

Integrated Themes for 4-8 Year Olds

Animals



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Introduction

All children have an interest in animals. As a teacher you have the opportunity to extend both their knowledge and their skills. You can use their experiences and understanding as a base and hold their attention with a variety of activities. Encourage them to bring photographs of pets and animals they have encountered, and use these as a display. Already they are involved!

General Learning Outcomes

- To extend the children's present knowledge of animals, using a variety of learning experiences, in all subject areas.
- To develop the children's skills throughout the curriculum using the theme of animals.

General Concepts

- Animals are living things.
- Animals can live in many different places.
- Animals have different sizes, shapes and colours.
- Animals move in different ways.
- Animals grow and change at different rates.
- There are many classifications of animals, which can be identified according to their characteristics.
- Most animals can move from place to place.
- Some animals may be cared for by humans, kept as pets, studied or used.
- Animals need food, water, air and appropriate climatic conditions.



Section 1:

Pets

The children will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts studied through discussion, successful completion of practical activities and given worksheets. These activities will also demonstrate the level of the children's skills.

❑ Specific Concepts

- Pets are living things.
- Pets are acquired by their owners and become their responsibility.
- Pets may live in the family home or have a special home.
- Pets grow and change.
- Pets are different sizes, shapes and colours.
- Pets move in different ways.
- Pets need to stay healthy. This is their owners' responsibility, assisted by the veterinarian.
- Pets need food and water.

❑ Activity Suggestions

- Set up a roster for children's animals to visit the classroom – this is essential to avoid chaos! Although smaller animals are happy to spend a half day at school, dogs and cats should visit for only 15-30 minutes. This will require parent co-operation.

Allow the pet's owners to tell where they acquired the pet, its age at that time, the cost, how the pet has changed since them.

As the roster progresses, encourage the children to identify similarities and differences: shape; size; colour; skin cover; pet's home; mode of movement; food.

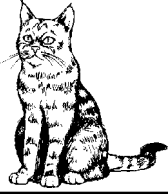
With more unusual pets discuss why more children do not own such an animal.
- Take photos of each pet and its owner and make a class book. Older children can write the text, younger ones can contribute orally to the teacher-written text.
- There is plenty of scope for group and class discussions with pets:
 - where pets may live; this can vary from family to family
 - differences between breeds of the same animal
 - characteristics - this could lead to a riddle session
 - pets' needs
- Many reading sessions lead to a drama activity. After reading a story children could make popstick puppets and work in groups to either act out the story or produce an alternative ending. Children could make masks instead of puppets.

