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**An Annotated Bibliography of Research Relevant to
Interactions with Animals
2014-2015**

The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy

**Compiled by Erich Yahner
(All Abstracts and Summaries from Authors or Publishers)**

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Baumgartner, E., & Cho, J. I. (2014). Animal-assisted activities for students with disabilities: obtaining stakeholders' approval and planning strategies for teachers. *Childhood Education, 90*(4), 281-290.

Animal-human interactions have been found to have positive influences on children across the world. In particular, research supports the benefits of animal-assisted activities in addressing students' social and behavioral problems within the classroom environment. The general information about animal-assisted activities provided in this article can help teachers identify key steps in effectively using such activities to teach socially important behaviors to children with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, and autism. The author explains that the effectiveness of animals in classrooms is dependent on strong administrative, parental, and collegial support; clear and measurable goals; well-developed instructional plans; an appropriate animal choice; well-developed health and safety procedures; and systematic plans for monitoring progress in student performance.

Jalongo, M. R. (2015). An Attachment Perspective on the Child–Dog Bond: Interdisciplinary and International Research Findings. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 43*(5), 395-405.

Understanding the process of attachment formation in young children has been a focal point in child development research for decades. However, young children's attachments are not only with human beings; they also form bonds with companion animals, particularly dogs (*Canis familiaris*). Given the number of dogs that are kept by families and the amount of time that young children spend with these animals, the child–dog bond merits further study. In this review of the literature, young children's interactions with companion canines are explored from an attachment theory perspective. Research on human–animal interaction is a burgeoning field of inquiry that includes well-established disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, child development/family studies) as well as emerging fields, such as anthrozoology, neurobiology, ethology, and bioecology. This review is grounded and organized around four themes in the research: (1) the treatment of animals in the family; (2) influences on the child/dog bond; (3) the uniqueness of attachments formed with dogs; and (4) canine attachment behaviors. The review concludes with a discussion about why study of the child–companion animal attachment has lagged behind other areas of study and offers recommendations for future research.

Krull, C., Suchomel, J., & Bechtel, M. (2015). Effects of Animals in Post-Secondary Science Classrooms on Academic Achievement, Academic Retention, and Intrinsic Motivation. *American Journal of Educational Research, 3*(9), 1193-1207.

This study investigates biophilia, the love of life, and how to incorporate this concept, originally recognized by E.O. Wilson, into schools [9] Studies have shown animals can increase student interest, motivation, attitude, academic achievement, and academic retention. However, resistance to animals in classrooms has emerged because of safety concerns. After consulting past research, the prediction is made that after attending lessons taught using the 5E Learning Cycle, students in a class with animals will have higher academic achievement, academic retention, and intrinsic motivation. Students were taught using a 5E

lesson design for two nonconsecutive lab experiences. During the two-pronged study, students were differentiated into each one of the following groups at one point throughout the study: 1) content covering evolution using living herpetofauna, versus images, and 2) the Theory of Natural Selection using the classroom's terrariums and enclosures as models, versus images. After the study, a paired t-test was run and found no significant difference in the academic achievement and academic retention for student taught with animals versus those that were not. There was however, a difference in intrinsic motivation, which turned the focus into what the change in motivation means for future research. This study was one step in a much larger academic reform involving how students learn, and continued research is needed in order to ensure significance with biophilia in the classroom.

Le Roux, M. C., Swartz, L., & Swart, E. (2014, December). The effect of an animal-assisted reading program on the reading rate, accuracy and comprehension of grade 3 students: A randomized control study. In *Child & Youth Care Forum* (Vol. 43, No. 6, pp. 655-673). Springer US.

Background - Animal-assisted therapy has been widely used with students. This study is the first known investigation into the impact of an animal-assisted reading program on reading skills, employing an experimental pre-test/post-test control group design and controlling for the effects of extra attention to student's reading. Objective - The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effects of an animal-assisted reading program on the reading rate, accuracy and comprehension of grade 3 students. Method - Students identified by the ESSI Reading Test as poor readers (N = 102) were randomly assigned to three experimental groups and one control group. Twenty-seven students read to a dog in the presence of a Pets as Therapy volunteer, 24 students read directly to an adult, while 26 students read to a teddy bear in the presence of an adult. Students in the control group (n = 25) were not part of the program and continued with their normal school activities. Data collection took place before the start of the program (Time 1), directly after completion of the 10-week reading program (Time 2), and again 8 weeks after the completion of the program (Time 3). Results - Mixed method analysis of variance revealed significant interaction between group and time on the Neale reading comprehension scores with the "dog group" scoring higher than the three other groups. Conclusion - The animal-assisted reading program had an impact on some of the reading skills of the students who read to a dog. The program is flexible and can be applied in a variety of settings.

