

Discussion and Activity Guide – Kindergarten to Grade 3

OUR FAMILY

By Valerie Ingram & Alistair Schroff, Illustrated by Alex Chepelev



Why Humane Education?

It benefits animals, kids, their families, and the whole community! Humane education builds empathy. It helps prevent bullying, cruelty, and abuse.

Humane education encourages responsibility and kindness to all living things.

Why Animal Picture Books and Stories?

Stories featuring animals capture children's attention, imagination, and emotions. Stories like this one celebrate the human-animal bond, but at the same time nurture all caring relationships. These stories inspire children to make the world a better, kinder place for all.

The book and guide meet many curriculum requirements including critical thinking, responsibility, and social-emotional learning.



lakesanimalfriendship.ca

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Activity Illustrations by Nola Johnston

Design by Karen Cowl/Stripe Graphics Ltd.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Our Family is a simple story about a “day in the life” of a family, including their indoor cat and dog, and the community cat they care for outdoors. The needs we all have – humans and the animals in our lives – are shown to be similar.

KEY CONCEPTS:

- ▶ We have a responsibility to care for ourselves and others.
- ▶ Cats and dogs have needs and are part of the family.
- ▶ We meet the needs of our furry family members to keep them happy, healthy and safe.
- ▶ There is a lot of similarity between the needs of cats (including community cats), dogs and human family members.

QUESTIONS TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING:

Note: After asking each question, give the child a few moments to think before they respond.

Before you begin reading, show the cover, read the title, and ask the children:

- ❶ What do you think this book will be about?
- ❷ What does the title and front cover tell us about the story?
- ❸ What words would you use to describe the dog and cats?

During the story, pause to ask the questions:

- ❶ What do you think will happen next?
- ❷ How do you think the pets and their guardians feel together? How do you know?
- ❸ Why do you think one cat is indoors, while Charlie the community cat is outdoors?
- ❹ Why is exercise good for people and animals? What are some fun ways to get exercise?
- ❺ What are some examples of kind words and actions for a dog/cat? A friend? Yourself?

Things to think about and discuss after you read the book:

- ❶ What do dogs and cats need to be healthy and happy? What about community cats?
- ❷ What do you need to be healthy and happy? How are your needs similar or different from the needs of dogs and cats?
- ❸ A friend can often know what you are thinking and feeling. What are some of the ways that you and your friend communicate without speaking?
- ❹ How do cats and dogs communicate with us without speaking? Look through the book again and pay careful attention to their face, tail, ears, and body.
- ❺ What did you learn from today’s book and discussion that you didn’t know before?

MORE LEARNING FUN! ACTIVITIES FOR REINFORCEMENT OF CONCEPTS:

- ❶ How do you know a dog or cat is happy? Refer to pages 5 and 6 of this Discussion Guide. Have the children cut pictures of happy dogs and cats out of magazines and then make a collage. Can you find pictures of happy pets with their happy guardian? Make sure both are happy!
- ❷ Refer to page 7 of this Discussion Guide and teach the children the song on page 8. Show children the right way to pet a dog using a stuffed animal – and remind them to only pet happy dogs. Demonstrate and take turns meeting and petting a stuffed animal. Remind the children to speak softly, move slowly, and pet gently when invited.
- ❸ How are our needs similar to our pets' needs?
 - Refer to the chart on page 9
 - As a group or individually, choose to focus on the needs of a dog or a cat.
 - Choose 3 things that the dog/cat needs (food, exercise, training/learning, place to rest, grooming, etc.), and draw one in each of the Pet Needs boxes. Label each need.
 - In the corresponding boxes to the right, draw the “people” version of these needs. For example:
 - Food: bowl of dog food/plate of spaghetti
 - Exercise: ball/bike
 - Grooming: pet shampoo/soap

Note: You could also have the children compare indoor cats with community cats, or two different pets instead (dog/rabbit, cat/hamster, dog/cat, etc.)

- ❹ Make a ‘Box of Love’! Fill a box with items that dogs and cats need (bowl, ball, collar with ID, shampoo, blanket, etc.). Have children take turns reaching in to pull out an item. Discuss how it meets the needs of a pet. With each item ask the question: “Do you need this too?” This will help the children to make the connection between the needs of a pet and human needs.
- ❺ Check out the fun BONUS activities at the end of this booklet!

WAIT – THERE’S EVEN MORE! ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Our Free Resources available for download on lakesanimalfriendship.ca/resources:

- “My First Cat & Dog Activity Book”
- “How I Love and Care for My Happy Dog / Cat” (Colouring book with same text as the book)
- “Our Family: What We Need to be Happy, Healthy, and Safe” (Colouring book)

Other Recommended Resources:

- *Before You Were Mine* by Maribeth Boelts
- *Tails are not for Pulling* by Elizabeth Verdick
- *How do Dinosaurs Love Their Dogs & Cats* by Jane Yolen
- *Don’t Lick the Dog* and *A Cat Like That* by Wendy Wahman
- Gryphon Press Reading List thegryphonpress.com
- Red Rover Recommended Reading redrover.org/resource/books
- BC SPCA Teaching Resources spca.bc.ca/programs-services/leaders-in-our-field/professional-resources/for-teachers

CURRICULUM LINKS (www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca):

