Children & Animals:
An annotated bibliography for teachers about the benefits of pets in the classroom for young children
By: Erin G. Bell

Rationale


This study conducted in elementary classrooms in Ontario, Canada examined teachers' attitudes and experiences using classroom animals. The majority of teachers surveyed believed that the use of live pets in the classroom contributed positively to increased empathy, as well as socio-emotional development, in students, much of which is supported by current research.


This editorial by Mary Jalongo discusses the significance of companion animals in the lives of young children. She conveys how early childhood educators can enrich the lives of the children and families they serve by introducing...
Cast your vote online for SECA President-Elect this September.

Meet Our Candidates

Evelyn Moore, Texas
Kathy Attaway, Kentucky

Want to Get to Know the Candidates?
Go to www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org and you’ll find:

- A video of the candidates — The video is hosted by Dr. Janie Humphries, Immediate Past President of SECA and Chair of the 2012 Nominating Committee.
- An interview with the candidates on SECA Radio.
- In the winter 2012 issue of Dimensions of Early Childhood, you’ll find the candidate’s responses to questions from the SECA Nominating Committee on pages 20-22.

Vote Online in the 2012 SECA Election

- Online voting will be open September 1–30, 2012.
- You must have your SECA member ID to cast your vote.
- When voting opens, we will email you to remind you (or send a postcard if we don’t have your email address).
- If you need a paper ballot, we will mail one to you upon your request.
- Each active member may only vote once.
- We will announce the results on October 1, 2012.

64th Annual SECA Conference
February 28-March 2, 2013
Mobile Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel
Mobile, Alabama
Hand in Hand: Children and Nature

Call for proposals SECA 2013 Proposals must be submitted by August 15, 2012 with notification of acceptance by October 1, 2012.
Do you struggle with time management? In our busy lives this can be an issue. I often find myself contemplating issues of time management, and thought I might share in this column the thoughts of others regarding time management…

I don’t need more time, I need a deadline.

– Duke Ellington

Yesterday is a canceled check; tomorrow is a promissory note; today is the only cash you have. Spend it wisely.

– Anonymous

No problem can stand the assault sustained thinking.

– Voltaire

Putting off an easy thing makes it hard, and putting off a hard one makes it impossible.

– George H. Lonmer

I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order and diligence, and without the determination to concentrate myself on one subject at a time.

– Charles Dickens

Our most valuable asset is time, and successful achievers spend this precious commodity more carefully than money.

– Zig Ziglar

Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.

– Goethe

Done is better than perfect.

– Messies Anonymous

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

– General George Patton

In The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time (1983), Edward T. Hall wrote about the multiple means by which we experience time depending upon one’s own cultural background. He posited that many U.S. citizens are rooted in what he termed “Profane Time”, that which dominates daily life, and that part of life which is explicit, talked about and formulated. In the Western world, profane time marks minutes and hours, the days of the week, months of the year, years, decades, centuries – the taken for granted systems which our civilization has elaborated. Time management suggestions are often rooted in this model such as these that follow for Child Care Program Directors

• Empower teachers
• Learn to delegate
• Encourage staff to solve problems themselves – every time you take on someone else’s problem, their problem is solved
• Have office hours

Our most valuable asset is time, and successful achievers spend this precious commodity more carefully than money.

– Zig Ziglar

As an alternative, Hall suggested that individuals might consider placing themselves in “Sacred Time” on a daily basis or even occasional basis. Sacred Time is a place in which people subconsciously reaffirm and acknowledge their own goodness, or place in the world in relationship to others. Personally, I have found that my day goes a lot better when I do spend a quiet hour early in the morning thinking about nothing, but really, thinking about everything. If you are interested in thinking more about managing time differently in the future, you might also consider Stephen Covey’s (1990) suggestions to consider one’s tasks in terms of importance and urgency. He posited that if we can manage our tasks by keeping them in a state of “Not Urgent and Important”, while avoiding being in a state of “Urgent and Important” or “Urgent but Important”.
Congratulations to Oklahoma City Community College Child Development Center Lab School on Re-accreditation!

Imagine yourself as a child, in a strange place, surrounded by unfamiliar people, noises, sights, and smells. Your one desperate wish is to be home with your family, but for you and the 40 or so other children at Pauline Mayer Children’s Shelter in Oklahoma City at any given time, that’s probably not going to happen for a while.

As one volunteer said, “We can’t give these kids what they want, so why not give them what we can?” That comment, and a news story about a pillowcase project for hospitalized children inspired Dr. Laura Wilhelm to invite her University of Central Oklahoma Early Childhood Education students and colleagues to start a pillowcase sewing project for the children at the shelter.

The group partnered with Angel’s Foster Network to sew pillowcases for the children in care. Jennifer Abney from Angels washed the cases in Downey so they would smell good, tied them with ribbon, and tucked in a special note from another child. These sweet notes were written by a 6th grade Sunday school class to let each recipient know that someone is thinking about him or her. When a child arrives at the shelter now, they are allowed to choose one of these special pillowcases to be their very own. This fall, the group plans to make flannel pillow cases. Since the need is on-going, we appreciate donations of fabric, materials, and especially time. Erin ? has already secured some donations including toothbrushes and toothpaste to add. You are welcome to join us for a day of sewing and laughter as we assemble another batch. No prior sewing skills required. We will be happy to teach you to sew in a fairly straight line so that you too can send a bit of warmth and love to a child.

