SAFETY WITH ANIMALS

**LESSON 2: Grades K-3**

# HANDLE WITH CARE

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:**  1.3, 1.5, 1.10, 2.3, 3.2 & 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:**  Communication Arts: 1, 4 & 6; Science: 3; Health & Phys Ed: 5

**Objective:** To encourage students to be responsible by considering the effects their actions may have on themselves and others. To teach students to be gentle with pets in order to prevent being bitten or scratched.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.K-2.1—Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults.**

Life can be dangerous for our animal friends. They can’t read warning labels or signs and often don’t understand what is not safe. List the dangers they might face in our day-to-day, normal lives and homes. Think about things right outside of your yard and front door as well as in your home. What dangers might our pets encounter?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

Plan ahead, think about your pets and what you need to do to keep them safe. Think before you place them in a dangerous circumstance; for instance, leaving the gate of your yard open so they can get out or leave a toxic substance within their reach.

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

**2-LS4-1—**All of our pets are different, diverse living beings. Even a household that has two dogs or two cats can have different responses among the same species. How can our action(s) affect the reactions of pets?

**Materials Needed:**

* Coloring/writing utensils
* Stuffed animal for each child
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “How Would You Feel?”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Kind Pledge Certificate”

**Method:**  Introduce this lesson by reviewing the fact that animals have feelings, too. Just like us, they are affected by how others treat them. If someone treats us poorly, how do we feel? Mad, sad, uncared for. If someone treats us well, how do we feel? Happy, glad, cared for. Pets respond the same way. If we treat them well, they will be happy. If we treat them poorly, they will be sad. Animals have a right to be happy and feel good just like we do. So it’s up to us to behave in a way that is kind and caring. Pets and people will want to spend time with us if we think about their feelings, too. Treat others as you would want to be treated.

If we are kind and gentle with our pets, they will also be less likely to bite or hurt us. Using stuffed animals, demonstrate the proper way to pick up, hold, stroke and play with pets. Give children an opportunity to imitate your gentle actions with their stuffed animals.

Distribute a copy of the “How Would You Feel?” handout to each student. Read each sentence, then discuss how you would feel. Ask the students to draw a face on each animal and write one word under each completed picture that describes the feeling. Remind students that animals would feel similar to how we feel. The sentences may also lead to a discussion about pets’ basic needs.

**Call to Action:** Practice being gentle with your pet at home, or a neighbor's or friend's pet. Pay attention to how they respond to your actions. Do they purr, nuzzle, get calm, or go to sleep? Have children use a stuffed animal to demonstrate their experiences.

Ask students to close their eyes and visualize what kindness to animals looks like. Second, ask them (eyes still closed) to think of the kindest person they know. Third, distribute a Kind Certificate to each student, ask them to fill it out and give it to that person, telling the person why they chose them.

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

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