



Animal Welfare Awareness Patch Program

The Animal Welfare Awareness patch program helps Daisies - Ambassadors understand the issues and needs surrounding animal behavior, animal care, and finances and how they all relate to animal welfare and your local animal shelter. Girls may earn this patch once per level by completing the different activities listed by level.



Step 1: Learn about interacting with animals

Step 2: Learn about animal needs

Step 3: Learn about the issues

Step 4: Learn more about the resources available in your area

Step 5: Make a difference in your community

STEP 1

Learn about interacting with animals

Daisies – Brownies (Select at least one)

- What animals make good companions? Learn about what a pet is and what kind of animals make good companions. What makes pets different from wild animals? Why is it important for wild animals to stay in their natural environment and not be taken in as someone's pet? (Brownies) Share what you learned with your family and friends.
- Safety around dogs is important. Learn how to stay safe when meeting someone who has a dog. Practice what you have learned using a stuffed animal or act out the parts with friends.
- Learn how to hold a puppy or a kitten. Why is it important to hold a puppy or a kitten properly? Practice with a stuffed animal and then share what you learned with a friend or family member.
- Learn how to behave around our four-legged-friends the right way. Find out how pets communicate using their body language. Be an actress and act out the scenarios at the end of the document.

Juniors and Up (Select at least one)

- How do dogs and cats communicate or talk to us? How do dogs and cats tell us when they are happy, sad, scared, playful, lonely, angry, or sick? Learn about how dogs, cats, and critters use body language to communicate. Then, observe your dog, cat, or critter (or visit a park to observe how dogs interact and communicate with one another and people), and try to determine what the animal is trying to say. Record your observations. (Cadettes and up—Make a flyer to share with others that depicts an animal's body language and what it means).
- Ask an expert to help you understand how to interact with a new animal (an animal you haven't met before). How does this differ from how you might interact with your pet?
- Learn how to safely and properly walk a dog on a leash. What are some of the leash laws in your area and why are these important to have in place?

How to Approach a Dog

Step 1: Ask the owner for permission to pet their dog. If the owner says it is ok, then follow the next steps. If not, be polite and leave the animal alone.

Step 2: if you have permission to pet the dog, stand still with your arms at your sides. Make sure you do not make eye contact with the dog. Allow the owner and the dog to approach you and let the dog smell you.

Step 3: Stand to the side of the dog, and pet the dog gently on his back or side, not its head. Be sure to pet the same direction as their fur, from their nose to their tail.



STEP 2

Learn about animal needs

Daisies - Brownies (Select at least one)

- Learn about what companion animals need. This can include: food, water, shelter, grooming, training, love, exercise, and veterinary care. How much does it cost to care for your pet? Select one of the following activities:
 - Play a game of Pet Bingo using the Bingo card at the end of the document.
 - Pretend to care for a pet using a stuffed animal. Make sure you think about where it needs to sleep and play, what it needs to eat, and what kind of care it needs to stay happy and healthy. Using pretend money, take your pet to the (pretend) vet and buy your pet food from your pretend grocery or furry friend supply store.
- Create a biography for an animal companion (where did they come from, what do they eat, what do they play with, how much did they cost, how long do they live, what kind of care do they need etc.).
- Help your parents take care of your pets for a week.
- Take a survey to find out what type of furry friend is right for you and your family.



Juniors and Up (Select at least one)

- How much does it really cost to own a pet? The cost of adopting a pet is only the beginning of the money you will spend on caring for the animal. Determine how much it actually costs to take care of a four-legged-friend. Expenses might include: adoption fee, leash, collar, ID tag, microchip, training classes, food and water bowls, flea control, brush, grooming, dewormer, toys, food, spay/neutering, yearly vaccinations, yearly check-up, boarding, dog bed, crate for training, and more. What are the one-time costs and what are the reoccurring costs? To find prices, visit a local pet supply store, call a veterinarian, or search online. (Cadettes and up should repeat this activity for two types of pets).
- Take a survey to find out what pet is right for you and your family. What factors impact the decision to get a pet and what kind of pet is right for you at that time, including the age and temperament of the pet? Research how shelters help match up pets with families. You can research online or go into your local shelter and interview a staff member about adoption.



