**4-H Pets and Small Animals**

“Lions, Tigers, and Bears, oh my!” do not make good pets, but many other animals do. The 4-H Pets and Small Animals projects helps youth explore the wide variety of pets available. Youth will also learn about the types of pets that fit best into their family.

- Identify breeds and animal species and their characteristics.
- Learn about the selection, care, needs of pets, and basic principles of pet behavior.
- Demonstrate care and management in feeding, handling, grooming, and fitting/showing.
- Explore health regulations, first aid, and simple treatments for ailments.
- Learn and practice animal ownership responsibilities.

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### Starting Out: Beginner

- Gather information and determine the best pet for the member’s family.
- Learn about proper care, grooming, and feeding.
- Create a plan to prevent your pet from getting lost or finding it if it gets lost.
- Purchase and use the appropriate grooming equipment and techniques.
- Shop comparatively for setting up a vivarium (habitat) appropriate for your pet.

### Learning More: Intermediate

- Plan a training and exercise program for your pet.
- Prepare for participation in a cat or pet show.
- Compare labels on pet food to make an informed decision on content and price.
- Keep a diary of your pet’s health and eating habits.
- Take a Pet First Aid Class.
- Practice appropriate training for a pet.

### Exploring Depth: Advanced

- Develop a business plan for a pet care or sitting business.
- Assess careers related to pets and pet business.
- Research diseases in pet mammals, birds, and fish.
- Identify symptoms and a course of action for a disease in your pet.
- Do a presentation on how pets affect the environment.
- Appreciate the contribution of scientific research to the welfare of pets and their use in research.

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The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.

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**4-H THRIVE**

Help Youth:

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<th>Light Their Spark</th>
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**Light Their Spark**

A spark is something youth are passionate about; it really fires them up and gives them joy and energy. Help youth find how this project excites them.

**Flex Their Brain**

The brain grows stronger when we try new things and master new skills. Encourage youth effort and persistence to help them reach higher levels of success.

**Reach Their Goals**

Help youth use the GPS system to achieve their goals.

- **Goal Selection**: Choose one meaningful, realistic and demanding goal.
- **Pursue Strategies**: Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.
- **Shift Gears**: Change strategies if you’re having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

**Reflect**

Ask project members how they can use their passion for this project to be more confident, competent and caring. Discuss ways they can use their skills to make a contribution in the community, improve their character or establish connections.
Expand Your Experiences!

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

- Research the nutritional needs of your animal(s) and compare to nutritional needs of humans and other animals.
- Create a poster on the anatomy of your animal and/or the difference between hot and cold blooded animals.

Healthy Living

- Discuss the necessity of washing your hands before and after handling your pet.
- Discuss your pet’s life expectancy and what to look for when they get older.
- Create a display or skit on safety rules concerning pets.

Citizenship

- Use your animal as therapy for sick and disadvantaged individuals.
- Show/raise your animal(s) as a cultural exchange with other nations.
- Volunteer at an ASPCA Adoption Day at local pet stores.

Leadership

- Become a role model for others by taking the position of Junior or Teen Leader.
- Help younger members learn about taking care of animals.
- Create a movement in your community for the adoption of rescue animals.

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