Unit 04: Pets

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **4-6 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit, focused on pets, is designed to guide exploration through several key investigations and culminate in a celebration of learning. The curriculum is structured to help participants:

- Explore the Topic: Begin by taking a walk around the school or neighborhood to look for signs of pets in the community (e.g., people walking dogs, pet-related signage, animal tracks, or birds in trees). Discuss where pets live and how people care for them.
- Investigation #1: Make observational drawings of pets seen during walks or from photos and books. Create texture rubbings of pet-related items (e.g., leashes, collars, cages, food bowls) or animal textures (fur, feathers, scales) using safe classroom materials.
- Investigation #2: Invite a classroom visitor who has a pet to share how they care for it (e.g., feeding, grooming, exercise). Students can ask questions and compare pet care routines.
- Investigation #3: Invite a veterinarian or a pet groomer to talk about how they help take care of pets. If possible, conduct a virtual or in-person visit to a vet office or grooming space.
- Investigation #4: Invite a classroom visitor who works with animals in a community setting (e.g., animal shelter worker, service animal trainer, pet store employee) to discuss how they help keep pets healthy and safe.
- Celebrate Learning: Conclude the study by sharing acquired knowledge and experiences. Invite peers and family members to visit for the celebration.

The unit incorporates a variety of learning experiences, including outdoor exploration, family partnerships, and diverse activities focusing on movement, discussion, and literacy

Essential Questions

- What do we know about pets? What do we want to find out?
- Do you have a pet?
- Which animal is a pet? (Display pictures of a domesticated animal and a wild animal.)
- How many pets do you think we'll see on our walk today?

- Have you ever seen a pet like this? (Display two photos of pets that you have not yet discussed, such as a parrot and a hermit crab.)
- Did you see any pets on your way to school today?
- Do all pets have tails?
- How many kinds of animals do you think we'll see on our visit to the shelter?
- Which pet did you like the best? (Display a few pictures of pets seen at yesterday's visit.)
- Which animal do you think this is? (Display a close up photo of an animal's interesting characteristics.)
- Which of these animals makes a safe pet? (Display photos of wild and domesticated animals.)
- Where do pets live?
- Would you rather sleep here or here?
- What kind of pet sleeps in this nest?
- What is the best type of home for this pet?
- How many fish can comfortably live in this aquarium?
- Which pet eats this?
- Do all pets have teeth?
- How many times a day does our classroom pet eat?
- What do you want to look for on our visit to the pet-supply store?
- Do these teeth belong to a carnivore or an herbivore?
- Do animals talk?
- Which of these pets should be brushed?
- Which of these do we use to keep our classroom clean?
- What kind of pet is this?
- Do all pets have names?
- Why do we have pets?
- Can pets have jobs?
- Do you love a pet?

- What would you like to tell your family about our study of pets?
- Which would you like to have as a pet?

Enduring Understandings

Through this unit, students will develop understandings about:

- The basic characteristics that define different kinds of pets, including their body parts (fur, tails, beaks, fins) and how different animals look, move, and behave.
- How pets move, such as walking, hopping, flying, swimming, and crawling—and how different pets have different needs for space, exercise, and play.
- How people stay safe around pets, including gentle handling, hand washing, asking permission before petting, and understanding animal signals like growling or hiding.
- What different pets "eat" or need to stay healthy, such as kibble, seeds, fish flakes, or fresh vegetables—and how food, water, and love help them grow and thrive.
- The idea of pet routines and daily care, including feeding schedules, grooming, cleaning habitats, and walking pets—and how people help pets feel safe and loved at home or school.
- That different pets are suited for different environments and roles, such as dogs who need space to run, cats who like cozy beds, or fish that live in tanks with clean water.
- The environments pets live in, such as cages, tanks, beds, crates, or outdoor shelters—and how people create these spaces to support their pets' comfort and health.
- The process of adopting and caring for a pet, including choosing the right pet, preparing a home, feeding, cleaning, and visiting the vet (all introduced through age-appropriate, play-based activities).
- That various professions involve working with animals, such as veterinarians, groomers, shelter workers, pet store employees, trainers, and animal rescue workers.
- The helpful roles pets play in people's lives, including being companions, providing emotional support, helping people with disabilities (like guide dogs), and bringing joy to families.
- The importance of treating pets kindly and respectfully, including practicing gentle hands, following routines, using calm voices, and learning about pet needs and feelings.

