**CANINE COMPANIONS**

**LESSON 1: Grades K-3**

**WHAT DO DOG’S NEED?**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:**  1.6, 1.10, 2.5, 3.1, 3.6, 3.7, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 6; Science: 3; Physical Education: 5

**Objective:**  To teach children about the basic needs of dogs and to help them understand the similarities between the needs of pets and those of people.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.3-4.1—Engage effectively in collaborative discussions building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.**

**SL.3-4.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to remarks of others.**

Ask students to discuss how dogs--as living, breathing, feeling creatures---have needs. If some of these needs are not met (i.e., food and water), dogs can become very sick and even die. What are the needs of dogs? How are they similar to our needs? Discuss.

Have a spelling bee with a difference. Make a list of **all** the needs our canine friends have and share the list ahead of time with students. On the day of the spelling bee, divide students into teams to determine who can remember—and spell—each need of our fabulous canines!

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

Being the guardian of another creature is very important. You hold their welfare in your hands. It is vital you do what you are supposed to do, providing humane and compassionate care to your canine friend.

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**2-LS2-1—**Events have causes that generate observable patterns.

Cause and Effect are powerful observation tools that can predict patterns. How can cause and effect predict the needs of dogs? What will happen if their needs are not met? How can we make a difference in the welfare of dogs? In our homes? In our community?

**Materials:**

* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Pets Need” Match-up
* DOWNLOAD coloring sheet—“Color My Collar”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Be Prepared”

**Method:** Both children and pets need people to take care of them; they are incapable of meeting their own basic needs. While a young child requires the constant care of parents, pets need a family, as well, to provide for them. What kinds of things must we have in order to be healthy and happy? We need food, water, shelter, exercise, medical care and love. Pets must have all of these things, too!

Print out the 3 pages of the “Pets Need Match-Up” hand-out. Cut along the dotted lines on the first 2 pages of the hand-out. Tell the class, “I’ll show you a picture of something we need, then you’ll find the word that matches the picture. As we match the picture needs with the words, let’s talk about why each one is so important.” Match all the cards until each has a mate.

What would happen if each of these needs weren’t met?

*Now we’re going to sing a song to help remind us that we must care for our pets each day. Let’s sing the “Love Your Pets” song.* (Sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat).

 *Love, love, love your pets,*

 *Love them every day.*

 *Give them food,*

 *And water, too.*

 *Then let them*

 *Run and play.*

**Call to Action:** Give children the opportunity to practice meeting pet’s needs. Designate half the class as pretend pet owners and the other half as pretend pets. Have the owners do pretend activities such as feeding, walking, petting, and playing with their “pets.” Then let the children reverse roles.

Distribute the “Be Prepared” and “Color My Collar” handouts. Reinforce the messages that pets cannot talk and therefore need our protection in all situations. One of the best ways to help our dogs and cats is to provide a collar with identification. In the event they get lost, it could be their ticket home. (We’ll discuss microchips in another lesson.) Of course, keeping our pets safely in our homes and yards is crucial to their well-being. Discussion story starters:

*What could happen if your pet escaped outside without an ID tag?*

*Why is it important that each individual pet have a collar with an ID tag?*

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Websites:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for animal-related web sites.