



## Animal Needs

### PURPOSE

In order for children to know how to treat animals humanely, they need to learn about the basic needs of animal companions and practice providing for them. This lesson seeks to help children understand how human and animal companion needs are similar, and how they differ. For example, both people and animals need food, but the types of food that people and animals eat are different. Through learning these concepts, children will better understand their responsibility toward animal companions.

### OVERVIEW

Students learn about some of the basic needs of dogs and cats. They compare and contrast the needs of animal companions to the needs of people and discuss how someone might feel if they did not have their needs met. Then, they apply what they learned by making a cat toy that meets an important animal need.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to...

- identify at least three basic needs of dogs and cats.
- compare and contrast the needs of people and animal companions.

### 1. Warm Up (5 min.)

- Ask students what dogs and cats need to be happy, healthy, and safe. Allow students to share, and write their responses on the whiteboard/chalkboard or on chart paper. (Possible answers include: healthy food, clean water, home, veterinary care, toys, ID tag, family, attention, love and care.)
- Explain that animals and people do not have all the same needs, but they do have many similar needs, such as food, water, shelter, family, and fun. However, meeting these needs looks a little different for our animal companions (the animals who live with and depend on us) than it does for people.

**AGES** 3–5 years

**TIME** 45 min.

### SEL COMPETENCY

- Social awareness (Perspective-taking, Respect for others)

### SKILLS

Comparing and contrasting, Drawing, Matching, Speaking and listening

### MATERIALS PROVIDED

- *Understanding Needs* matching cards
- *Dog Needs* worksheet
- *Cat Needs* worksheet

### MATERIALS NOT PROVIDED

- Whiteboard, chalkboard, or chart paper and markers/chalk
- Nontoxic markers/crayons
- Pictures of dog and cat needs cut out of pet care magazines (optional)
- Nontoxic glue sticks [preferably plant-based] (optional)
- Poster board with pictures of items that dogs and cats need to be happy, healthy, and safe (optional)
- Plain white crew socks
- Cardboard squares
- Nontoxic fabric markers
- Craft paper, recycled wax paper, or recycled parchment paper
- Dried catnip (organic, if possible)
- Tablespoon measuring spoon
- Funnel (paper shaped into a cone)

### VOCABULARY

- Animal companion



## 2. Understanding Needs (15 min.)

- Show students the “person” version of one of the *Understanding Needs* matching cards.
- Have a student volunteer find the matching animal card.
- Repeat this activity until all the cards are matched.
- After each match is made, ask students how the needs on the cards are similar and different for people and for animals. Ask students if they understand what it really means to provide an animal companion with each need. Briefly discuss how to fulfill each basic need, noting the following key points. (Make it engaging by asking students questions about each need that relate to the key points.)
  - ★ **Clean water** – provide dogs and cats with fresh, clean water each day, and clean their water dish
  - ★ **Healthy food** – provide dogs and cats with wholesome dog and cat food each day, and clean their food bowl
  - ★ **Home** – have dogs and cats live indoors; animal companions living outdoors are exposed to weather that can be dangerous and many other unsafe, unhealthy situations—and they can feel lonely, too
  - ★ **Health care** – provide animal companions with regular check-ups, and pay attention to any physical or behavioral changes that might be a sign that they are sick or injured
  - ★ **Humane training** – patiently teach dogs and cats good behaviors and never use harsh punishments if they make mistakes
  - ★ **Grooming** – every animal has different grooming needs, and it is important to know what they are (e.g., bathing, brushing, trimming nails)
  - ★ **Exercise** – animals need exercise to stay healthy; take dogs on walks and runs, and play with cats indoors
  - ★ **Proper clothing** – protect short-haired dogs in cold weather; protect dogs’ paws in hot and cold weather
  - ★ **Play** – make sure animals have toys to play with to keep them happy
  - ★ **Sleep** – provide animals with safe, comfortable places to sleep
  - ★ **Family and love** – give animals lots of love and attention; spend both quiet and active time with them; pet them gently

## 3. Dog and Cat Needs (10 min.)

- Let students choose whether they want to work on the *Dog Needs* worksheet or the *Cat Needs* worksheet.
- Ask students to draw pictures of things that the dog or the cat needs to be happy, healthy, and safe. (Students are not expected to draw detailed and accurate pictures of these items. Instead, it is intended to be a fun activity in which they will think about what a dog or cat needs to be happy, healthy, and safe. Ask them to draw these items to the best of their ability. You can create a large poster board that includes images of items that dogs and cats need to be happy, healthy, and safe, and encourage students to reference the images on the poster board as they explain what they have included on their own drawing.)

## RECOMMENDED BOOK

- *Are You Ready for Me?* by Claire Buchwald

## RESOURCE LINKS

**Pawster.** "How to Care for Your Dog - A Comprehensive Guide to Basic Dog Care Tips." <https://pawster.com/dog-care/>

**PetCo.** "Cat Facts." [https://www.petco.com/content/petco/PetcoStore/en\\_US/pet-services/resource-center/caresheets/cat-care-sheet.html](https://www.petco.com/content/petco/PetcoStore/en_US/pet-services/resource-center/caresheets/cat-care-sheet.html)

## Educator Spotlight

### Mickey Kudia

Chicago Program Manager, HEART:

*There are many young people who love their animal companions and want to know how to best provide for them. This lesson teaches students important basic information about how to care for pets, while also challenging students to think about how the needs of animals are similar and different from their own needs. We're providing students with an opportunity to make a cat toy because it is a great way for them to apply what they've learned to help animals in the real world.*



- Monitor the students, and ask them to explain what they are drawing. If they draw things that might be harmful or inappropriate for animals, discuss the items and why they might be inappropriate for a dog or cat.

