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Millions of Students Impacted by Teacher Grant Program

Through the Pets in the Classroom grant program, millions of students are experiencing the joys and benefits of interacting with pets in the classroom setting.

The Pet Care Trust is pleased to announce the impact their Pets in the Classroom grant program has made since the program's inception in 2011, helping millions of students to experience the joy and benefits of companion animals at school. Through December 31, 2019, the program has brought classroom pets to over 167,000 classrooms, impacting over 6.6 million students nationwide and in Canada.

The program, which provides funding for a small animal or pet supplies to Pre-Kindergarten through 9th grade teachers in both private and public schools, was established by the Pet Care Trust with the knowledge that, while pets are a valuable teaching tool, many teachers have very limited resources for the support of classroom animals.

"We are excited to share some strong measurable results of having pets in the classroom," said Jackie King, Executive Director of the Pet Care Trust. "The results from an American Humane study, as well as a large teacher survey that was conducted both point to the fact that the Pets in the Classroom program has a tremendous positive impact on students and their development."

Phase II of the [American Humane Research Study](#) on pets in the classroom was published in the Human Animal Interaction Research Bulletin in the summer of 2019. Through the study, teachers with classroom pets reported significantly greater increases in overall social skills (including communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement, and self-control); better social competence; and improved academic reading competence. Additionally, parent respondents indicated they saw significantly greater increases in pro-social behaviors among their children compared to parents with children in classrooms without pets.

The research confirms what teachers have shared with the Pets in the Classroom grant program. A [survey conducted in the spring of 2019](#) by the Pets in the Classroom grant program received over 10,200 overwhelmingly positive responses from teachers who have received Pets in the Classroom grants within the past two years. Through the survey, teachers reported that their students had demonstrated improvements in the following areas:

- 98% of teachers saw an increase in empathy and compassion, thanks to a classroom pet.
- 98% of teachers saw an increase in student responsibility.

- 97% of teachers saw an increase in student engagement.
- 95% of teachers saw an increase in social skills.
- 93% of teachers saw some decrease in anxiety among students.
- 92% of teachers surveyed saw an improvement in students' self-esteem.
- 86% saw a decrease in necessary student disciplinary measures.
- 78% of teachers saw an improvement in test/academic performance.
- 78% of teachers saw an improvement in attendance due to their classroom pet.

Through the survey, teachers across the U.S. and Canada have shared valuable insight about the transformative power of classroom pets. Of the many comments teachers share with us, one teacher stated:

I am a school counselor at the middle school level. I have a guinea pig that the students look forward to visiting every day. They have even started a guinea pig club. Having our pig has taught students responsibility and kindness. But, most of all our pig has helped so many students struggling with anxiety, anger and self-esteem issues. Our guinea pig brings joy to many students each and every day!

The survey results, coupled with the American Humane study and thousands of previously shared teachers' experiences, show the many benefits that pets can provide to students in the classroom. One little pet can help shy kids open up, struggling readers build confidence, aggressive children develop nurturing tendencies, and apathetic students gain a new desire for learning.

“We’ve given millions of children the opportunity to achieve academic success, increase their social skills, and create lasting memories through caring for a classroom pet,” concluded King, “and we look forward to providing this opportunity to millions more children.”

To learn more about the Pets in the Classroom grant program, visit www.petsintheclassroom.org.