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2013 NAEYC Public Policy Forum
Washington, DC
A Members-Only Benefit
March 19-20, 2013

Hear from senior national policymakers
Enhance and share your knowledge of federal and state policy issues
Meet with your members of congress

Omni Shoreham Hotel Special Room Rate: $219 plus hotel tax and fees (single/double)
NAEYC Registration fee of $55 per individual
them to animals and connecting them to nature and the environment.


The article discusses the levels in teaching pyramid as a framework for utilizing pets in promoting children’s social emotional development.

**Getting Started: Things to Consider**


The online version of this book provides comprehensive health and safety guidelines for child care and young children. It is widely used and many of the standards and indicators in the ITERS and ECERS are based on this publication. These sections relate to animals and pets.


This information, provided by the Iowa State University Extension, outlines behaviors children should learn before being around pets. It also provides guidelines for pet selection and pet care with respect to children and their health and safety.


This one page article gives ten things to consider when choosing a class pet. It also provides information on NAEYC Accreditation as it relates to pets and animals. It is a very quick and informative guide that will help teachers of young children make decisions about pets in the classroom.

Continued on Page 6
Children and ANIMALS


The article explains the developmental benefits of pets to children at different ages. It also provides detailed information on choosing an appropriate pet and pets that should be avoided by young children.


This brochure from the Humane Society is intended for classroom teachers. It provides information and self-assessment tools for teachers to use when making the important decision about whether or not to get a pet for their classroom. It also discusses some of the health and safety issues surrounding pets and children. They also provide some great alternative activities for exposing children to animals in a positive way if teachers decide that a classroom pet is not right for them.


Pets in The Classroom is an educational grants program to support school teachers to have aquarium fish or small pets in the classroom. This organization offers information about the benefits of having pets in the classroom as well as helps teachers apply for small grants to help pay for the initial cost of purchasing a classroom pet. They also offer fact sheets on common classroom pets.


This document outlines the potential benefits and drawbacks to keeping animals in the classroom. It could serve as a guide for teachers in deciding if a classroom pet is a good choice for them. It also provides information regarding which animals are best for keeping as pets and interacting with and which animals are better kept for observation purposes. This document also discusses the roles of the various people who will be involved in the life of the pet, including the children, teachers, administrators, parents, and the local zoo.


This fact sheet from the California Childcare Health Program provides information regarding the health and safety risks associated with children and pets. It also provides suggestions for reducing the risks of allergy related problems, injuries and infections that can result from the exposure to some animals.

Learning from Animals


This website, written and sponsored by the ASPCA, provides multiple sources of information regarding real issues involving animals and pets. It also provides detailed information on pet care and is designed for children to use independently or with an adult. It also provides opportunities for
problem solving and community action. The website has links to games, cartoons, and videos for children. A caution about this site is that it discusses real issues involving animal cruelty that could be upsetting for young children. It is important that children visit this site with the guidance of an adult.


This project report describes how five children (an infant, three toddlers, and a preschooler) enrolled at a private day care home engaged in their first journey into project work through a study of Canada geese living on a nearby body of water. Prior to the experience described in this paper, the author had used the Project Approach only with children over age 3. The author has been caring for children for 20 years, the last several years using the Project Approach as defined by Lilian Katz, Sylvia Chard, and Judy Harris Helm. The author’s curriculum is also inspired by the approach to early childhood education and care in the preprimary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, which she has studied extensively. Through her reflective journal, videos, and samples of the children’s work, the author describes how the children responded to a number of provocations to think more deeply about and make representations of the things they observed during their project. (Abstract)


This article discusses how a brief project-based unit promoted the learning of children in a first-grade classroom. The children attended a public elementary school located in a southeastern university town in the United States. This study found that more state-mandated objectives were covered during the project-based unit than during the teacher-directed unit and that children had "more to say" by using more words and expressing more specific and accurate ideas after the project-based instruction. The project also provided more enriched learning opportunities than the traditional teacher-directed unit.


This site offers photos, videos and sound bites of animals and pets. It is updated and changed frequently and is an interactive resource for children, teachers, and families. It provides interesting facts and colorful photos of animals and pets. It also features links to crafts, games, science activities and recipes. It is sure to be a favorite site for children to visit on the classroom computer.


The article focuses on Cockapoos in the Classroom, a pet therapy program for children suffering from autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) which provide learning opportunities for them. It discusses how cockapoos can help children with ASD in learning new words, trying new activities and inspiring them to interact with others. It states that the pet therapy program in the school is aimed at improving communication as well as social skills. (Abstract)

This study involving a zoo outreach program, where zoo animals were placed in elementary school classrooms showed an increased use of science vocabulary and recorded observations among students when “unique” animals were involved. These results were contrasted with the data from exposure to “ordinary” animals, such as rabbits and doves.

**No Pets Allowed? No Problem!**


This short article, by Peggy Ashbrook, provides a detailed description of getting children involved in an observational study of invertebrates. The animals discussed in this article are snails, slugs, worms, insects, spiders, and crustaceans. The article also gives tips for creating safe and appropriate habitats for attracting these animals to your playground or garden. This kind of project is a great option for teachers who are not able to keep animals in their classrooms.


This article discusses the importance of nature studies in early childhood education and describes an in depth study of birds. This is great article for any early childhood teacher to read, especially those who may not be able to have a classroom pet. The article provides practical ideas and resources for teachers to use in the classroom.

**Dealing with Loss**


This article discusses the issues and emotions a child faces when a pet dies. It offers information on what to expect from the child and how to help children work through the loss of a pet.