## Note

As an alternative to having them draw pictures, provide students with pictures that are cut out from pet care magazines. Ask them to paste four or five pictures onto the worksheet that are things a dog or cat needs to be happy, healthy, and safe.

### 4. Catnip Toy (10 min.)

- Explain that, just like people, our dogs and cats like to play and have fun.
- Ask students how they might feel if they never had any time to play.
- Explain that it is nice for animals to have toys because it gives them something fun to do, especially when their guardian is away.
- Let students know that they will be making catnip toys for cats. Explain that catnip is a plant with a mint smell that cats really like, and the toy they are making will have catnip in it.

#### ★ Catnip Toy<sup>1</sup>

1. Introduce the Catnip Toy activity to the students. Model how to complete the activity using the following instructions, and then let the students make their own, assisting them as needed.
2. Place a piece of cardboard in the sock. This makes it easier to draw on the sock. Decorate the sock using nontoxic fabric markers. Pull the cardboard out of the sock.
3. Crinkle up two pieces of craft paper (or recycled wax paper or recycled parchment paper) and put them inside the sock. (Explain that cats like to scratch this material and they like the sound of it.)
4. Pour two tablespoons of catnip into the sock. (Shape a sheet of paper into a cone to make a funnel. Place the funnel deep into the opening of the sock to make it easier to pour in the catnip.)
5. Tie a knot at the top of the sock.
6. Give the toy to a cat and watch him/her play with it, or donate the toy to an animal shelter.

## Note

You can choose to let the students keep the toys for their own pets at home or donate them to a local animal shelter. If you plan to donate the items, contact your local animal shelter and ask if they have preferences for donated toys; some shelters have preferences or restrictions based on health and safety needs.

### 5. Wrap Up (5 min.)

- Ask students the following:
  - ★ How are the needs of people and animals similar and different?
  - ★ How might a person or an animal feel if they did not have what they needed (e.g., how might a person or animal feel if they did not have a place to live)?
  - ★ Why is it important to understand what animals need to be happy and healthy?

<sup>1</sup> Modified from Operation Happy Sock, <http://ohappysock.blogspot.com/>

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. **Read Aloud:** Read the book *Are You Ready for Me?* by Claire Buchwald. As you read the book, ask students to put their finger on their nose every time they think they hear something mentioned that a puppy or a dog needs. Write all the things that are mentioned on the whiteboard/chalkboard or chart paper. Then, ask the following questions:
  - What is fun about having a puppy or a dog?
  - What is difficult about taking care of a puppy or a dog?
  - Why is it important to take good care of our dogs and cats?
2. **Drawing:** Have students draw pictures of what they need to be happy and healthy. Give them time to share what they drew. You can compare the pictures they draw to the pictures they drew of what dogs and cats need.



# Dog Needs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Draw what this dog needs to be happy and healthy.



# Cat Needs

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Draw what this cat needs to be happy and healthy.





Clean Water

Clean Water



Healthy Food



Healthy Food



Home



Home



Health Care - Doctor



Health Care - Vet



Learning - School



© Meena Alagappan

Learning - Training

Understanding Needs Matching cards



Grooming



Grooming



Exercise



Exercise



Proper Clothing



Proper Clothing



Playing Ball



Playing Ball



Sleep



Sleep



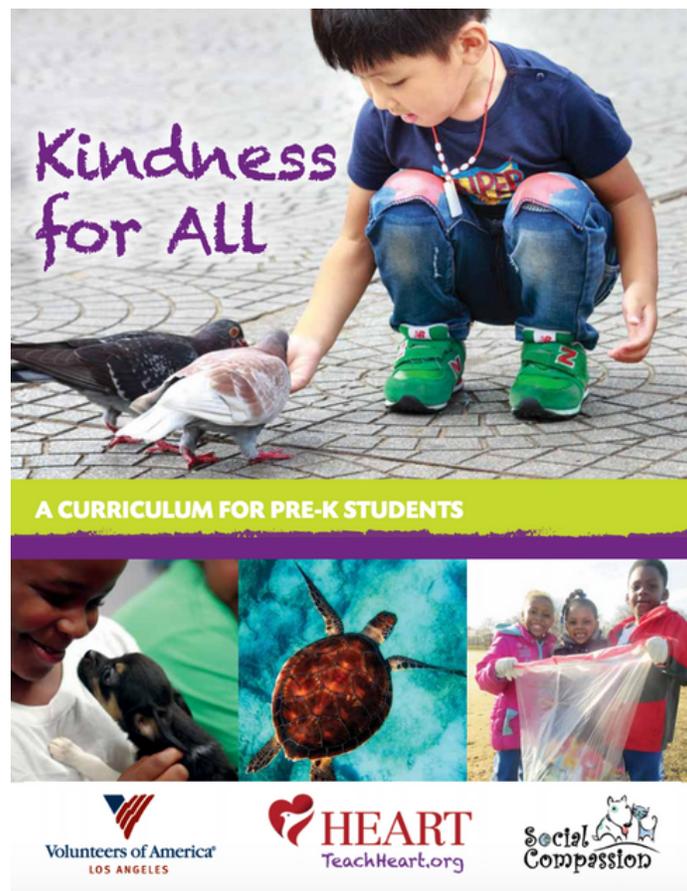
Family & Love



Family & Love

# Thank you for teaching this lesson!

Visit our resource library at  
[www.teachheart.org/library](http://www.teachheart.org/library) to download  
the entire Pre-K resource guide for free!



Love our content? Have feedback?  
Drop us a line at [email@teachheart.org](mailto:email@teachheart.org)

We can't wait to hear from you!