



Animal Refuge League

OF GREATER PORTLAND

P.O. Box 336

Westbrook, ME 04092

www.arlgp.org

A KIDS' GUIDE TO HELPING ANIMALS *You Can Make a Difference!*

Thank you for your interest in helping animals!

The Animal Refuge League is an animal shelter established in 1911 with the help of former Maine Governor Percival Baxter. The ARL takes in about 4,000 animals a year. The animals come to us for many reasons. They may have been strays, which means we couldn't find their owners. Sometimes their owners could no longer care for them. We provide the best possible care for the animals until we can find their owners or until someone chooses to adopt them.

The ARL is also dedicated to fighting animal overpopulation by educating others and by making sure that every animal that is adopted is spayed or neutered. This means that they have an operation so that they can't have babies. We have a program that can help others spay and neuter their pets, too.

This book has some ways that you and others can help the Animal Refuge League fulfill its mission. Thank you for caring!



HUMANE AT HOME!

THINK BEFORE YOU ADOPT



Having a pet is a rewarding experience, but it can also be a huge responsibility that takes a lot of time and effort. This is a good time for a family meeting. These are things you and your family should think about before bringing home a pet:

Are we ready for the lifetime commitment of owning a pet? A dog or a rabbit can live up to 10 years or more. A cat can live up to 20, and some parrots can live to be 80! Rats and hamsters live 3-4 years, and guinea pigs live about 5-7. Find out the average life span of any animal you are considering adopting and make sure that you and your family are ready to provide a home for the pet for the rest of his life.

Can we afford a pet? Pets can cost a lot of money to care for! There is food, vet care, toys, pet sitting when you go away, leashes and collars, grooming, training classes and the list goes on. A large dog will cost a lot more to care for than a pet rat. Consider everything your pet would need to be healthy and happy.

How much time do we have to devote to a pet? Some pets are going to need more time than others, but all pets need time with their special people. Dogs will need to be walked and exercised every day, and will need training to be a good pet. Your cats will need time to play with you, or to sit on your lap. Rabbits should have 3-4 hours outside of their cage to run around and exercise! Think about how much time you can spend with a pet before choosing one.

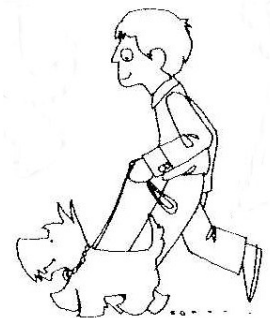


Is everyone in the family in agreement? A pet will need the whole family to share in the responsibility of caring for her.

Who will take care of the pet? The adults in the family should always be the main caregivers of your pet, but there are many responsibilities to share! Who will feed the pet? Who will walk or exercise the pet? Who will train the pet? Remember that even when you are feeling tired or sick, or if it's rainy or cold, your dog will still need to be walked and your cat will still need to play! Think about everything your pet will need and decide who will do what tasks before bringing a pet home.

How much space do we have? You should think about your living space when deciding what type of pet to get. A 150 pound St. Bernard is probably not the best match if you live in a small apartment!

What type of pet is best for our family? Once you have decided to get a pet, find out everything you can about a pet you might want to get. Read books, talk to a veterinarian, call the Animal Refuge League. Talk about all the pets' needs before you decide. Think about the age of any pet you are considering. Usually, a younger pet is going to need more of your time and energy. The staff at the Animal Refuge League can work with you and your family to choose the pet that best suits you.



BECOME YOUR OWN PET'S BEST FRIEND

- Make sure you know the right foods to feed your pet to keep her healthy.
- Give your pet fresh food and water every day.
- Make sure your animal has a clean, dry warm place to sleep.
- Brush and groom your animals regularly—especially long haired pets.
- Your pet needs yearly check-ups, just like you! Take your pet to the veterinarian every year and when he's sick.
- Animals need to exercise every day! They love to play as much as you do!
- Have your pets spayed or neutered so they won't have babies. There aren't enough homes for the 70,000 born every day!
- Take the time to train your pet so he gets along well with others.
- Make sure that your pet has a collar and tag on so that she will make it home safely if she gets lost. Check the collar often to make sure it isn't too tight.
- Treat your animal as an important member of the family. Animals need lots of quality time with the people they love!