Students Will Know

Students will gain knowledge of:

• Vocabulary:"pet," "animal," "fur," "feathers," "scales," "whiskers," "claws," "paws," "leash," "collar,"

“cage,” “tank,” “kennel,” “vet,” “grooming,” “feeding,” “water bowl,” “treat,” “toys,” “bed,” “habitat,” “care,” “responsibility,” “behavior,” “training,” “shelter,” “adopt,” “owner,” “healthy,” “friendly,” “noisy,” and “quiet”

• Pet Features: The body parts, coverings, and behaviors of common pets (e.g., tails for balance, fur for warmth, whiskers for sensing)

• How People Care for Pets: Learning about the basic needs of pets (food, water, shelter, exercise, love) and daily routines (feeding, walking, cleaning)

• Pet Safety: Understanding how to safely interact with animals (e.g., asking before petting, gentle handling, safe distance from unfamiliar pets)

• Pet Communication and Behavior: Recognizing common animal signals and behaviors (barking, purring, wagging, hiding) and what they might mean

• Pet Homes and Habitats: Learning about where different pets live—cages, tanks, beds, kennels—and how those spaces are kept clean and cozy

• Animal Helpers: Meeting and learning about people who work with animals (veterinarians, groomers, animal shelter workers, pet trainers)

• Types of Pets: Exploring the differences between various pets (dogs, cats, fish, birds, reptiles, small mammals) and what makes them unique

• Pet Journals and Observation: Keeping simple records or drawings about pet care routines, behavior changes, and observations of class or visiting pets

• Community Connections: Understanding how pets are part of our homes and communities—how they are adopted, visited at the vet, brought to parks, or cared for at shelters

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Observing and Identifying: Identifying different types of pets (e.g., dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles); observing pet behaviors, sounds, and movements; noticing pet needs such as food, water, and shelter.
- Exploring Safely: Using classroom or outdoor materials (stuffed animals, toy pet supplies, leashes, kennels) to safely explore pet care through dramatic play and sensory activities.
- Drawing and Documentation: Making observational drawings of pets, pet habitats, and pet care routines; taking photos or videos during pet-related walks or visits; documenting observations in journals or on pet care charts.
- Discussion and Shared Writing: Engaging in discussions about how to care for pets, what pets need to stay healthy, and pet experiences; participating in shared writing about real or imagined pets and visits to the vet or pet store.
- Comparing and Contrasting: Comparing pet sizes, sounds, coverings (fur, feathers, scales), diets, or

habitats; sorting pets by wild vs. domesticated or high vs. low maintenance.

- Caring for the Environment: Understanding how to create clean, safe environments for pets; participating in activities like “pretend grooming station,” “pet clean-up crew,” or building homes for animals from recycled materials.
- Reading and Research: Reading nonfiction books about different pets and how to care for them; using age-appropriate resources to learn about animal behavior, needs, and responsibilities.
- Physical Movement: Moving like different pets (e.g., slithering like a snake, hopping like a bunny, stretching like a cat); participating in movement games based on pet actions or obstacle courses for pretend pets.
- Pattern Recognition: Identifying and completing patterns using pet toys, food types, or animal prints (e.g., bone-ball-bone-ball, paw-paw-tail).
- Measurement and Quantity: Measuring pet beds, fish tanks, or leashes; counting legs, treats, or grooming tools; using rulers or blocks to compare pet sizes or cage dimensions.
- Sorting and Categorizing: Sorting pets by type (mammals, birds, reptiles), color, size, diet, or habitat needs (water, land, air).
- Asking Questions: Generating questions to ask visiting pet owners, veterinarians, or shelter workers; exploring "What if..." pet care scenarios in group discussions.
- Creative Expression: Creating pet-themed books, murals, or building models of pet habitats, pet stores, or vet clinics using recycled or craft materials.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- Observational Drawings: Students create drawings based on classroom or neighborhood observations of pets and animals (e.g., pets seen on walks, classroom visits, or through books and videos).
- Discussion and Shared Writing: Contributions to daily large group discussions and shared writing activities reflect understanding of pet care, types of pets, and how people interact with and care for animals.
- Class Pet Book/Science Journals: Children's entries in their science journals and the collaborative class "All About Pets" book serve as ongoing records of learning and observation about different pets and their needs.
- Question of the Day Responses: Daily responses to the "Question of the Day" prompts (e.g., "What do pets need to be healthy?" or "What kind of pet would you like to have?") provide insight into comprehension and engagement.
- Pet Care Practice: Demonstrating knowledge and care during dramatic play or real-life pet care routines (e.g., feeding a classroom fish, brushing a toy dog, or acting out visits to a vet clinic).
- Hands-On Pet Projects: Participation in projects such as creating pet habitats using blocks or recycled

materials, making collars or name tags, or designing a pretend pet store.

