



PETS IN CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Infants and children less than 5 years old are more likely than most people to get diseases from animals. Reptiles (e.g., lizards, snakes, turtles), amphibians (e.g., frogs, toads, newts, salamanders), and young birds (e.g., baby chicks, ducklings) should not be permitted in rooms occupied by children. Children and infants should not have contact with these animals or items that have been in contact with these animals or their environments.

When bringing appropriate pets into a childcare facility, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Children should always be properly supervised when animals are available.
2. Areas should be designated for animal contact. Such areas should be properly cleaned regularly and after animal contact. Food or drink should not be consumed in these areas.
3. No animals should be allowed to run freely.
4. All animals should be in good physical condition and vaccinated against transmittable diseases. Dogs, cats, and ferrets require proof of current rabies vaccination. Animals should be kept clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites, and lice.
5. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or bird on an as needed basis, (at a minimum of one time per week), and appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish and insects must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health. Persons cleaning cages must wear gloves, masks, and glasses or goggles. Cleaning should be performed by individuals >5 years, under the supervision of an adult. Ideally, cleaning should be performed when other children are not in the room.
6. Wash hands with soap and warm water after contact with animals or their environment.

Because wild animals can carry diseases that are dangerous to people, children should not have direct contact with wildlife. Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if the animal appears to be friendly.

For concerns about pets in a childcare facility please contact the Division of Public Health Services, Communicable Disease Control Section at (603) 271-4496 or 800-852-3345 ext. 4496.

For more information please view the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/>