



National 4-H Curriculum
BU-06362



Pet Helper's Guide



Name _____
County _____



Note to the Project Helper

Welcome to the 4-H Pet series. This set of four activity guides has been developed to provide you and the youth you support with ideas and activities to expand the pet project. As a helper, you are a key person in making the youths' experiences both fun and educational. How you choose to be involved will often determine the success the youth have developing important life skills while learning about pets. The youths' interest in pets is the vehicle leading to life skill development.

Pet Project Outcomes

Through participation in this curriculum youth will:

- Practice the life skills of:
 - decision making
 - communicating with others
 - leading self and others
 - planning and organizing
 - learning to learn
- Identify and select appropriate pets
- Demonstrate good pet management and health practices
- Develop pet showmanship skills
- Explore careers in the pet industry

Your Role

- Become familiar with the materials in this series
- Support the youth in his/her efforts to set goals and complete each of the three Pet Achievement Programs
- Serve as a resource person to help connect youth with the community, resource materials and others knowledgeable about pets
- Provide a safe, supportive environment
- Guide, encourage and reward progress
- Evaluate to what extent the youth outcomes are achieved (see page 35)

The 4-H Pet Series

Pet 1 – <i>Pet Pals</i>	4-H BU-06359
Pet 2 – <i>Scurrying Ahead</i>	4-H BU-06360
Pet 3 – <i>Scaling the Heights</i>	4-H BU-06361
<i>Pet Helper's Guide</i>	4-H BU-06362

Youth Activity Guides

Each of the three youth activity guides is designed to be developmentally appropriate for grades 2–4, 5–7, 8–12 respectively, but may be used by youth in any grade based on their project skills and expertise.

The three Pet Achievement Programs for youth to complete with your support are an important part of each guide. By striving to complete the programs, youth will be encouraged to learn more about pets and the pet industry while practicing and developing important life skills.

Pet Helper's Guide

The fourth piece in the series is written to assist you in your helper role with individual youth but also to work effectively with groups of youth interested in the pet project. The learn-by-doing activities, as well as most activities in the youth guides, can also be adapted to the family, the classroom or other groups. In this guide, you'll also find helpful hints about characteristics of youth, life skill development, teaching experientially, project meeting ideas as well as answers to many of the activities in the youth guides.

The activities in this guide will help you help youth:

- Plan the pet project year
- Discover pet resources
- Investigate pet therapy
- Conduct a pet quiz bowl
- Share pet stories
- Plan a pet fun day
- Show pets
- Participate in a pet skillathon
- Explore animal control operations
- Give presentations
- Play Pet Pyramid
- Experience Pet Bingo
- Deal with loss
- Keep records



Acknowledgements

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**Have fun and
thank you for
volunteering to
work with youth!**



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For more on pets ... look for these other guides in this set.



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Level 2 Scurrying Ahead

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Bones, Bones, Bones



Level 3 Scaling the Heights

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The Perfect Pet
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Chapter 4: Pet Science
Taking Taxonomy
Fun with Cockatiels
Getting to Know Hamsters



Youth Learning Characteristics

The 9–11 year olds

Active is the word for this group! Activities should encourage physical involvement because 9–11 year-old boys and girls are anything but still and quiet.

Hands-on involvement with objects is helpful. Children this age are still fairly concrete thinkers and will give adults more attention if they are both seeing and doing things. They also need many opportunities to share their thoughts and reactions to others.

Children at this stage are beginning to think logically and symbolically and are beginning to understand abstract ideas. As they consider an idea, they think it is right or wrong, great or disgusting, fun or boring. There is very little middle ground.

The role of the helper is crucial at this stage. These children look to adults for approval and follow rules primarily out of respect for adults. Individual evaluation by adults is preferred over group competition, where only one can be the best. Comparison with the success of others is difficult for these children. It erodes self-confidence. Instead of comparing children with each other, build positive self-concepts by comparing present to past performances for the individual.

This is also the age of the “**joiners**.” Boys and girls like to be in organized groups of others similar to themselves. They generally are concerned with immediate self reward. The satisfaction of completing a project often comes from pleasing the volunteer or parent rather than from the value of the activity itself. Often participation in community service projects are enjoyed because youth can see they are making a difference in another’s life.

These youngsters have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile. School and other pressures are demanding. Individual improvement should continue to be emphasized. Youngsters want to know how much they have improved and what they should do to be better next time. Individual evaluation and encouragement from an adult can have amazing results.

