Pets, Pets, Pets.

THE VICTORIAN CURRICULUM
FOUNDATION - Level 2
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Introduction

The RSPCA Pets, Pets, Pets program encourages students to develop an understanding that all pets have needs and we, as their owners, are responsible for their care.

By looking at and discussing the needs of different types of pets and comparing those to the needs of humans, students will discover that the needs of animals mirror their own.

Program Aims

- To identify and discuss the basic needs of various pets.
- To discover that humans and animals have similar basic needs and feelings.
- To be aware owning a pet is a responsibility and discuss what some of these responsibilities are.
- To find out who is responsible for looking after their pets’ needs in their home.
- To explore the roles pets play in our families and lives.
- To find out what the RSPCA is and how it helps animals.
- To engage in hands on learning.
- To develop an understanding that students’ choices and actions have consequences.
- To understand the differences between a live animal and a toy and appreciate pets are not toys.

Key questions

- What do animals need to survive?
- How are these needs similar to our own?
- Do animals feel?
- How are these feelings similar to our own?
- What is our role as their owners?
- Why do we have pets as part of our family?
- How does the RSPCA help lost, sick and unwanted animals?
Links to the Victorian Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 sets out what every student should learn during their first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/ accessed Feb 2017).

The RSPCA Pets, Pets, Pets program aims to address many areas of the Victorian Curriculum. Elements of the suggested pre-visit activities, the RSPCA education session and post-visit activities are incorporated into the Learning Areas and Capabilities of Foundation - Level 2.

Learning Areas

ENGLISH

- Reading and viewing
- Speaking and listening
- Writing

SCIENCE

- Science understanding: Biological sciences

Capabilities

ETHICAL CAPABILITY

- Understanding concepts
- Decision making and actions

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

- Self-awareness and management: Recognition and expression of emotions
- Social awareness and management: Relationships and diversity
About RSPCA Victoria

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Victoria) is a non-government, community based charity that works to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection.

Vision
Ending cruelty to all animals.

Purpose
With the community, achieve outstanding animal welfare outcomes through education, advocacy, animal care and protection.

Five freedoms for animals
The RSPCA considers that the welfare of an animal includes its physical and mental state and that good animal welfare implies both fitness and a sense of well-being.

The RSPCA believes that an animal’s welfare should be considered in terms of the following five freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

- You and your class can discover more about RSPCA Victoria by visiting our website.

www.rspcavic.org
The Needs of Animals

Animals need food, water, shelter, exercise, companionship and veterinary care to live a healthy and happy life. All pets depend on their owners to provide these needs. Having been bred selectively for hundreds of years, they have not retained all of the instincts and behaviours that allowed their ancestors to survive in the wild. By containing them in hutches, cages, aviaries, backyards, aquariums and paddocks we take away many abilities they may have, to fend for themselves.

Food

Food provides animals with energy. If they don’t have enough energy they can’t move freely, fight disease or think clearly. In time, their bodies no longer perform basic functions like breathing and pumping blood.

If animals are being fed processed food such as dry food or pellets it is important to follow the recommended daily amounts provided on the packet labels. Children may need the assistance of adults to help them, especially if they choose to feed their animals twice a day and have to halve the quantities.

There are many overweight animals whose bodies work hard to stay alive. Deposits of fat make it hard for an obese animal’s blood to flow efficiently. As a result, the supply of oxygen to the animal’s muscles and organs is reduced and the body no longer function well. The animal’s life may be spent in pain and discomfort and their life expectancy is shortened.

It is very important students understand the importance of providing just the right amount of food; not too much, not too little.

Water

Animals need fresh water all the time. Water allows the chemical processes that keep an animal alive to take place. It helps them control their body temperature, especially on hot days. Water must be fresh and clean. When water has been sitting around for a while it can gather harmful germs and parasites. Remember to refresh animals’ water bowls at least twice a day. Never allow water bowls to remain empty.

