

Animals in Child Care Centres Supporting Resource



Appropriate Children Interaction with Animals (Box 8*)

- Always treat animals gently and calmly. Never hurt, tease, frighten, surprise or corner an animal.
- Avoid chasing and kissing animals.
- Never disturb an animal that is eating or sleeping.
- Always perform hand hygiene (wash hands or use alcohol-based hand-rub) after touching animals, their food bowls, toys, bedding, etc.
- Avoid touching animal food and feces.
- Avoid touching their face after animal contact until hand hygiene is performed.

Animal Food and Treats (Box 12*)

- For resident animals – food and treats should be stored off the floor, in a latched cupboard and kept away from where human food is stored, prepared, served or consumed.
- Animal food and treats should always be inaccessible to children.
- Children should not feed animals directly from their hands.
- Do not use human food items (e.g. ice cream cones) to feed animals.
- Raw pet food should not be served to resident animals and visiting animals should not have received raw pet food in the preceding 90 days before a visit to a child care centre.
- Animal food and treats may contain allergens (e.g. peanuts). Operators of child care centres should follow their anaphylactic policy (per Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care & Early Years Act) that includes a strategy to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylaxis-causing agents potentially present in animal food and treats.
- Hand hygiene should be performed after handling animal food and treats.

Visiting Animals (Box 16*)

Some municipalities may have by-laws restricting exotic animal ownership. Child care centre operators should be aware of any by-laws restricting animals in their municipality.

Record-keeping for visiting animals:

- Date of the visit.
- Name of the animal(s) owner.
- Owner contact information.
- Animal(s) name and species.
- Proof of animal health documentation (see Appendix 2.B Veterinary Care Statement for Animals Visiting Child Care Centres).
- Description of the group of children/room(s) visited.
- Any additional guests in attendance.

It is recommended that these records are kept on-site for one year and made available to public health unit staff or parents/guardians who may request to see them.

Resident Animal Care Plan (Box 17*)

- Staff members responsible for resident animal, including times when the child care centre is closed.
- Animal's daily requirements, including feeding and exercise.
- Daily health screening of the animal for signs of infection/injury.
- Animal bathing and cleaning requirements.
- Cage/tank cleaning/disinfection schedule and procedure.
- Contact numbers for the resident animal's veterinarian and also local health unit phone number to report an animal bite/scratch.
- Annual completion of Veterinary Care Statement (see Appendix 2.A Veterinary Care Statement for Resident Animals in Child Care Centres).

*Refer to *Recommendations for the Management of Animals in Child Care Settings, 2018, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.*