The 12–14 year olds

This developmental stage varies widely among young teens. **Growth spurts** beginning with adolescence occur at a wide range of ages, with girls usually maturing before boys. These rapid changes in physical appearance may make some teen uncomfortable. Faster-developing teens may feel thrust into a more adult world they didn’t choose. Slower-developing teens may be uneasy about their lack of changes.

Young teens move from concrete to more **abstract thinking**. Playing with ideas is as much fun as playing sports. Ready-made solutions from adults are often rejected by young teens in favor of **finding their own solutions**. Volunteers who provide supervision, support and minimal direction will do well with this group.

Small groups provide the best opportunity for young teens to **test ideas**. Justice and equality become important issues. Opinions of peers become more important than opinions of parents and other adults. Teens enjoy the social interaction and acceptance they receive in **groups**.

As puberty approaches, young teens begin a roller coaster ride of hormones and emotions. This time period seems to present the biggest challenge to a young person’s self-concept. These youngsters face so many changes that they hardly know who they are. Young teens begin to test values and seek adults who are accepting and willing to talk about values and morals. Adults can help by providing self-discovery activities leading teens to self-knowledge.

Continue to avoid comparing young people with each other and try not to embarrass them. They want to be part of something important and have opportunities to **develop responsibility** and **demonstrate leadership skills**.

The 15–18 year olds

Most teens of this age recognize their own special abilities and talents. In most cases, they have adjusted to the many post-puberty changes. By now teens tend to be wrapped up in themselves and their peer group rather than family, teachers and other adults. Relationship skills are usually more developed and dating increases. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is of higher importance.

Mid-teens begin to think about their future and realistic plans. Their **vocational goals** influence the activities that they select. Teen set goals based on their personal needs and priorities. Any goals set by others are generally rejected. As they master abstract thinking, they can imagine new things in ways that sometimes challenge adults.

These teens can generally initiate and carry out their own tasks **without supervision**. They can help younger members plan and complete their projects. They should be encouraged to take on this leadership role. An adult volunteer can be helpful by arranging new experiences in areas of interest to teens, but must be sure to allow for plenty of input from the youth. The volunteer should play the role of advisor/coach for independent workers.



Developing Life Skills

Life skills are defined in the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996) as "Skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life." As a volunteer working with youth in this project you have many opportunities to assist youth in developing life skills as they acquire project related skills and knowledge.

TLS Model

The TLS Model identifies and divides the major life skills targeted by 4-H youth development by the four H's from the 4-H Clover that represent Head, Heart, Hands and Health. These four are further divided in categories of life skills and then into specific general life skills as shown here. The TLS Model handbook further divides each general life skill into separate learning opportunities to develop the skill.