O'Haire, M. E., McKenzie, S. J., McCune, S., & Slaughter, V. (2014). Effects of classroom animal-assisted activities on social functioning in children with autism spectrum disorder. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 20(3), 162-168.

Objective: The objective of this study was to implement and evaluate a classroom-based Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA) program on social functioning in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). *Design:* This was a multisite, control-to-intervention design study. *Settings/location:* The study was conducted in 41 classrooms in 15 schools in Brisbane, Australia. *Subjects:* Sixty-four (64) 5- to 12-year-old children diagnosed with ASD comprised the study group. *Intervention:* The AAA program consisted of 8 weeks of animal exposure in the school classroom in addition to 16 20-minute animal-interaction sessions. *Outcome measures:* Teacher- and parent-reported child behavior and social functioning were assessed through standardized instruments at three time points: upon study entry (Time 1), after an 8-week waiting period during the week prior to the AAA program (Time 2), and during the week following the 8-week AAA program (Time 3). *Results:* Significant improvements were identified in social functioning, including increases in social approach behaviors and social skills, and decreases in social withdrawal behaviors, from before to after the AAA program, but not during the waitlist period. Over half of parents also reported that participants demonstrated an increased interest in attending school during the program. *Conclusions:* Results demonstrate the feasibility and potential efficacy of a new classroom-based Animal-Assisted Activities model, which may provide a relatively simple and cost-effective means of helping educators and families to improve the social functioning of children with ASD.

Pendry, P., Carr, A. M., Smith, A. N., & Roeter, S. M. (2014). Improving Adolescent Social Competence and Behavior: A Randomized Trial of an 11-Week Equine Facilitated Learning Prevention Program. *The journal of primary prevention, 35*(4), 281-293.

There is growing evidence that promoting social competence in youth is an effective strategy to prevent mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders in adulthood. Research suggests that programs delivered in collaboration with schools are particularly effective when they target social and emotional skill building, utilize an interactive instructional style, provide opportunities for youth participation and self-direction, and include explicit attempts to enhance youth social competence. A relatively new but popular approach that incorporates these characteristics is human animal interaction, which can be implemented in educational settings. We report the results from a randomized clinical trial examining the effects of an 11-week equine facilitated learning (EFL) program on the social competence and behavior of 5th–8th grade children. Children ($N = 131$) were recruited through referral by school counselors and school-based recruitment and then screened for low social competence. Researchers randomly assigned children to an experimental ($n = 53$) or waitlisted control group ($n = 60$). Children in the experimental group participated in an 11-week EFL program consisting of once-weekly, 90-min sessions of individual and team-focused activities, whereas children in the control group served as a wait-listed control and participated 16 weeks later. Parents of children in both groups rated child social competence at pretest and posttest. Three independent raters observed and reported children's positive and negative behavior using a validated checklist during each weekly session. Results indicated that program participation had a moderate treatment effect ($d = .55$) on social competence ($p = .02$) that was independent of pretest levels, age, gender, and referral status. Results showed that higher levels of program attendance predicted children's trajectories of observed positive ($\beta = .500$; $p = .003$) and negative behavior ($\beta = -.062$; $p < .001$) over the 11-week program.

Pinto, L. E., & Foulkes, D. (2015). Well-Being and Human-Animal Interactions in Schools: The Case of “Dog Daycare Co-Op”. *Brock Education Journal, 24*(2).

This study draws on Martha Nussbaum's (2000) account of the nature of human wellbeing in order to explore the role of animals in formal education settings. Nussbaum's capabilities approach identifies the ability “to have concern for and live with other animals, plants and the environment” (p. 80) as a necessary component for well-being. Yet, this condition of well-being remains largely unexplored in education despite research that suggests many potential social and health benefits of dog-human interaction. This paper describes the effects of a unique, Canadian school-based cooperative education program in which students work with animals for high school credit. The qualitative research design is based on interviews, students' own stories of the impact of animal interaction – particularly in light of other challenges they faced academically and socially. Research results, support other empirical accounts of positive effects of animals in education settings, and offer insight into the nature of human-animal interaction as a component of well-being within a vocationally-oriented program.

Rothgerber, H., & Mican, F. (2014). Childhood pet ownership, attachment to pets, and subsequent meat avoidance. The mediating role of empathy toward animals. *Appetite, 79*, 11-17.

Researchers studying childhood pet ownership outcomes do not typically focus on measures of adult diet, and those studying the psychology of meat consumption do not normally consider early experiences with companion animals. The present research sought to integrate these two areas by examining relationships between childhood pet ownership, pet attachment, empathy toward animals, belief in human–animal similarity, meat avoidance, and justifications for eating meat. Results from 273 individuals responding to a survey on an internet platform revealed that participants with greater childhood attachment to a pet reported greater meat avoidance as adults, an effect that disappeared when controlling for animal empathy. Greater childhood pet attachment was also related to the use of indirect, apologetic justifications for meat consumption, and this effect too, was mediated by empathy toward animals. Child pet ownership itself predicted views toward animals but not dietary behavior or meat-eating justifications. The authors propose a sequence of events by which greater childhood pet attachment leads to increased meat avoidance, focusing on the central role played by empathy toward animals.

