

House Rabbit Care

Suggested Grade Level: 1-3
 Character: Respect, Responsibility

Training Structure: Learning Station	Style: Interactive Learning Level: Lower Elementary (1-3 rd grade)
Length: 40 minutes	Grade: 1-3 <i>Intermediate attention span, beginning Readers</i>

Purpose: *To provide youth with information that will lead them to properly care for a house rabbit. They will learn what a house rabbit's "need" to be a happy and healthy pet. This will be done by the following:*

Introduction/Ice Breaker	Time: 5 minutes
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Facilitator will lead a quick and fun question and answer period, using props if available.

1. What Animal that you might adopt or buy does this? (Mimic a rabbit wiggling its nose & tail or hopping)
2. Would you like to have a rabbit for a pet? Why?
(If one of participants already owns one ask how they received it, how old it is, is it a boy or girl)
3. Do you know what an animal doctor is called?
4. What do rabbits eat?
5. Would you like to learn how to take the best (good) care of a house rabbit?

Interactive Talk	Time: 8-10 minutes
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Props will be used to support the lecture.

- A. Group will learn general physiology and rabbit behavior
- B. General responsibilities of pet ownership

Handling Demonstration (optional)	Time: 10 minutes
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Handling Demonstration with non-live rabbit followed by live rabbit (if available) interaction.

- A. Group will learn to properly pet with the using the "two finger touch" method
- B. Rabbit will be placed in the circle and be allowed to visit kids voluntarily
- C. Students will use the two finger touch method to pet the rabbit

Activities	Time: 10-20 minutes
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Group will play two educational games

- Hay Search
- Hoppy Rabbit Game – Simon Says

Handouts	Time: 1-2 minutes
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Fun Interactive handouts for take home use designed to educate

- Word Search
- Find the Rabbit

Props

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| Bag of Timothy hay | Toy plush rabbit |
| Food bowl | Live rabbit (optional) |
| Water bowl | |

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Introduction/Ice Breaker

Make sure you establish that you do not have time for personal stories right now but everyone gets to participate in the question and answer time by raising their hands with an answer



Sample Questions

1. **What Animal that you might adopt or buy does this?**
Mimic a rabbit wiggling its nose & tail or hopping

2. **Would you like to have a rabbit for a pet? Why?**
If one of participants already owns one ask how they received it, how old it is, is it a boy or girl

3. **Do you know what an animal doctor is called?**
Veterinarian

4. **What do rabbits eat?**

5. **Would you like to learn how to take good care of a house rabbit?**

Interactive Talk

Go over the external parts of the rabbit using the toy rabbit or a poster as a prop.



There are some very important things to learn today if you want to make sure that a house rabbit is healthy and happy.

Parts of the Rabbit

Big ears are for listening and is a built in "air-conditioner", they help the rabbit keep cool during the summer

Feet are for hopping and running. They use them to go find things like food hay and water, but mostly feet are used to jump up and down, run and to scratch an itch.

Nose twitches because the rabbit is always on guard sniffing its surroundings. Also when it twitches its nose the lip spread out moisture and helps them smell better.

Big eyes that stick out help the rabbit see all the way around them. They cannot see well right in front of them. They add to sight with the scent and the hearing to feel safe and find things too.

The tail is a used as a warning to other bunnies. They will lift it and wiggle it, like waving a flag, to warn their buddies of danger in the wild.

Hair is for protection.

What does your pet house rabbit need?

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Your rabbit needs a **home**. A place to live he can call his own. Make sure that your rabbit does not have its home or bed that is too cold or too hot. Like not right next to the vent where the heat or cooling comes out or right in the sun all of the time or right next to a stove or right by a door where a lot of cold air will come into during the winter.

All living things need **water**. Wild rabbits learn from their parents how to find water. Pet rabbits cannot turn on the faucets to get water for themselves so they rely on us to do it for them. It is very important that your house rabbit or any of your pets have lots of clean fresh water everyday. Two times a day is best. You can use a proper bottle or bowl for rabbits.