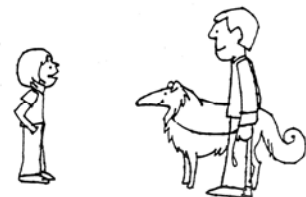


PROTECT YOURSELF BY RESPECTING ANIMALS

Like humans, an animal's instinct is to protect themselves from danger. Keep yourself safe around animals by following these rules:

What to do:

- ALWAYS ask a dog's owner before you pet a dog.
- If the person says "Yes", let the dog sniff the back of your hand, curling your fingers into your palm and extending your hand slowly toward her face. She may want to sniff other parts of you, too. That's how a dog finds out who you are.
- Stand quietly with your eyes on the ground as you and the dog get to know each other.
- Scratch the dog under her chin. Move and talk quietly and slowly.



What not to do:

- NEVER pet an animal without the owner's permission. Never approach an animal when his owner is not present.
- Never put your hand over or around a dog's head. These actions can be threatening to a dog and can cause him to snap.
- Never put your face in a dog's face, or stare into a dog's eyes. This is how dogs challenge each other to fight and it is considered very rude behavior to a dog.
- Never pet a dog from behind. It can startle her and cause her to snap.



- Never run past or toward a dog. Their natural instinct is to chase something that is running.
- Never jump, scream or wave your arms at an animal-even in play. This can get the animal excited and can lead to rough play and biting, or it can scare them.
- Never make fast, jerky movements, especially around a dog's eyes or head. This can seem like teasing and lead to snapping.
- Never disturb an animal who is eating or taking care of puppies. She may feel like she needs to protect her food or babies.
- Never disturb an animal who is sleeping.
- Never *sic* a dog on a friend while playing. You will confuse the dog by teaching that it's okay to attack sometimes.
- Never pet or pick up an injured animal, even your own. Get help from a parent, adult friend, a veterinarian or an Animal Control Officer.

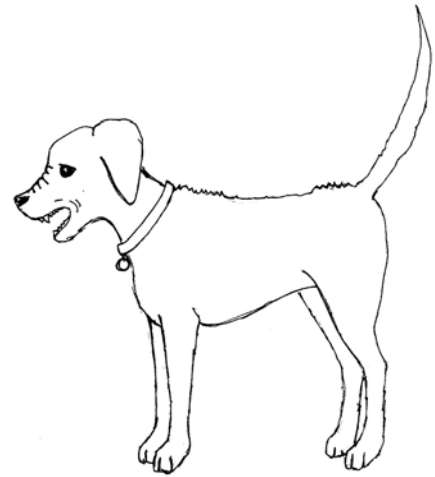


Body Language

How do you know if a dog or cat might bite? Animals can communicate a lot through their body language. An animal might bite when she feels threatened. He might be protecting something, or he might be scared. Learning about body language can help you understand how an animal is feeling and can help you stay safe.

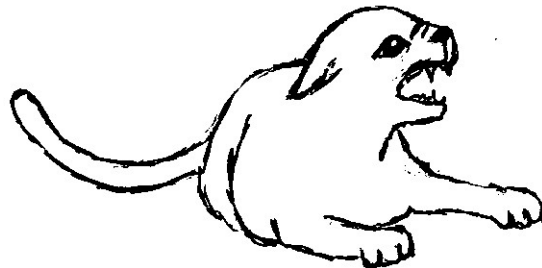
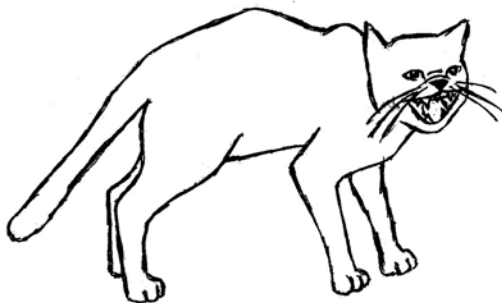
Aggressive Dog

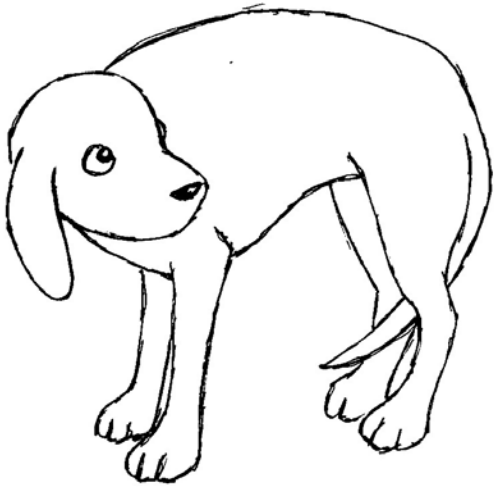
His hackles (the fur on the back of his neck and shoulders) may be standing up. His tail might be straight up. His body and legs might be stiff; he might look like he's standing on his toes. He might be growling or showing his teeth; he's telling you "I'll use them if I have to!" He might be staring without looking away.