Pets



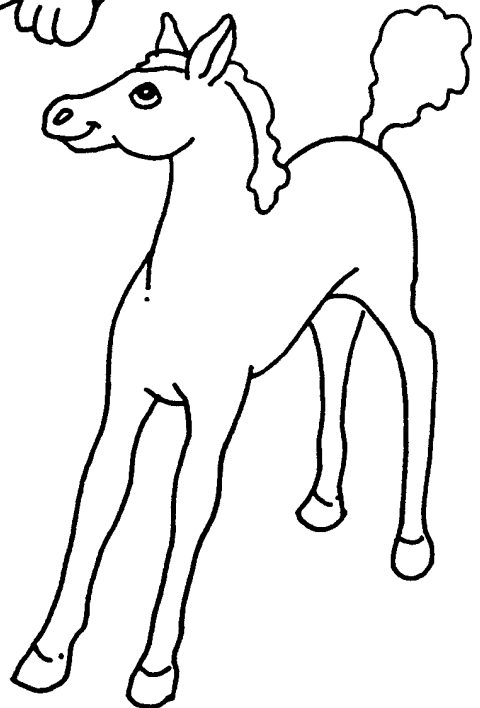
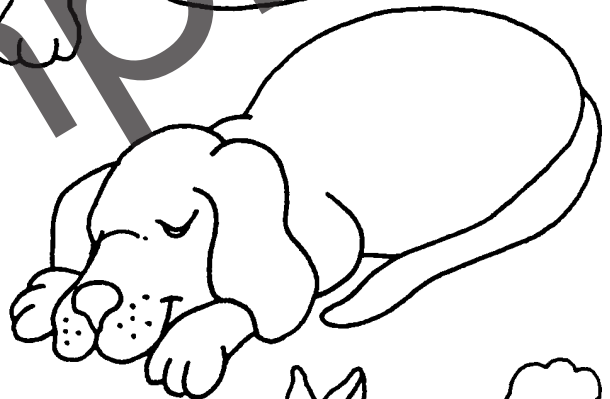
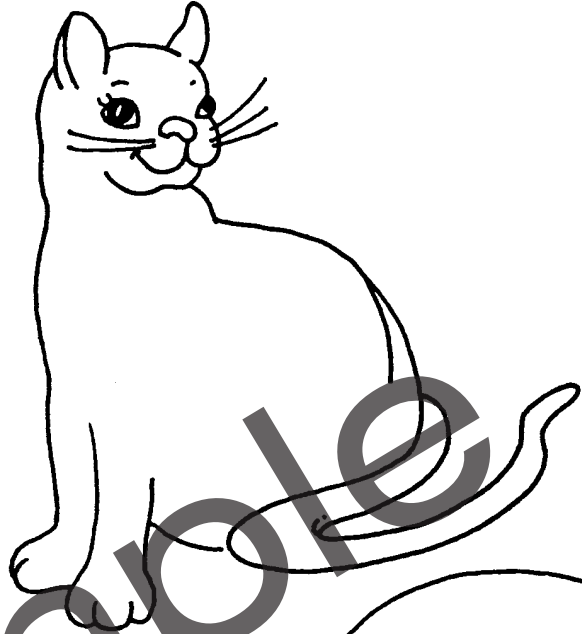
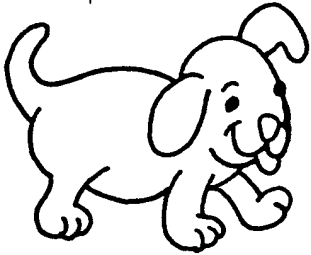
□ Activity Suggestions

- Children could choose an ideal pet for a senior citizen living alone, or for an aged persons' home and justify their choice.
 - Key sentences from the story could be written out in random order for the children to sequence correctly. Pictures could be used with younger children.
 - There are numerous writing activities:
 - writing about their pet;
 - the pet they would like to own;
 - writing a letter to their pet, or from their pet to another animal.
 - A legion of maths activities spring to mind:
 - Make a set of animals, e.g. dogs and a set of homes, e.g. kennel for 1:1 correspondence.
 - If the fish on Page 14 were coloured the same colour by every student for the various numerals, children could be asked the colour of the sixth fish, which fish is blue, etc.
 - Problem solving activities can generate from discussions of animal homes, food, etc.
 - Pattern activities could use animal pictures for early concepts of multiplication, and also for concrete practice in addition and subtraction.
 - Pets are an ideal way to consolidate and extend skills in social studies:
 - listening to literature
 - acquiring information through listening and observing
 - graphs and tables
 - pictures and diagrams
 - time and chronology (Why not collect photos of your own pet(s) and see if the children can sequence them chronologically?)
- Likewise, the science skills of observing, communicating, classifying, measuring, predicting, would be used throughout all lessons, not just science.
- The health and safety aspects of having a pet could be enhanced by the visit of a vet and a representative from the R.S.P.C.A.
Perhaps the local council's dog ranger would be prepared to speak about his work for a few minutes.
A mention of the care we should take when approaching an unknown animal would not come amiss.
 - A poster competition would result in some innovative art/craft lessons, particularly if a choice of media were available, and the children had three or four sessions in which to complete their entry.
 - The unusual pets component of the program will depend on any your children own. If none are forthcoming you can turn to the local community. Perhaps someone has racing pigeons, a donkey, snakes or a peacock.



Mother and Baby Pets

■ Draw lines from the mothers to their babies.





Animal Sounds

Here are some sounds that animals make:

neigh

tweet tweet

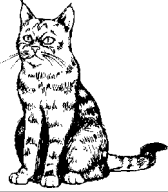
squeak

woof

meow

■ Put the correct word in each speech bubble to show what the animals say.





Find the Baby

■ Find each mother's baby.

Draw a circle around it.