Shelter

Just like people, animals need places where they can shelter from wind, rain and sun. Some animals need protection from predators ie. guinea pigs need shelter from cats and dogs. Kennels, hutches, houses and bird cages provide shelter for our pets while barns, stables and sheds protect farm animals. If an animal’s shelter is also its home, it must be as comfortable as possible. Bedding should be soft, warm and dry and cleaned regularly. Shelters need to be large enough for the animal to move around freely.
Exercise
Exercise keeps animals healthy and alert. Blood flow is increased during exercise, clearing arteries and veins and transporting oxygen and nutrients to the cells quickly. Metabolic rates are increased, allowing faster and more efficient digestion of food. Exercise keeps muscles strong and senses heightened. Energy stored as fat is used up, preventing an animal from becoming overweight.

Periods of exercise are very stimulating for animals. New sights, sounds, smells and tastes are discovered; unknown paths, trees and tunnels are explored; new animals encountered. We can help our pets to get exercise by providing toys and play.

Friends
Most animals need the company of others to feel safe and secure. Budgies, canaries, cattle, chooks, dogs, guinea pigs, horses, rabbits and sheep prefer to live in groups. For millions of years animals herded or flocked together to protect themselves from predators.

It is not always practical to have groups of animals living in our homes. The good news is many animals substitute people or other animals for creatures of their own species and forge special bonds with them. When animals become bored and lonely, they may engage in destructive or boisterous behaviour, damaging property, disturbing neighbours and occasionally harming themselves.

It is important to choose the right friend for your pet. This means selecting a compatible species and introducing them carefully and slowly to avoid confrontation. RSPCA adoption staff can assist with this process to help make sure it runs smoothly. If animals are not desexed unwanted litters may result.

Vet care
Animals get sick and injured, just like us. They should receive veterinary attention at least once a year for a check-up and vaccination or as soon as symptoms of illness or injury are noticed. Even rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, mice, chickens and birds need to visit a vet. If an animal shows signs of ill health it is important it receives veterinary care immediately.

An indication that an animal may be ill includes:

- loss of appetite;
- sluggish behaviour;
- rapid weight loss;
- repeated vomiting; and/or
- discharge from ears or eyes.

Vets can also advise on how to rid animals of fleas and worms.
Identification

Identification allows animals to be returned to their owners if they are lost. Cats and dogs need name tags attached to their collars. One side of a tag contains the animal’s name and the other side contains a telephone number and/or address. Victorian law states all cats and dogs must be registered with local councils. When the animals are registered their owners are provided with a registration tag for the animals’ collar. These serve as an additional form of identification.

Animals can lose their collar and tags, and in doing so, lose their identification. To overcome this, owners can have a microchip — about the size of a grain of rice — inserted under the animal’s skin. If a lost animal is brought to a vet or an animal shelter it is checked for a microchip. A scanner is passed over the animal and if a microchip is present, the scanner beeps and displays an identification number. This number is entered into a national database to determine the name and contact details of the pet’s owner. Microchipping is an excellent method of pet identification.

Additional information about the needs of pets can be found in the Animal Care section of our website.

Extension Activities

Some activities your class may engage in before and after an RSPCA education session to extend the topics and explore further.

The Arts

- Practise the RSPCA Animal Needs Song (See Appendix for lyrics) [Click for YouTube link].
- Look at a variety of songs, books, poems and rhymes about dogs, cats, fish, birds, rats and other animals kept as pets.
- Create a Centre of Interest area in your classroom with items relating to pets and pet care. This could include: two or three collars, ie a large dog collar, a cat collar and one with or without a name tag on it; a council registration tag; different size food and water bowls; photos of pet animals; dry food packets; pet treats’ a variety of tinned food; a lead, animal toys; an empty aquarium; kitty litter; a cat scratching post; and pet grooming items.
- Create a Vet Corner in your classroom with plush pets and a toy medical kit. Children can explore the work of an animal doctor by looking after pets in a pretend animal hospital.
- My Special Pet Activity. Create an individual pets using the Activity Master Sheet.
- Paint a picture of their pet (or a pet they know or would like to own). Paintings may include a pet being walked, fed, taken to the vet, etc.
- Discuss and roleplay the way a cat or dog may look and move when experiencing different emotions (eg. happy, sad, scared) or exhibiting different behaviours (eg. playing, chasing).
- Make models of various pets, their environment and needs (eg. food, shelter). This could be undertaken in small groups and presented as a diorama or a mural/painting.
• Create a **collage** of different animals which are pets (images can be taken from the Internet or magazines).