- Observation Walks: Engaging in neighborhood or schoolyard walks to observe and photograph pets, pet-related items (e.g., leashes, food bowls), or signs of animal care in the community.
- Exhibits/Displays: The final "Celebrating Learning" event showcases children's investigations, pet journals, drawings, habitat models, and collaborative class projects about pets.
- Small Group Activities: Performance within various small group tasks such as "Pet Match-Up Game," "Guess the Animal Sound," or "Build a Pet Bed."

Learning Plan

The learning plan is structured into daily activities within each major section (Exploring the Topic, Investigations 1-5, and Celebrating Learning).

• Exploring the Topic: 5 days

• Investigation 1: 5 days

• Investigation 2: 5 days

• Investigation 3: 5 days

• Investigation 4: 4 days

• Investigation 5: 4 days

• Celebrating Learning: 2 days

Each day typically includes:

Interest Areas: Designated learning centers (e.g., Toys and Games, Discovery, Library, Technology, Music and Movement, Art, Dramatic Play, Block, Cooking) with relevant materials and prompts

Outdoor Experiences: Hands-on activities like walking around the school or outdoor area to listen for music, thinking of ways to make music with outdoor materials, creating a musical wall, play a louder/softer game, creating homemade megaphones and using them outside, "Body Part Balance," "Up and Away" "Balance on a Beam," "Follow the Leader," "Balance on a Beam," "Swing & Jump Rope" and "Follow the Leader."

Family Partnerships: Engaging families through letters, inviting them to contribute photos of family members experiencing music (playing an instrument, singing 'Happy Birthday'), inviting them to share their favorite music, inviting those that work with music to join the classroom (ex. musician), inviting families to join the

visiting musician, and visiting the classroom to share expertise.

Wow! Experiences: Special events like inviting a high school band member to join in on the investigations, looking at a piano to see the hammers strike the strings, hosting a classroom visitor that plays an instrument or creates music with their voice, taking a site visit to a location where music is created and the final celebration of learning.

Question of the Day: A specific question to focus daily inquiry and discussion

Large Group:

Games: Engaging games like "Hippity, Hoppity, How Many?," "Feely Box!" "I'm Thinking Of," etc.

Songs/Poems/Rhymes/Chants: Singing songs such as "Old McDonald," "Musical Junk," "Move to the Beat," "Clap the Missing Word," "Ticky Ricky," "A-Hunting We Will Go," "This Old Man," "Clap a Friend's Name," "The People in Your Neighborhood," "Humpty Dumpty," "Hello Friends," etc. or reciting poems like "Here is the Beehive" and "Riddle Dee Dee"

Movement: Structured movement activities like "Bounce, Bounce, Bounce," "The Kids Go Marching In," "My Body Jumps," "High in the Tree," "The Wave," "Shape Hunt," "A-Hunting We Will Go," "Paper Towel Rap," etc.

Discussion and Shared Writing: Focused discussions and collaborative writing on topics like "Responding to Music," "Describing Music," "Describing Sounds," "What Do We Know About Music Making?" "What Do We Want to Find Out About Music Making?" "Making Music," "Making Instruments," "Instrument Sounds," "Musical Patterns," "Exploring Sheet Music, "Making Sounds with a Stringed Instrument," "Visiting Musician," "Music-Making Traditions," and preparing for/sharing learning at the celebration

Read-Aloud: Nonfiction and fiction books featuring music, instruments, sounds, feelings or related topics are read daily, often with "Book Discussion Cards"

Small Group Options: Two differentiated small group options are provided daily, often linked to "Intentional Teaching Cards" (e.g., "Stepping Stones," "Where's the Bean Bag?" "Can You Find It?" "Character's Feelings," "Shared Writing," "Patterns," "Jumping Beans," "Action Patterns, "Musical Water," "Writing Poems," "Graphing," "Tallying," "Rhyming Chart," etc.) covering literacy, math, and science skills

Materials

- Objects: Pet-food containers, plastic or stuffed animals (domesticated), pet carriers, pet enclosures, cardboard shoe boxes, samples of dry pet food in airtight plastic containers, pet food dishes and water bottles, pet bedding, pet toys, grooming materials, pet beds, pet-care books, books about pet breeds

- Pictures or Videos: children with pets, pets in everyday activities

Standards

- Standard 0.1: Children demonstrate self-confidence.

0.1.1 Express individuality by making independent decisions.

0.1.2 Express ideas for activities and initiate discussions.

0.1.3 Actively engage in activities and interactions with teachers and peers.

- Standard 0.2: Children demonstrate self-direction.