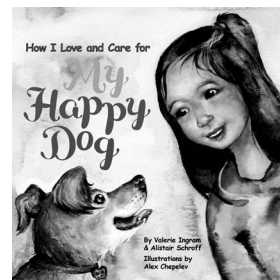
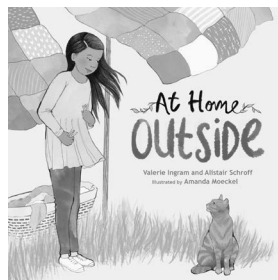
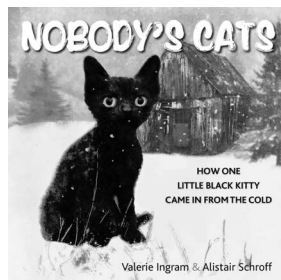
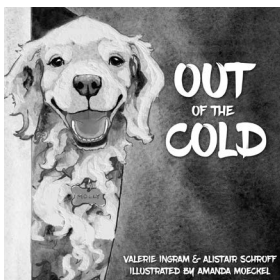
Core Competencies

Critical and Reflective Thinking	Questioning and Investigating
	Reflecting and Assessing
Social Awareness and Responsibility	Building Relationships
	Contributing to Community and Caring for the Environment

Curricular Competencies

English Language Arts	
<i>Comprehension and Connection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning. Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community. Recognize the importance of story in personal, family, and community identity. Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to stories and other texts to make meaning. Recognize the structure of story.
<i>Creation and Communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding. Identify, organize, and present ideas in a variety of forms.
Social Studies	
<i>Cause and Consequence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize causes and consequences of events, decisions, and developments in life.
<i>Ethical Judgement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify fair and unfair aspects of events, decisions, or actions in their lives and consider appropriate courses of action.
Physical and Health Education	
<i>Healthy and Active Living</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to make choices that contribute to health and well-being.

Enjoy this book? Check out the other books in the Kindness Collection!

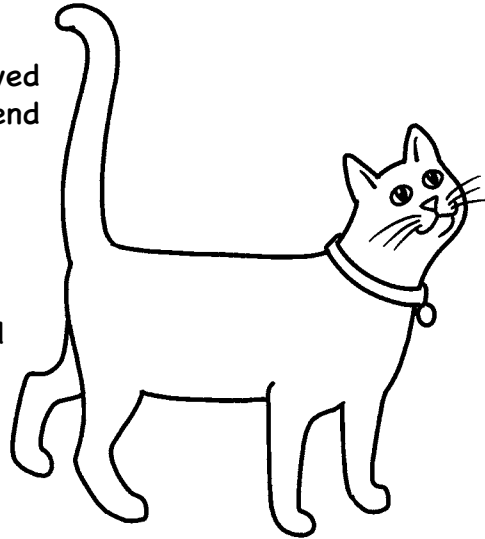


Respect My Feelings

Use the "cat clues" and learn to keep everyone safe.

tail is up and curved at the end

body is relaxed



ears forward

soft, relaxed face



Happy cats! "Let's be friends."

furrowed brow

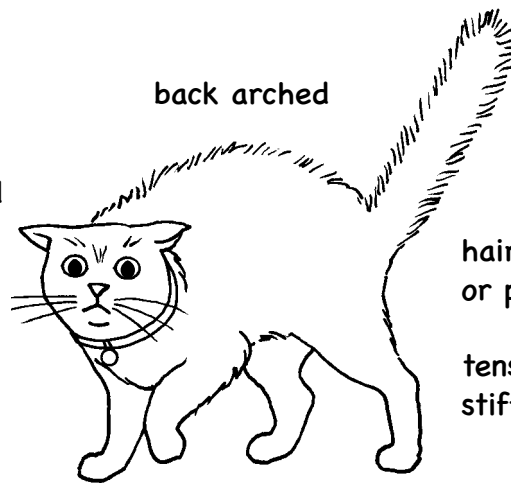
ears back



tail tucked or flicking

large, dilated pupils

back arched



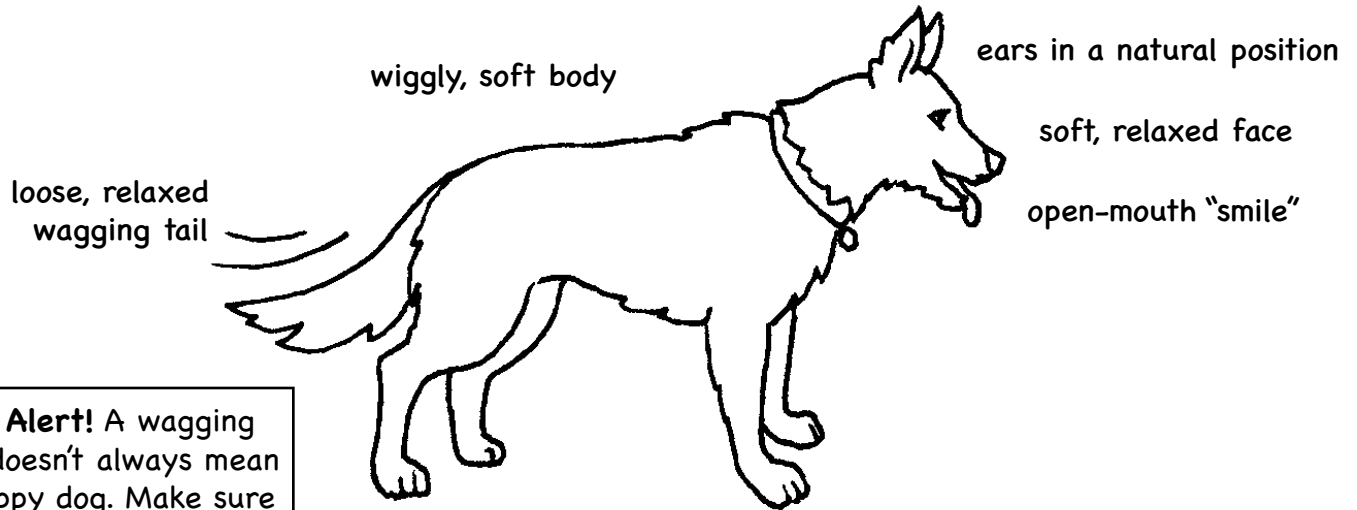
hair raised or puffed up

tense or stiff body

Stressed cats! "Please leave us alone."

