

“What will the hamster eat?”
A lesson to learn about healthy choices for the classroom hamster

Summary:

In this lesson, preschool students ages three to four will predict the types of food that a hamster will eat, help perform research to learn what types of food hamsters SHOULD eat, and then test the information on the classroom hamster.

Materials:

Hamster

Chart paper

Markers

Computer with internet access

Optional: Two Bite Club book from the Team Nutrition Website

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/two-bite-club>

Introduction:

Objectives:

Students will be able to make one prediction regarding what can be fed to a hamster.

Students will be able to name at least three resources that can be used to learn more about feeding a hamster.

Procedure:

During morning meeting, the class will discuss foods that they enjoy eating. Each student will be asked to name one favorite food.

Students will be asked what the classroom hamster eats each day. The class will work together to create a list of at least 10 other foods that a hamster might like.

The teacher will ask the class how to learn which foods are safe for a hamster. The class will work together to create a list of at least three resources that can be used to gain information about hamsters. With teacher guidance, the list will include the library, the pet store, and the internet.

Lesson:

Objectives:

Students will work together to formulate a list of at least three questions to ask on a field trip to learn more about hamsters.

Students will take a field trip to the local pet store and library to learn more about what hamsters can eat.

Students will be able to recall at least one fact learned during the field trips. The class will use the information recalled to update the original list.

Students will label foods on the list as “every day” and “sometimes” foods, based on information gathered during the field trips.

Procedure:

Students will work together to create a list of at least three questions that can be asked to learn more about healthy treats for hamsters. The classroom teacher will show the students how to use search engines to look for information online, and find answers to each question.

During the school year, the class will take the list of questions and the information found online to local “experts.” Field trips can include, but are not limited to, local vet, local pet store, and the local library. If a field trip is not possible, speakers may be invited to the classroom.

As information is learned from “the experts,” the class will update the food lists made. Once the list has at least five new foods for the hamster to try, the class can begin introducing a new food each week. Students will record if the hamster liked the food or did not touch the food within a 24 hour period on a chart hanging in the classroom.

Closure:

After all new foods have been introduced; students will go through and re-introduce foods the hamster did not like one more time. Discuss how this is similar to the “Two Bite Club” that the students are in. Students will be invited to make posters of the hamster’s favorite foods to hang in the discovery area.

Assessment:

- Students will be able to contribute at least one idea to the class discussion during the introduction.
- Students will be able to recall at least one fact from one field trip when updating the hamster food list.
- Students will be able to create a poster advertising at least one favorite hamster food.