

Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Connections

For 4-H Cloverbud Volunteers Working with Grades K—2

April - June 2015 Issue

How to Handle Pets Safely

By Penne Smith, 4-H Youth Development Educator, South Central Regional Office (OSU Extension)



Children are naturally drawn to animals. In order to help make “man’s best friend” your child’s best friend, it is important to take into account some safety guidelines for your child and the pet. Having a pet can be a very positive and rewarding experience for a child. Children learn responsibility and compassion through caring for a pet. When deciding to get a family pet you will need to decide how much of the animal’s care you expect the child to be responsible for and/or how much you intend to responsible for.

- ▶ Family pets adjust to children best when they are treated as part of the family. It’s been proven that an inside cat lives a longer, healthier life than the kitty that roams outside the house. Outdoor cats face many dangers, including cars, other cats ready to fight, and exposure to fleas, ticks, worms as well as sickness or death from eating spoiled foods or poisons.
- ▶ Dogs should never be left outdoors chained up. Dogs that are left chained up are more aggressive and more likely to bite.

- ▶ Spay or neuter your pets. Pets that have been spayed or neutered are less likely to bite than pets that have not been “fixed.”
- ▶ Petting under the chin is where you begin. You should pet a dog under its chin or on its chest. This way the dog can see where your hand is and what you are doing. Many dogs don’t like to be petted on top of the head. They might think you are trying to hurt them. (Many cats do not like to be petted on their chest.)
- ▶ Check your pet’s collar regularly. Collars do not expand, but puppies and kittens grow quickly! Check your pet’s collars at least every week until it is full grown. You should be able to easily slip two or three fingers between the pet’s collar and their neck. It is important that you put a collar and an ID on your pet, just in case he slips out and gets lost.
- ▶ Animals like humans, have times they just want to be left alone. Learn how to recognize your pet’s mood, and to give it space when it would rather be left alone. Animals should never be restrained by a child against their will.

The most important lesson is to always treat pets gently and with kindness. Pets that are in pain, are afraid, or feel threatened are most likely to bite or scratch to protect themselves. Make sure you use safe practices when petting a dog or cat that belongs to someone else.

1. Get permission from the owner before you pet Rover or Muffy. Many dogs and cats are very friendly, but some are not.
2. Let the dog sniff your hand in order to understand you mean no harm. If a dog smells you to get to know you, let him sniff the back of your hand. This will keep your fingers out of the way as well as not threaten the dog.
3. If a dog is eating or chewing on a bone or other item, he might think you are going to take it away, which could cause the dog to protect what it has by growling, snapping or biting.
4. If you shout, run or swing your arms or feet around dogs, they are more likely to chase you or attack you. Being clam around a shy dog or cat can make them feel less nervous and more secure.
5. If you are teasing or annoying a dog or a cat, they can’t tell you in words that they want you to stop; but they can tell you to stop by growling, biting or scratching.

For more information on how to meet a dog safely watch https://www.youtube.com/watch=JVkip3UghVI&feature=player_embedded and how to stay safe around loose dogs <https://vimeo.com/87997940> .



Dog Behaviors

Looking for easy to teach resources for your next meeting? Check out the most recent Click it, Print it, Do it! activity for your Cloverbuds!

Pet Activities for Cloverbuds

By Nancy Snook, 4-H Youth Development Educator,
Noble County (OSU Extension)

Cloverbud pet/animal activities are designed to introduce 5 through 8 year olds to various kinds of animals and to develop safe basic care and handling skills. The focus of Cloverbud pet/animal activities is on learning through activities other than livestock showing such as clinics, skill-a-thons, and pairing up with older 4-H member "animal buddies" to learn about the care and training of the animals. Because most 5 to 8 year olds do not have the motor skills and/or the judgment to anticipate potentially dangerous situations, they require careful one-on-one supervision in order to participate in activities involving animals of any size.

As 4-H Cloverbud volunteer leaders work with youth to develop ways to incorporate pet/animal activities into Cloverbud activity areas, here are some suggestions:

Animal Care

The club could feature an animal each year – learn about taking care of the animal, do drawing and painting activities etc. around that type of animal – have a special display at the fair with all the related projects

Pet Parade

Cloverbuds will parade their pets or a stuffed animal. Pets are to weigh less than the Cloverbud parading the pet. Make sure dogs, cats or rabbits are on a leash or caged/crated. Have plenty of adults on hand to supervise and keep animals away from each other.

Photo Booth

Have Cloverbuds bring a photo of them and their pet(s) taken together and then display all the photos on a display board or in the club's fair booth.

Exhibiting Animals

Cloverbuds do not participate as competitive exhibitors with animals or other projects. A one-time, noncompetitive event such as Cloverbud or PeeWee Showmanship is appropriate if:

- All awards presented are the same for each Cloverbud.
- Youth learn about animals in a fun way (the activity is an educational experience and developmentally appropriate.
- One-on-one supervision. A teen or adult leader leads the animal on a halter (if appropriate for species) and the Cloverbud wears appropriate clothing/equipment for safety.
- Parent signs a waiver (permission form) allowing Cloverbud to participate.

Equine Fun Day

A 4-H Cloverbud "horse show" that mimics a real show by offering classes such as stick horse showmanship, barrel racing and lead in line (Cloverbud leads their advisor or parent).

Care for My Pet Activity

Materials: paper, crayons, markers, pencils

On a piece of paper have children draw a picture of a farm animal or pet they have. Then ask them to draw pictures of what they need to take care of them. Lead a discussion on items that are needed for good care: food, water, shelter, things to play with, companionship,

Campus Connections

By Scott Scheer, Ph.D., State Extension Specialist,
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Hello again! Great to make this 4-H Cloverbud Connection with you!

Save the dates! 4-H Cloverbuds will have the second annual 4-H Cloverbud Day Camp at the Ohio State fair. It will be offered for two days so more kids can participate. The dates are Wednesday, July 29 and Thursday, July 30, 2015.

Registration information will be available from your county extension office.



The day camp will provide 4-H Cloverbuds an enjoyable and educational event of their own to look forward to at the state fair. Objectives for this year's camp are to gain new knowledge, meet new friends to develop social and learning skills, and explore the Ohio State Fair. We are looking forward to continuing this annual opportunity for 4-H Cloverbuds which promises to be an educational and fun event!

Thanks for your commitment to the 4-H Cloverbud program as we enhance the healthy development of children throughout the state!



Cloverbud Connections is published four times annually by OSU Extension in Monroe and Hocking Counties, providing volunteers and teachers working with kindergarten through second grade access to unbiased, research-based information.

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