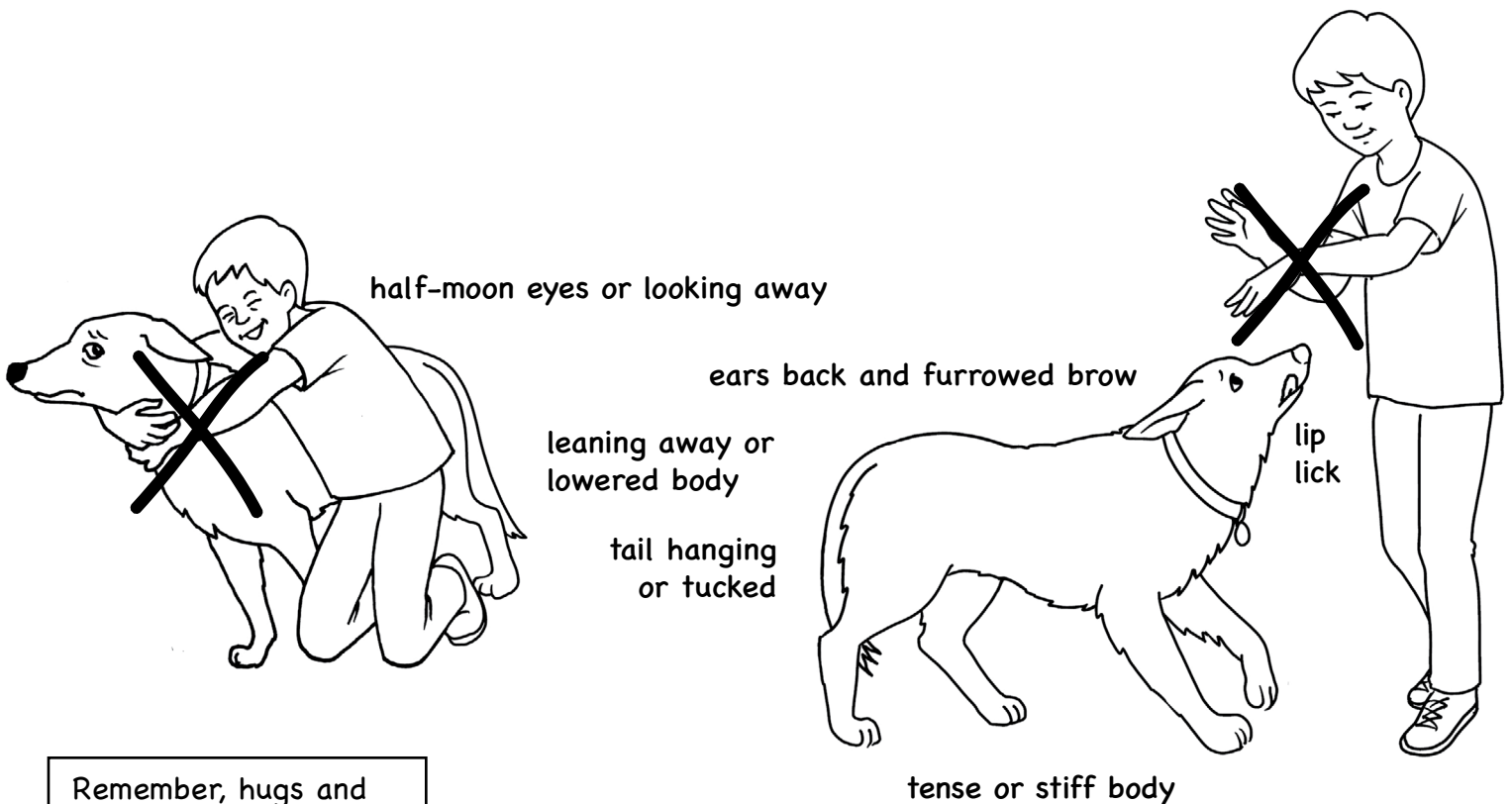
Respect My Feelings

Be a "doggie detective" and learn to keep everyone safe.



Wag Alert! A wagging tail doesn't always mean a happy dog. Make sure the dog is showing all the happy signs.

Happy dog! "Let's be friends."



