



# Flying High Farm

## Mental Health Services for Youth

**Ask Me to Show You Poetry in Motion,  
and I Will Show You a Horse** author unknown

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



(composed of children with a sibling diagnosed with autism or Asperger's Syndrome) will address the unique needs of these special sibs while providing them with a safe place to voice their feelings and problem-solve.

These special sibs need support, information and the chance to meet peers who understand. "Sometimes they're jealous of their siblings, who seem to get away with everything," says Claudia Clark, a social worker at the Child-Parent Resource Institute in London, Ontario, where she's a group leader for siblings of children with autism and pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). They also feel protective, and worry their sibling will be teased or left out. Some kids admit to sadness and a sense of loss. "Their brothers and sisters can't be there for them in the same way," Clark says.

Attendance for the Special Siblings group is already at capacity, but if you would like to add your child to the waiting list or have questions about Flying High Farm, please call me at 978-582-7103 or visit [www.flyinghighfarm.com](http://www.flyinghighfarm.com).

☞ Christine Randle, LICSW/  
Therapeutic Riding Instructor

**F**lying High Farm would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the families and professionals who have recognized the tremendous positive impact that animals have on children.

In large part to your support, Flying High Farm has been able to help more than 100 children over the past year. The symbiotic relationship between child and animal is truly a magical sight to behold. I feel honored to be able to combine two of my interests—children and animals—into a challenging and fulfilling career. Without all of your support and loyalty this would not be possible.

In the last issue of the Flying High Farm newsletter, I announced that a Special Siblings group would be starting in April. I am excited to announce that this group will be starting on Tuesday, April 5 (3:30 to 4:20, biweekly). This group

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### FHF accepts:

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

# The Benefits of Pets in the Classroom—Part 2



By Jolie Goodwin (1999; unpublished paper)

In addition to strengthening existing bonds, contact with animals can have other effects on children as well. Their overall social health and emotional well being could be improved through interaction with animals. Kidd and Kidd state that “to help children grow up to be happy, healthy adults by adapting and adjusting to a rapidly changing world, it is important to find ways to study the emotional relationships between children and animals as well as other human beings.”

Could having an animal in the classroom correlate with these lessons? Could the pet even help children move towards independence in these goals? Triebenbacher seems to believe this is true. She states, “The benefits of pet ownership and attachment to animals include minimizing emotional trauma, helping to alleviate some emotional problems as well as fears and loneliness, to lessen anxiety during times of stress, to promote good mental and physical health for both children and adults, and provide noncontingent unconditional love and opportunities for affection.” Children are faced with many obstacles throughout their school days. Often pets can have calming effects on children and even make them feel loved. By adding this factor into their lives not only at home, but also in the classroom, teachers are empowering their children to not only learn interesting things in a

new way, but also to seek out a possible stress reduction method. Triebenbacher conducted a study based on this belief. She interviewed children regarding their feelings about pets. Here are some interesting statistics based on her interviews:

- 98% of the children consider their pets to be “very important family members.”
- 98% of the children indicated that they love their pets very much.
- The most commonly expressed way to convey love to an animal was through touch.
- The second most common way to convey love dealt with responsibilities as a pet owner.
- When asked if they believe their pets love them very much, 99% of the children stated that their pets did love them very much.
- 88% of the children said they believe their pets know when they are sick or sad.
- Children from ages 3-11 indicated that, if they could have any pet, their first choice would be a dog.

Since animals appear to play such an important role in the emotional well being of children, many people believe that it is the role of the teacher to try to provide the things that enable children to progress in this area. Animals can make a difference in the life of a three-year-old autistic child in the same way they can with a retired banker. Their love is universal, nonjudgmental and unconditional.

Humans can begin to better understand themselves in relation to other beings through relationships with animals. These relationships are fundamental to world building and human development (Naherniak 1995). Naherniak states, “If there is one thing that is most important for children to realize, it is that they share a world

with other beings who have needs similar but not identical to theirs. This understanding helps to develop the child’s confidence, empathy and respect for others.”

Teachers have the unique opportunity to provide avenues to help children make these realizations.