**English**

• Visit our **e-learning hub** for narrated presentations about the RSPCA and the needs of animals.

• Conduct an **I See, I Think, I Wonder, I Feel** activity. Choose a picture of a pet or group of pets. Some animal rescues have been provided in the **appendix** section. Ask students to articulate and discuss what they See, Think, Wonder and Feel about one or more of the images.

• Construct a **KWL** chart as a class, small group or individuals
  
  **K** - what we know about pets;
  
  **W** - what we would like to know;
  
  **L** - what we learnt about pets).

  The last section (what we learnt) can be completed after the RSPCA visit.

• Discuss with the class who has pets in their lives and invite students to share information about these. Students without pets may have interacted with the pets of neighbours, grandparents or family friends and can share their experiences about these animals.

• Students bring along a photo of their pet for an **Our Pets Wall** or mural. Include captions such as *This is Gemma’s cat, Blackie. Fluffy is Ben’s guinea pig*. Include photos of the children on the wall and have the class match the pet to their owner. Clues work well eg. next to Michael’s photo have a caption *Michael loves his black dog*.

• **What makes a pet?** - Discuss what makes an animal suitable to have as a pet and explore why we don’t keep some animals as pets eg. a hippopotamus.

• Write a **poem** about a pet and what it needs.

• Write **acrostic** pet animal poems.

• Write a list of words starting with each letter of the alphabet that relate to pets (see **Activity Master Sheet**).

• Has any student previously visited the **RSPCA**? What was the reason for the visit? Ask students what they believe they RSPCA does - and what does the acronym stand for. Use background information provided or visit [www.rspcavic.org](http://www.rspcavic.org) to gain more information.

• The class may like to **survey** another class to see how the results differ from their own. A survey of staff could prove interesting for the students.

• **Shared Feelings** - Discuss animal scenarios as a way to assist students consider the feelings of animals, eg: a dog tied up on a chain with no sign of food, water and shelter; a cat left out of a warm home on a very cold night; a tiger pacing in a zoo enclosure.

• Identify pet words in word lists.

• Play ‘**Who Am I?**’ games about different pets.
• Write a story about **A day in the Life of a Pet.**

• **Pet Celeb** - Imagine you are interviewing an animal that is kept as a pet. Write interview questions and what you think they would say (if they could talk!).

• Create a PowerPoint presentation (or similar) about the visit to the RSPCA (class, small group or individual).

• **Pet Discovery Speakers** - Listen to a range of people share stories about their pets. Guests could include the principal, another teacher, grandparents, a vet or vet nurse.

• Introduce students’ **Special Pets** (Pets, Pets, Pets Art Activity) to the class or group. Encourage other class members to ask questions about the Special Pet, eg: what it likes to eat or where it sleeps etc.

• Have students take turns to choose an item from the **Centre of Interest** area. Each student explains what the item is and what it is used for. This activity is more suitable at the end of the unit, once the students have learnt about the items.

• Construct a picture story about a dog brought into the RSPCA using the **Activity Master Sheet**. Once students have positioned the pictures in the correct order, have them tell the story in their own words or write a story about the sequence of events.

**Mathematics**

• Construct a **pictograph** or bar graph to represent the number of different pets owned by children in the class. Discuss the results and find out how many different types of pets there are amongst the students and what these pets are. Are there any pets that have not been mentioned? Look at which animal is the most popular in the class and discuss the possible reasons for this popularity.

• Use **shapes** to make animals.

• Create animal **jigsaws**.

• **Find The Differences Activity**. Identify the differences between two almost—identical pictures (see **Activity Master Sheet**).

• **Count The Pets Activity** (see **Activity Master Sheet**).

• **Pet Schedule** - Identify times of the day when pets do different things, eg. sleep, eat, exercise

• **Research** whether different animals might need different sized water bowls eg. compare a dog and a guinea pig; or a bird and a pony? Measure the number of cups of water that are held in various sizes of water bowls.

