



SCHOOLNET!

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Student Interaction with Animals

Interaction with animals can represent a unique and valuable educational experience. Animals are frequently kept in classrooms or studied in their natural habitats, at farms or in enclosures such as zoos and parks.

Many diseases, including E. coli O157:H7 and Salmonella, can be transmitted from animals and humans (termed "zoonoses"). Children tend to be more susceptible to zoonotic diseases and parasites than adults due to a lack of handwashing and the tendency of young children to put their hands in their mouths.

In addition, animal contact can result in serious injuries through bites or scratches. Allergic reactions and asthma attacks can also be triggered by interaction with animals.

Taking some simple precautions can reduce the risk of illness and injury for the students, teachers, staff, and animals.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Educate students and staff on the importance of handwashing after handling animals or after contact with animal enclosures. Washing hands with soap and warm water for



at least 20 seconds is essential to prevent the spread of disease. Hand sanitizing gels and hand wipes are **not** a substitute for proper handwashing.

- Instruct students not to put their fingers in their mouths after contact with animals or animal enclosures.
- Instruct children not to kiss or nuzzle animals, put their hands in an animal's mouth or come into contact with animal waste.
- During student interaction with animals supervision is essential. School staff should monitor animals for abnormal behavior and ensure that students behave appropriately during interaction with animals.
- School staff or other adults should be responsible for cleaning the enclosures and removing the waste of animals that live on school property.

ANIMALS TO AVOID

Due to the increased risk of illness or injury, interaction with some animals is not appropriate.

- Aggressive Animals** – Animals which naturally or are trained to demonstrate aggression toward humans should not be permitted on school grounds. Specific animals that should be avoided include wolf-hybrids and ferrets. Exceptions may include dogs for demonstration that are under the control of trained military or law enforcement officials.
- Baby Chicks and Ducks** – Baby chicks and ducks frequently carry Salmonella and Campylobacter. Student and staff interaction with these animals should be limited.
- Reptiles** – Reptiles such as turtles,

lizards and snakes frequently carry Salmonella bacteria. Direct contact with these animals should be limited.

- Stray Animals** – Stray animals should never be brought onto school campuses because the health and vaccination status of these animals is not known.
- Wild animals** - Wild animals pose a risk for transmitting rabies as well as other zoonotic disease and their behavior tends to be unpredictable.
 - Bats, raccoons, skunks, and wild carnivores, have a high incidence of rabies and contact with these animals (including recently killed animals) should not be permitted.
 - Poisonous or venomous animals including spiders, certain insects, snakes, reptiles, and lizards should also be prohibited from being brought onto school grounds.

Exceptions include those instances when wild animals are presented at schools by professionals who have experience handling wildlife, or animals are displayed in enclosed cages that prevent contact between the animal and the children.

When animal presentations are made at the school this activity should not occur in the lunchroom or other location where food is stored, handled or served. Further, students who touch animals, cages or other materials that have been with in contact with an animal, should be directed to wash their hands after such contact.

When visiting zoos, farms or other locations where animals are present, ensure that thorough handwashing occurs prior to meal periods and that eating occurs in animal free areas.

For more information about reducing the risk of illness and injury related to animals contact the Food and Community Safety Program at 253.798.6460.

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New Nutrition Promotion Curriculum

The Group Health Community Foundation offers an interactive health education program called Health Trek that teaches middle-school students to take charge of their health. Health Trek encourages healthy eating and promotes physical activity to kids using classroom curriculum, exhibits, and an interactive website. The program covers topics such as:

- Nutritional needs of children and teens
- Food science and how to read a food label
- Making healthy fast-food choices
- Physical activity
- Food marketing tricks of the trade
- Media literacy and body image

Group Health Community Foundation educators deliver hands-on exhibits to partner schools that have attended the training. They also bring a traveling Public Service Announcement (PSA) Studio and work with students in each school to create video and print PSAs about physical activity and healthy eating habits.



For more information or to arrange an in-school program, contact the Group Health Community Foundation at (206)-287-4337 or visit the Health Trek website at www.healthtrek.org.

1st Annual School Board Challenge

The first annual Washington School Board Challenge is an awards program created by a growing coalition of organizations from the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The Challenge is issued from the Washington State Parent Teacher Association (WSPTA) and the Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA) to local school boards across the state.

The Challenge rewards and recognizes school districts that seek to improve the health of their students through the development and implementation of policies or procedures that promote proper nutrition and regular physical activity. Specifically, the School Board Challenge:

- Seeks out sustainable and exemplary nutrition and physical activity policies or procedures that have been developed or successfully implemented by Washington teachers, food service departments, parents, school boards, administrators, and students;
- Promotes existing nutrition and physical activity model policies or procedures that are making a demonstrated difference in students' access to healthy foods, nutrition education and quality physical activity; and

- Recognizes and awards resources to the best programs in order to support and promote the implementation and expansion of similar policies and programs throughout Washington.

