

Appendix 3

Guidelines for Exhibition of Animals in School and Child-Care Settings

General Guidelines

- Animals are effective and valuable teaching aids, but safeguards are required to reduce the risk for infection and injury. Other groups have developed recommendations similar to those provided here.^{174,203,204}
- Ensure that teachers and staff know which animal species are inappropriate as residents or visitors to the facility and which animals should not be in direct contact with children (*See* animal-specific guidelines in this Appendix).
- Ensure that personnel providing animals for educational purposes are knowledgeable regarding animal handling and zoonotic disease issues. Persons or facilities that display animals to the public should be licensed by the USDA.
- Inform parents of the presence of animals as well as the benefits and potential risks associated with animals in school classrooms. Consult with parents to determine special considerations needed for children who are immunocompromised, have allergies, or have asthma.
- Educate children about germs and proper hand-washing technique.
- Wash hands after contact with animals, animal products or feed, or animal environments.
- Supervise human-animal contact, particularly involving children < 5 years of age.
- Display animals in enclosed cages or under appropriate restraints.
- Do not allow animals to roam, fly free, or have contact with wild animals.
- Designate specific areas for animal contact. Do not allow food or drink in animal contact areas; do not allow animals in areas where food and drink are stored, prepared, served, or consumed.
- Clean and disinfect all areas where animals and animal products have been present. Children should perform this task only under adult supervision.
- Do not clean animal cages or enclosures in sinks or other areas used to store, prepare, serve, or consume food and drinks.
- Obtain a certificate of veterinary inspection, proof of rabies vaccination, or both according to local or state requirements for the species being exhibited. Also, ensure veterinary care, including preventive health programs for endo- and ectoparasites, as appropriate for the species.

Animal-Specific Guidelines

Refer to the general guidelines for animals that do not have specific recommendations provided in this section (eg, nonsittacine birds; domestic dogs, cats, rabbits, and rodents [including mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, and chinchillas]).

- Guide, hearing assistance, or other service animals and animals used in law enforcement: These may be used in accordance with recommendations from the sponsoring organizations when they are under the control of a person familiar with the specific animal.
- Psittacine birds (eg, parrots, parakeets, and cockatiels): Consult the psittacosis compendium¹⁷⁴ and seek veterinary advice.
- Reptiles (eg, turtles, snakes, and lizards): Do not keep reptiles in facilities with children < 5 years of age, and do not allow children < 5 years of age to have direct contact with these animals.
- Amphibians (eg, frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts): Do not keep amphibians in facilities with children < 5 years of age, and do not allow children < 5 years of age to have direct contact with these animals.
- Live poultry (eg, chicks, ducklings, and goslings): Do not keep live poultry in facilities with children < 5 years of age, and do not allow children < 5 years of age to have direct contact with these animals.
- Ferrets: Do not keep ferrets in facilities with children < 5 years of age, and do not allow children < 5 years of age to have direct contact with these animals to avoid bites. Ferrets should be up to date for rabies vaccination.
- Farm animals: Certain animals (eg, calves, goats, and sheep) intermittently excrete substantial numbers of germs; therefore, these farm animals are not appropriate in facilities with children < 5 years of age and should not be displayed to older children in school settings unless meticulous attention to personal hygiene can be ensured.
- Fish: Use disposable gloves when cleaning aquariums, and do not dispose of aquarium water in sinks used for food preparation or for obtaining drinking water.
- Animal products: Assume that products such as owl pellets and frozen rodents used to feed reptiles are contaminated with *Salmonella* organisms. Dissection of owl pellets should not be performed in areas where food is stored, prepared, served, or consumed. Children < 5 years of age should not be allowed to have direct contact with animal products unless the products have been treated to eliminate germs.

Animals Not Recommended in School or Child-Care Settings

- Inherently dangerous animals (eg, lions, tigers, cougars, and bears).
- Nonhuman primates (eg, monkeys and apes).
- Mammals at high risk for transmitting rabies (eg, bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes).
- Aggressive or unpredictable wild or domestic animals.
- Stray animals with unknown health and vaccination history.
- Venomous or toxin-producing spiders, insects, reptiles, and amphibians.
- Animals that present a high risk for zoonotic disease transmission (eg, reptiles, amphibians, and live poultry) or bites (eg, ferrets).