

Teacher information

Aim

City of Gold Coast (City) recognises that companion animals play an important role in today's society. However, pets that are not managed responsibly can have negative impacts on community safety, animal welfare and the environment.

The Pets are part of our city too! program has been designed to build understanding of how to interact safely with pets and the importance of responsible pet ownership, reducing negative impacts not just to the lives of the animals, but also those of their neighbours, the community and our environment.

Learning outcomes

- Identify and read common pet body language in order to develop an appreciation and understanding of how to behave appropriately and safely around them.
- Understand important pet owner responsibilities and rules, and the connection to the health of the community and environment.
- Understand the importance of choosing an appropriate pet, general welfare and husbandry requirements.
- Discover the City's role in managing responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.

Overview

The learning activities introduce important pet owner responsibilities and rules and the connection to the health of the community, its pets and the environment and the City's role in reducing the impacts of pets in our city.

Using this kit

This program is flexible and has been designed in a way which allows the teacher to choose activities best suited to the learning context.

Where possible, resources have been provided to complement the suggested learning activities.



Pat and play safely

- Pets teach responsibility. Children learn about the requirements of a living being such as food, water and exercise.
- Pets aid childhood development. Pets help children develop nurturing and social skills. Developing positive feelings about pets can aid self-esteem and help children develop verbal communication and compassion.
- Pets are a friend to children. Children turn to pets when they need a friend, confidante or protector. Children often refer to their family pet as their 'best friend' as pets do not judge children or get angry at them, children often trust them with their secrets and private thoughts.
- Pets teach life lessons. Pets are often the first experience a child has with death and grieving.
- Pets are fun. Pets provide unconditional love and affection. Children can participate in safe games with their pets and those who participate in walking/exercising the family dog have the added benefit of extra physical activity.

Unfortunately, not all childhood experiences with pets are positive ones. Each year in Queensland, about 1200 children receive dog bite injuries requiring hospital treatment (*Kidsafe Qld Inc*).

Young children are at greatest risk of hospitalisation from dog attacks. Injuries often occur because children do not know how to behave around dogs and dogs do not know how to behave around children. More than 80% of these dog attacks happen in the family home or that of a family member or friend. It is also important to note that children are most often bitten by their own dog or one known to them.

Avoid risks with pets

Supervise or separate

Children do not have the ability to read the warning signs your pet may be displaying. Actively supervising all interaction between your child and pet, and ensuring that they are securely separated at all other times, are the keys to minimising the risk of an incident.

All pets have the potential to cause harm, so you can never assume a particular pet is good with kids. Even if a pet is great with kids and has never shown aggression, why take a chance? All interaction between young children and pets should be actively supervised. This means that you are in a position to engage and intervene at all times.

If you can't actively supervise, make sure that there are pet and child free zones both inside and outdoors. Make sure the areas are secure to avoid any unplanned interaction. It is also important that extended family and visitors are vigilant in following the 'supervise or separate' rule.

Zoonoses

Zoonoses are a range of diseases which pets can pass onto humans. Worms, Ring Worm and Toxoplasmosis, in particular, relate to our children, pet dogs and cats.

Good hygiene practices, regular worming and flea treatment and keeping the environment free of cat and dog faeces will go long way to minimising the risk of these and other diseases being passed on.

Pet Selection

Deciding to become a pet owner requires careful thought and planning. Before you decide what type of pet you want, first ask yourself "Can I look after a pet properly?" If the answer is yes, the next step is to make the right choice of pet, based on your lifestyle and priorities. If you are part of a family, the decision to get a pet should be a combined one, as all family members will come into contact with the pet, and should be involved in looking after it.