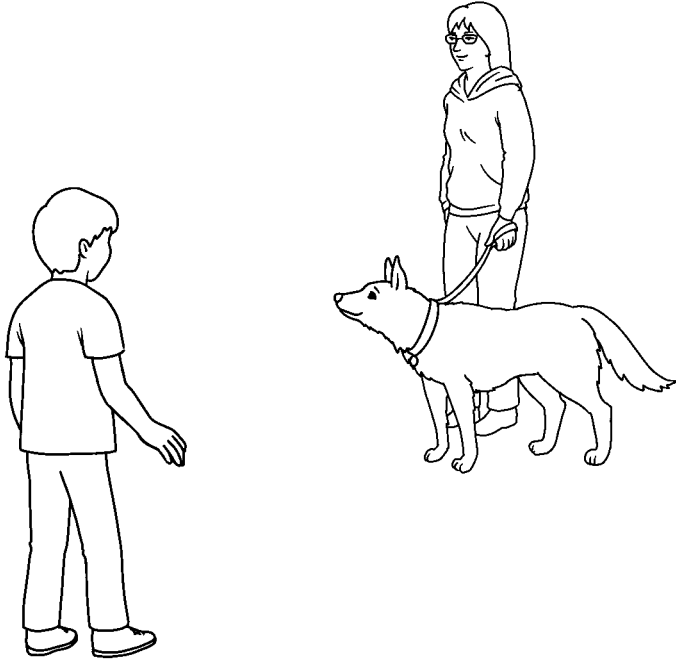
Remember, hugs and kisses are for people, not pets! Pets can feel trapped and scared and might bite.

Stressed dogs! "Please leave us alone."

WAIT to Safely Meet a Dog

W is for WAIT

WAIT a safe distance away.
WAIT for your parents to say "OK".



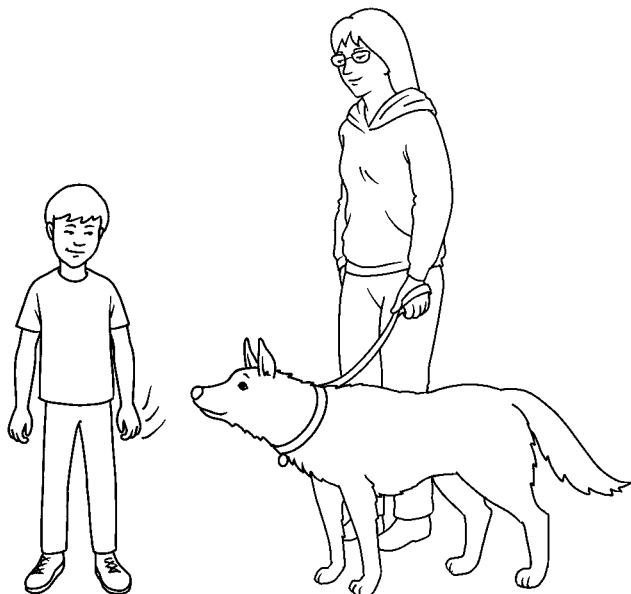
A is for ASK

ASK the guardian if the dog can be pet.
But wait, the dog hasn't said "OK" just yet!



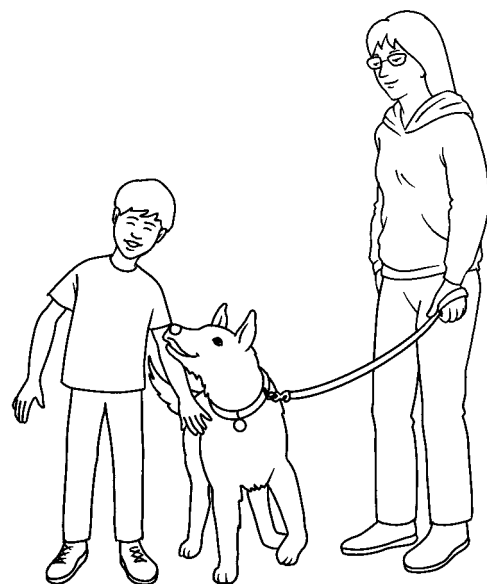
I is for INVITE

INVITE the dog to come to your side,
then let them sniff so they can decide.



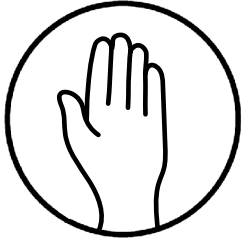
T is for TOUCH

If the dog comes in for a gentle TOUCH,
you can first pet their side - but not too much!



WAITing to Meet a Dog Song

(Sing to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and do the actions in the circles.)



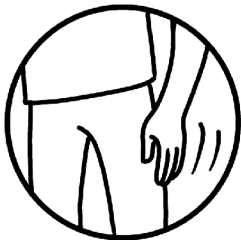
WAIT until your parents say:



"You can meet this dog today."



ASK the dog and their person too.



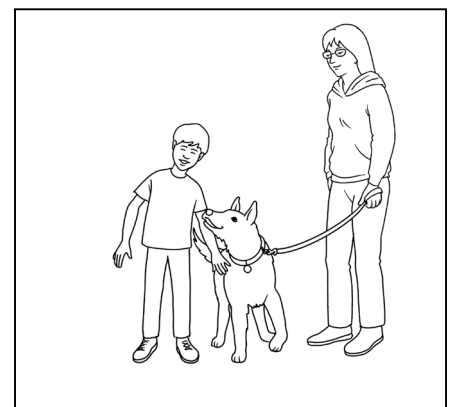
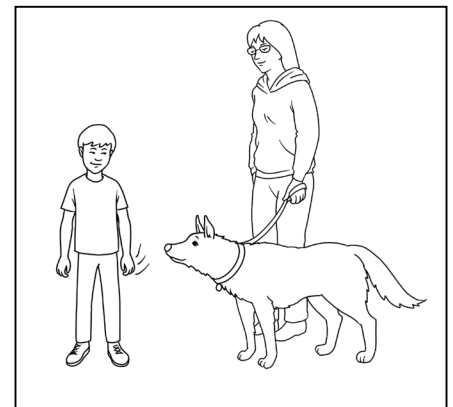
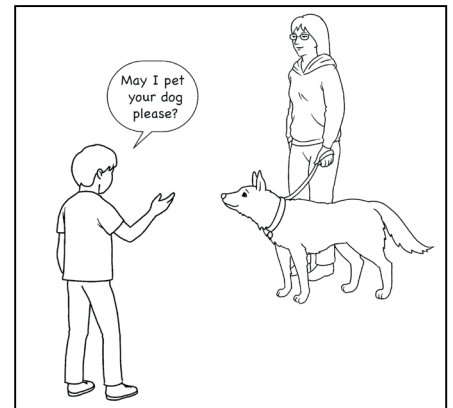
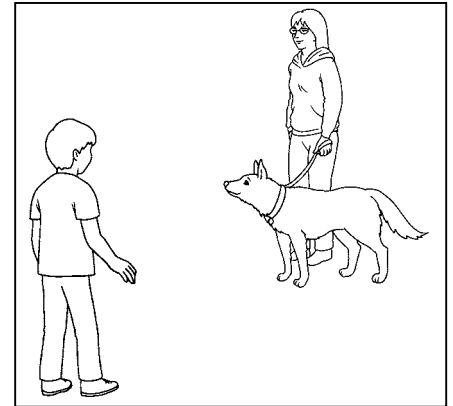
INVITE the dog to sniff at you.



