

What is a Pet?

OBJECTIVE

To understand what a pet is and what it needs to be healthy and happy.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will learn what a pet is through the use of puppets and/or stuffed animals and they will discover what a pet needs by identifying items in a "pet bag."

MATERIALS

- 🐾 Pet puppets and/or stuffed animals: Use one or more of the following: dog, cat, rabbit, hamster, guinea pig, bird, mouse or rat.
- 🐾 Pet bag: Gather the following items for the bag: dog and cat collars with identification tags, brush, bowl, pet food, leash, pet toys, pet shampoo, pet toothpaste and toothbrush, rawhide or treats, yarn (an example of a "toy" that could hurt an animal if swallowed), cardboard roll from paper towels or toilet tissue (example of a "free" toy), pet nail clipper and kitty litter scoop.

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 What's a pet? Ask for examples of pets.
- 🐾 Why do pets live with people? What do people need to do to take care of their pets?
- 🐾 Are pets part of our families? How should you treat the members of your family? How should you treat your pet? How does your pet treat you?
- 🐾 How are pets different than wild animals? Ask for examples of wild animals.

Procedure

Introduce each pet puppet or stuffed animal individually. Ask the students what it is and discuss what each pet needs, how it acts and why it's special. If a student in the class has a particular pet at home, ask how they care for this pet and what it's like.

Using the pet bag, ask one student to come up at a time and choose an item out of the bag. They should hold it up for everyone to see and tell the class what it is. If they don't know, they can call on someone else to help them. After each student is done, they can choose another student to come up. Make sure there are enough items for each student to choose one.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 Ask the students if the items that are in the pet bag are things that they have at home for their own pet. Is taking care of a pet a lot of work?
- 🐾 What are some jobs that you have to do for your pet that aren't very fun - like scooping the kitty litter box or cleaning the yard. Why are these important jobs? What would happen if you didn't do these jobs?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Create a "pet area" in your classroom where students can play with pet puppets or stuffed animals, look at pictures and books of pets, play with pet items from the "pet bag," and pretend to be a veterinarian, groomer or pet owner. Decorate the area with pictures the students draw of pets or photos they bring in of their own pets.