



SNAPSHOT 4H1640

4-H Cat Project



CURRICULA & RESOURCES

National 4-H Curricula

<http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/curriculum/>

- » Cats
 - Purr-fect Pals (08148)
 - Climbing Up (08149)
 - Leaping Forward (08150)
 - Helper's Guide (08151)

Other Resources

- » The Cat Fanciers' Association: <http://www.cfa.org/Shows/AboutCFAShows.aspx>
- » eXtension: <http://www.extension.org/category/cat>
- » The International Cat Association: <http://www.tica.org/member.php>



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Cats are a wonderful addition to a family and great companions for anyone living alone. They require minimal care but love attention. The 4-H cat project helps you explore what kind of cat fits into your family's lifestyle. It will enable you to be an excellent trainer and caretaker of your cat.

- » Learn major cat breeds and identify their characteristics.
- » Study responsibilities of cat ownership.
- » Demonstrate cat care and management in feeding, handling, keeping records, grooming and fitting.
- » Learn cat health regulations, first aid and simple treatments for ailments.
- » Explore careers related to animal science.

THE BIG PICTURE

Starting Out:

- » Gather information and determine the best cat for your family.
- » Learn about the proper care, grooming and feeding of your cat.
- » Learn to identify the parts of a cat.
- » Create a plan to prevent your cat from getting lost and an emergency plan for if it does get lost.
- » Purchase the appropriate grooming equipment and use proper grooming techniques on your cat.
- » Practice appropriate training for your cat.
- » Learn the various body language signs of your cat's personality.

Learning More:

- » Plan a training and exercise program for your cat.
- » Prepare your cat for participation in cat shows.
- » Make a decision about breeding or not breeding your cat.
- » Compare the labels on cat foods to make an informed decision on content and price.
- » Keep a diary of your cats's health and eating habits.
- » Research kennel facilities in your area and decide if one is right for your cat.

Expanding Horizons:

- » Create a trainer's diary to assist you when you work with your cat.
- » Create a cat ownership budget plan.
- » Help a friend make a decision about owning a cat.
- » Research diseases in cats.
- » Identify symptoms and a course of action if your cat gets sick.
- » Research career options dealing with cats.



FOCUS ON CATS

Science

- » Explore the parts and function of a cat's digestive system.
- » Monitor the effect of environmental conditions on your cat.
- » Learn about pack behavior and compare it to your own cat's behavior.

Citizenship & Leadership

- » Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- » Write a letter to your local paper about the importance of having cats spayed or neutered.
- » Organize a cat show for your club.
- » Develop a plan to foster cats of deploying soldiers.

Communication

Prepare a poster or demonstration on:

- » How to approach an unfamiliar cat safely.
- » How to prepare a cat for showing.
- » How to train a cat for showing.
- » How to select a nutritional diet.
- » How to select cat species for your family.

Life Skills

- » Use critical-thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills to help you make good decisions about project management.
- » Keep records on your project expenses and income.
- » Practice personal resiliency through successes and challenges in your project.



HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- » Contact your local Michigan State University (MSU) Extension office for workshops, activities and events.
- » Learn about service animals and the process of fostering and training one.
- » Job shadow at a local business (pet store, veterinary clinic, breeder or groomer) in a cat-related career that interests you.
- » Go to local and area cat shows, and explore the differences in cat breeds and the different ways they are shown.
- » Explore health safety issues with cats and the diseases cats have that might make humans ill.
- » Explore what kinds of cats make the best pets and what breeds make the best inside or outside pets.
- » Learn how local pet stores acquire cats.
- » Research all the kinds of parasites your cat might get, and find out how to protect yourself and your cat.
- » Do some comparison shopping for cat supplies.
- » Explore what kind of restrictions and laws your community might have on cats.
- » Explore the uses and benefits of animal-assisted therapy.
- » Attend a 4-H cat project meeting.
- » Complete a cat project record book to track your income, expenses and experiences with your cat.
- » Contact your local MSU Extension 4-H staff to be nominated to serve on the State 4-H Companion Animal Committee.
- » If you are interested in a college education in animal science or veterinary medicine, visit MSU's website at www.msu.edu to explore those majors.

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