• **Order** pets according to their size or weight.

• **Animal House** - Open-ended problem solving. Example: There are 32 legs in the backyard. How many dogs, cats and birds could there be?

• **Happy Meals** - Look at different sized cans of pet food—from tiny single serves—to large cans of dog food—and ask students to guess which is the heaviest and the lightest. Then weigh the cans to determine if students are correct. Is the biggest can also the heaviest? Students could also estimate the specific weight first and then weigh the item.
Science

- **Animal Clusters** - Classify a variety of animals into two groups: those commonly found as pets; and those that are not.

- Identify and revise the needs of pet (food, water, shelter, exercise, friends) using the *Activity Master Sheets*. Students can colour in the illustrations and/or add some of their own. Have students cut and paste the caption to match the illustration (if given out separately).

- **Match the Pet to its Shelter** Activity. Using the *Activity Master Sheets*, students colour the illustrations before selecting the shelter they think is the most suitable for each animal. They can also paste the matching word for each shelter eg. dog kennel, cat basket.

- **Species Report** - Write an information report about a specific pet (include a labelled diagram).

- **Shelter Shuffle** - Compare shelters for different animals eg. dog kennels, cat baskets, rabbit hutches, aquariums, chicken coops. What makes each suitable for particular animals?

- Use a Venn diagram to show differences and similarities between two pets (students could focus on appearance, needs, environment).

A visit to the RSPCA Education Centre

_Pets, Pets, Pets_ is conducted at the RSPCA’s Education Centre in Burwood East. As you enter our gallery, members of the Education team and their friendly education animals will meet you. This is an opportunity to stop and observe the animals in the gallery, the RSPCA information modules and the animals outside in the adjacent paddocks.

Depending on the size of the group, children will either stay as a class or be divided into smaller groups for some or all the following activities.

**In the Theatre (approx 30 mins)**

*Pet Needs Lucky Dip* - an interactive game where students select a pet item from the pet needs tub and discover where it belongs amongst a selection of plush animals and picture cards.

**In the Gallery (approx 30 mins)**

_Rabbit and Guinea Pigs_ — an engaging activity based on the needs of pets. Meet the RSPCA rabbits and guinea pigs and compare the needs of small animals to the needs of other animals and humans. Learn the importance of food, water, shelter, exercise, friends and vet care for all animals. Let’s give them some delicious vegetables and a lovely pat.
In the Barn (approx 30 mins)
Exploring the working barn is a highlight of the visit. The barn allows for an up close experience with a range of animals which can be common (and not so common) pets. Students meet the barn animal attendants and learn about their job. They are given an opportunity to observe the animals’ enclosures, learn how to correctly handle and pat the animals and participate in a feeding activity.
When we come to you

An Education Officer — and in most cases an education animal — visits your school and spends time with you and your students. The emphasis of *Pets, Pets, Pets* is on the basic needs of animals ie. food, water, shelter, exercise and friends. This offsite visit may include:

- Discussions focussing on: the comparisons between the needs of pets, farm animals and humans; the roles pets play in our lives; and how the RSPCA helps pets.

- A rabbit and guinea pig activity - Students help to provide appropriate food, water, shelter and toys for small animals (provided by the RSPCA education Officer).

- An education dog - Students meet the education dog and the Education Officer tells a story about the dog and it’s needs.

- Pet Needs Lucky Dip - an interactive game where students select an item from the pet needs tub and find where it belongs amongst a selection of animals and picture cards.
Activity Master Sheets

Find the Differences (Mathematics)

Count the Pets (Mathematics)

Animal Images Activity (English)

My Special Pet (Art)

Match the Pet to its Shelter (Science)

What do Pets Need? (Science)

RSPCA Picture Story (English)

Pets — A-Z Activity (Thinking)

Pet Needs Song
Find the Differences

Students compare the two pictures (see following page) and find the differences. They can highlight or circle each difference on Picture B.

There are eight differences between Picture A and Picture B.

In picture B ...