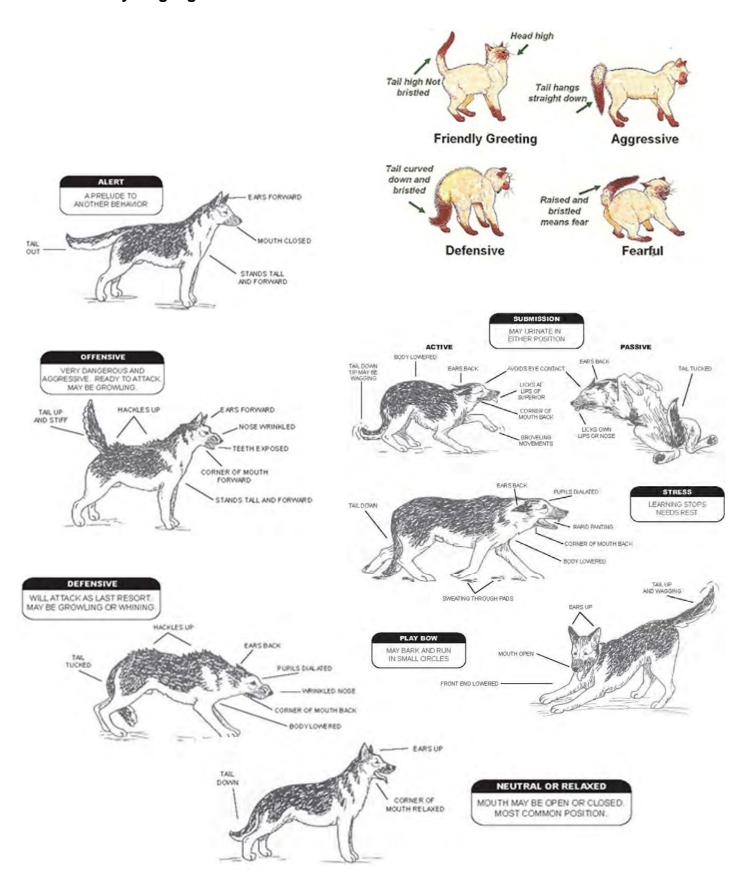
Understanding dogs and cats

Dogs and cats communicate with us using a range of facial characteristics, body positions and vocal sounds. It is important that these are looked at as a group rather than in isolation as they can be confusing. For example a wagging tail is usually associated with a happy dog yet the position of the tail and the way the tail is wagging may indicate fear or aggression. It is also important to understand that these are generalisations which may not be exhibited by all dogs and cats in similar situations.

Animals will tell you if it is uncomfortable in a situation with a child (or with you). As a parent and/or dog owner, it is up to you to educate yourself and children so that you all know what the dog might be feeling.

Learning about animal body language and developing empathy for animals is a great way to help improve the relationship with your pet.

Animal body language



Educate the family

Pets and children do not innately know how to behave around each other. Toddlers therefore will often try to inappropriately interact with your pet. They tend to grab fur, pull ears and tails, and poke at eyes and noses. We must make sure that our children do not have the opportunity to do these types of things. Remember that our pets do not have the ability to tell children to stop and will react according to their instincts if they are feeling threatened or hurt i.e., bite. It is important to teach children how to safely and respectfully interact with pets.

Teach children to be calm, respectful and gentle around dogs. Never allow children to;

- play roughly
- · tease, hurt or handle inappropriately
- · grab around the neck

Never approach a dog that is;

- · sleeping, eating or chewing a bone
- · playing with its toys
- · injured or sick
- · on its bed or in its kennel
- in a car, or on the back of a ute
- tied up

If approached by a dog;

- stand very still and do not run, as the dog may chase
- be very quiet
- · curl fingers and keep arms down by sides
- look away from the dog, not into its eyes
- wait for the dog to go away
- · tell an adult what happened
- if knocked over, curl up into a ball and stay still and quiet
- once the dog has gone away, get up and walk away slowly.

Teach children to always say: "May I please pat and play?"

- · ask parent/caregiver if they can pat the dog
- · ask the owner if it is okay to pat the dog
- if the owner says yes, hold the back of your hand out with your fingers curled under
- allow the dog to sniff your hand
- · if the dog backs away or is not interested, do not say hello
- if the dog sniffs your hand and does not back away or change its behaviour, pat it gently under the chin or chest
- do NOT pat the dog on the head or nose.

- squeeze, cuddle or kiss the pet
- wrestle on the floor/ground
- fighting or play fighting
- · behind a fence or gate
- using the litter box or scratching pole
- with its puppies or kittens
- not with its owner and unfamiliar with you.



Pets are part of our city too!

Owning pets can be a lot of fun, provide us with company, stress relief and unconditional love. Pet ownership also teaches children responsibility, and helps them develop their social and nurturing skills.

All animals and all pets have basic needs. As a responsible pet owner you need to be aware of these needs. You are responsible for their well-being and it is up to you to care for and look after your pet the same as you would a member of your family.

What do pets need?

Food

Your pet needs food for energy. It is very important that your pet eats the right food and the right amounts of food. Too little or too much food or the wrong type of food can cause health problems for your pet.