Tardif-Williams, C. Y., & Bosacki, S. L. (2015). Evaluating the Impact of a Humane Education Summer-Camp Program on School-Aged Children's Relationships with Companion Animals. *Anthrozoös*, 28(4), 587-600.

This study evaluated the impact of children's participation in a five-day humane education summer-camp program on the quality of their relationships with and treatment of companion animals. We measured changes from pre- to post-program in 77 children (50 girls, 27 boys) aged 6–12 years. The program promoted positive interactions between children and animals in natural settings, with a focus on either companion animals or farm/forest animals. The Companion Animal Bonding Scale, the Pet Friendship Scale, the Comfort from Companion Animal Scale, the Children's Treatment of Animal Questionnaire, and a drawing task were administered to children prior to the beginning of the camp on day one and again at the end of day five. Overall, the results showed that after five days of humane education in summer camp, children reported sharing significantly closer bonds and friendships with their companion animals. These results were more pronounced for girls versus boys, among younger (aged 6 to 8 years) versus older (aged 9 to 12 years) children, and among children receiving the companion-animal versus farm/forest-animal curriculum. Older boys reported significantly lower scores on the humane treatment of their companion animals, compared with younger boys, and both older and younger girls. Comparisons by type of curriculum also suggested that the humane education curriculum that focused on farm/forest animals resonated more with the girls versus the boys. The implications for camp- and classroom- based humane education programs are discussed.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Boyer, W. (2014). Using interactions between children and companion animals to build skills in self-regulation and emotion regulation. In *Teaching compassion: Humane education in early childhood* (pp. 33-47). Springer Netherlands. ISBN: 978940076921.

A decade into the twenty-first century, educators are becoming significantly more interested in the self-regulation and emotion regulation skills that children and youth will need in order to thrive in their learning and living contexts and avoid the alienation and loneliness that are becoming pervasive in our society. Empirical researchers and neuroscientists are exploring evidence-based practices and programs that can support the acquisition of self-regulation and emotion regulation through human-animal companion relationships. This chapter includes the definitions of and differentiation between self-regulation and emotion regulation, the current conception and role of companion animals, how children benefit from interactions with companion animals, and the self-regulation and emotion regulation skills that can be nurtured when children and animals interact and bond.

Hediger, K., Beetz, A., Zinsstag, J., Schelling, E., Waltner-Toews, D., Whittaker, M., & Tanner, M. (2015). The role of human-animal interactions in education. *One Health: The theory and practice of integrated health approaches*, 73. ISBN: 9781780643410.

No summary available.

Klotz, K. (2014). Promoting Humane Education Through Intermountain Therapy Animals' READ® Program. In *Teaching Compassion: Humane Education in Early Childhood* (pp. 175-195). Springer Netherlands. ISBN: 978940076921.

The Reading Education Assistance Dogs® (R.E.A.D.) program, a literacy support model utilizing therapy animals to help children develop their reading and communication skills, presents many ongoing, if informal, opportunities to promote humane concepts and behaviors. Key is the establishment of secure, trusted relationships and ongoing exposure to positive role models.

Szecs, T. (2014). Teaching Preservice Early Childhood Educators About Humane Education. In *Teaching Compassion: Humane Education in Early Childhood* (pp. 49-65). Springer Netherlands. ISBN: 978940076921.

Young children are inquisitive about their environment. Humane education has the potential to create various learning opportunities to expand children's understanding and skills for becoming responsible

citizens of the globe. The infusion of humane education values into curriculum should occur every day. Therefore, early childhood teachers should incorporate humane education in lessons across the curriculum. Nevertheless, teachers need experience and preparation for this task. In the field of teacher preparation, courses on humane education can create opportunities for preservice teachers to construct knowledge, skills, and attitudes for shaping young children's mind about the environment. This chapter proposes an argument for the infusion of humane education courses within teacher preparation. The theoretical framework emerges from a review of research on school-based humane education programs and on humane education courses at the university level. Subsequently, a project that piloted infused multidisciplinary humane education courses into teacher preparation is described, followed by the recommendations for early childhood teacher educators.

BOOKS

Rice, S., & Rud, A. G. (Eds.). (2015). *The educational significance of human and non-human animal interactions: Blurring the species line*. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 9781137505248.

The lives of animals and humans are deeply intertwined and mutually influencing. In recent years, there has been a growing appreciation of ways in which the interactions of human animals and non-human animals matter educationally. This book seeks to contribute to the ongoing conversation about animals and education.