

PAWS FOR KIDS - AAI 8 WEEK CURRICULUM

- 1. Week 1: Introduction + Safety Rules**
- 2. Week 2: Animal Body Language + Being Safe Around Unfamiliar Animals**
- 3. Week 3: Humane Care of Your Animal**
- 4. Week 4: Positive Reinforcement Training (Intro)**
- 5. Week 5: Positive Reinforcement Training (More Difficult)**
- 6. Week 6: The Job Dogs Do**
- 7. Week 7: Animals in Nature**
- 8. Week 8: Recap + Closing**

PAWS FOR KIDS - Animal Assisted Interventions for DCF Children

PFK Vision:

To foster healing, hope, confidence, and trust in children with trauma through guided connections with animals.

PFK Objectives

- Reduce stress and anxiety;
- Create feelings of comfort, support, well-being, and a sense of physical and psychological safety;
- Provide education to increase awareness, responsibility of and empathy for animals

Session: #1

Introductions + safety and rules

General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)

- Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)
- Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)
- Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child
- Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)

Ages: 3-11

Session length: 1 hour

Summary: This session will introduce the child to the handler and animal and share with child a picture book showing pictures of the animal and his/her life with the handler. The handler will also address all safety rules regarding dogs and explore with child his/her experience with dogs. The child will learn how to approach and ask the animal if it is ok to pet him/her. The child will learn how to pet the animal gently and slowly. The handler will share interesting facts about the animal with child and ask the child to share two things he/she likes about the animal.

Prep Materials Needed: 1. Picture book of handler and dog 2. "How to greet a dog" poster

Process Details: breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details

- **5 minutes:** Introductions of handler and animal and child (child remains with foster parent)
- **10 minutes:** Handler discusses the safety trust rules with the child/foster parent. Child recites back the safety and trust rules (3-6 depending on age)
- **10 minutes:** Handler talks with the child about how to approach the animal so the animal is relaxed and happy. (quiet, calm, slow, no outstretched hands)
- **5 minutes:** The child learns how to pet the dog in a calm, gentle manner (collar to tail)
- **10 minutes:** The handler/child look at pictures of the animal and discuss interesting facts and history of the animal. The child will share two things he/she likes best about the animal
- **10 minutes:** Handler/child talk about what the animal may need: walk, break, water, etc. and performs this (empathy building)
- **10 minutes:** Child shares again the safety/trust rules. The handler child talk about the next session (when the child will see the animal again and what they will do)

Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness

- The child will be or become attentive, calm and relaxed during the session
- The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal
- The child will be able to state the safety/trust rules
- The child will be able to remember and recite 2 special characteristics of the animal

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Session: #2 – Safety + Being Safe Around Unfamiliar Animals

General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)

- Observed decrease in child’s behavior (anxiety, stress)
- Observed increase in child’s behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)
- Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child
- Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child’s self-worth)

Ages: 3-11

Session length: 1 hour

Summary: This session will build on the 1st session and focus on **body language** and will teach the child about how to effectively interpret a dog’s body language based on cues/behavior of dogs. The child will also learn to recognize his/her own body language and how it impacts the dog. (i.e. soft voice, approach from side, firm but gentle stroke on the back). Handler and child will discuss topics through book and card game

Materials Used: See Resources. Card game (Dog Smart Card Game) + charts (older kids)

Process Details: breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details

- **5 minutes:** Introductions of handler and animal and child (child remains with foster parent)
- **5 minutes:** Handler reminds child of safety and trust rules. Child recites back the safety and trust rules (3-6 depending on age)
- **5 minutes:** Handler reminds child how to approach the animal so the animal is relaxed and happy. (quiet, calm, slow, no outstretched hands) Pet animal from collar to tail.
- **20 min:** Discuss with child how being safe around animals is very important. #1 - Read book that discuss safely interacting with dogs. #2 - Discuss with child the how to greet a dog chart #3 – play card game
- **10 minutes:** Handler suggests a break and prompts child on what the dog may need (groom, water, walk, etc.) This activity is then performed by child (empathy building)
- **10 minutes:** The child shares 2 Dos and 2 Don’t to be safe around animals + points out what a stressed dog looks like vs. a happy relaxed dog (card game)
- **5 minutes:** Child shares again the safety/trust rules and the handler child talk about the next session (when the child will see the animal again and what they will do)

Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness

- The child will be or become attentive, calm and relaxed during the session
- The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal (what does the animal need – water, food, etc.)
- The child will be able to state the safety/trust rules
- The child will be able to remember and recite 2 Do’s + 2 Don’t to be safe around animals

