

Norman the Guinea Pig



Last year I bought Norman a guinea pig for our class pet. We learned about a variety of animals and then voted on the one we wanted for our classroom. After we decided on a guinea pig we voted on a name by using voice output software for my students who are mostly nonverbal. Staff, students, and parents voted to name him Norman. This year I will be doing an extension lesson for my returning students. My lesson is for students who have profound disabilities. I know my lesson plan is different than you might see with regular education teachers, yet it has been a joy to have him as a member of our class.

Supplies:

Books on pet care

Visuals for steps for pet care.

Chart for jobs for students

Data chart to track food/water intake

Cleaning chart

Rewards chart for students to give a treat with Norman on break time

Steps:

1. Teacher will read books on pet care during interactive reading time and introduce Norman to the class. (first two weeks of school)

2. Teacher will model how to care for Norman by using visual supports to show the steps to care for him. (hand sanitizer steps, feeding steps, watering steps, how to hold Norman with safe hands, and giving Norman a treat steps) Each one of the jobs will have a visual schedule that breaks all the steps down with a dry erase to check off as the steps are completed.
3. Teacher will assign each student a day to have a job of feeding, watering, or cleaning the cage with assistance once a week before we leave for the weekend. (Norman lives at Mrs. Horn's house on the weekends to make sure she is safe. 😊) Once the students are successful in completing the care jobs for Norman they will move on to the extension lesson.

Extension Lesson

1. Teacher will use a large chart paper to model how to record how much water and food Norman is eating.
2. Students will use estimation on his bowl and water bottle with the premarked lines available. Each day the students will mark how much food and water that Norman has on the chart. At the end of the week the class will calculate how much food and water he has used by reading the chart and subtracting the numbers. The class will then record weekly on the white board how much he has eaten or drank for the week. At the end of the month, they will add the weeks up to see how much he ate and drank in month. The teacher will use a clear bowl and clear pitcher to show the class how much a month's worth of food and water is. Each month's total will be recorded on the board. The class will compare month to month to see if it is less or more. At the end of the year the class will add the 8 months up and learn how to get the average of all the months.

Rewards:

My student's struggle to stay on task and I use giving Norman a reward or holding Norman with safe hands to motivate my kiddos.

1. Each student has a chart called a "work for" board. The board has Velcro with tokens that can be attached. Each one has between 4 to 8 pieces, along with a picture of Norman at the top. First the student selects the reward they want to work for (either treat or holding). They student will be given a token each time they complete a task and reminded often that they are working for Norman. After they earn the reward we read a short social story about holding Norman or giving Norman a treat. We set a timer and allow the student to use the reward, and repeat. (This has been a game changer for two of my students last year. As long as they know they are working for Norman than they keep working)