Never feed your pet chocolate as this can make them very ill. If they accidentally eat a large amount of chocolate you should take them to your vet immediately.

Water

Just like humans, all animals need water to survive. It is very important that your pet has fresh clean water at all times. Your pet relies on you to provide clean drinking water each day. Always check to their bowl and never let it get empty.

Shelter

Pets need protection from the weather, especially if it is too hot or too cold. Some animals need protection from predators: they need a safe, comfortable place to feel protected and secure.

Exercise

Exercise helps to keep your pet healthy and alert. Exercise can be a walk, a game, a run on the beach or a discovery trek in your local area.

Make sure you set aside some time each day to exercise your pet.

Company

Most pets need the company of others to feel safe and secure. They enjoy animal company and human company.

If your pet doesn't have any company they will soon get bored and anxious. This can lead to destructive behaviour such as chewing shoes, tearing up gardens or annoying the neighbours.

Health and welfare

Just like us, pets love to be safe, happy and healthy. A healthy pet is usually a happy one.

Your pet will require annual visits to the vet for vaccinations, boosters and general health checks. Your vet can also advise you about parasite prevention. If your pet is looking unwell or behaving differently it is a good idea to take them to a vet.

By making sure your pet has plenty of space, clean conditions, a safe comfortable shelter, food, water and companionship, you are helping them to remain happy.

Responsible pet owners

Apart from the obvious responsibilities of providing food, water, shelter, exercise, companionship and vet care for your pet, there are also many rules and regulations for pet owners. Just like there are rules at school to keep you safe and happy, there are special rules that we need to follow in our community when we own a pet.

Responsible pet ownership involves:

- choosing the right pet for your family's lifestyle
- caring for all aspects of your pet's daily well-being
- complying with the law and ensuring your pet doesn't cause problems in the community

Australian statistics show that around 60% of households have pets. The actions of those households can have a major impact on not just the lives of the animals, but also those of their neighbours, the community and our environment. Owning a dog carries the responsibility of ensuring your dog is not a nuisance or menace to your neighbours and the wider community. All dog owners must comply with a number of local law and environmental health requirements.

Socially responsible pet owners;

- Identify their pets
- Ensure pets are not a nuisance
- Contain pets safely on the property
- Walk dogs on leash and scoop the poop

Pets that are responsibly managed cause few problems and rarely come to the attention of the City. Unfortunately, it is when animals are acquired with little forethought or for the wrong reasons or when they not managed responsibly, problems occur.

Identify pets

No matter how much people believe that their pet will not get lost, accidents do happen. Storms may blow fences down; visitors may leave a gate open. Pets may take fright when being transported in the car or out walking.

Each year, Animal Management Officers impound more than 3200 lost dogs and 1300 lost cats. Sadly, due to lack of identification only 75% of dogs and 13% of cats can be reunited with their owner.

Losing a beloved pet – even for a few hours – is a very distressing experience for pet and owner alike, but research shows that reuniting pets is much more successful if they can be easily identified.

Dogs and cats should wear a collar and identification tag with the pets name and contact phone number on it at all times. Additionally, dogs must be registered (with Council) and both cats and dogs must be microchipped.

Registration and microchip details are recorded on a database that will be used to reunite pet and owner in the event that a pet gets lost, however, details must be kept current.

Pet registration and microchipping is a legal requirement under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and you can be fined for not complying.

Microchip

A microchip is a tiny computer chip about the size of a grain of rice, which has an identification number programmed into it. The microchip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy, and will last for the life of the animal. The microchip is injected under the animal's skin between the shoulder blades (or into the nuchal ligament for horses) and is a simple procedure, which causes no side effects. To identify the animal, a scanner that reads microchip numbers is passed over the animal's skin. The scanned number can then be checked against a register, which provides details of the animal's ownership. A microchip provides a permanent form of identification which can quickly reunite owners with lost or injured pets.

Only authorised implanters (such as registered veterinarians or authorised implanters who have completed the required training) can implant microchips – contact your vet or local council for details.

Registration

Registration of your dog is compulsory if they are aged three months and over, in accordance with the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*. Registered dogs will receive a life-long coded tag that should be worn on the dog's collar at all times.

