Day One: After showing each picture of an animal to the class and identifying whether or not that can and cannot be a companion, students will glue pictures onto the appropriate large sheet of paper.

Day 2

Mini-Lesson #2:

- 1) Have students brainstorm what companion animals need and how it is similar to what the children need.
- 2) Create a T-chart with “companion animals” on one side and “children” on the other.
- 3) Have students compare (among other things):
 - a) a dog on a leash to a child holding an adult’s hand when crossing the street
 - b) collar and tags on a dog or cat to ID or name tag on students going on a class trip
- 4) Ask children to bring in stuffed animals from home (make sure you explain that it will be staying in school for a while, so it should not be an animal they sleep with or that they are attached to). Discuss: What do students know about each companion animal care item and clarify the proper use of each item by demonstrating on the stuffed animals.
- 5) Have children act out various situations involving the appropriate handling and care of a companion animal. At center time they can act out the situations in the dramatic play area.
 - a) What should you do when you meet an animal for the first time? How should you approach the animal? How should you physically handle the animal?
 - b) How should you behave when an animal is sleeping or eating?
 - c) What should you do if an animal is angry?
 - d) What can happen if you scare an animal?

- e) How do you think an animal might behave if he/she is sick and should that change the way you treat the animal?

Small Group Activity #2:

- 1) Have small groups of students role-play the proper use for some of the items that the teacher calls out - (e.g. petting an animal when putting his leash on, feeding an animal at the appropriate time.
- 2) Have small groups of students role-play improper or dangerous human behavior in interacting with companion animals. The teacher facilitates by calling out the behavior (e.g., tying a dog on a short leash and leaving tied for a long period of time is uncomfortable for the dog, taking away the food dish while the animal is eating might lead to a dog growling at or biting the person taking it away).

Summary for Day Two: Have students complete the “Who Needs What?” student activity sheet and review it as a class.

Day 3

Mini-Lesson #3:

- 1) Write the words “dog” and “chair” next to each other. Elicit from students the differences between those two nouns.
- 2) Discuss what students own -- hold up pencils, toys, etc. Demonstrate sentence structure like, “Lucy owns this pen.” Ask students, “Does a pen feel happy? sad? frightened? hungry? Does a cat? Can a student own a cat the way he owns a pen? Can he throw the cat away like he throws the pen away?” While discussing non-living property versus pets, record students’ responses on chart paper.

Small Group Activity #3:

- 1) Small groups of students will draw pictures of companion animals in situations in which guardians are acting responsibly. The students generate these ideas, not the teachers because this is their third day of activities.

Summary for Day Three:

- 1) Pictures students draw can be used to create a big book on the topic of “Caring for My Companion Animal.” The teacher can write sentences dictated by the students on responsible care.
- 2) The students and teacher can create an experience chart in which children list how we can give companion animals responsible care.

Follow-Up Activities:

- Invite a pet “therapy” dog or cat to come visit the class. For information on therapy animals contact the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals at phone #212-876-7700 or www.asPCA.org and/or the Delta Society at phone #973-376-2682 or www.deltasociety.org.
- While many teachers like having a class pet, it is extremely difficult to care for an

animal properly in a school atmosphere. Holidays, week-ends and evenings can pose special problems as there is no heat or light. There will likely be feeding problems and cleaning problems during these times as well. While some children may treat animals appropriately others may be rough or careless in their interactions. Some students may be allergic to animals and there is always the potential for an animal scratching or biting a student. Therefore, we do not recommend animals in the classroom and would suggest that you have a trained animal come visit the students.

- In Defense of Animals wants to replace the words pet “owner” with companion animal “guardian.” For more information about their guardianship campaign and free literature for teachers log onto www.idausa.org.
- Trips and Visitors
 - a) Take a trip to a veterinarian office for a tour. Pre-plan the trip and carefully explain the rules prior to the visit.
 - b) Have a veterinarian visit the classroom. Prepare the children for a visitor and talk about the kinds of questions that are appropriate to ask. Make up some questions before the visit, so that you do not waste a visitor’s time.
- Interdisciplinary Activities
 - a) Block area: Children can build homes that have companion animals, an animal hospital, a dog run and other places related to companion animals.
 - b) Painting Area: Create a mural collage of a city with apartment buildings. Make sure to cut big windows so that you can put pictures of each student’s family in the windows. Photographs of families with their companion animals as well as drawing may be used.
 - c) Housekeeping Area: Periodically change this area into a veterinarian’s office, an animal shelter or a home. The children can act out the roles of the various grown-ups.

New York State Standards Addressed:

ELA Standard 1 – Language for Information and Understanding:

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

Listening and Reading

1. Listening and reading to acquire information and understanding involves collecting data, facts, and ideas; discovering relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and using knowledge from oral, written, and electronic sources.

Speaking and Writing

1. Speaking and writing to acquire and transmit information requires asking probing and clarifying questions, interpreting information in one’s own words, applying information from one context to another, and presenting the information and interpretation clearly, concisely, and comprehensibly.

Name _____

Date _____

Who Needs What?

Different animals have different needs. Use a crayon to make an "X" in the appropriate columns, matching the animals with items in the column on the left.