All awardees will receive a certificate of recognition, and the most outstanding programs will be awarded a cash prize from Stonyfield Farm of up to \$2000. Applications must be received or postmarked by *April 1st*, and winners will be announced in May.

By identifying exemplary policies, the goal of the Challenge is to share information about effective strategies with school districts throughout the state. The School Board Challenge provides a vehicle to express appreciation to school board members, dedicated educators, school administrators, and community leaders who strive to provide physical and nutrition education, healthier meals, and physical activity opportunities for all students.

For more information or for an application visit: http://www.wspaha.org/school_board_challenge.htm





Parents and Teachers Agree on Solutions to Childhood Obesity

Two recently released national polls show remarkable agreement between parents and teachers on what schools should do to help stop the epidemic of childhood obesity. More than 90 percent of parents and teachers surveyed favor converting the contents of vending machines in schools to healthy foods and beverages. And more than 80 percent of parents and teachers believe students should be required to take physical education every day at every grade level.

The two national opinion surveys were conducted jointly by Lake Snell Perry & Associates and Market Strategies, Inc. on behalf of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), in partnership with the National Education Association¹.

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and C.E.O. of RWJF, sees tremendous opportunity in the poll results. "We're encouraged that parents and teachers see eye to eye on the opportunities schools have to help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic." She noted that 90 percent of teachers and 86 percent of parents surveyed connect physical activity with improved academic performance and behavior. "But," said Lavizzo-Mourey, "protecting our

children's health is the most important reason to make changes in schools."

Today, there are nearly twice as many overweight children (ages 6-11) and almost three times as many overweight adolescents (ages 12-19) as there were in 1980, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"There are significant health risks for the nine million U.S. children who are seriously overweight, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and the propensity to become overweight or obese as adults," said Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S. "Schools can become part of the solution by offering healthier choices and opportunities for kids to be more physically active."

For more information or to review the entire report visit: <http://www.rwjf.org/publications/publicationsPdfs/healthySchools.pdf>



Food Safety in the Classroom

Having food in the classroom can help to enhance the learning experience and following some simple guidelines can help you to ensure that these experiences are both educational and safe.

ESTABLISH A HAND WASHING ROUTINE.

Handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent illness. Make it a priority to ensure that all students wash their hands with soap and water before eating. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for proper handwashing.

USE AN APPROVED LOCATION FOR STORAGE AND PREPARATION.

Safe food preparation requires the proper amenities including appropriate sinks, surfaces and equipment. For this reason, all storage and food preparation activities including cooking, slicing and assembling of food should occur only in approved locations such as the school kitchen. Food should not be stored or prepared in the classroom.

AVOID HOME MADE FOODS.

There is not a way to be sure that foods made in a personal residence were prepared and stored safely. In addition, foods made in a personal residence may contain

unknown allergens, such as peanuts, that could cause a dangerous reaction in students sensitive to these products. Purchasing prepared foods from grocery store and restaurants is the safest option.

MINIMIZE HANDLING.

Remember that although germs grow best in potentially hazardous foods any food or beverage can cause a foodborne illness. Providing individual servings of food to each student instead of family style service where everyone can handle the pretzels, crackers, cookies and other foods, helps to limit the risk of foodborne illness.

MAINTAIN CLEAN EATING AREAS.

Ensure tables and other eating surfaces are cleaned before and after eating, using a detergent approved for school use. Surfaces with food remnants create a great environment for germs to grow and can attract unwanted visitors like rodents and insects.

For more information on classroom food safety contact the Food and Community Safety Program at 253.798.6460.



Food & Community Safety Program
3629 South D Street, MS414
Tacoma, WA 98418-6813

Return Service Requested



SCHOOLNET!



DIRT ALERT!

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and the Washington State Department of Ecology have launched a new health education campaign called "Dirt Alert". The campaign is intended to increase awareness about arsenic and lead in the soil and to educate community members about methods to reduce their risk of exposure. Currently we are focusing our effort in University Place.

Dirt Alert consists of a cast of characters - "Professor Dirt", "Sudsy Sally" and "Digger". These characters provide simple tips, called Healthy Actions, that you and your students can follow to decrease exposure to soil and dust that may contain arsenic and lead. The campaign offers FREE materials to use at school and home, including a nail brush, cleaning cloth, poster, activity sheet, and more.

If your University Place preschool, elementary school, PTA or community group would like a Dirt Alert presentation, Dirt Alert materials or more information, please contact Janet Blaisdell at (253) 798-6492 or visit www.DirtAlert.com.

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**For more information on
School Health and Safety
Information Visit our
website at
www.tpchd.org.**

Visit our website at
www.foodandcommunity.com



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