Kellert and Wilson (1993) suggest that the need humans have to interact with animals is critical in their development of their emotion, intellect and personality. The word that stands out here is *intellect*. It has been made clear that children can benefit from animals in the domains of emotion and socialization, but can animals teach people in other areas as well? If they can, this has major implications for the way children are presently learning. Shepard (1982) even goes so far as to suggest that since people seem to be growing away from nature in the modern world, this is causing a psychological retardation in humans. Could simply incorporating a small pet into the classroom setup alleviate his proposed problem? Could the pet enhance the behaviors and personality traits that teachers and parents are striving to mold in their children?

Kellert and Wilson offer the following:

1. Animals are powerful reinforcers of human attention and behavior.
2. When children interact and watch animals, they grow to be more persistent in nature and show more positive behavior changes.
3. The presence of animals facilitates both human speech and nonverbal expression.

Part 3 of this article will be in the next Flying High Farm newsletter.

♦ This was adapted from J. Goodwin’s unpublished paper. The entire document can be viewed at [www.teacherwebshelf.com/classroompets/research-articles.html#2](http://www.teacherwebshelf.com/classroompets/research-articles.html#2)

# Creature Kindness:

## Chocolate & Peeps instead of Fur & Feathers



To celebrate Easter, and to help rabbits and other popular pets be adopted to permanent homes, the Dumb Friends League ([www.ddfl.org](http://www.ddfl.org)) encourages you **not to buy** rabbits,



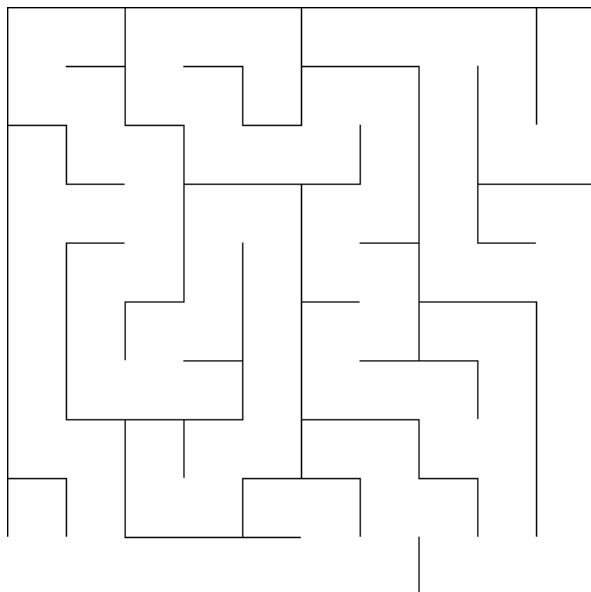
chicks and other animals linked with Easter. Instead of a live animal for your child's Easter basket, purchase a toy replica that doesn't require the commitment that a live animal does.

Another option is to enjoy a chocolate bunny or some Peeps! Yum! ☺



## Lion to Lamb Maze

People say that March comes in like a lion (meaning the weather can be ferocious like a lion) and leaves like a lamb (meaning the weather is nice and gentle). Help the lion turn into a lamb in the maze below.



## Equine Facts

Hair, Hair,  
Everywhere!



Horses grow long coats in the winter to keep warm, but now they need to shed these coats to stay cool in the warmer weather.

Horses shed their winter coats as their summer coats emerge. Duncan and Sea Spray are both just starting to shed, a sign that warmer weather is on its way!

Horses start growing their summer coats in mid-January as the hours of sunlight increase. It takes two to three months for the new hairs to reach the ends of the follicles and push the old hairs out.

Currying or using a shedding blade helps to loosen the old hairs so they will fall out. This helps speed the process along a little bit. When brushing Duncan and Sea Spray over the next few weeks, you'll notice that you go home with a lot more hair on you than when you brushed them in the fall. ☺





615 Leominster Road  
Lunenburg, MA 01462

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### Contact Information

Christine Randle, LICSW  
615 Leominster Road  
Lunenburg, MA 01462  
Phone: 978-582-7103  
[www.flyinghighfarm.com](http://www.flyinghighfarm.com)

### 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](http://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.