Aggressive Cat

She might be showing her teeth and hissing or growling. Her ears may be forward or flat against her head. Her body might be stiff, and her eyes might look large and very dark. She might be staring without looking away. Her tail might be moving back and forth.



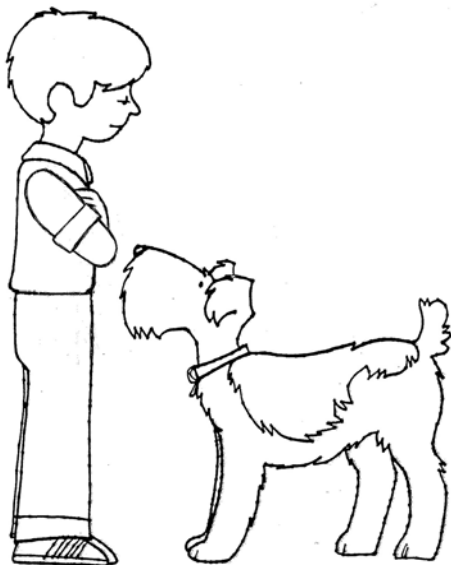
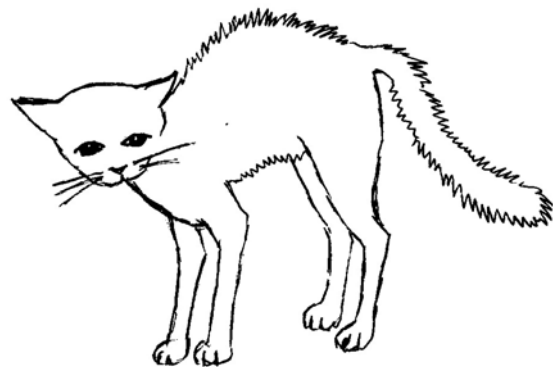
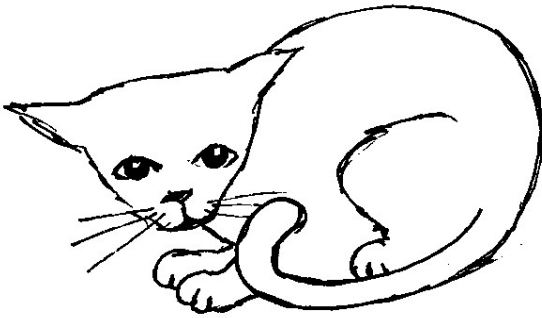


Scared Dog

Her tail might be tucked between her legs. You might see the white parts of her eyes. Her head might hang low and she might crouch lower to the ground. Her ears might be back or against her head.

Scared Cat

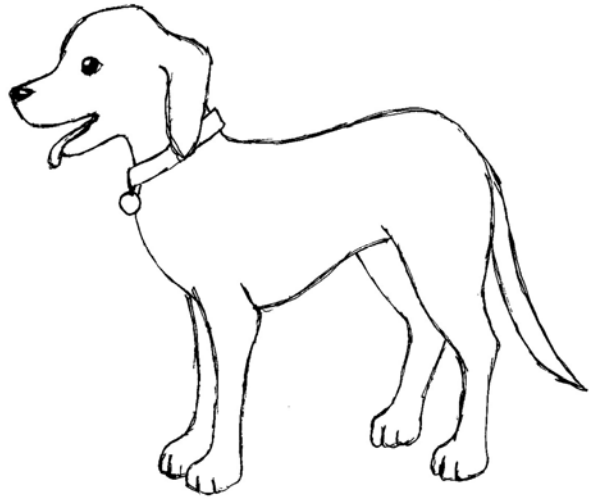
His fur might be standing up all over his body to try to make himself look bigger. Or he might curl up smaller and pull his tail tight to his body. His eyes might look big and dark. His ears might be down to the side of his head.



DO NOT approach an animal that shows any of these signs! If an animal you don't know comes up to you, **"BE A TREE"**: stand straight with your arms in your armpits, be quiet and look at the ground! If you see a stray animal, call the animal control officer in your town.