If he comes up close enough,



Pet his side with a gentle TOUCH.



Pet Needs

People Needs

Love, Love, Love Your Pets

(Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat",
and do the actions for each verse.)

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
Give them food and water, too.
Then let them run & play.

(action of pouring food, then tossing a ball)

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
Train them well so they can tell
It's time to sit & stay.

(holding palm out like "stop!")

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
If you want a happy pet,
Walking is the way.

(marching in place)

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
A nice warm bed to lay their head
Will keep the cold away.

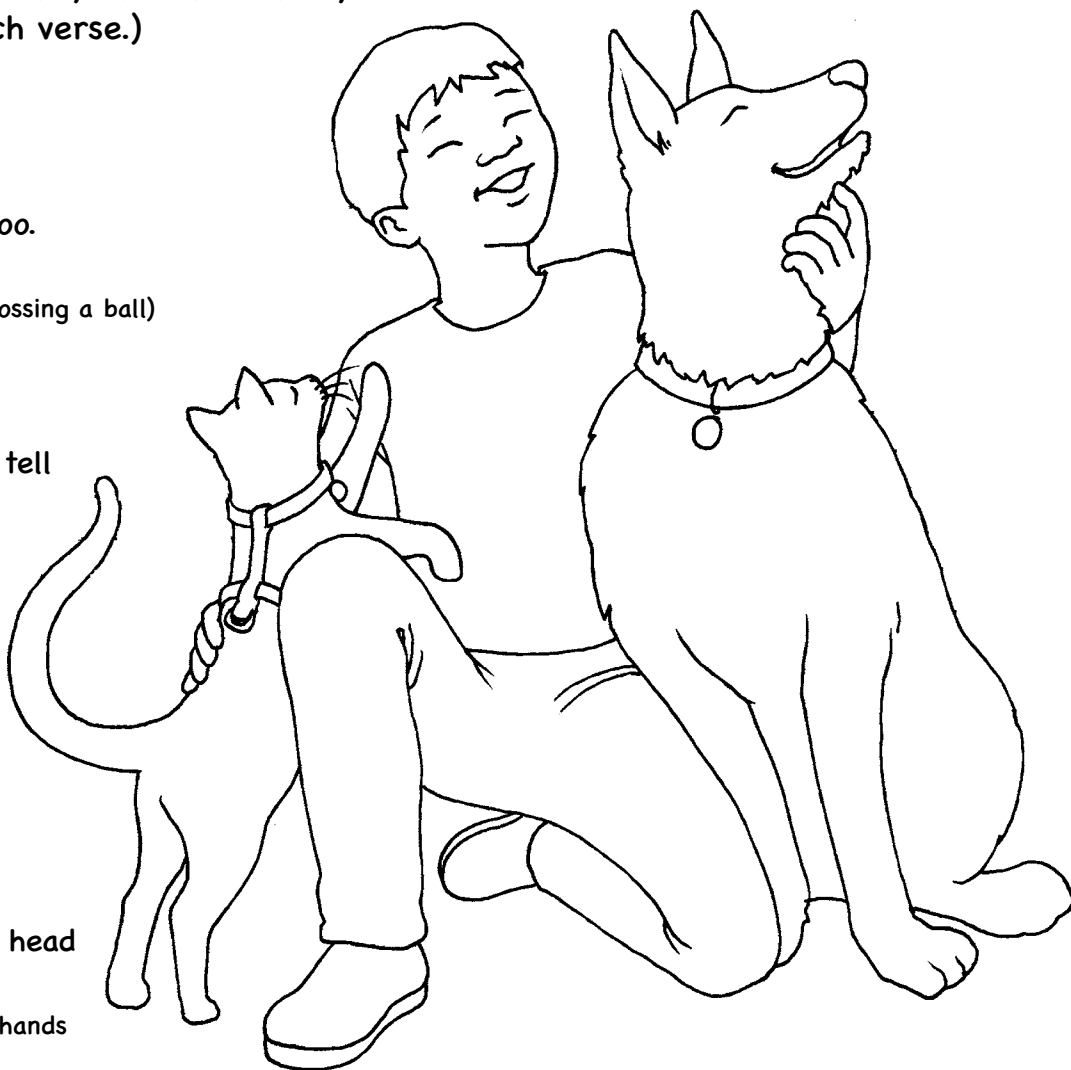
(holding palms together, using hands
like pillow for head)

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
A nice soft brush & gentle touch
To keep the mats away.