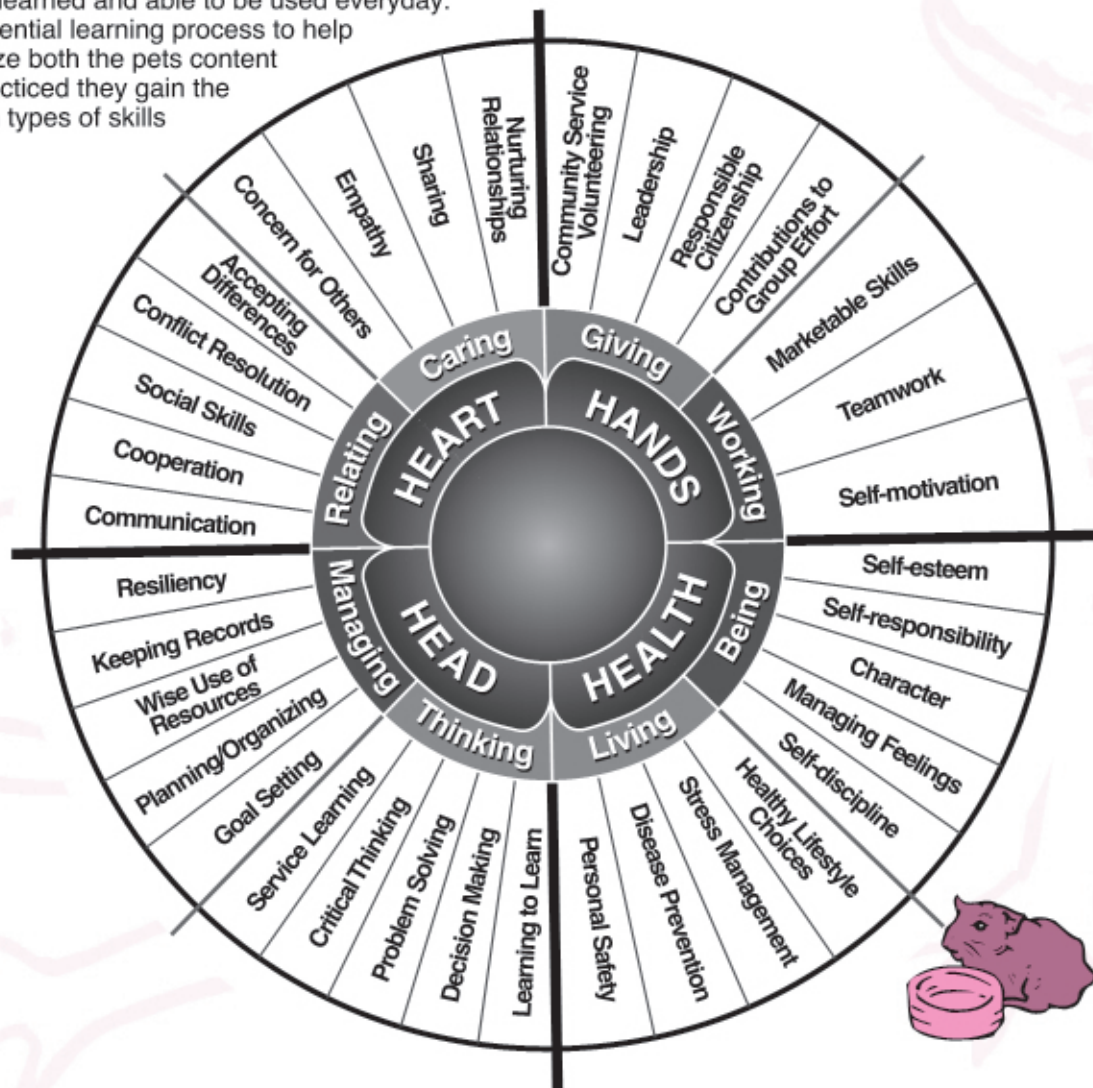
Experiential Model

As you capitalize on the youth's interest in this project, fun and friends your challenge is to provide age-appropriate opportunities for youth to experience and practice these skills until they are learned and able to be used everyday. By using the experiential learning process to help youth fully internalize both the pet content and the life skill practiced they gain the ability to apply both types of skills appropriately.

Show of Success Indicator

Each activity in this series shows both the project skill and life skills youth will practice and develop. A well-designed activity will involve the youth in the practice of several life skills. In one activity youth may practice decision making, communicating and goal setting. Only one is targeted for each activity so you can specifically discuss it with the youth when the activity is completed. "Show of Success" states what the youth would do to achieve the learner outcome for the activity. This indicator usually includes both the life skill and project skill. This is the goal for youth to achieve and for you to support their efforts to achieve.

Helping youth develop and understand important life skills while learning about their project is a challenge. However, the youth will appreciate your extra effort now and in the future when they look back on these experiences.



Teaching and Learning Experientially

The 4-H Youth Development Program has promoted the five steps of the experiential learning model as an essential part of all educational experiences. You'll notice that each of the activities in this series, as well as those in all other curriculum products that have qualified for the National 4-H Collection, use this model.

There are several reasons the five specific and sequential steps of the model work well when the objective is to combine the development of project subject matter and personal life skills in a single activity or series of related activities. The experiential learning process engages the learners in the activity, encourages them to think more, work harder and ultimately learn more thoroughly than with traditional teaching methods such as telling or showing.

"Experiential learning takes place when a person is involved in an activity, looks back and evaluates it, determines what was useful or important to remember and uses this information to perform another activity."

John Dewey



5. Apply

What was really learned and can the youth express how they can use what they learned? Or better yet, can they actually show that they have mastered a skill by performing another activity that requires the new skill to be used? Again the emphasis is placed on the life skill practiced rather than the subject matter skill.

4. Generalize

In this step the discussion becomes more personal. So what? is the question. What did the experience mean to me personally? To my everyday life? The subject matter alone could remain the focus of the discussion in all five steps of the model. However, because the major outcome is to help youth develop important life skills, a major part of the discussion is shifted to the life skill the youth practiced while doing the activity or experience. If the method employed required the youth to work in teams to complete the activity then questions about teamwork would be appropriate. If the methodology asks the youth to communicate then communications skills are discussed.