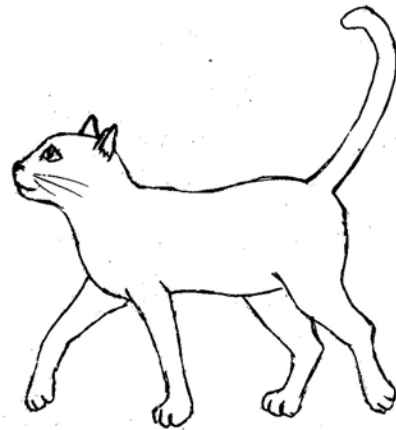
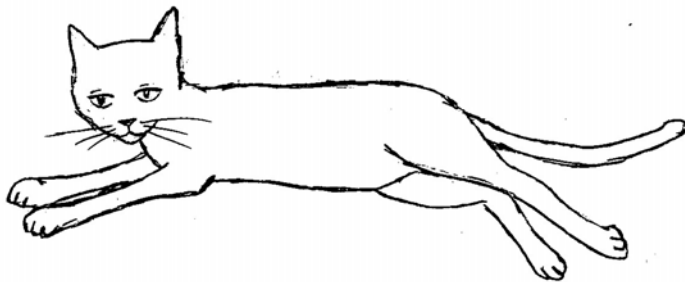
Friendly/Relaxed Dog

His mouth might be open with his tongue hanging out. His tail might hang low and loose. His body and ears may be relaxed. He may look at you, but doesn't stare and will look away.



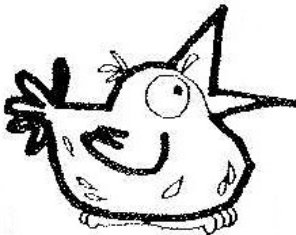
Friendly/Relaxed Cat

Her tail straight in the air with a little curl at the end. She may look at you with slowly blinking eyes. Her body and ears are relaxed, and she might stretch her legs and tail out long.



Leave Wildlife in the Wild

Animals that live in the wild should not be touched and should never be pets. Wild animals have different needs than pets. They can't get everything that they need when they live in a house. Wildlife can be dangerous to people, too. They might hurt a person while they try to protect themselves. Some can carry diseases that can be harmful to people. If you see a sick or injured animal, call the animal control officer in your town or a local wildlife rehabilitator.



TAKE ACTION!

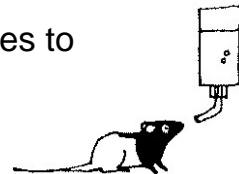
HOLD A PET SUPPLY/DONATION DRIVE

What is a Pet Supply/Donation Drive?

A Pet Supply Drive is a group effort to ask friends, family, neighbors and the community to give items such as food, bedding, toys etc. to help meet the needs of homeless animals. These donations help the Animal Refuge League to provide top quality care for each animal.

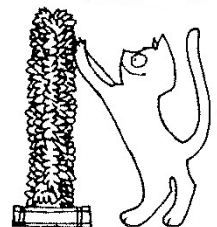
What type of pet supply items should we collect?

- For the dogs and pups: unopened food (see our website for brands), tennis balls, rawhide bones and kongs, stuffed toys (best without plastic eyes, noses, etc.)
- For the cats and kittens: unopened food (see our website for brands), cats toys, treats, baby food stage one for young kittens (turkey or chicken), tuna, unscented cat litter (non-clumping), Kitten Milk Replacement Formula.
- For the small animals: small animal bedding (Aspen or recycled paper), food, timothy hay (2nd cut is best) toys (cardboard boxes with two entry points cut out, old phone books for shredding, hard plastic baby toys like rattles and keys, plastic cat toys).
- For the birds: Harrison's pellets, toys, wooden dowels for perches.
- New or used dog/cat beds, towels, sheets, and blankets; cats and dogs love to snuggle in your old blankets!
- Bleach, paper towels, laundry detergent, stamps, gift certificates to grocery stores or pet stores.



How do we get started?

Create posters asking people to donate pet supply items for your collection drive project. You can download flyers for your drive from the kids page on our website: www.arlqp.org. You can also download some pictures for decorating your posters or donation boxes. You may be able to hang the posters in your school, at a pet supply store, a veterinarian's office or throughout your neighborhood. You will need to decide how you will collect the items and include that information on you posters. Please call the ARL at 854-9771 ext. 110 when you're ready to drop off your donations so we can be sure to thank you properly for your kindness!



