



Discovering the Animal in YOU!

# Companion Pets

4-H Science, Engineering and Technology Project Overview

Dogs, cats, birds, fish and rodents – all of these animals are companion animals. Participation in the companion animal project will assist you in choosing the pet that best suits you and your family, learning the needs of pets and exploring career possibilities.

## Objectives

- Identify animal species, breeds and their characteristics.
- Learn about the selection, care, needs of pets and basic principles of pet behavior.
- Learn and practice responsible animal ownership.
- Demonstrate care and management in feeding, handling and grooming pets.



## Starting Out

- Determine a pet suitable for your family.
- Identify the parts of your pet.
- Complete companion animal activity guide.
- Learn the proper care, grooming and feeding for your pet.
- Create a plan to prevent your pet from getting lost or how to find it if it is lost.
- Take responsibility and clean up after your pet.
- Design a poster describing your pet.
- Write a speech or report on companion animals and present it to your club/classroom.
- Participate in an area pet show.
- Volunteer at local animal shelter.

## Moving Forward

- Keep records on your pet's health and feedings.
- Interview a local veterinarian.
- Present a demonstration on companion animals.
- Research your pet, and prepare a brochure.
- Plan and conduct a pet show.
- Assist beginning youth in companion animal projects.
- Prepare a brochure to distribute to the public on the importance of spaying and neutering household pets.

## Digging Deeper

- Serve as junior Pet Project leader.
- Participate in the 4-H University Dog Care contest.
- Develop a plan for a pet care or a pet-sitting business.
- Research diseases in companion animals.
- Research and share with others why it's not a good idea to keep wild animals as pets.
- Coordinate a service-learning project related to companion animals.
- Investigate careers related to companion animals.

# “Pawsitive” Character

Is there a more perfect union of loyalty, love and friendship than the relationship between you and your pet? Pet ownership has a positive effect on us. Growing up with a pet benefits you in many ways, including improving self-esteem and self-confidence, helping in developing trusting relationships with other people and helping develop nonverbal communication skills, as well as compassion and empathy, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology. To help you get the most out of your relationship with your pets and to help you grow into fulfilled pet-owning adults, it’s important to learn how to be responsible pet owners.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Trustworthiness</b> | Be creditable and reliable: Your pet depends on you for its food and shelter. Make sure you take care of your pet. |
| <b>Respect</b>         | Choose a pet that is appropriate for you and all your family members. Learn how to safely greet a pet.             |
| <b>Responsibility</b>  | Keep track of your pet’s health appointment dates on a calendar.   |
| <b>Fairness</b>        | Share in the care of your pet, including feeding, exercising and cleaning up after your pet.                       |
| <b>Caring</b>          | Spend time each day with your pet, and treat it with love.   |
| <b>Citizenship</b>     | Use your project to serve others by doing some of the pet service activities below.                                |

## Pet Service Activities

- Donate recycled items, such as towels and blankets, to a local animal shelter.
- Walk dogs at a local animal shelter.
- Coordinate a fundraiser such as a bake sale for a local animal shelter.
- Assist a local shelter in pet-adoption drives.
- Create fliers to advertise local shelters.
- Bake homemade dog/cat treats for animal shelters.
- Become an advocate for spaying/neutering pets.
- Organize a pet show for a local nursing home.
- Organize a community dog wash.
- Collect donations for local animal shelters.
- Volunteer to care for a neighbor’s pet.
- Learn about pet therapy and use your knowledge at a local nursing home.

## Career Possibilities

|                         |                       |                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Veterinarian            | Pet trainer           | Chemist developing pet food  |
| Veterinarian technician | Pet massage therapist | Manufacturer of pet supplies |
| Pet Groomer             | Pet boarding          | Retail sales at pet stores   |
| Pet sitter              | Pet nutritionist      | Vet school professor         |



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