

On Your Mark, Get Set, Get Supplies!

Character concept:

Being organized, which includes having the right supplies to do a job, is part of being a responsible person.

Objective:

Students will understand that taking proper care of a pet involves having all the necessary supplies.

Curriculum connection:

Students will demonstrate control when performing fundamental locomotion, nonlocomotion, and manipulative skills. They will follow directions and class procedures while participating in physical activities, demonstrate spatial awareness, and understand relationships to objects and people. Students will also solve problems using addition of money amounts and demonstrate proficiency in adding one- and two-digit numbers using mental computation. (health and physical education, mathematics)

National standards addressed:

physical education (movement forms, NPH.K-12.1), math (number and operations, compute fluently and make reasonable estimates, NM-NUM.3-5.3)

Materials:

- two plush toy cats
- masking tape
- blank labels, stickers, or price tags

As many of the following as possible:

- safe, fun cat **toy**, such as a store-bought ball or plush animal or homemade plaything, such as a sock tied in a knot (for cats to chase), a crumpled ball of paper (for cats to bat and swat), or a paper bag (for cats to hide in). **Note:** *Yarn is not safe for cats to play with; they may become tangled in it.*
- **water bowl** (a stainless steel or porcelain bowl marked "water")
- **food bowl** (a stainless steel or porcelain bowl mark "food," "treats," "kibble," or such)
- bag or box of dry **cat food**
- **scratching post** (this can be made from two pieces of wood glued together on a perpendicular, with the standing piece wrapped in sisal rope)
- **collar**
- **tag**
- **litter box** (for this activity, a shallow cardboard box, box lid, or aluminum pan marked "litter box" will do)
 - bag of **kitty litter**
 - **litter scoop** (a large, slotted spoon or ladle will work fine)
 - **first-aid kit** or supplies, which might include tape, gauze bandages, gloves, an ice pack, cotton swabs, and an eyedropper



- **cat carrier** (this is important for safe travel to places such as the veterinarian's office; for purposes of this activity, a cardboard box can be used to represent a carrier)
- **brush**
- **flea comb** (for this activity, any comb will do)
- **nail clippers** (for this activity, human nail clippers will do)

Activity:

Students will play a game similar to "steal the bacon," in which two teams compete to collect the most cat care supplies.

Procedure:

Prepare in advance: Attach a price tag to each item. (Stickers or labels work fine.) Approximate costs for cat-care supplies are as follows: toy, \$2; water bowl, food bowl, \$4 each; cat food, \$7/bag; scratching post, \$15; collar, \$8; tag, \$3; litter box, \$8; kitty litter, \$7; first-aid kit, \$15; carrier, \$30; brush, \$7; flea comb, \$3; nail clipper, \$8.

1. Clear a large area of the classroom and use masking tape to make two parallel lines on the floor. The lines should be 10-12 feet apart.
2. One at a time, hold up each of the cat care supplies and name them (or ask students to tell what they are). Have students describe how each item is important to caring for a cat. Tell students that in order to care properly for a cat, a person must have all of these supplies.
3. Place all supplies in the center of the two lines, either in a row or in a large cluster.
4. Divide players into two equal teams and have students line up behind the two taped lines so that teams are facing each other. Have each team count off so that every player has a number that matches a player's number on the other team. Make note of the highest number called—for example, 12 if you have 24 players.
5. If there is an odd number of students in your class, designate one student to be the game leader. If teams are equal, you may act as the leader.
6. Give each team a plush toy cat and ask teams to name their cat. Team cats can be placed off to one side of each team's "territory."
7. Explain the rules of the game, as follows. Then begin playing.

*The leader will call out the name of a cat care necessity (use the **bold** words in the materials list on the previous page). The leader will then call out a number from 1 to the highest number called (e.g., 12).*

The two players with that number race to grab the item called. Whoever reaches it first brings it to his or her team's cat.

The leader continues to name remaining supplies and call out remaining numbers (e.g., "Flea comb—ten!") until all supplies have been claimed. Depending on class size, some numbers may be called more than once or not at all. The team with the most supplies at the end wins.

8. After the game, discuss what could happen to each team's cat as a result of that team's missing supplies. For example, without food, Felix will be hungry and get sick. Without a scratching post, Spiffy could damage the furniture. What happens if a cat has a litter box

but no kitty litter? Remind students that responsible caregivers have *all* the supplies necessary to care for their pets.

9. Because caring for a pet requires certain basic supplies, it requires having enough money to pay for those supplies. As a class, determine the “starting costs” for adopting a cat; that is, what it would cost to purchase the basic supplies each team has collected. Have both teams locate the price tag on each of their items and add up the costs for their supplies. Students should be able to compute the costs mentally; however, you may wish to provide calculators or scrap paper and pencils. As a class, doublecheck both teams’ math, then add their two sums for a grand total: \$121.

10. Ask students to name other basic expenses involved in caring for a cat. Here are some of those, including their approximate costs: spaying/neutering (\$50); veterinary care, including physical exam (\$32), feline leukemia test (\$42), heartworm test (\$32), distemper shot (\$15), rabies shot (\$15), and leukemia shot (\$17); and petsitting (\$10 per visit). Remind students that these are just “starting costs.” Food needs to be in constant supply, toys get worn out and need replacement, vaccinations must be kept up-to-date, and veterinary checkups must be done regularly, at least once a year. Guide them in understanding that being a responsible caregiver means making sure you can afford to properly take care of your pet.

Variation:

Play this game using other pets, such as dogs, guinea pigs, canaries, goldfish, and rabbits. For a list of the supplies various pets need, consult *The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care* (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2001), *The HSUS Complete Guide to Cat Care* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), *The HSUS Complete Guide to Dog Care* (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1998), www.hsus.org, and online pet-supply merchants.

Extension:

Have your students try their hands at Catcentration, an interactive memory game, at www.kindclubhouse.org. The goal is to match pairs of playing cards so that they spell out and illustrate a cat care tip. For each successful round, players “win” a cat care supply.

Helpful Resource

Dr. Kind Answers Kids’ Questions About Animals is a collection of children’s questions about proper pet care and wildlife issues. In this 62-page, pocket-sized book, a veterinarian explains what different animals need, what they do, and why they do it. Available for \$2.50 at www.nahee.org.