When you have a birthday party, ask your guests to bring gifts or money for the animals at the shelter!



COMFORT CRAFTS

Here are some things you can make to help reduce stress for the animals in the shelter (or at home!)

KITTY CASTLES

The shelter can be a sometimes scary and stressful place for a cat to be. Having a place to perch or hide can help the cat to feel more comfortable.

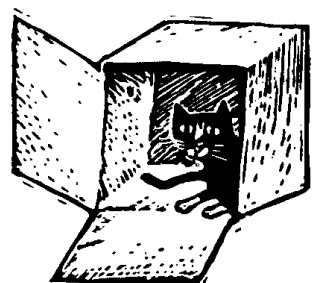
You will need:

- Cardboard boxes (big enough for a cat to hide in, but small enough to fit into the kitty's cage, the boxes that copy paper come in are a good size)
- Scissors
- Markers, Crayons and anything else you can think of to decorate your castle.

Just make sure it is all non-toxic!

Directions: Cut holes in the box. At least one will need to be big enough for a cat to fit through. Others can be windows, but some cats may like them without windows. Make a variety! Decorate the castle however you would like. Bring the castles to the shelter!

Variation: Try cutting a few quarter sized holes in a paper bag for a peek-a-boo sack. You can color it, too!



KITTY TOYS

Make some toys for the kitties to play with!

You will need:

- Pipe cleaners
- Jingle bells*
- Unfinished wooden beads*

**use extra large sized beads & bells so kitty won't choke if it comes off!*

Directions: String beads and/or jingle bells on to pipe cleaner. Twist and turn the pipe cleaner, making crazy shapes!



SOCK TOYS

You can use new, or used (clean, of course!) socks for these toys!

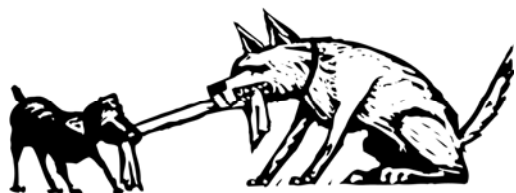
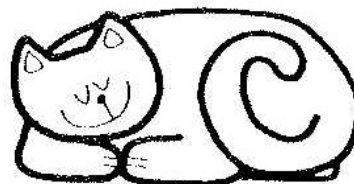
- For dog toys: Fill socks with poly fiber fill, or put in a tennis ball; tie or sew the end. Or, tie or sew 3 or 4 sock in a line for a pull toy.
- For cat toys: Use baby socks and fill with poly fiber fill, or crumpled paper and catnip; tie or sew the end.
- For rat toys or bird toys: Sew socks end to end into a long length and then twist or plait them into a thick climbing rope. Add a few knots for extra grip and feed it through a split ring / hook for hanging in the cage.

****Make sure not to use long pieces of yarn or thread...some animals may try to eat the yarn or thread and get sick!**



GOODIES TO GROW

Grow cat grass (wheat, barley, rye, oats and/or flax), catnip or honeysuckle in pie plates or large pots. Cats like to eat cat grass (and catnip) and they like the scent of honeysuckle (and catnip). You can bring in the catnip plant or dry out the leaves and bring those to the shelter. Make sure to avoid pesticides!



FLEECE DOG TOYS

Take 3 strips of fleece about 1-2 inches wide and tie a knot in one end. Braid the pieces and tie a knot at the other end. You can make a bunch of different lengths. These are great for fleece scraps, so if you know someone who sews, ask them to save scraps.

CLIMBING ROPES

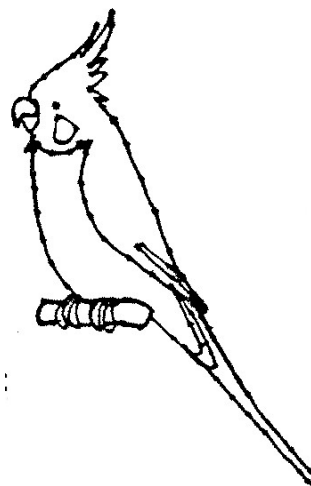
Take three or four strands of cotton clothesline and knot them at regular intervals. You can even do fancy things like braiding in a piece of USA produced rawhide, clean untreated wood (perhaps wooden clothespins without springs). Make the lines at least two to three feet long to hang in small animal cages.