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Session #3 Humane Care of your Animal

General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)

- *Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)*
- *Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)*
- *Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)*
- *Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child*

Ages: 3-11

Session length: 1 hour

Summary: *The Five Domains of Animal Welfare are: 1. Freedom from hunger or thirst by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor, 2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area, 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment, 4. Freedom to express (most) normal behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind, 5. Freedom from fear and distress by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering. The child will learn that, beyond the basic needs, companion animals (pets) have additional physical and psychological needs similar to humans: exercise and play; socialization, love and attention; regular grooming; and healthcare. Guardians (pet owners) have a responsibility to provide care to their pets. **This session will focus on teaching the child about all aspects of caring for an animal. This session will be key for education as well as promoting empathy. Could play Pablo Puppy: encouraging humane care of animals. Or "what a dog needs" lesson plan or something similar.***

Materials Used: *(books, etc.) Pablo Puppy: encouraging humane care of animals game*

Process Details: *breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details*

- **5 minutes:** *Handler will recap safety rules*
- **5 minutes:** *Handler will talk to the child about care that an animal needs in order to be healthy and happy, same as the things a child needs to be healthy and happy.*
- **15 minutes:** *Handler and child will begin to play the game*
- **10 minutes:** *(empathy) take a break, ask child "what might the animal need?" walk (double leash), pee/poop, treat, play?)*
- **15 minutes:** *Finish game and talk have child share 3 important things about animal care.*
- **10 minutes:** *Free time for child to play a game or have some other fun interaction with the dog.*

Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness)

- *The child will be attentive, calm, and relaxed during the session*
- *The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal*
- *The child will be able to state 3 things that are beautiful about nature/2 favorite activities dog/nature*
- *The child will be able to perform a training activity with the animal*

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Session #4 & #5 Positive Reinforcement Training

General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)

- *Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)*
- *Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)*
- *Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)*
- *Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child*

Ages: 3-18

Session length: 1 hour

Summary: *These 2 sessions (4/5) will focus on teaching the child about **Positive Reinforcement Training**, its importance, as well as the wrong way to train and why. The child will have an opportunity to teach the animal a trick and give a reward. In session #5, ultimately the child will teach the dog something a little more complicated (age dependent) The importance of play will also be highlighted and the handler will have a couple of play activities planned (this visit will take place outdoors if possible) Five elements of PRT 1. Come up with short, preferably one-word commands for the behaviors you want to teach; 2. As soon as your dog performs the desired behavior, reward him immediately with a treat and verbal praise 3. Keep training sessions short and fun; 4. Continue to use PRT for new behaviors to build mutual feelings of trust and confidence.*

Materials Used: *Book: 101 Tricks OR Articles/other information about Positive Reinforcement Training*

Process Details: *breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details*

- **5 minutes:** *Handler will recap safety rules*
- **10 minutes:** *Handler will review the elements of Positive Reinforcement Training and why it's important*
- **20 minutes:** *Handler and child will pick out a PRT activity and work with the dog to execute*
- **10 minutes:** *(empathy) take a break, ask child "what might the animal need?" walk (double leash), pee/poop, treat, play?)*
- **10 minutes:** *Child will share what they learned about PRT and why its beneficial for the dog*
- **5 minutes:** *Free time for child to play a game or have some other fun interaction with the dog.*

Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness

- *The child will be attentive, calm, and relaxed during the session*
- *The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal*
- *The child will be able to state 3 things that are beautiful about nature/2 favorite activities dog/nature*
- *The child will be able to perform a training activity with the animal*

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Session: #6

The Jobs Dogs Do

General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)

- *Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)*
- *Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)*
- *Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)*
- *Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child*

Ages: 3 – 11 years old

Session length: 1 hour

Summary: This session will focus on how special animals are, the many jobs they have, and the ways they help humans with coping and problem solving. This session will cover breeds of dogs, what they were bred for and the jobs they do to enhance human lives. The child will share 2 breeds he/she finds most interesting and helpful to humans and why. *Note: this session can also apply to horses/donkeys with their special talents/capabilities*

Materials Used: (books, etc.) Options: *Ben: the Best Furry Friend* or *Adventures of Doodle and Weeze*

Process Details: *breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details*

- **5 minutes:** *Handler will prompt child to share safety rules*
- **5 minutes:** *Handler and child will talk about how special animals are why? Give examples using your experience with your own animal, etc.*
- **20 minutes:** *Handler and child will read one of the two books (above) or own choice*
- **15 minutes:** *take a break, prompt child "what might the animal need?" walk (double leash walk, pee/poop, treat, play?) (empathy)*
- **10 minutes:** *Discuss book and have child share 2 breeds he/she finds the most interesting/special about how animals help humans and state why.*
- **5 minutes:** *Free time for child to play a game or have some other fun interaction with the dog.*

Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness

- *The child will be or become attentive, calm and relaxed during the session.*
- *The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal.*
- *The child will be able to state the safety/trust rules.*
- *The child will be able to state 2 of the jobs that animals do and what they like best*

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Session: #7 Animals and Nature	
<p>General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)</i> • <i>Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)</i> • <i>Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)</i> • <i>Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child</i> 	
Ages: All ages	
Session length: 1 hour	
<p>Summary: <i>This session will focus on Animals and Nature. The handler and child will take a walk in a natural setting with the dog on a double leash. Before the walk, the handler will review how to walk the dog, then talk to the child about the special benefits of being a part of nature. During the walk, the handler will talk about the plants, animals, and other sights and smells they encounter as well as fun activities to do with dogs in nature (hiking, swimming, ball throwing, etc.). The child will be able to share 2 beautiful things about nature and 2 favorite activities that he/she would like to do with a dog in nature. The child will perform a training activity with the dog.</i></p>	
<p>Materials Used: <i>(books, etc.) Double leash for the child to use to walk the dog with the handler.</i></p>	
<p>Process Details: <i>breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 minutes: <i>Handler will review with the child how to walk the dog.</i> • 10 minutes: <i>Handler will ask the child about nature: what the child likes about nature, what the child likes to do outside, what the child thinks the dog might like about nature. Then the handler will talk about the positive aspects of nature: beauty, quiet, places for all living things to live (e.g., birds, insects), opportunities to have fun (swimming, hiking, and camping).</i> • 25 minutes: <i>Handler and child walk the dog in a natural area. Handler talks about plants, animals, and other sights and smells they encounter, and explains that people and dogs are also part of the natural world. Handler asks the child to observe the dog: does it act any differently outside? How does it seem to be feeling? How does the child feel being outside in nature? Handler will ask the child to state 2 things that are beautiful in nature and 2 favorite activities that he/she would like to do with a dog in nature.</i> • 10 minutes: <i>Training activity: the child will practice a training activity that has already been learned with the dog, or the handler will teach the child a new activity. The child can praise the dog and give it a treat.</i> • 5 minutes: <i>The handler will take a picture of the child with the animal. (to be given to the child at the last session)</i> 	
<p>Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The child will be attentive, calm, and relaxed during the session</i> • <i>The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal</i> • <i>The child will be able to state 3 things that are beautiful about nature/2 favorite activities dog/nature</i> • <i>The child will be able to perform a training activity with the animal</i> 	

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Session: #8 Recap + Closing Visit	
<p>General Objectives for All Sessions (as applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Observed decrease in child's behavior (anxiety, stress)</i> ● <i>Observed increase in child's behavior (positive affect or mood, pleasure, well-being, safety)</i> ● <i>Observed/measured success as a result of learning (awareness of and retention of learned information, resulting in positive affect from the success (increase of child's self-worth)</i> ● <i>Observed empathy / care shown for the animal by the child</i> 	
Ages: All ages	
Session length: 1 hour	
<p>Summary: This session will focus on reviewing the last 7 weeks and doing activities. Child will share 2 things they learned about bite prevention, then demonstrate; humane care, then demonstrate, etc. Child will have an opportunity to groom, play, stroke, and walk the dog (depending upon interest) Handler and child will talk about the monthly play group and child's continued connection to the animal. Handler will present child with framed picture of child/animal.</p>	
<p>Materials Used: (books, etc.)<u>Options:</u> Ben: the Best Furry Friend or Adventures of Doodle and Weeze</p>	
<p>Process Details: <i>breakdown of how the time will be spent (min/hour) and other details</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5 minutes: <i>Child to share safety rules</i> ● 30 minutes: <i>Handler and child will recap learning in past sessions and allow the child to demonstrate. Child should be able to share 2 things they learned (with prompts if necessary) about each of the sessions.</i> ● 25 minutes: <i>Free time for child to play a game or have some other fun interaction with the dog (handler's choice). Framed photo is given to child.</i> 	
<p>Evaluation (observed behavioral changes, increase in understanding, awareness)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The child will be or become attentive, calm and relaxed during the session.</i> ● <i>The child will demonstrate care and empathy for the animal.</i> ● <i>The child will be able to state the safety/trust rules.</i> ● <i>The child will be able to state 2 things they learned (with prompts if necessary) about each of the sessions.</i> 	