0.2.1 Make independent choices and plans from a broad range of diverse interest centers.

0.2.2 Demonstrate self-help skills.

0.2.3 Move through classroom routines and activities with minimal teacher direction and transition easily from one activity to the next.

- Standard 0.3: Children identify and express feelings.

0.3.1 Recognize and describe a wide range of feelings, including sadness, anger, fear, and happiness.

- Standard 0.4: Children exhibit positive interactions with other children and adults.

0.4.1 Engage appropriately with peers and teachers in classroom activities.

0.4.2 Demonstrate socially acceptable behavior for teachers and peers.

0.4.6 Demonstrate verbal or nonverbal problem-solving skills without being aggressive.

II. Language Arts Literacy

- Standard 1.1: Children participate in conversations and discussions.

1.1.1 Engage in conversations about familiar topics.

1.1.2 Ask and answer questions related to the topic.

- Standard 1.2: Children comprehend and use new vocabulary.

1.2.1 Use new vocabulary related to the topic.

1.2.2 Understand and follow multi-step directions.

- Standard 1.3: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of dramatic play and storytelling.

1.3.1 Play roles observed through life experiences.

1.3.3 Participate with others in dramatic play, negotiating roles and setting up scenarios using costumes and props.

- Standard 1.4: Children demonstrate emergent reading skills.

1.4.1 Show interest in books and print materials.

- Standard 1.5: Children demonstrate emergent writing skills.

1.5.1 Use drawing and writing to express ideas.

III. Mathematics

- Standard 3.1: Children use numbers and counting.

3.1.1 Count with understanding and recognize how many are in a set.

- Standard 3.2: Children identify and describe shapes.

3.2.1 Identify and describe two- and three-dimensional shapes.

3.2.2 Understand and use positional words.

- Standard 3.3: Children compare and measure.

3.3.1 Compare and order objects by length, size, weight.

3.3.2 Use non-standard units to measure.

- Standard 3.4: Children sort and classify objects.

3.4.1 Sort and classify objects based on one or more attributes.

- Standard 3.5: Children recognize and create patterns.

3.5.1 Recognize and extend simple patterns.

IV. Science

- Standard 4.1: Children explore and investigate the natural and physical world.

4.1.1 Observe and describe objects and events.

4.1.2 Ask questions about observations.

4.1.3 Conduct simple investigations to answer questions.

4.1.4 Make predictions and test them.

- Standard 4.2: Children understand properties of objects and materials.

4.2.1 Identify and describe properties of objects.

4.2.2 Explore how objects can be changed.

- Standard 4.3: Children understand basic concepts of force and motion.

4.3.1 Explore different ways objects move.

4.3.2 Understand that forces cause changes in motion.

- Standard 4.4: Children understand concepts related to structures and engineering.

4.4.1 Explore how structures are built and designed.

4.4.2 Use tools and materials to design and build.

V. Health, Safety, and Physical Education

- Standard 2.2: Children demonstrate large motor skills.

2.2.1 Demonstrate locomotor skills.

2.2.2 Demonstrate non-locomotor skills.

2.2.3 Demonstrate manipulative skills.

- Standard 2.3: Children demonstrate small motor skills.

2.3.1 Develop eye-hand coordination.

2.3.2 Demonstrate fine motor skills.

VI. Visual and Performing Arts

- Standard 5.1: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of dramatic play and storytelling.

5.1.3 Participate with others in dramatic play, negotiating roles and setting up scenarios using costumes and props.

- Standard 5.2: Children express themselves through and develop an appreciation of the visual arts.

5.2.1 Create two- and three-dimensional works of art while exploring color, line, shape, form, texture, and space.

VII. Social Studies, Family, and Life Skills

- Standard 6.1: Children understand themselves and their families.

6.1.1 Share information about themselves and their families.

- Standard 6.3: Children understand their community.

6.3.1 Explore and identify places and people in their community.

6.3.2 Understand the roles of community helpers.

- Standard 6.4: Children demonstrate problem-solving skills.

6.4.1 Identify a problem and generate possible solutions.

6.4.2 Use materials and resources to solve problems.

VIII. Technology

- Standard 8.1: Children use technology tools for learning and communication.

8.1.1 Explore and use various technological tools.

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR MODIFICATIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, ELL, AT RISK AND STUDENTS GIFTED STUDENTS.

Using a variety of hands-on activities, movement, small group options, visual activities, along with discussions to support diverse learners and learning styles. Students experience hands-on exploration of technology and materials that provide multiple entry points for learners.

This link includes content specific accommodations and modification for all populations:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fmQ5llgX1HZdIPa7duX33pfmonGDoVFag9eE2DpbLfM/edit?usp=sharing