



Listening Time:



32:15

SEASON 2, EPISODE 7

All About Pets!

Having a pet can help to foster responsibility in children, and can offer a unique opportunity for kids to take care of someone else — helping them to grow big hearts!

When children care for pets, they develop a sense of responsibility and build nurturing instincts. Pets can be great friends, especially during difficult times. Having a pet can ease loneliness, relieve stress, and bring joy.

When a pet dies, it can often be the first time a child experiences loss, which can bring up feelings of sadness, fear and anger like the kids expressed in this episode.

Though some children may not have pets at home, we can explore this relationship and the empathy it builds by using the resources provided here. Invite your class to use movement to tap into the expression of different pets and collaborate as a class to care for a "pet" of your own!



Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast

Learning Extensions

Pet Yoga Poses

PreK - 3rd Grade



Goals

- ♥ Develop gross motor skills
- ♥ Improve focus and memory
- ♥ Cultivate creative expression

Instructions



Play the Episode

If the class hasn't yet listened to the Little Kids, Big Hearts "Everything PETS!" episode, start by listening! It's on Apple, Spotify, or where you listen. Learn more (or listen) at playsparkler.org/podcast.

Discussion



In the episode, Evelyn, Ella, Chelsea, and Eliot share stories about their pets and the "Quiglies" in the Land of Qook-a-lackas. As a class, discuss the pets that members of your community have: How do our pets make us feel? What do we learn from our pets?

Pet Yoga Poses



Get Ready! Here's what you'll need:

- ♥ Quiet music
- ♥ Paper
- ♥ Markers
- ♥ Space to move!



Pet Yoga Poses

- ♥ Let's listen to some soft music and get into pairs to create some Pet Poses!
- ♥ Invite each of the pairs of students to write/draw a pet on their team's piece of paper.
- ♥ Then ask each team to create a "yoga pose" inspired by their pet. Practice the pose! Can they hold it to the count of five?
- ♥ Gather back together in a circle and take turns demonstrating different pet poses.
- ♥ What feelings do the students have during the pet poses?



Class Pet Project

PreK-3rd Grade



Goals

- ♥ Cultivate leadership and executive function skills
- ♥ Inspire teamwork and cooperation
- ♥ Develop empathy for animals and other people

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Paper, markers/crayons
- ♥ A blank book that can become a Class Pet Journal

Class Pet Campaign & Election



Give students the chance to decide what their class pet will be by having them nominate and vote on different pets. Your pet can be real — or a stuffed animal or plastic toy!

- ♥ What kind of "pet" would be the best fit for our class — a tortoise, a fish, a guinea pig, a humpback whale, a giraffe?
- ♥ Ask each student to pick a pet, draw a picture of it, and write a few sentences about why it would be the best class pet.
- ♥ Come together as a class and invite each student to share their pet proposal.
- ♥ Ask the students to discuss the pros and cons of each pet and discuss the responsibilities students will have in caring for the class pet. For example, if it's a stuffed animal, the pet can have a brush and each child who brings it home may need to brush its fur at night.
- ♥ Vote on which pet would be the best class pet. (Older students can nominate class pets and then vote.) Which pet gets the most votes?
- ♥ You can have a separate election for the pet's name once the pet is selected.

Pet Care & Responsibility



- ♥ You've decided as a class which pet to adopt: Now you need to get ready to take care of your pet!
- ♥ Discuss a list of responsibilities, and create a schedule for taking care of the pet: reading to it, playing with it, feeding it, bathing it, brushing it, exercising with it, etc.
- ♥ Decide who in the class is responsible each day for your class pet.
- ♥ Share a Class Pet Journal so each student can share words/pictures representing their experience caring for the pet in the classroom and bringing it into their home.