1. Experience

Note the model begins with an experience. Action! This immediately focuses the attention on the learner rather than the teacher. When the learner is encouraged to learn by doing before being told or shown how, opportunities are presented for a wide variety of life skills to be practiced depending on the method used to engage the youth in the experience. As the group leader your challenge is to "sit on your hands" as much as possible during the experience step. You and the youth involved will quickly learn what the skill or knowledge level is. Many times you will hear "We figured this out all by ourselves!"

2. Share

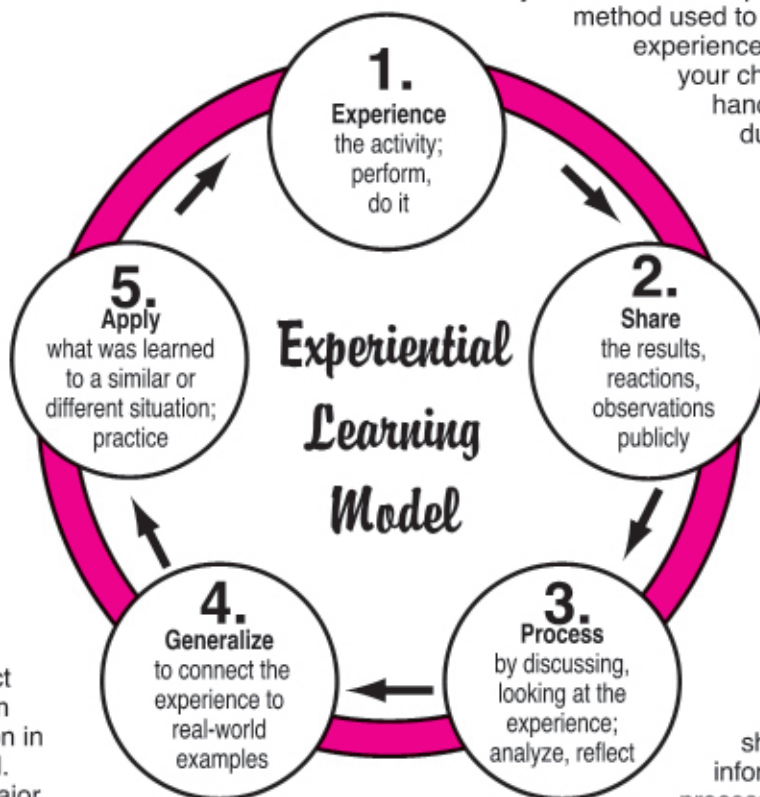
Share the results, reactions, observations publicly

2. Share

As the model shows, sharing is simply asking the group or individuals: What did you do? What happened? What did it feel like to do (whatever)? This step should generate lots of information to lead to the process step.

3. Process

The questions and discussion now become more focused on what was most important about the experience. Common themes that emerge from the sharing session are explored further. Often the key teaching points related to the subject matter are discussed.



Pet Resources

Knowing where to find information when it's needed is a valuable life skill. In the information-age today, information is readily available from many places. Additional sources are being added almost daily through the various telecommunication networks. In this activity your group will work together to discover where information about pets can be found. Internet search engines can list websites which may not be the topic that was asked for. Adult assistance is recommended when Internet use is suggested.

Life Skill:	Learning to learn
Pet Project Skill:	Discovering pet-related resources
What Youth Will Do:	Explore at least 10 sources of information about pets.
Time Involved:	One hour
Suggested Group Size:	5 to 20
Materials Needed:	Pet-related resources

Getting Started

This activity will involve the youth more if they are asked to find and bring a source of information about pets to the group meeting. You will also want to gather several resources prior to the meeting. A listing is included in this activity.

1. Experience (Doing)

At the meeting brainstorm together all the resources that could be used to answer questions the group may have about pets. Sometimes providing a specific question to find the answer is helpful. List their ideas. Then have each youth share what might be learned from each resource. If resources are brought to the meeting have the youth share what types of information are available from their resources first. See if the group can name and discuss at least 20 different sources of information. Encourage creativity. If time allows ask teams of two to categorize the resources as people resources, written resources, businesses, organizations, electronic, audio or visual.

Using the computer helps me learn faster.



Talk it Over

2. Share (What happened?)

- Q. What resources did you discover?
- Q. Which ones were new to you?
- Q. Which ones were most useful?

