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### **Survey Shows Classroom Pets Enhance Learning Experience for Students**

*A survey produced by the Pets in the Classroom grant program shows the impact the program has had on students during the 2023-24 school year.*

**FOREST HILL, MD (July 9, 2024)** - The [Pets in the Classroom grant program](#) is pleased to announce the results of its 2024 teacher survey. The survey, which polled teachers across the United States and Canada who have received funding for classroom pets through their grant program in the past two years, received an overwhelming response, with over 2,100 teachers participating. The survey findings emphasize the numerous ways that classroom pets have a positive impact on students, from enhancing social-emotional development to improving academic engagement to fostering a love for learning.

Ninety-nine percent of respondents said that having a pet in the classroom has been a positive experience, and teachers reported that interacting with classroom pets helped improve attendance, reduce anxiety levels, foster empathy and compassion, enhance test and academic performance, develop social skills, boost self-esteem, and decrease disciplinary measures. The data, coupled with the comments that teachers shared through the survey, demonstrate the impact classroom pets are making:

**Attendance:** 80 percent of teachers saw an improvement in attendance due to their classroom pet. One teacher shared, *"I have a student who has had a terrible attendance record. This year, she has missed very little; her mother told me it is because she is responsible for taking care of our classroom animals every day."*

**Decreased anxiety:** 95 percent of teachers saw a decrease in anxiety among students. A teacher remarked, *"I have many students who greatly struggle with anxiety and emotional regulation, having and holding the pets in my classroom has been such a gift. They are able to step outside of the situation and care for the pet in a way that helps them too to settle and regulate their emotions."*

**Empathy/compassion:** Nearly 98 percent of teachers saw an increase in empathy and compassion, thanks to a classroom pet. *"I have noticed a big change in my students' empathy. Listening to them care for our classroom pet (beta fish) makes a huge difference in how they treat each other."*

**Test/academic performance:** Nearly 79 percent of teachers saw an improvement in test/academic performance. One teacher stated, *"Students are super motivated by being able to engage with the classroom pet, which has enhanced class participation and test scores."*

**Responsibility:** Nearly 98 percent of teachers saw an increase in student responsibility: *“Having a classroom pet has helped with our classroom management and the children's sense of responsibility. They are in charge of feeding our hamster as well as cleaning the cage. They have also learned how to handle it carefully and to be quiet in our classroom so we don't hurt the hamster's ears. One of the students even made her own hamster rules book, it's adorable. We have greatly enjoyed having our classroom pet - he is a great addition to our community.”*

**Self-esteem:** Around 93 percent of teachers surveyed saw an improvement in self-esteem in students. One teacher commented, *“Crocodile's (our bearded dragon) presence in our classroom sparked growth and confidence. Shy students found their voices, and everyone learned the value of empathy and responsibility. I would encourage most teachers to get a classroom pet.”*

**Increased social skills:** Nearly 96 percent of teachers saw an increase in social skills: *“I have had several students who are not social and struggle with interacting with others. My classroom pet has allowed these students to show responsibility, engage with others, and feel a sense of community when being tasked with caring and supervising the classroom pet. These students are now more social and other students are taking time to get to know them on a personal level.”*

**Student engagement:** Nearly 98 percent of teachers saw an increase in student engagement. One teacher said, *“The kids are actively engaged. In a lot of lessons in my science class, concepts are abstract. But, when I can connect it to Fluffy they are all immediately more invested and can understand concepts better.”*

**Decrease in necessary student disciplinary measures:** Of the teachers surveyed, 87 percent saw a decrease in necessary student disciplinary measures: *“I have a couple of students who struggle with their behavior in class. Since getting [our] pets in the classroom, their behaviors and anxiety levels have come down a lot. When they start to get overwhelmed, or a bit out of control, they gravitate towards our pets. I can just see whatever they were dealing with melt away within minutes.*

The statistics, coupled with the heartwarming comments shared by teachers about how pets are transforming their students' lives, truly show the impact of the program. One teacher stated, *“Having a hamster in our classroom has been an absolute joy! Our little furry friend has not only brought smiles to our faces but has also taught us valuable lessons about responsibility, empathy, and care. Watching the students interact with the hamster has been heartwarming. They eagerly take turns feeding, cleaning, and playing with our tiny classroom companion. It has sparked a sense of teamwork and cooperation among them as they collaborate to ensure the hamster's well-being. Moreover, having a hamster has added a unique element to our learning environment. It serves as a constant source of fascination and curiosity, leading to spontaneous discussions about animal behavior, habitats, and life cycles. Overall, having a hamster in our classroom has enriched our educational experience in countless ways. It's not just a pet; it's a cherished member of our classroom community, teaching us valuable lessons every day.”*

The Pets in the Classroom grant program was established by the Pet Care Trust with the knowledge that classroom pets can be a valuable teaching tool that many teachers do not have access to because of a lack of funding. Since the program's inception in 2010, Pets in the Classroom has issued 246,704 grants. This means that an estimated 9.8 million children have experienced the joys and benefits of pet care through the program.

As teachers look for more ways to support their students in the upcoming school year, the Pets in the Classroom grant program is ready to help by providing funding for classroom pets to pre-K – 9th grade teachers across the U.S. and Canada beginning August 1.

Learn more about the Pets in the Classroom grant program by visiting [www.PetsintheClassroom.org](http://www.PetsintheClassroom.org).