(making a gentle petting motion)

Love, love, love your pets.
Love them every day.
If you want a happy pet,
Loving is the way.

(holding hands to heart)

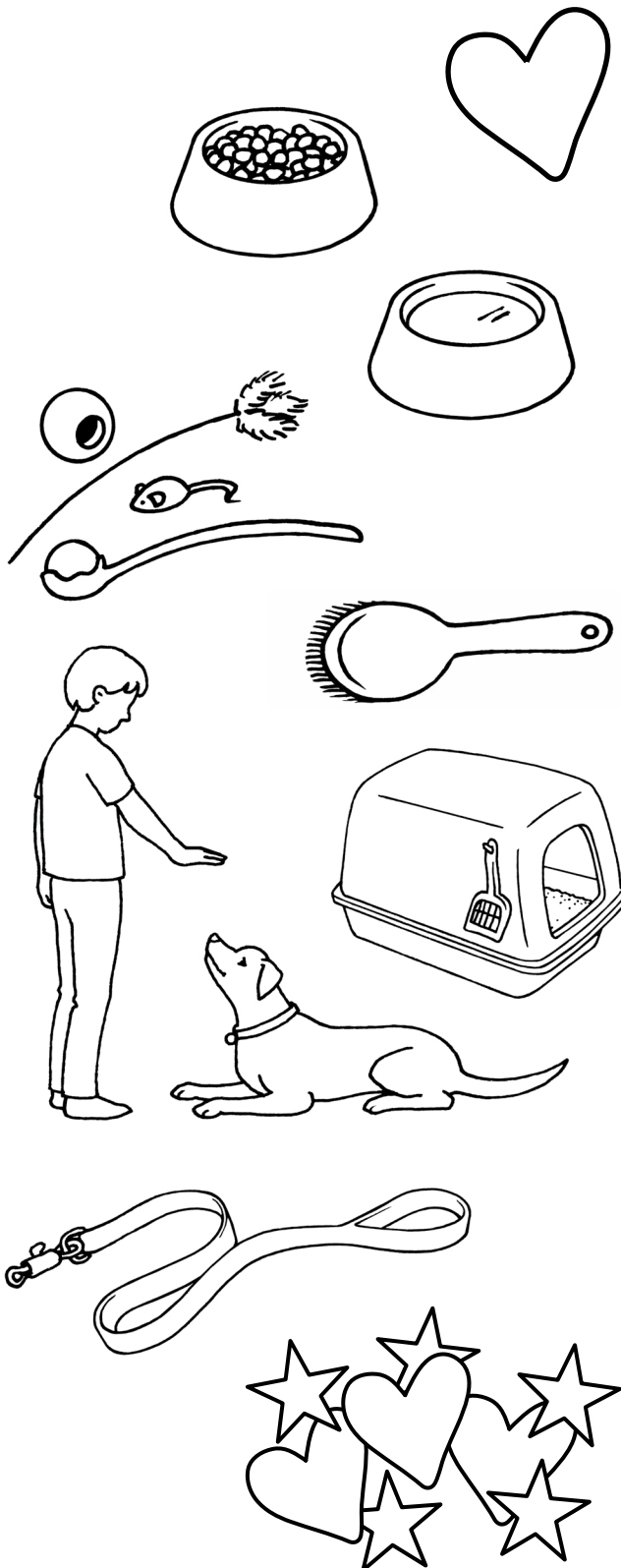


How do you show love for pets? Draw a picture.



Daily Pet Care

Draw a star for you, for each thing you do.



Give love.

Give good food.

Give fresh water.

Play with your pet.

Brush your pet.

Do training & tricks with your pet.

If you have a kitty, clean the litterbox.

Have a dog, go for a walk.

Always be kind.

Meet all of the pet needs on this list?
You are a SUPERSTAR!



Best Friends Forever Contract



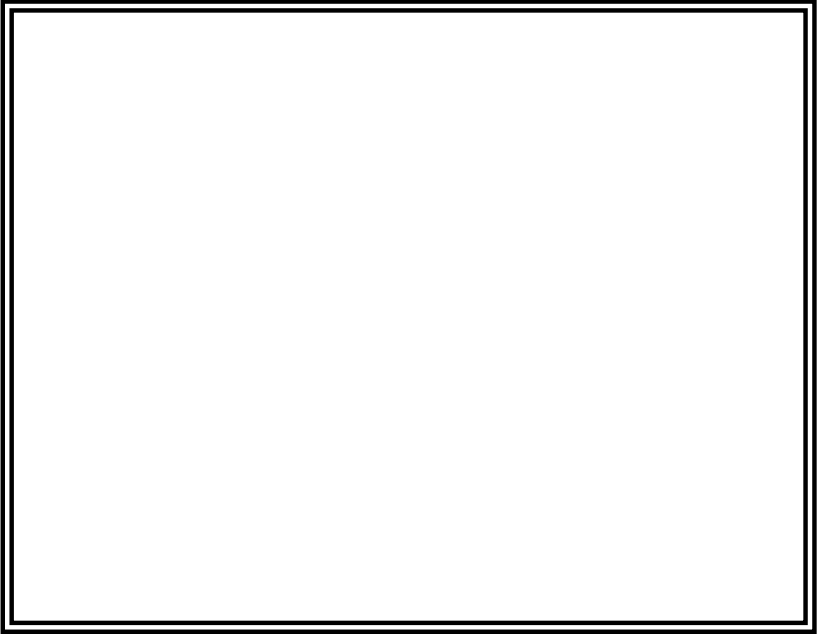
Are you ready for a pet, or not quite yet?