Your rabbit should have as much **hay** as it wants (Introduce props here).

When it becomes an adult rabbit it needs a different kind of hay. It needs hay that is grass hay. Grass hays are like this (pictures). Grass hays help their stomachs and other parts work very well.

Pellets made from provide vitamins and mineral for your rabbit to stay healthy. You need to follow instructions on how many pellets they should have each day. If you want to give your rabbit other things to eat you need to ask your veterinarian for instructions on other foods and treats that are okay.

Rabbits need a **bathroom area**. Rabbits are very clean animals and they like to go to the bathroom in the same area. A litter box, just like a cat can be used. But you need litter that is specially made for rabbits. Don't use the cat litter.

Daily brushing will help your rabbit's fur stay shiny and clean and is a fun way to interact with your pet. A rabbit will lick its body to clean itself but sometimes it needs help. A rabbit continually grows hair and brushing helps remove the hair so your rabbit doesn't swallow too much hair during cleaning.

Love If you are going to have a house rabbit as a pet it needs lots of love and it needs to play just like you. You can love it by petting it. Some of the rabbits like to be held, some do not like to be held. They like to be given lots of attention every day.

Playing for a rabbit is different than they way you play. Rabbits love to run and jump. Sometimes leap into the air and kick their feet back. This is called a "binky".

Rabbits play with their mouth and their feet. What does this mean? They like to chew, and since they don't have hands they use their mouth, like a hand to pick up things.

Baby rattles are safe toys for your rabbit; they can pick them up with their mouth and toss them. Some rabbits like to have their hay put in different places like in a cardboard tube. They can push it around like a ball (they like balls) and eat the hay out of it too.

Some like to find healthy treats hidden in their hay. Many rabbits like to have a lot of hay put in a big cardboard box and they will jump in there and snuggle and maybe play hide-n-seek with you.

Handling Demonstration

Have kids sit in a circle. If using a live rabbit place an emphasis on moving slowly and being very quiet because the rabbit does not know you. If using a toy rabbit bring the rabbit around and each student can practice the two finger technique.

Option: A live rabbit can be in the room, but not used as a petting demonstration but observation. A "puppy pen" can be set up with a rabbit, food, water, litter, and toys.

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The best way to get to know your rabbit is to sit on the floor with them. The rabbit feels safe and can get to know you. Some rabbits like to be cuddled pet and held. Sometimes it can be scary for them and we need to learn how to properly and safely pet and hold a rabbit.

(Hold up two fingers) We're going to learn how to "two finger touch" a rabbit. When you pet your rabbit start by using two fingers to pet them on their head, between their ears, the back of their neck or the back. Rabbits have very sensitive noses and whiskers so it might scare them if you pet them on the nose.

(Use the toy rabbit, or live demonstration rabbit, have the kids hold up two fingers and mimic)

Never chase a rabbit, the rabbit will always win. Let your rabbit learn to come to you for love, petting and treats. If _____ *(enter rabbits' name)* comes over to you, you can pet him/her gently using the "two finger touch" method that we learned. Don't worry if _____ *(enter rabbits name)* doesn't come to you, everyone will have a chance to pet him/her.

Place live or toy rabbit in circle. Talk about how nice the rabbit is, point out the soft fur and large ears. Use the time to repeat what was taught during the Interactive talk.

Props List

Props are a visual aid that helps explain and teach. Below are ideas that can be used in the House Rabbit Care lesson plan. Feel free to customize to fit your situation, class size, room set up, and time allotment.

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- Live Rabbit w/carrier *(optional)*
- Toy plush rabbit
- Bag of Western Timothy hay
- Bag of rabbit pellets
- Water bowl *(heavy crock or ceramic type)*
- Bottle of water
- Food bowl
- Litter box *(with or without litter)*
- Rabbit toys
- Toilet paper or paper towel tubes
- Soft brush
- Take home activity sheets applicable to the species e.g. rabbit "word search" etc.