

Caring for

your pet



A Guide for Children

This book is about
how you can help
to keep your pet
safe and happy

A new pet

Bringing your new pet home is a very special time for you and for the little creature that is now going to share your life. When you have a pet it becomes part of your family, and you will need to learn to give it care and kindness.



The first thing to do is for you to get to know your pet, and for your pet to get to know you. It will probably be scared of you and everything else to begin with, and may have just left its mother for the first time.

Pretend that you are in a new and strange place - this could be how your pet is feeling now.

To help your pet feel less frightened and worried, talk to it very quietly, almost in a whisper. Most animals can hear very well so even when you speak softly, it will hear you.

Let it see you when you speak to it and let it smell your hand. Move slowly and quietly.



It may need two or three days to get used to you before you can try to pick it up and cuddle it. You will need a grown-up to show you how to pick up your pet safely.

Always be very gentle when you touch your pet. This way your pet will learn to trust you and see you as a very special friend.

When you bring a new pet home - remember

- 🐾 talk to it quietly
- 🐾 let it see you
- 🐾 let it smell your hand
- 🐾 begin to stroke it gently when it has got used to you
- 🐾 wait two or three days before you try to pick it up
- 🐾 ask a grown-up to show you how to pick up your pet



Learning about your pet

You can learn lots of things about your pet. This will help you to keep it happy and safe.



You can find out about your pet by:

- 🐾 reading books
- 🐾 reading leaflets about your type of pet
- 🐾 asking one of the grown-ups who look after you
- 🐾 asking the vet

You need to find out what your pet needs:



to eat- what sort of food does it eat?



to drink - does it need a water bowl or a bottle?



to live in - does your pet need a cage or a hutch?



to sleep in - what sort of bed would it like?












to stay safe - where should you keep it to make sure it's safe?



to play with - what does your pet like to do when you are not there?



If you like, you can also find out where they come from and how they would live in the wild. One way you can learn about your pet is to watch it as much as you can.

-  Does it move quickly or slowly?
-  Where does it like to hide?
-  How does it like to play?
-  When does it sleep and wake up?
-  What sounds does it make?
-  What are its happy sounds?
-  What are its unhappy sounds?
-  How does it clean itself?
-  Where does it like to be stroked?

This is great fun and will teach you much about your new little friend.

Keeping your pet happy and healthy

Always remember that your pet is a real animal. Just like you, it can feel happy and sad. It can become hungry and thirsty too, so you need to care for your pet every single day. This means:

- 🐾 feeding it fresh food
- 🐾 giving it fresh water
- 🐾 giving it little treats from time to time

Even if you are tired or have lots of homework you will still need to look after your pet.

If you go on holiday you will have to ask your parents to make sure a nice, caring person will look after your pet for you.



Keeping your pet safe and comfortable

We don't like being frightened or hurt and nor does your pet. Keep it away from any other animals in your house and loud noises, such as shouts or bangs. Remember that other animals could frighten or hurt your pet.



If your pet is asleep, try not to wake it as this may startle or annoy it. Frightened or annoyed pets can sometimes bite - this is their way of telling you how they feel.

Do you like to be cosy and comfortable? All living creatures do as well. You will need to make sure your pet is not too hot or too cold. Animals can get very uncomfortable in the sun on a warm day, and will need to go into the shade.

If your pet lives outside it will need a weather-proof house, and to have lots of warm bedding when it is cold or damp. If your pet lives indoors in a cage, it will need to be somewhere safe and quiet.

As your pet is not able to clean its own house, you will need to make sure that you do this at least once a week, or it will be uncomfortable and may become ill.

You may need to groom your pet to keep its coat shiny and clean. Ask a grown up to show you how to brush your pet without hurting or scaring it.

Being your pet's best friend

Do you like having friends? You might be your pet's only friend.

Try to have some special time each day with your pet, and it will learn to love you, and will never be lonely.



Looking after a sick pet

If your pet looks unhappy and is not eating its food, it may be because it is hurt or not well.

You will need to tell your parents straightaway so that they can take it to the vet.



When your pet is hurt or feeling ill, you may help it to feel a little bit better if you are extra kind and gentle.

Having fun with your pet

Like you, pets enjoy having fun. All animals like to play, and it is a good way for them to stay happy and healthy. Always ask a grown-up where and when you and your pet can play safely.



Some pets like to play with toys, and this will help to keep it happy and stop it becoming bored. Find out what sort of toys your pet would like - you can then enjoy watching it whilst it explores and plays.

Remember - if you are kind to your pet, you are helping to make things nice for animals in the world.








NOTES FOR PARENTS/CARERS

This book is based on the 'Five Freedoms', issued by the Farm Animal Welfare Council as a set of guidelines relating to the welfare of farm animals. They are applicable to caring for most pets.

However, it is recognised that some species of pets, like hamsters, need to be housed alone, and therefore the owners cannot comply with the requirement 'to be provided with company of the animal's own kind'. To address this the content of the book encourages its readers to ensure the pet is given kind attention each and every day to prevent loneliness.

THE FIVE FREEDOMS

-  **Freedom from thirst, hunger, and malnutrition**, by being given ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
-  **Freedom from discomfort**, by being provided with a suitable environment including shelter and a comfortable resting place.
-  **Freedom from pain, injury and disease**, by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
-  **Freedom to express normal behaviour**, by being provided with sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.
-  **Freedom from fear and distress**, by ensuring conditions which avoid mental suffering.

The Environmental Animal Sanctuary and Education (EASE)
is a registered charity (no. 1089160) which promotes
the human/companion animal relationship.

Our services include pet bereavement support and education
in animal welfare.

For more information about our work, visit our website on

www.ease-animals.org.uk



EASE, PO Box 292, Hatfield, Herts AL9 6ZJ

Email: info@ease-animals.org.uk

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM EASE

BOOKLETS:

Can you be a dog's best friend?

A practical guide for prospective new dog owners

Pet Bereavement Activity book

Activity book for children experiencing loss of a beloved pet

LEAFLETS:

Small animal guide

Choosing the right small animal for your child

EASE animal care guides

12 leaflets in the care of rabbits, guinea-pigs, hamsters, mice, rats, gerbils, ferrets, parrots, chinchillas, budgerigars, chickens and doves

Blemie's Will

By Eugene O'Neill

For a full list of our pet bereavement support material and educational articles, please visit www.ease-animals.org.uk