1. the hutch contains guinea pigs, not rabbits;
2. the cat is sleeping in a box, not a cat basket;
3. one hen has been replaced by a tortoise;
4. the dog by the kennel has spots;
5. the dog is chasing another dog not a cat;
6. there is one less bird in the aviary;
7. the bowl has food in it; and
8. a pony has its head over the fence.
Can you find the differences between Picture A and Picture B?
Count the Pets How many animals can you see?

___ chickens  ___ rabbits  ___ dogs  ___ cats  ___ birds
Animal Images Activity

The following images may be useful as inspiration for creative writing or role play. Please refer to the Extension Activities on page 8 of this document.
My Special Pet

Using the templates on the following pages, children design their own special pet. Some children will not have a pet at home and creating a special pet allows all children to participate.

Template shapes outlined with a dotted line are more suitable for students in Prep and Grade 1. Shapes outlined with a bold, solid line are more suitable for students in Grade 2. Teachers can decide on which option to use, depending on the skill level of the class.

The children will need to select the colour/colours of their animal. They may simply colour it in or create texture by gluing on fabric, wool or other suitable materials.

As well as naming their special pet the children need to decide:

- What food their special pet eats.
- Where and at what time their special pet is fed.
- How their special pet drinks ie. where is the water bowl kept? Is the bowl small, medium, large?
- Where their special pet lives and the type of shelter it lives in.
- How their special pet exercises - and how often.
- Who their special pet’s friend(s) are.
- What sort of identification does their special pet have. Ie. collar with a tag or a microchip or both.

This information could be presented in booklet form and/or orally to the class or on a poster.
MY SPECIAL PET HEADS
MY SPECIAL PET LEGS AND WINGS
MY SPECIAL PET TAILS AND EARS
Match the Pet to its Shelter

Encourage students to glue the shelters onto a larger piece of paper or card and draw additional items that the pet may need. For example: the dog kennel may be sitting in a larger yard with some food and water bowls and a toy to play with. The cat basket may have a comfortable cushion or blanket and be situated inside someone’s living room, next to a scratching post.
house
bowl
basked
CUT-OUT PETS FOR PREPS AND GRADE 1

- cat
- mouse
- fish
- dog
What do Pets Need?

Pets need food.
Pets need water.
Pets need shelter.
Pets need friends.
Pets need vet care.
Pets need exercise.
Pets need identification.
Pets need food.

Pets need water.

Pets need shelter.

Pets need friends.

Pets need exercise.

Pets need identification.
Pets need vet care.

RSPCA Picture Story

The illustrations on the following page depict a lost/stray dog and the events leading up to the dog being adopted by a family from the RSPCA shelter.

Students are to organise the illustrations into the correct order to tell the story. Stories can then be presented verbally or written on the sheet provided.

The correct sequence for the illustrations is:

1. A lost/stray dog
2. The dog is caught by the RSPCA and delivered to the RSPCA shelter
3. The dog is checked for identification, and good health. It is given food, water and exercise by the RSPCA shelter staff
4. The dog waits in the adoption area at the RSPCA shelter until a new owner can be found,
5. A family comes to the shelter to look for a suitable dog to adopt.
RSPCA Picture Story
Pets — A-Z Activity

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There are some things
Animals need
To be very happy
To be very healthy
What do they need?
Food and Water
Friends and Shelter
Exercise, Exercise
Vets do operations
and give vaccinations
Now you try
Now you try
Actions for Five Freedoms Song

Food: Hands move towards mouth, like bringing a sandwich to the mouth for eating.

Water: One hand clasped around an imaginary bottle, move up and towards mouth then tilt.

Friends: Clasp hands together.

Shelter: Make a triangle shape with hands above head, like a roof.

Exercise: One hand flat with palm facing downwards. Fingers of opposite hand are running across the flat hand.

Vets do operations: One hand makes scissor/cutting action moving across from right to left.

and give vaccinations: Straight finger points to upper arm of arm opposite.

Now you try, Now you try: Pointing index fingers, alternating up and down movement.

Sing the song through, with actions to the tune of Frere Jaques, repeat 3 times.
Notes: