

Pet care

Learning aims

- To be able to listen to others in a small group
- Begin to understand 'why' and 'how' questions
- Become familiar with new vocabulary linked to their particular interests or topic
- To be able to use talk to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking.



Resources

- Selection of animal soft toys
- Selection of real objects which are used to care for pets e.g. water bowl, lead, grooming brush or dog collar
- Pictures of resources used to care for pets such as a bridle or dog bed, cat carrying basket.

Activity Outline

1. Provide a selection of soft toy animals or ask the children to bring in their cuddly toy from home. If a child brings an imaginary animal such as a unicorn, allow this because if they have an object which represents their particular interest, they are more likely to engage with the activity.
2. Sit with a small group of up to six children in a circle. Go round the circle and ask them if their 'pet' has a name. Ask the children if they know what a pet is and explain how it is a big responsibility owning a pet.
3. Ask the children if they have any pets at home and what their names are. If they don't have a pet, what would they wish for and why. Model using sentence starters such as 'My pet is called...' or 'I wish I had a...' so they can organise their thoughts using talk.
4. Encourage the children to stroke the pets they are holding. Draw their attention to the objects and pictures in the centre of the circle. Can anyone name or explain the purpose of the objects? Use open ended questions such as 'I wonder why the dog needs a bowl?' 'How might you use the lead?'
5. Allow the children time to explore and handle the objects.
6. Revisit the resources during a future group time. Ask the children to choose an object and explain it to the rest of the group. If you have a child who is reluctant to share, you could ask them to tell you and you can feedback to the rest of the group. Alternatively you can provide small whiteboards for the children to draw their ideas and then explain what they represent.
7. Go around the circle a final time and ask the children if they would like to share what they have learnt about looking after pets.

Extending the activity

- Place the resources you have used in the role play area so they children can explore them and enhance their play.
- Create a pet display using photos of the children's pets, brought in from home. Encourage the children to share their photos or pictures with the group, talk about their pet and how they help to look after them.
- Hide a soft toy pet around the setting for the children to find. Discuss where the pet is hiding and teach children how to play 'Hide and Seek' with the toy. Whoever finds the hidden animal, chooses where to hide it next for the rest of the group. They could say 'warmer' or 'colder' as the seekers get nearer or further away from the hidden pet.

Special considerations

Important: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

NDNA products to support you with this activity

- [Art of Expression and Creativity - publication](#)