



Flying High Farm

Mental Health Services for Youth

Special Siblings

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Flying High Farm incorporates the therapeutic magic of animals toward optimizing one's emotional growth.



After receiving requests from parents, Flying High Farm is proud to announce that in April 2005

a group will be formulated for siblings of children with autism or Asperger's Syndrome. The exact date and time of this group is yet to be decided, but it will be an 80-minute after-school weekly group. As with other groups at Flying High Farm, participation will be limited to four or five children relatively close in age. This group will address the unique needs of these special sibs while providing them with a safe place to voice their feelings and problem-solve.

The book, Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs (by Meyer and Vadasy, 1996), focuses on the intensity of emotions that children experience when they have a sibling with special needs.

An excerpt follows:

Emma's soccer games never seem as important to her mother as meetings at Amy's school or at the Cerebral Palsy Center. If Emma brings home a paper with a B

grade, her mother says, "Well, you'll have to try harder next time." But she makes a big fuss about anything Amy brings home, no matter how sloppy it is. If you have a brother or sister with special needs, chances are that sometimes you feel neglected. You might feel ignored by you parents. It may seem that they don't notice you unless you do something wrong or get into trouble. They may spend so much of their time on your special sib that you feel left out, as though you're not very important. Sometimes you probably feel like saying, 'Hey, you have other kids in this family too!' You want to let your parents know your sib isn't the only person in the family. Like Emma, you might sometimes wish that you had a disability, just so you would get as much attention as your sib.

Parents usually have to spend more time with a child with special needs than with the other kids in the family. The special sib often needs medical care or help to do things that you can do for yourself. Some special sibs need lots and lots of attention. Others need extra help only in certain areas. But just because your brother or sister needs extra attention doesn't mean that you don't need some attention too. You still need to spend some time with your parents, talking

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about your problems and doing the things that your friends do with their parents. You need to spend an afternoon at the movies together, or go out for ice cream, or go to the swimming pool. When parents have a special child, they sometimes forget that all of their children need some of their time and attention.

Flying High Farm is excited to offer this group to these special siblings. For more information, call Christine Randle, LICSW and Therapeutic Riding Instructor at 978-582-7103 or visit www.flyinghighfarm.com.

Flying High Farm accepts:

- BCBS
- PacifiCare
- Fallon
- UBH
- Magellan
- ValueOptions

The Benefits of Pets in the Classroom—Part 1



By Jolie Goodwin (1999; unpublished paper)

Upon hearing a soft knock, I opened my classroom door to find my headmaster holding the hand of a very teary child. He introduced the timid boy to me, explaining that it was his first day. My headmaster told me he had tried two rooms previously and could not get the child to enter through the door. I glanced back at my class and turned again to see the young boy slide behind my headmaster's tall leg. I got down on one knee and welcomed the child. He peered out at me, but made no move to venture from his new hiding place. My headmaster then whispered to me, "I suddenly remembered you had a rabbit." As if on cue, one of my young female students came over and reached out her hand and said, "Would you like to come in and see our pet Bunny? His name is Bailey and he LOVES us!" I motioned for the students to move to the floor and we let Bailey, our beloved classroom rabbit, out of his cage. The boy stepped into the room and within a five minute span went from tears to giggles as the small, brown, furry critter nibbled on his shoelace.

This is only an example of what an animal can bring into the lives of children, as well as adults. Many questions are brought to mind when one contemplates the impact of these animals. Can animals help bring out or strengthen some of the stronger traits we are constantly searching for in children? If they can, how can we, as parents and teachers, facilitate that outcome? Can having a pet in the classroom help teach children? What does it teach them? Can an animal actually bring about positive changes in people in the domains of emotion, health and/or cognition? These are all questions that are con-

stantly being discussed by teachers, psychologists, social workers, parents, and even certain organizations such as the Delta Society.

Animals can have a profound impact on children through interaction. Animals can provide an additional aspect to education that not only is important, but essential to creating a well-rounded individual.

An understanding of the way children go about the process of creating healthy bonds can be found by examining their interactions not only with people, but also with animals. The notion that all humans have an innate, biologically based need for social interaction is agreed upon by Bowlby (1958) and Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall (1978). People are constantly seeking things that will relax them, relieve stress, bring happiness and/or enhance emotional stability.

Can animals help bring out or strengthen some of the stronger traits we are constantly searching for in children?

For the child, the attempt to make social bonds can be difficult as other children often are making the same attempts elsewhere, or on different developmental levels. A pet can serve as an additional attachment. I remember all too well coming home as a child and burying my tears and difficult times in the fur of the family dog. I recall explaining things to the dog, telling it all the things that went wrong that particular day knowing full well the only response I would get would be licks with a long, wet tongue. Somehow, it made me feel better. Considering the results of a study conducted by Triebenbacher (1998) that state that 90% of pet owners talk to their pets, I realize this is a common behavior.

