

Instructor Introduction

The Perfect Home (Grades 3-5)

Students will review the basic needs of all animals and the concept of responsible pet guardianship and commitment. Students will learn about the different time and care commitments of pets by species and understand that different pets are appropriate for different families.

Excerpts from the MSPCA's Statements of Belief:

"The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals believes that responsible pet owners protect the welfare of animals kept as pets, while at the same time ensuring that their pets do not impact negatively on other animals, the public, or the environment."

The MSPCA defines a responsible pet owner as one who:

1. Provides for the physical, behavioral, and psychological needs of a pet for its lifetime. These needs include, but are not limited to: preventative and curative medical care, adequate and sanitary housing, a nutritionally balanced diet, appropriate grooming, sufficient training to ensure the pet's safety and a comfortable lifestyle, companionship and attention, and adequate exercise;
2. Obeys the laws relating to animal care and control;
3. Is mindful of and does not contribute to the pet overpopulation problem; and
4. Will provide a humane and appropriate alternative for a pet if for any reason he or she can no longer keep the animal.

The following bullets list the important elements behind this lesson plan. For more information on any pet care questions, please contact an MSPCA Education Coordinator.

- companion animals have many physical and psychological needs:
 - quality food and fresh water
 - appropriate shelter
 - exercise and play
 - training and socialization
 - love and attention
 - regular grooming
 - veterinary care
- when acquiring a pet, a commitment should be made for the life of the animal; animal life expectancies vary greatly by species
- when parents acquire pets for children, the initial excitement will most likely wear off, and it is the responsibility of the parent to assume care of the animal if this happens
- pet guardianship is a major commitment in which lifestyle, time availability, housing, family members, children's ages, allergies, and finances should all be considered