Here is a list that you can read, to tell you what a pet will need.

We will take care of _____ (name of pet).

We will give our pet everything they need:

- ♡ Exercise
- ♡ Playtime
- ♡ Love
- ♡ Training
- ♡ Good food
- ♡ Warm place to sleep
- ♡ Collar and ID Tag
- ♡ Healthy treats
- ♡ Fresh water
- ♡ Brushing and petting
- ♡ Safety
- ♡ Veterinary care



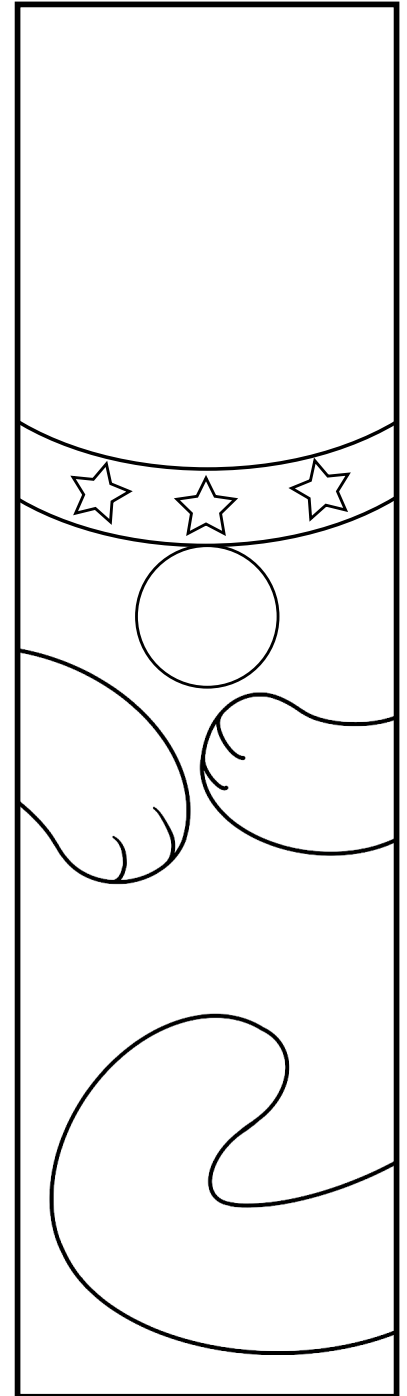
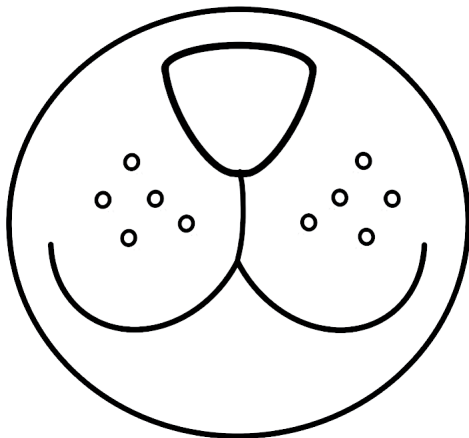
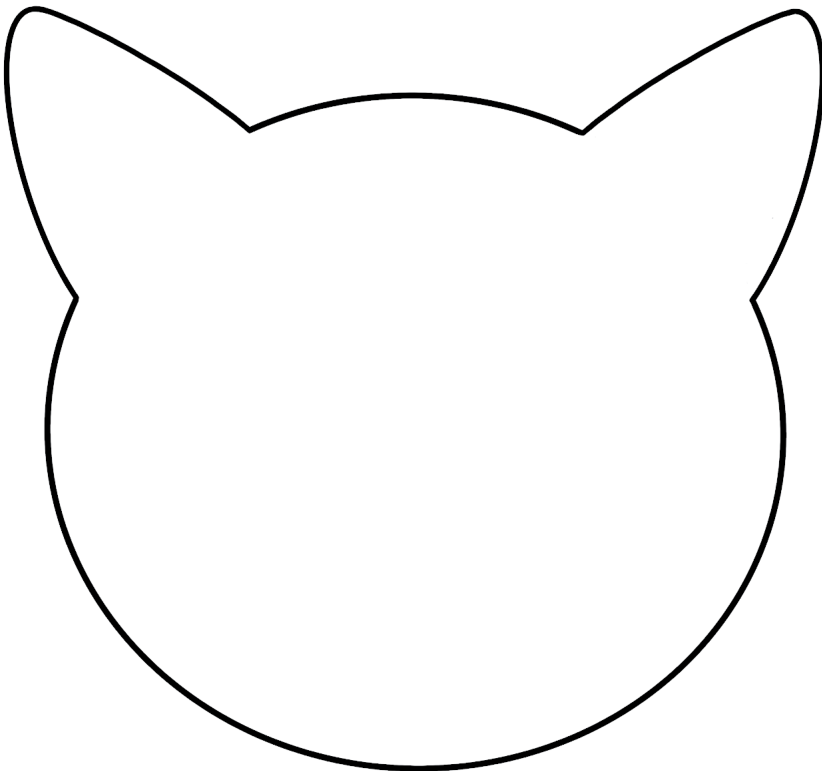
Signed by the whole family

This is a photo or drawing of my pet,
or the pet I hope to have some day.

Cats Make Purr-fect Reading Buddies!