Many children just want their feelings validated and often do not receive this outcome when presenting their problems to adults. People tend to want to solve other people's problems or attempt to cheer them up. Often, a pet fulfills the need of the child simply by being there. Robin and ten Bensel (1985) believe the desire children have

for proximity and an emotional bond is congruent with attachment behavior towards humans. Robin and ten Bensel call the relationship between child and pet, "simpler and less conflicted than human relationships" (21, p.66). Kidd and Kidd (1995) conducted a study asking children to draw a picture. The picture could contain themselves and/or family members and/or pets. It is interesting to note that children who owned pets drew themselves significantly closer to their pet than to their family member. In response to the importance of child/pet relationships, Kidd and Kidd state that "perhaps relationships with pets are more accepting and less complex than those with family members. Pets do not scold, criticize or demand behavior changes" (p. 239).

The question of whether animals are beneficial to humans seems to have an answer. The question of how exactly they are able to provide these benefits remains. Also, exactly what are the benefits they can bring? Sable (1995) suggests that pets have a place in our intrinsic desire to make close bonds. Is it possible that pets can serve as facilitators in strengthening present bonds? I know that having pets in my classroom brought the students closer together through shared jobs and interests. The animal became a focus for some children, and suddenly there was a new friend with a common interest.

In Kidd and Kidd's study mentioned previously, there were other interesting conclusions made from the children's drawings. It was observed that out of the group of pet-owning children, 100% of these children included a family member in their picture. However, 35% of the children who did not own pets drew a picture of only themselves. If it is possible for a pet to bring a family or a group closer together, the arguments for not owning a pet should become null and void. So many families are trying to achieve these results in other fashions. If even the possibility exists that a pet could strengthen families, that in itself is enough reason to make the effort. (This article will be continued in the February 2005 Newsletter.)

♦ This was adapted from J. Goodwin's unpublished paper. The entire document can be viewed at www.teacherwebshelf.com/classrooms/research-articles.html#2

Creature Kindness:

Keep Tiger & Rover safe in the winter



Equine Facts

Snow Horses



Although you may want to curl up on the couch under a blanket or sit in front of your fireplace when its cold outside, horses have very different ideas.

Sea Spray and Duncan love being outside when new snow is falling. When the snow falls on their manes it begins to melt. The melting snow then forms icicles that hang from their long manes. They may grow an icy beard as well when their whiskers freeze.

Have you ever made a snow angel? Yes? Well so have Sea Spray and Duncan. However their snow angels don't look like yours. They make their angels when they roll around in the snow, this also helps them get to all of those itchy spots under their long hair.



Zar likes the snow too! 🐾

- When it falls below 20 degrees F, keep all pets indoors. Shorthaired dogs, cats and puppies should be kept indoors when the temperature dips below 40 degrees F.
- Check your garage and driveway for antifreeze and other chemicals. Antifreeze tastes sweet to pets, but most brands are very poisonous. Should your pet ingest any amount of antifreeze, contact your veterinarian immediately. Use a pet-safe anti-freeze.
- When your pet is outside, make sure there is plenty of fresh drinking water available. Animals can't burn calories without a fresh supply of water and if they can't burn calories, they can't keep warm. Also, use a ceramic or hard plastic water bowl rather than a metal one, as your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to cold metal.
- Provide a dry, draft-free doghouse if you must keep your dog outside for any period of time. It should be large enough to allow your dog to sit and lay down comfortably, but small enough to hold in his body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches off the ground and covered with cedar shavings or straw. The doghouse should be turned to face away from the wind and the doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic.
- Get into the habit of slapping the hood of your vehicle before starting it. In their search to keep warm outdoors, cats often take refuge next to a warm car engine or tire.
- Keep snow from piling high next to your fence. A packed snowdrift will provide a boost for your dog to jump over the fence and escape the safe confines of your yard. 🐾

Flying High Farm Wordsearch

Z	A	R	S	P	A	G	T	A	C
H	E	E	S	R	O	H	T	T	H
I	L	X	A	S	A	G	N	E	E
N	M	O	E	A	T	B	A	L	S
I	P	D	U	N	C	A	N	L	T
U	S	O	O	C	H	I	N	E	N
Q	S	E	N	G	R	E	Y	B	U
E	U	R	R	Y	I	T	O	S	T
L	C	G	I	P	S	F	U	N	B
R	G	R	E	A	T	D	A	N	E
A	Z	Y	A	R	P	S	A	E	S
H	S	T	R	G	H	J	R	Y	M

Zar
Duncan
Oxer
Sea Spray
Chestnut
Pony

Harlequin
Great Dane
Cat
Dog
Horse
Grey

Find these Flying High Farm animals words frontward, backward, up, down and diagonally.



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Compliance with HIPAA

At Flying High Farm, your and your child's privacy is a priority. We follow strict federal and state guidelines to maintain the confidentiality of your child's protected health information. Protected Health Information (PHI) is any information about your child's past, present or future health care or payment for that care that could be used to identify him/her.

You can view all HIPAA documents at
www.flyinghighfarm.com/HIPAA.htm. ☺

Individual and Group Treatment

Limited openings are currently available for individual and group treatment. To schedule an intake or for more information, call Christine Randle, LICSW, at 978-582-7103.

