

Animals

Background understanding for caregivers:

Animals play an important role in our world. They provide us with food and they produce fertilizer to the soil. However, the farming of animals has been more and more separated from its natural existence on the land and moved to big industrialized systems that are more like factories than farms. This has severe implications on animal welfare. Millions of animals have terrible living conditions, which lead to suffering, stress and sickness. Many animals are fed with antibiotics, pesticides and hormones. Unhappy animals lead to unhealthy meat, dairy and eggs, which we as humans consume.



There is more and more awareness on alternative ways of treating animals and finding healthy ways of food production. The children you care for now will one day be part of this positive development and you can help them become aware of how they can act from an early age. You can also look to traditional ways of working with animals in a household.

Depending on age, you can explain this to the children with examples from your own area: young children can start learning how to care for animals, older children can learn about healthy and unhealthy ways of producing food from animals.



Examples of healthy behavior with animals:

- If you have any animals at your institution make sure to treat them with kindness and respect
- Feed them every day
- Pet them if they are tame
- Make sure that they have space to move around, socialize and dig the grass/soil/dirt



How can you teach the children to respect animals and treat them with kindness?

It is important that children learn where food comes from, and how important it is for humans and the environment that the animals we eat have lived a happy and healthy life. This knowledge will encourage the children to develop healthy habits in their adult life.



An activity day with the children about this topic could include:

- Have a discussion with the children about how they think animals feel when they are treated good and when they are treated bad
- If you do not have animals at the institution, make a trip to a small farm, where the children can interact with animals
- If you do have animals at the institution make a plan where the children take turn on taking care of the animals, including feeding them, mucking out and petting them
- The children generating ideas on how the institution can get the most out of the animals (eggs, milk, meat) without compromising on the animal welfare.