Why should dog owners register as well as microchip when microchipping will help a lost pet find its way home? While microchipping provides a reunification service, there are many things that microchipping cannot provide that registration does. Your registration fee helps us provide animal management services and facilities that help keep your pets, the community and the environment safe:

- facilities such as dog parks, dog poo dispensers, bags and pounds
- animal management staff to attend to nuisance complaints, investigate dog attacks, patrol parks/beaches/streets, and collect and return stray animals to owners
- events such as pet expos
- information such as responsible pet ownership publications, websites, and online courses
- domestic animal audits (e.g. excess animal permits, breeding facilities, etc)
- management of dangerous and restricted breed dogs
- dog bite prevention education programs
- emergency animal welfare preparedness

Ensure pets are not a nuisance

As a responsible pet owner, you have an obligation to care for the health and wellbeing of your pet, as well as a duty to ensure their activities don't interfere with your neighbours or the environment.

Noise

Under the Council of the *City of Gold Coast (Council) Local Law No.12 (Animal Management) 2013*, owners are responsible for ensuring their pet don't cause a noise nuisance. A noise nuisance is a noise that disrupts or inhibits an activity ordinarily carried out.

Many people keep animals for companionship however, noisy pets may greatly reduce the quality of life for neighbours and increase neighbourhood tensions. While barking dogs are the most common problem, other animals such as birds and poultry can also cause a noise nuisance

Odour

Unpleasant smells caused by inadequate cleaning can also prevent neighbours from enjoying their property.

Failing to clean up after your pet has fouled in an enclosed area can lead to an unpleasant build up which causes flies and smell. Dispose of faeces regularly. Simply bag it, and place in your domestic bin on a daily basis.

Uneaten food scraps, bedding and any other material likely to become offensive (i.e. faeces, soiled bedding and/or litter) needs to be collected at least daily.

Containing pets safely on your property

All domestic animals must be contained to their property at all times. It is the pet owner's duty to provide a suitable enclosure or fencing to prevent them from escaping.

Wandering pets are in danger of; becoming lost, injury from fights, snakes, ticks or being hit by a car, preying on wildlife, and can annoy neighbours by damaging gardens, destroying private property or fouling footpaths and lawns.

Walking your dog on a leash and scoop the poop

Any dog that is taken into a public place must be kept on a leash at all times and it remains the dog owner's responsibility to pick up and dispose of the dog's droppings. Even if your dog is well behaved and friendly, you can never know how they may react under unusual circumstances. Therefore City Laws make it compulsory to keep them on a leash.

The City has allocated a large number of parks, reserves and beaches where dogs can be exercised off their leash. Despite areas being zoned off leash, owners need to be vigilant that their dogs do not cause a nuisance to others in the area, and that dogs remain under effective control at all times.

Desex you pet

If you own a pet and do not intend to breed from it, have it desexed.

Desexed pets make better companions – they can be better behaved, less likely to roam and have reduced risk of getting cancer. Desexing your pet also entitles you to a discount on your council registration fees.

Many cats and dogs are bred by accident, because owners don't get around to desexing their pets. It is possible for cats to breed from as young as four months of age! Thousands of healthy cats and dogs are euthanased (put to sleep) each year in shelters and pounds. This is because not enough homes can be found for them – we have an 'oversupply' of pets.



Animal Management

The City of Gold Coast (City) recognises that companion animals play an important role in today's society and wants people to enjoy them, be it for companionship, work, entertainment or sport.

Pets that are responsibly managed cause few problems and rarely come to the attention of the City. Unfortunately, it is when animals are acquired with little forethought or for the wrong reasons or when they're not managed responsibly, problems occur.

Animal Management is a specialised division of the City of Gold Coast tasked to uphold the city's regulations relating to pet ownership and animal management.

While the City has been given the responsibility of administering and enforcing legislation it recognises the need to promote responsible pet ownership and to provide community education programs that allow for changes in community standards.

Thankfully the image of the 'dog catcher' is fading and in its place we have Animal Management Officers whose task is to provide advice, education and assistance and where necessary enforcement of animal management legislation.

Animal Management provides a range of support and practical advice for compliant and safe resolution of any breach of local laws, by;

- providing effective management and a suitable environment for companion animals within the community
- reducing public and environmental nuisance or harm caused by companion animals
- encouraging responsible pet ownership

Legislation

There are a number of laws regarding the keeping of animals in place:

- Local Law No.12 (Animal Management) 2013
- Subordinate Local Law No.12 (Animal Management) 2013
- Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008
- Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Regulation 2009
- Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002
- Animal Care and Protection Act 2001.

A number of policies and procedures have been developed to ensure the community complies with this legislation. If you keep animals on your property they must be kept in accordance with the City's local laws.

