

Lesson: Animal Babies and Health

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This lesson: Animal babies and health will allow students to explore the basics of animal health and safety. Access to baby animals will be supplied and students will tour the Vet tech facilities at Mezzacello and learn common disease vectors for various animals.

Students love baby animals, but they might not fully understand the life cycle of an animal. This lesson is designed to help students understand the complete life cycle

on an urban farm, and that sometimes that means they are a source of food.

But first they need a healthy environment, care, warmth, and a balanced diet. Even if an animal is destined to be a food source, it still deserves dignity, care and respect. Animals that are destined to provide alternate food source to meet (Eggs, manure, more animals) will have different needs.

Materials

- A source of baby animals
- A cage to secure them, feed them, water them, and provide shelter from wind, cold, or sunlight
- A whiteboard or paper for making notes the camp can see
- Dry erase markers
- Microfiber cloth for erasing things
- Gloves
- Boots
- Paper Towels
- Hand sanitizer
- A space preferably outdoors with grass, although asphalt or linoleum is fine, just bring sanitizer to clean up
- Access to fresh water from a watering can or a hose

Instructions

1. Introduce the animals to the students
2. Allow the students to identify the baby animal
 - It's OK to allow the students to handle the animals, but you MUST INSIST they wear gloves or wash their hands with soap afterwards
 - Handling a a baby animal is fun, but insist on treating the animal with grace kindness and ask students to listen to the animal for signs of fear or distress
 - This is a great lesson in [empathy](#) and [mindfulness](#)
 - If only one person expresses concern or fear, ask

- that person to be brave and share what they fear
 - Acknowledge that thought and show them kindness, ask others to as well
 - Remind them that we all of us were baby animals once
3. Ask the students to [observe](#) and share everything they know about this animal in their world
 4. Record those observations on the whiteboard
 5. Discuss the life cycle of this animal from birth to death
 - This might be a bit much
 - If one of the students mentions them as a food source you can address that
 - On an urban farm animals all serve more than one role and more than one source of food (meat, eggs, manure for plants, ect)
 - Ask students to reflect on the difference between a farm animal and a pet
 - [Are pets sustainable? Do they require extra care and feed and time?](#)
 - Are farm animals pets?
 6. Discuss the role of death in the lifecycle
 - Why are some animals food sources and not others
 - Why is that?
 - Discuss the role of culture in food
 - Why do some people eat insects and not other people
 - What about chickens or rabbits, cows and horses
 - Are these food choices random?
 - Are they food – or not – a result of any specific cultural theme?
 7. Ask your students if an animal can have more than one use on an urban farm?
 8. Now attend the needs of this baby animal
 - Do they or it have adequate food, water, shelter, care?
 - If not what would the students add?

9. [Discuss the role of electrolytes and medicated feed for baby animals](#)
10. Poll the students to see if they all agree that these baby animals are safe and healthy