- We often think of cats and dogs when we think of household companions. However, the options for pets extends beyond these furry four-legged-friends. Research at least four animals that one might have for a pet. Create a comparison chart showing lifespan, diet, cost to own, special needs, and necessary habitat/living space that you can share with others. Options may include: hamsters, bearded dragons, chinchillas, turtles, guinea pigs, or even birds.

STEP 3

Learn about the issues

Daisies – Brownies (Select at least one)

- Why is it important to have identification for your pet? Compare and contrast having a collar with an I.D. tag and a microchip. What one is most beneficial in reuniting a lost pet with his family?
- Learn what to do if your companion animal gets lost. Pretend your pet, or a made up pet, is lost. Follow the steps and make a pretend sign to post about your animal to help others reunite the lost pet with your family.
- Talk with your local shelter to learn about some of the reasons animals arrive at the shelter. How do shelters reconnect owners and lost pets?
- Learn about safe and unsafe conditions for our furry friends and what can be done to keep these animals safe while in our care. How hot can it get in a car? Why is it important to have an indoor space for animals in the winter?

Juniors and Up (Select at least one)

- Why is it important to have identification for your furry friend? Learn about the different types of identification: I.D. tags and microchips. Discuss the pros and cons of each type of identification. Which one is most beneficial in reuniting a lost pet with its family?
- Learn about safe and unsafe conditions for our furry friends and what can be done to keep these animals safe while in our care. How hot can it get in a car? Why is it important to have an indoor space for animals in the winter? Based on your research, what are some facts and recommendations pet guardians should know? Share this information with at least two other people.
- Learn about spaying and neutering and the benefits to shelters when their communities have access to spaying and neutering services. Does your local shelter have a spay/neuter program? How do you think this helps people, pets, and shelters? Educate at least one other person about what you learned and how they can help.
- Learn about adoption rates in different parts of the country. Why do shelters in some regions (like New England) adopt out more animals than other areas of the country? What can be done to help shelters that have lower adoption rates and more animals in their care? How do shelters collaborate to help more animals?



STEP 4

Learn more about the resources available in your area

Daisies – Brownies (Select at least one)

- Proper care for a companion animal can be costly. What are some resources available to help those struggling to care for their pet so that they don't have to surrender the animal to a shelter? The Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland and the Animal Welfare Society are great places to start your research.
- Learn about how animals are adopted at your local shelter, and pretend to adopt a pet at your own adoption center following the same steps your local shelter would take.
- Visit your local shelter to see how it works. What kinds of animals do they care for? How do they go about finding homes for these pets? What needs do they have?

Juniors and Up (Select at least one)

- Visit a shelter to see how it works. While you are there, interview a member of the shelter staff to learn what their job entails. What needs does the shelter have? Where do the pets come from? How does the shelter go about finding new homes for the pets? What challenges do they face?
- Proper care for a companion animal can be costly. What are some resources available to help those struggling to care for their pet so that they don't have to surrender the animal to a shelter? Explore these preventative resources and create a list of options to cover needs such as emergency veterinary care, routine veterinary care, food and daily needs, and medication.
- While we often think of animal shelters and resources for dogs, cats, and other common companion animals, there are instances where people adopt an exotic pet. Research what exotic pets are legal/illegal to have in Maine. What resources are there for people that either have an animal they shouldn't have or are unable to best care for their unique creature?
- Learn about the work of the Animal Welfare Advisory Council (AWAC). What are some of the key issues they address? How might their work help reduce the number of homeless animals?



STEP 5

Make a difference in your community

Daisies – Brownies (Select one)

- Hold a toy drive or invite others to help you make toys for your local shelter. Why do you think the shelter gives toys to the animals in their care? Why does the shelter need so many toys? What toys are the best for each kind of animal at the shelter? Find out more about what kinds of toys are needed at your local animal shelter. For examples: <https://arlgp.org/donation-drive-toolkit/>
- Make a poster or video summarizing what you have learned and some key points you want others to know about helping keep our furry friends safe and in a loving home.
- Do something special for Adopt A Cat Month (June), Adopt a Dog Month (October), or be Kind to Animals Week (May).
- Compile a list of local resources that can be shared with others to help keep companion animals with their families. Resources could include upcoming pet adoption or education events, resources for free/reduced cost animal care, and more. Create a fun way to share what you have discovered.

