

Children and Pets

Research shows that children who have pets at home have stronger immune systems and seem to be better at fighting infection and less likely to be absent from school. This was most evident in children between five to eight years of age. The study further showed that antibody levels among pet owning children were more stable indicating that although keeping pets may increase exposure to infections, it builds up the immune system so that it works effectively.

Teaching children about animals and their welfare:

- You can start at an early age, by pointing out animals and their names.
- Let them observe different kinds of animals at zoos, animal parks or pet shops.
- Explain about animal behaviour, their roles and value of animals to us.
- Read stories and introduce them to TV shows on animals.
- Teach them to be gentle when handling animals. That it is wrong to chase or hit an animal, shouting or pulling not appropriate, humane ways.
- Teach them that animals deserve care and require lifetime commitment. They are living creatures who depend upon us to care for them.
- Do not allow young children to touch a strange animal or leave them unattended with the animal.
- If you own a pet, have your children assist you as part of their daily chores. This teaches responsibility and caring and helps them to build a bond with animals.