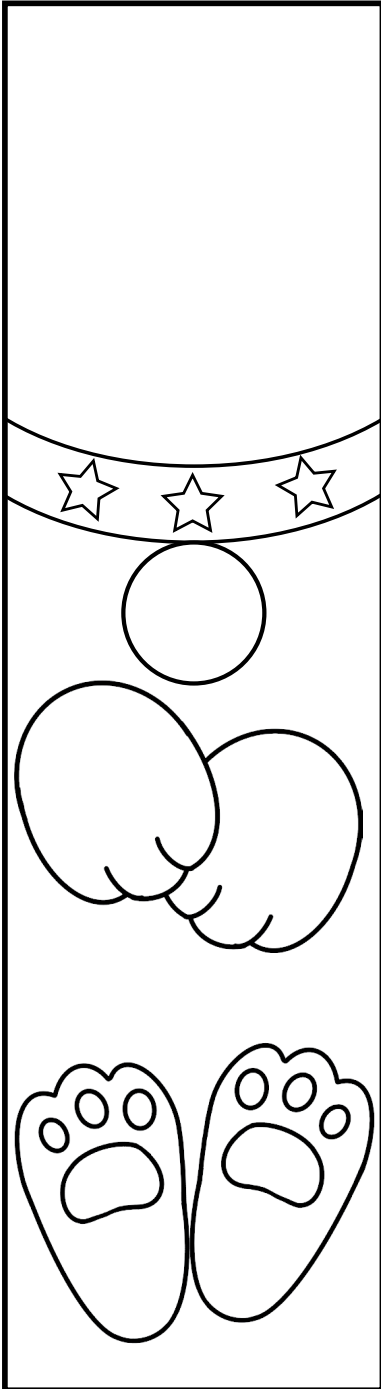
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Colour all the pieces and draw eyes on the head.
2. Cut out the pieces.
3. Write the cat's name on the tag.
4. Glue the nose and mouth to the head.
5. Glue the head to the bookmark body.
6. Read to your pet!



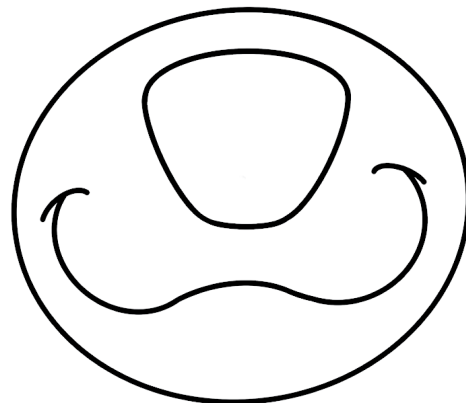
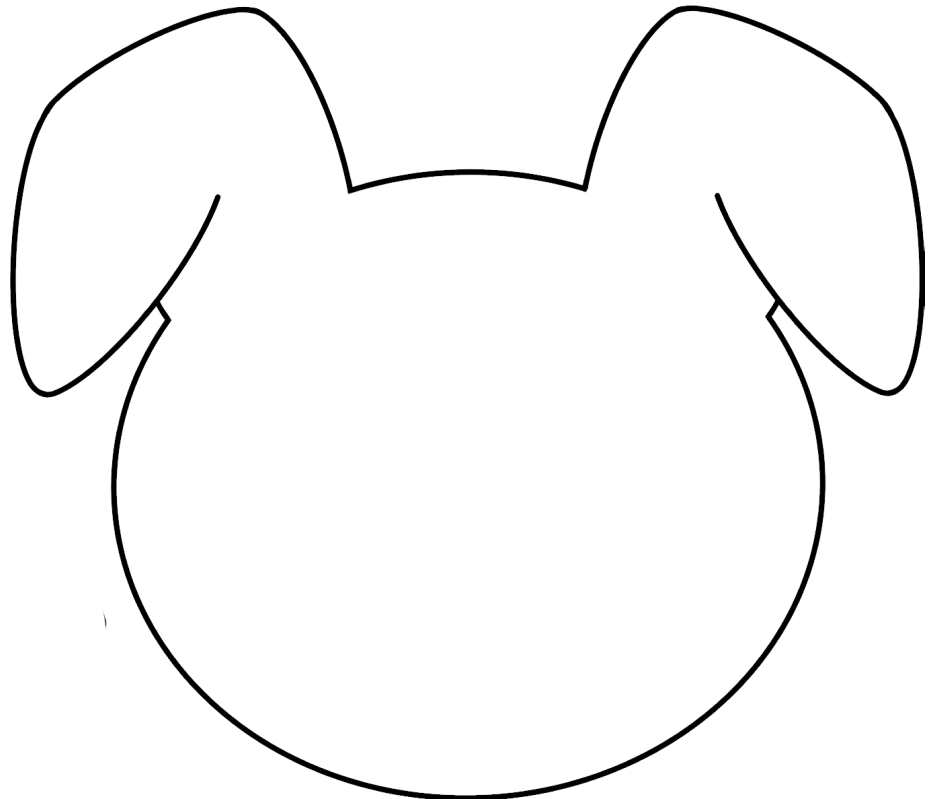
For more fun, make it a stick puppet! Glue a popsicle stick on the back. Act out fun and kind stories with your friends.

Dig Into a Good Book With Your Best Friend!



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Colour all the pieces and draw eyes on the head.
2. Cut out the pieces.
3. Write the dog's name on the tag.
4. Glue the nose and mouth to the head.
5. Glue the head to the bookmark body.
6. Read to your pet!



For more fun, make it a stick puppet!
Glue a popsicle stick on the back. Act out
kind critter stories with your friends.

