

Vet Clinic

Introduction to the Exhibit:

Welcome to the Veterinary Clinic, where children can take on the role of a veterinarian and treat the animals seeking their care! From screening various animal X-rays to weighing a puppy on the scale, this exhibit allows children to participate in real-life situations to experience what it's like to work in a veterinary clinic. Learn about proper pet care from a variety of books on the counters and try to see if you can figure out which items are best for dogs and cats on our wall next to the Toddler Park. Put on a vet's coat, fill a dish with dog food, start the washing station and help the animals be healthy, happy pets!

The Power of Play

By role playing and creating real life situations, children learn about the world around them and discover key skills important for their success with peers. During play, children strengthen their discoveries about suitable behavior in various situations, as well as enhance their ability to think creatively. In addition to promoting the growth of imagination, improving memory and increasing vocabulary skills, the opportunity to engage in role play allows children the chance to learn valuable social and perspective-taking skills that they will continue to develop into their adult lives. This exhibit is an ideal place for undirected play to occur, which encourages children to share ("Can I use the X-Ray machine when you're finished with it?") listen ("What kind of medicine should I give to my sick cat?") and negotiate ("Let's take turns washing the puppies. I'll use the sink first while you help dry them off - then we'll switch!") while learning to work in pairs and/or groups. Role play (such as pretending to be a veterinarian or an owner of a sick pet) enables children to make choices and explore while developing language and leadership skills.

ASK: How much does the large dog weigh? Can your child find a place to measure his height on the wall? What part of the animal is shown in the X-rays? What do X-rays tell us about an animal? What does a cat eat? How do you wash and care for a dog's coat?

LISTEN: Does your child make animal noises as he plays? Listen to your child playing with other children: Is she playing the role of a pet owner or veterinarian? How is your child speaking to the animals? Encourage your child to use the veterinary tools to listen to the dog's heartbeat.

LOOK: Observe the animals to which your child is drawn. Look at how he handles the pets: does he interact with them as toys or as living creatures? Examine and look at the X-rays with your child to determine what may be wrong with the pets. Look at the photos of the Museum visitors that are pet owners. What kinds of pets do you see? Bring in your own photo to add to our wall!

Key Vocabulary WORDS to USE in This Exhibit!

leash collar x-ray veterinarian
 clinic weigh wash
stethoscope healthy bowl paws
 fur medicine cast surgery

After Your Visit: The Learning Continues!

When you and your child return home, pull out some of his/her stuffed animals and clipboards outfitted with blank paper and pens. Encourage your child to pretend that the animals are sick and need to see a vet. He and a friend, sibling or care giver can play “Veterinary Clinic” at home by role-playing as vets and/or assistants who need to record symptoms and write out prescriptions for medicine to make the “sick” animals well again. Encourage your children to draw and/or scribble – this is a good time to practice emergent writing skills. You and your family can also visit your local animal shelter or pet store to learn more about pets and how to properly care for them, as well as get the opportunity to be face to face with some animal friends!

**We carefully choose the props and toys included in our exhibits. All of these items are lead-free and developmentally appropriate, and many are available in our Explore Store.*