Enforcement of City local laws

Officers ensure compliance through;

- · complaint investigation
- issuing compliance notices/infringements
- commencing legal action
- impounding stray animals
- · issuing permits
- patrolling beaches/parks
- educating animal owners

Complaint management

City of Gold Coast responds to all complaints and customer service requests made regarding companion animals. High risk assessment triggers an immediate response, however a low risk assessment might lead to a resolution through communication. If a person stays in breach of the legislation, the risk increase and inspections may be required to resolve the issue.

Investigation of animal attacks

People have a right to feel safe in the community and it is the responsibility of pet owners to ensure the protection of others and to keep public areas safe for people to enjoy.

Animal Management investigates all forms of animal attacks;

- gathering evidence such as witness statements
- determining what enforcement action to be taken based on evidence
- providing advice and counselling

For example: A dog may also be declared a dangerous dog (if it is a serious attack) or a menacing dog as a result of an attack. This declaration imposes higher registration fees and restrictions on the keeping of the animal. Penalties for the owner of a dog involved in an attack may also include fines, removal of the dog from the area, seizure or destruction.

Provision of facilities

The City provides facilities that encourage pet owners to exercise their pets as well as helping keep pets, the community and the environment safe.

- Off leash dog exercise areas (check out the GC DOG PARKS app for locations and facilities)
- Dog waste bag dispenses
- Pounds
- Holding facilities

Lost and Found Animals - What happens

City of Gold Coast's lost and found service helps minimise the risk to our pets and any adverse impact on the community and the environment, by keeping lost animals off the streets.

Found animals

If you find a lost animal, contain it somewhere safe.

The best way for the animal to be quickly returned to its owner is to call the City of Gold Coast on 07 5581 6664. We can assist by contacting the owner of a dog if it is registered with the City and wearing its registration tag.

If the owner is unable to be contacted, the pet can be taken to the nearest pound. After notifying the owner, registered, microchipped and identified animals will be held for a period of five working days. Unidentified animals are held for a period of three working days.

If the animal's owners have not been located at the end of these periods, the animal may be re-homed by the Animal Welfare League.

Lost animals

If you have lost an animal, contact the City as soon as possible on 07 5581 7600 to record your animal on our Lost and Found Register. The register is updated daily and includes details of all animals which have been notified to the City as being lost, found or impounded. We will search the register to determine if your animal has been found, however it is recommended you visit the pound to view the animals in person.

Note: if you have reported your animal as lost and it has been found, don't forget to contact us on 07 5581 7600 to remove your animal's details from the register.

Owners of lost animals can also contact the RSPCA, surrounding neighbours, vets and other councils to locate their pet. Another good idea is to place advertisements in local newspapers.

Identified pets are never lost for long.

City pounds

Coombabah Pound Shelter Road	Stapylton Pound Rossmans Road
Phone: 07 5581 7600	Phone: 07 3807 0580
Monday to Friday - 8am to 5.30pm	Monday to Friday - 8am to 12.30pm
Saturday - 8am to 4.30pm	Closed - weekends and public holidays
Public holidays - 10am to 2pm	
Closed - Sundays Good Friday and Christmas day	Merrimac Holding Pens. Boowaggan Road

When you come to the shelter to collect your pet, you need to show identification. If you are picking the animal up on behalf of its owner, you will need a letter of authority (or verify with the owner over the phone) before the animal can be released.

You need to pay a release fee. Additional fees may be charged to cover the time your pet has spent in the pound. Release fees cover some of the costs associated with the City rescuing your animal and attempting to reunite you with your animal. You will also be required to register your dog if not already registered.

Management of pest animal species

The City is responsible for managing declared pest animals on City land as well as ensuring that residents manage any pest animals on their land.

Officers are involved in:

- trapping and control of declared pest animals
- monitoring pest animal impacts
- scientific research
- community trapping programs
- educating the community

Declared pest animals in Queensland include: wild dogs, foxes, feral cats, deer and rabbits.

Educating the community

It's important to get into the community and spread the word about responsible pet ownership and community safety. Here are some of the ways we inform animal owners and promote a positive message;

- delivery of our Pat & Play safely program
- stage show 'Responsible Pet Owners keep our city safe' performed throughout the city
- free 'Pets are part of our city too Education Kit' and resources
- provision of off leash parks in the community gives dogs the chance to stretch their legs and make new friends
- pet giveaways including; leashes, interactive toys, treats and pooch pouches
- · workshops and seminars
- support of Gold Coast Pet & Animal Expo, RSPCA Million Paws Walk and other pet friendly community events
- general education via the City website and fact sheets
- increase awareness through other promotional and marketing campaigns

Disaster management

Our plans and emergency teams ensure we are prepared for a major incident with coordinated, well-rehearsed strategies to lessen the impact.

