

# Being humane at every age and stage

## **You can teach preschool aged children that animals can be a lot like children:**

- They need food, water, and shelter, as well as vaccinations and visits to the doctor to stay healthy.
- They can get hurt and feel pain.
- Pets need gentle care and handling and lots of affection. They aren't toys.
- Some pets, like dogs and cats, like to play but don't always want to.

## **Elementary school age children should be taught:**

- Aggressive actions towards animals can cause them fear, pain and suffering.
- Nature is the wild animals' home and you are the guests there. Just like any home, guests should not leave garbage behind, break things, or act loud and obnoxious.

- Each animal has a special purpose in the web of life.
- People and their pets share a special relationship, loving and caring for each other no matter what.

## **Middle and high school age children should understand:**

- The difference between fair treatment versus abuse or neglect.
- How society "uses" animals and the difference between humane and inhumane treatment of animals.
- Complex issues, such as euthanasia or unwanted pets, endangered species, use of animals in scientific experimentation.
- Why we need laws to protect animals from cruelty, even from their owners.
- The concept of charity, such as donating time or part of the child's allowance to a good cause.



Source: American Humane Association