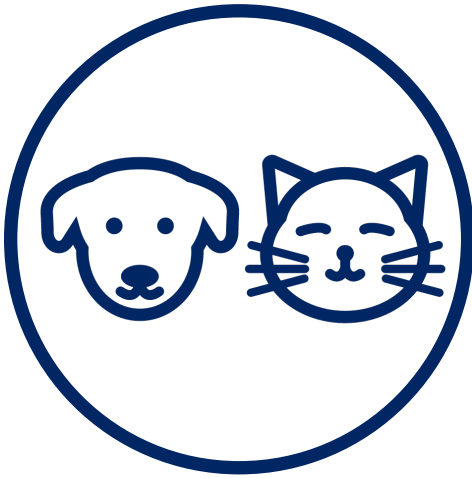


Children's Resources: How to Take Care of a Pet



Word of the Day: Pet

A pet is an animal that is taken care of by people for company and friendship.

Discussion Questions

- Do you have a pet? If so, what kind of pet do you have?
- How do you take care of a pet? What does a pet need to be happy and healthy?
- If you could have any pet in the whole world, what kind of pet would you have? Why?

Pet Needs



Food and Water

Pets need to eat food made especially for them and need to drink water.



Shelter

Pets need a comfortable and safe place to call their home.



Play

Pets need to be kept busy and given fun things to do.



Grooming

Pets need to be kept nice and clean.



Veterinarian

Pets need to visit the veterinarian to make sure they are healthy.



Love

Pets need lots of love from their humans!

Children's Resources: How to Take Care of a Pet

Infants/Toddler Activities



Arts & Crafts

Card for Your Pet

Materials: paper cut-out in the shape of a heart, arts & crafts materials

- Children enjoy creating art and other gifts for those they care about. Tell your child that it would be nice to make art to show the family pet how much they love them.
- Cut out a piece of paper in the shape of a heart and let your child decorate the heart how they wish. You can use non-toxic paint, markers, stamps, stickers, or other child-friendly art materials.
- Once they are finished, become excited and "show" the art to your pet with your child and display it somewhere in the home.



Games

Helpful Hand

Materials: family pet items

- If your family has a child-friendly pet, it can be great to involve your child in learning how to care for them. Be sure to supervise your child when interacting closely with the family pet.
- Activities can include:
 - Letting your child measure out food and/or feed your pet
 - Letting your child pour water into your pet's water bowl
 - Encouraging appropriate play with your pet
 - Letting your child practice brushing or grooming your pet

Children's Resources: How to Take Care of a Pet



Schwarzman
Animal Medical Center
Usdan Institute for
Animal Health Education

Infants/Toddler Activities (continued)



Games

Imagination Play - Pets

Materials: stuffed animals, food bowl, pet toys, grooming items

- Imagination play can be an immersive and engaging way for your child to learn. Using stuffed animals, you can create similar scenarios to the activities above in "Helpful Hand".
- Activities with stuffed animals can include pretending to:
 - Trim nails and/or beaks
 - Feed your pets
 - Wash your pets and brush their teeth
 - Bring your pets to see a veterinarian

Children's Resources: How to Take Care of a Pet

PreK-Kindergarten Activities



Arts & Crafts

Braided Rope Dog Toy

Materials: fleece or old t-shirts, scissors, safety pin or rubber band

- If your family has a dog (and your child has succeeded in learning how to tie their shoes), it might be fun to try making a braided rope dog toy!
- You can follow this tutorial for a [DIY Braided Rope Dog Toy](#).
- You will need to cut fleece or old t-shirts into strips and secure the ends with a safety pin or rubber band and tie a knot.
- Demonstrate to your child how to braid the rope. While your child practices, hold the other end of the rope.
- Once finished, tie it off and let your child give the toy to the dog to play!

Feather Cat Toy

Materials: string, scissors, craft feathers, wooden stick, glue, tape

- If your family has a cat, there are plenty of ideas for a [DIY Feather Cat Toy](#).
- Let your child pick out feathers and practice tying them together with string. If your child needs help, they can glue or tape the feathers at the ends first before tying them together.
- Hang the bundled feathers from a wooden stick or string.
- Once finished, let your child play with the cat using their new toy!

Bird Enrichment

Materials: paper, scissors

- There are [a multitude of different toys](#) you can create for pet birds using everyday household items.
- One easy type of bird enrichment is shredded paper. Your toddler can easily shred pieces of paper that can either hang around your bird's cage, be stuffed into a toilet paper tube with some food so your bird can practice foraging, or even strung together into fun shapes.

Children's Resources: How to Take Care of a Pet

PreK-Kindergarten Activities (continued)



Games

Compare & Contrast: People Needs and Pet Needs

Materials: two containers, objects representing people and pet needs

- Gather two containers and label one "People" and the other one "Pets" with photos or pictures to match.
- Gather items representing different needs. For pet needs, you can have a pet toy, pet food, and a water bowl. For people needs, you can have a child's toy, a human food item, and a bottle of water.
- Challenge your child to put each item in the appropriate container. For example, "Can you put the food items in the right container?"
- Ask follow-up questions after your child has sorted through the items, such as, "What was different between the two toys?" or, "Why did the people and pet container both have food?"