Companion animal plans are in place for disaster;

- preparedness
- prevention
- response
- recovery

Teaching and learning activities

Activity	Resources	
Pet week		
Schedule a pet themed week. Incorporate the below activities and more to create an educational, fun filled week all about pets.		
Guest speakers		
Invite some pet/animal industry representatives to give informative talks and hands on incursions.		
Veterinaries		
Wildlife Carers		
Animal Trainers		
Animal Welfare		
Groomers		
AWLQ PetSense Program		
Developed to help children better understand their cats and dogs for the purpose of preventing injuries. The program was designed for use by teachers, parents as well as children, to help them 'read' dog and cat body language so they are better able to gauge when and when not to approach, pat and play with an animal.	http://www.awlqld.com.au/education/	
RSPCA Qld Education Program	https://www.rspcaqld.org.au/education	
Students and adults can benefit from our humane education programs, with lessons tailored to suit the needs, interests and skill levels of your group.		
WOAW	http://www.woaw.org.au/teachers/learnin	
World of Animal Welfare website provides quality RSPCA learning resources including mini units, lessons & activities.	g-resources/	
Victor & Victoria's Pet Town		
An online learning tool to assist kindergarten and primary school children in responsible pet ownership and dog safety.	https://www.pettown.vic.gov.au/	
We Are Family		
A guide to nurturing the child-pet relationship from pregnancy to pre-school, to make the child-pet relationship a safe and fulfilling one.	https://www.wearefamily.vic.gov.au/	
Free Downloads: Posters, Handouts, and More!	http://drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/free-	
Many free, professional-grade, downloadable resources on animal behaviour and training.	downloads-posters-handouts-and-more	
Living with Wildlife – koalas and dogs	Cityofgoldsooot com cu/halanavaliasla	
Responsibility of dog owners to ensure that their pets do not injure or kill other animals, including protected wildlife such as the koala.	Cityofgoldcoast.com.au/helpsavekoalas	

Get reading

Borrow some pet related books from a City of Gold Coast library or we have thousands of ebooks and eaudiobooks available to read on your screen or download to your computer, smartphone or tablet.

Cityofgoldcoast.com.au/libraries

The Perfect Pet is an amusing story about a girl named Elizabeth who tries to convince her parents that she should have a pet.

Before reading The Perfect Pet, ask children about the different pets that they have. Make a graph with pictures or names of the different types of pets at the top (dog, cat, lizard, bird, rabbit, snake, fish, horse, etc.) that children have.

The Perfect Pet by Margie Palatini

Some children may not have pets, so instead, make a graph of pets that they wish they had. Let their imaginations soar (unicorn, dinosaur, dragon, etc.). Ask questions like: "Why would you want that kind of pet?" "How would you take care of your pet?" "What you feed your pet?"

Amazing Animals

Write the following words on the board for use as column headers: fin, claw, feather, ears, fur etc. Make sure children understand what each is and what it is used for. Using a selection of animal pictures ask students to group animals with similar traits.

What do they need?

Ask students to name some things that all children need to be happy and healthy and add photos to the board. Answers should include food, water, a home, someone to love them, someone to teach them, exercise, playtime, doctor visits, and grooming. Next, ask students to name things that pets need to be happy and healthy. Guide them in understanding that pets need many of the same things we do. Everything listed in the first step (above) would apply to pets.

Guess the Pet Game

Cut pictures of animals (2 of each animal) out of magazines or coloring books. Pin one picture on each child's back. Have children move around the room behaving like the picture of the animal on their back. The object is for the children to locate their matching animal.

Obedience School

Have children pretend to be dogs. As a few dog commands are called out (fetch, sit, lie down, roll over, bark, beg, come, etc.), have children act them out.

Pet Emergency Plan

This advertisement is designed to ensure pet owners are well prepared to protect their pets in emergencies, particularly during bushfires.

https://getready.qld.gov.au/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLjVoIU

pNg

For more information

P 1300 GOLDCOAST (1300 465 326) W cityofgoldcoast.com.au

GOLDCOAST.