Juniors and Up (Select one)

- Hold an event to make enrichment toys for the shelter, invite others from the community or other Girl Scouts to join you in making them. Explain why these toys are important to the animals and how they are used. Be sure to check with your local shelter to see what their needs are before making any plans.
- Create a video that explains shelters and their needs to others in the community. Share your video with members of your community as well as on social media.
- Connect with your local food pantry and hold a pet food drive to help those struggling to feed their animals. If you do not have a food pantry or there is a better location for the food to be distributed through, make arrangements with that location. Be sure to explain the importance of the pet food drive and create a flyer you can hand out explaining some of what you have learned.
- Compile a list of local resources that can be shared with others to help keep companion animals with their families. Resources could include upcoming pet adoption or education events, resources for free/reduced cost animal care, and more. Create a fun way to share what you have discovered.
- Help a neighbor who has difficulty getting out to walk their dog care for their pet by making a plan with them to walk their dog regularly.

Scenarios

A Cat Runs and Hides

Scenario #1

Cat: Is walking around the house.

Child: Sees the cat and chases after her.

Cat: Hisses, runs into the corner and hides.

Child: Continues to approach the cat.

Cat: (pretend) Scratches the child.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? How do you think the cat felt? The best thing to do is to respect how they feel and leave them alone if that is what they are telling you with their bodies.



Scenario #2

Cat: Is walking around the house.

Child: Approaches the cat slowly, holding her hand out.

Cat: Sniffs hand, then rubs up against the child. The cat walks away.

Child: Says, "looks like she has had enough" and walks away.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? How do you think the cat felt? In this scenario, the child did the right thing. Just like us, sometimes animals like to be left alone. It shows kindness and compassion to respect what the animal is telling us.

A Dog is Playing With A Toy

Scenario #1

Dog: Is playing with a ball.

Child: Takes toy and runs away with it.

Dog: Chases child and jumps on them.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? Why do you think the dog reacted this way? Dogs love to play with toys, but not letting them have the toy is called teasing. What does teasing mean? Have you ever been teased? How does it feel?



Scenario #2

Dog: Is playing with a ball.

Child: Takes ball and throws it.

Dog: Chases ball and brings it back to child.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? When you play with a dog, make sure to stand in one spot and not run with the toy. Also, if a dog stops to chew on toy, the best thing to do is leave it alone. The dog may be tired and need a break from playing and you can come back later.



A Bunny is Sitting in His Cage

Scenario #1

Bunny: Is sitting calmly in in his cage.

Child: Walks over to the cage and pets bunny from tail to nose.

Bunny: Jumps up and stomps back feet.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? Just like people, bunnies can get scared. Bunnies cannot see directly in front of them, so make sure to approach from the side. If the bunny is suddenly pet, then he will stomp his back feet to tell you he is upset. And like all domesticated animals, bunnies like to be pet in the same direction as their fur, from nose to tail.

Scenario #2

Bunny: Is sitting calmly in his cage.

Child: Approaches bunny from the side and slowly pets bunny from nose to tail.

Was this the right or wrong thing for the child to do? Learning about the natural behaviors of our pets will allow us to stay safe around them and allow them to be more comfortable.

Pet Bingo



Mouse, Hampster, or Gerbil



Dog



Hermit Crab



Turtle



Parakeet



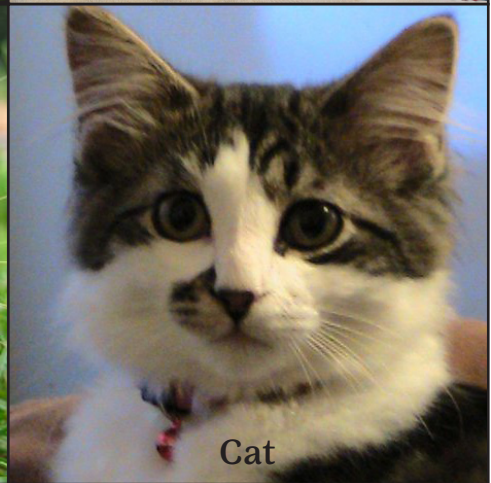
Rabbit



Bearded
Dragon



Guinea Pig



Cat

How to Play

Pick one of the squares. Then, answer the following questions about the animal listed. When you find the answers to the questions, make an X on the square. Try to answer all the questions about each of the animals in a row up/down, across, or diagonally. Or, if you want, try to answer all the questions about all of the animals on the Bingo card.

- How much does it cost to care for this pet?
- How much space does this pet need?
- How much food does this pet need?
- What kind of human contact does this pet like?