

Perfect pets - rabbits

Discover how to look after your pets perfectly by understanding the five welfare needs!



Learning objective

- to identify and understand the five welfare needs

Curriculum links

- Science – animals including humans
- Literacy – speaking and listening

Age range KS1

Session length 30 - 40 minutes

Resources

- 5 welfare needs cards (printable)
- Soft toy rabbit (or printable rabbit photo)
- Rabbit needs box including rabbit pellets and an activity ball (printable photos), water bottle, small bag of hay, apple tree branch or stick, cabbage leaf, photo of large hutch inside a very large run (printable), photo or 2 rabbits together (printable), injection (printable), flowerpot photo (printable)

Introduction

Introduce Wood Green, The Animals Charity. What animals do Wood Green look after? Elephants? Kangaroos? Wood Green looks after pets. Explain that all of the animals at Wood Green have fur or feathers and they are all missing a family looking after them. Watch a short film outlining the work of Wood Green:

http://www.woodgreen.org.uk/fun_and_learning/teachers/lesson_plans/2582_looking_after_the_animals_at_wood_green

Share with the class the learning objective and explain that they are going to be thinking about all the things rabbits need to be happy and healthy, their 'welfare needs'. Explain that all animals need some important things to keep them happy and healthy, just like we do. Can the children guess five things ALL animals might need to be healthy and happy? These are food and water, friends, a home, vet care and toys. And when guessed correctly show the class the printable sheets with the need displayed as wording and a picture.

Explain that these five needs are very important and if an animal doesn't have these things they may become poorly or feel very sad.

Main session

Place a soft toy rabbit or photo of a rabbit at the front of the class and stick the five welfare needs cards on the whiteboard or wall. Introduce the rabbit needs box and explain inside the box are lots of things rabbits need to be healthy and happy. The children have the challenge of deciding which 'welfare need' the item belongs to.

Start as a class and work together to model the activity – ask one child to come and close their eyes and choose one item out of the box. Decide as a class what the item is and which welfare need it belongs to, then place the item under the correct welfare need card.

Ask further children to come and choose items from the box and in speaking and listening pairs, ask children to decide what the item is and which need it belongs to. When each pair has an answer, ask them to put their hand up, share their answer and see if other pairs agree by using a show of thumbs up for agree and thumbs down for disagree.

The items belong in the following welfare needs:

Food and water	Home	Friends	Toys	Vet care
Rabbit pellets	Photo of hutch and large run	Photo of two rabbits together	Activity ball	Photo of injection
Water bottle			Flowerpot	
Small bag of hay				
Cabbage leaf				
Apple tree branch				

Each item can be discussed with the class as follows:

- **Rabbit pellets** – rabbits need a special rabbit food to eat, the best kind is all brown with no bright colours in it. Rabbits need just a small handful of pellets each day to be healthy and happy.
- **Water bottle** – rabbits need fresh water to drink every day. We need to make sure they have lots to drink on warm, sunny days and that their water isn't frozen and turned into ice on cold, wintry days.
- **Small bag of hay** – rabbits need to eat hay every day to be healthy and happy.
- **Cabbage leaf** – rabbits love extra things to eat every day to stay healthy and these can include fruit, vegetables like cabbage and even fresh plants and flowers such as dandelion leaves and rose petals.
- **Apple tree branch** – rabbits need hard things to nibble on to help wear down their teeth as their teeth never stop growing. Rabbits love munching on apple trees which are nice and hard.
- **Hutch and run** – rabbits need a big home with lots of space to exercise. A hutch inside a run is a great idea so the rabbits can hop around in the run whenever they like.
- **Two rabbits together** – to be happy, rabbits need a rabbit friend. They can feel very lonely and sad if they live on their own as they will have no-one to play with, just like we would all feel sad if we had no friends to play with.
- **Flowerpot** – flowerpots make great toys for rabbits, they can be filled with hay and tasty treats, the rabbits can munch on the treats and then play with the flowerpot too!
- **Activity ball** – these are fun toys for rabbits to eat their pellets out of. They roll them around and the pellets drop out. Eating this way is much more fun than sitting at a food bowl and munching all the food at once!
- **Injection** – rabbits need to visit the vet twice a year for injections to stay healthy and happy. The vet can also check the rabbit is feeling healthy and happy at the same time.

Plenary

When all the items have been placed under the correct welfare need card, ask the class if the rabbit is now feeling happy. Ask the class what might happen if some of the things the rabbit needs aren't given to him. How would he feel if he didn't have a friend? How about if he only had a very small hutch or was fed guinea pig food rather than rabbit food? Explain anyone who doesn't give an animal all these five things they need may get into trouble, may not be allowed to look after animals again and might even be fined lots of money.

Ask some of the children to share something new they have learned today about rabbits.