3. Process (What's important?)

- Q. Why is being able to find answers easily important?

4. Generalize (So what?)

- Q. If you wanted to know more about a possible career where would you go or what could you do to find information?

5. Apply (Now what?)

- Q. What do you need to do to be able to access information from all over the world on a computer?



Challenges

1. Rent a video on pets and show it to the group.
2. Have a group member demonstrate how to use a CD Rom disc with information about pets.

A Year of Pet Fun


Pet project meetings offer exciting settings for youth to develop project and life skills. When they participate in planning, youth are developing an important life skill as well as becoming more personally involved. You will find that these programs more closely meet the needs of your youth when everyone helps identify what to do, when to do it, how to do it and who should do it.

This activity has been designed to help your pet group plan its year's program of five or more project activities. You will find ideas for involving your group in the planning process. A list of meeting topics is found on page 34 of this guide.

Getting Started

Before the meeting, you may want to talk to the parents to see what they feel their children need and how you can help. At the meeting, ask the youth and their parents to discuss what they would like to learn and do. Suggest looking through the pet activity guide and the list of meeting ideas.

Your role is to create situations in which the youth can develop both project and life skills. Helping a group plan a year's program or just one meeting takes a lot of patience and the ability to "sit on one's hands" while the members work together. Here is a technique for generating ideas and arriving at decisions.



Life Skill:	Planning and organizing
Pet Project Skill:	Planning the program year
What Youth Will Do:	Plan a one-year program of group activities.
Time Involved:	One hour
Suggested Group Size:	No limit
Materials Needed:	Pencil, paper, flip chart or blackboard, poster paper (optional), project achievement programs, literature, resource materials

Let's plan five group meetings.



1. Experience (Doing)

Have everyone review the topics in the pet activity guides plus those mentioned in other resource materials. Then have each person write at least two meeting ideas from the activity guides. Remind them to look at the More Challenges section in each activity for additional ideas. Sometimes youth can generate more ideas by working together in groups of two or three, with one person writing down the ideas. Allow five to ten minutes.

Have each person share his/her ideas in round-robin fashion. One person shares an idea, then the next

person and so on until all ideas have been recorded on a blackboard or a large sheet of paper. List the ideas quickly without discussion. After all ideas are listed provide time for the person who suggested the idea to clarify or explain it. Others can add support or ask questions. After a short discussion, move to the next idea.

From all the ideas generated and discussed (and possibly combined), have each individual rate the items in the order of preference on a separate sheet of paper. You may want to have participants indicate their top five or ten choices. If ten choices are indicated, the top choice would receive ten points and the last choice one point.

Read each idea and have all members give their ranking. Add up the numbers. Allow time to discuss the choices as they relate to the group's overall goals. From the decisions made, make up the list of topics for the year's program.

Deciding Who Does What

Now that the group has decided what they want to learn, you will want to be sure everyone shares in the responsibility of seeing that it happens. Allow as many members (and families) as possible to have a specific part of the year's program. Recreation, demonstrations, refreshments and hosting the main program are all possibilities. If the group is large, the team approach is encouraged.



My Pet Project Group Calendar

(Example)

Name of Group _____

Name of Leader(s) _____

PROJECT GROUP GOALS FOR THE YEAR

1. Everyone completes at least one-half of his/her achievement program.

2. We practice the life skill of decision making.
3. Each family is involved in activities.

Meeting Date Time and Place	Meeting Topic and Activities	Who Is Responsible	What to Do Before the Next Meeting
November 6 7 p.m. Ashford's Family Home	Identifying Pet Parts Recreation, Presentation, Refreshments	Junior Leaders, Mark and Jim, Henning Family	Review caring and maintenance of pets

Talk it Over

2. Share (What happened?)

- Q. What have you included on your plan?
- Q. What have you learned about planning?
- Q. How do you feel about this planning session?

3. Process (What's important?)

- Q. Why are decisions made through consensus often more accepted than those made by voting?
- Q. Why is it important for youth, parents and leaders to work together on planning activities?
- Q. What life skills do you practice when planning together?

4. Generalize (So what?)

- Q. How will this experience help you plan family experiences?
- Q. How will it help you plan in other areas of your life?

5. Apply (Now what?)

- Q. How might the way you plan your week or year change as a result of this experience?

Our pet
project group
meets once a
month.



Challenges

1. Ask the group to use the same process (Nominal Group Technique) to plan something else.