RATTY (OR BIRDY!) PIÑATA

You will need:

- Paper towels
- Peas, corn, sunflower seeds, cheerios
- String

Directions: Lay the paper towels out several layers thick. Place a pile of treats on the paper. Bundle it up and tie it closed with some string.



YUMMY DECORATIONS *(to hang in small animal cages)*

You will need:

- A needle
- Strong cotton thread
- An assortment of threadable (and things that won't spoil too quickly) critter treats: like popcorn, dried fruit, cheerios, peanuts in their shell.

Directions: Using the needle, thread the treats on to the thread...and they are ready for hanging!





RATTY BEANBAGS

You will need:

- Some tough fabric (like denim)
- Whole uncooked wheat grains, rice or small dried beans.
- Needle and thread

Directions: Cut the fabric into a rectangle, size depending on your number of rats. Sew up the side seams so that it forms a pillow case, leaving one end open to put the filling in. Fill loosely with your grains or beans. Sew up the end to close it completely. These can be microwaved in winter and frozen in summer to give small animals a warm or cool place to lay.

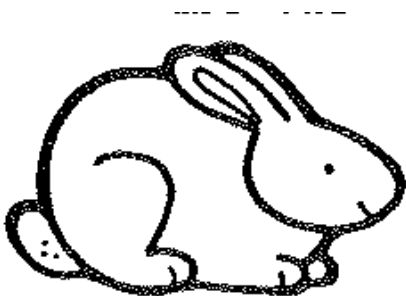
PAPER MACHE HIDEOUT

You will need:

- a balloon
- a roll of toilet paper (or perhaps some newspaper) and some water

Directions: Blow up the balloon. Tear off strips of toilet paper, wet them and stick them onto the balloon. Continue doing this until the balloon is completely covered except for a small entrance hole. Ensure the paper is thick enough to "hold it's own" when the balloon is removed. Let dry. Pop balloon and remove it. Either cut the base flat so it is stable, or string the round hideout up in the cage as a loft. Be inventive with different balloon shapes, or use other molds (like tissue boxes or upturned plastic bowls) to make interesting shapes. This will not produce a permanent hideout, but the critters will have a great time hiding in it and shredding it.

Make different sizes for many types of little critters!



TREAT TUBES

Fill cardboard rolls from paper towels or toilet paper with nice hay or veggie treats.

BUNNY BASKETS

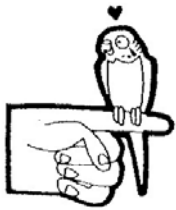
Fill untreated wicker baskets or boxes with: shredded paper, junk mail, magazines, straw, or other organic materials for digging.



ADOPT-A-CAGE FUNDRAISER



This is a way for you and your classroom, school, or organization to “adopt” an animal from The Animal Refuge League without actually taking an animal home! How is that possible? Every animal that comes to our shelter has basic needs such as food, water and medical care. Staff and volunteers also work hard to provide toys and special attention to each of our furry friends. The care for each of the animals is expensive. Caring for 4,000 animals a year is a big job, and we need your help! If your class, school or organization could raise \$150, you could adopt a cat or rabbit cage for a year, and \$300 will adopt a dog cage for a year. This money helps to pay for the care of the many animals that will stay the cage throughout the year. Maybe you will even be able to “adopt” more than one animal! You and your group could collect bottles or pennies from friends, family and neighbors to raise the money. Be creative!



EDUCATE OTHERS

Be a shining example of how one person can make a difference. Educate your friends and family about proper animal care and teach them about animal welfare. Always treat people and animals with kindness and respect.



- Learn about local animal issues and write letters to the editor of local papers.
- Create a video about shelter animals.
- Do a bulletin board display for your school or local library. Have different animal themes each month such as pet owner responsibility, information about pet overpopulation & spay/neuter, why animals are at shelters, dog bite prevention, etc.
- Research animal related web sites and share information with others.
- Investigate dangers faced by local wildlife, and come up with some solutions.
- Do an “Animal Fact” statement each morning over school PA system.
- Create a puppet show or play for a school assembly or for younger students.
- Read or write your own stories about animals for younger students.
- Create a monthly newsletter or comic strip about animals and animal issues.
- Make posters for school or neighborhood library, stores, veterinarian offices about animal care, spay/neuter, adopting an older animal, etc.
- Create a recommended animal reading book list for you school or local brary.
- Paint mural for your school or park.
- Walk your sick neighbor’s dog.



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