

2g. Pet Policy and Procedure

- *Corrected 5/04*
- *Approved by the HSAC on May 17, 2004*
- *Approved by Policy Council on August 23, 2004*
- *Reviewed 4/18*

Policy and procedure complies with WAC 288-295-5170 - [link coming soon](#)

Policy

In order to provide children with enjoyable and safe educational experiences with pets, staff members will prepare in advance for pet placement and/or visits to their center. The care and well being of pets will be included in lesson plan(s) prior to and during the stay or visit of the pet. Staff members, pet owners and volunteers will model appropriate pet handling and care behaviors to children.

Procedure

Child Pet Allergies/Reactions

At Intake and/or Welcome Visits, pertinent information (*child pet allergies, reactions, etc.*) will be noted on the Health History form and shared with other appropriate staff members.

Prior Approval

Prior to any animal and/or pet visiting or being placed in a classroom, an [Activity Proposal Form \(EDUC 9d\)](http://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/09-lesson-planning/d-celebration-activity-proposal-form) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/09-lesson-planning/d-celebration-activity-proposal-form) must be completed and submitted to both the building Area Manager and Child Development Specialist for approval. (Please note: Childcare Licensing requires that animals are not allowed in rooms typically used by infants and toddlers.)

Management and Care of Pets upon Approval

- Prior to a dog/puppy or cat/kitten visiting our program, proof of current rabies vaccinations will be given to the Area Manager to place on file at the center. Student Medical Concerns/Allergies lists will also be reviewed, by the classroom staff, to prepare in advance for accommodating those children with pet allergies.
- Children will be organized into small groups for supervised activity when handling pets.
- If a pet (guinea pig, etc.) is kept in a classroom on an ongoing basis, the Direct Service Team will ensure an appropriate written schedule for providing food, water, and cleaning is created and posted.
- Pets (excluding aquatic animals) showing signs of illness are removed from the facility until they have been seen, treated and given approval to return to the center

by a veterinarian. Written proof of veterinary visits will be given to the Area Manager to place on file.

- Reptiles and amphibians must be in an aquarium or other totally self-contained area except during educational activities involving the reptile. Per the Center of Disease Control (CDC), children five years of age or less must not physically handle reptiles and amphibians. Reptiles and amphibians are not allowed to become classroom pets.
- Animals with a history of biting or other aggressive behaviors are not allowed on any program premises.
- LCC Campus – Refer to [Policy 650 - Pets on Campus \(lowercolumbia.edu/publications/administrative-policies/600/650\)](https://www.lowercolumbia.edu/publications/administrative-policies/600/650).
- Direct Service Team members must ensure children and adults wash their hands after handling animals.

Containers and Cages

- Pet containers and cages are not hung in hallways, entryways or over where children eat, sleep, and play. They also will not be in or near food preparation areas including sinks used for food prep and/or clean-up.
- Container and cage debris must be prevented from spilling out.
- Direct Service Team members clean and disinfect pet containers and cages weekly and more frequently if needed.

Parent Guardian Review of Pet Policy and Procedure

The program Pet Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at Parent Orientations. This information will

include sharing of the following potential health risks associated with animals:

- **Allergies:** Allergens such as hair, fur, dander, urine, feces or parasite are associated with animals. Signs of allergy include: red, sore, watery or itchy eyes, running nose, sneezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and skin rash.
- **Bites, Scratches and Kicks:** Persons interacting with animals are at risk of being bitten, scratched, or kicked.
- **Zoonosis:** Animals can have organisms, which can possibly cause disease in people. Such a disease is called a Zoonosis. Breathing in infected dust or droplets may spread a disease. Disease can also be spread by ingestion, by contaminated food or water, or through cuts and scratches or by bites.

Notification to Parent/Guardians Required Prior to an Animal Coming to a Center

Following approval by both the Area Manager and Child Development Specialist of a DST submitted [Activity Proposal Form \(EDUC 9d\)](https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/09-lesson-planning/d-celebration-activity-proposal-form) (lowercolumbia.edu/publications/head-start-handbooks/EDUC/09-lesson-planning/d-celebration-activity-proposal-form) and prior to an animal being at a center, a Notification to Parent/Guardian of Animals on Premises form must be completed by the DST. This is done whether the animal is visiting or becoming a classroom pet. The form is to be: distributed to the parent/guardians of the students who the animal is visiting or becoming a classroom pet of, posted in the classroom(s) and copies given to the Area Manager and the Child Development Specialist. Parent/guardians are to be instructed to return the bottom of the form to the DST with their signature and date indicating their understanding of the potential health risks of the animal(s) stated on the form. This documentation will be maintained in a folder in the Area Manager's office.