



The 'Smiley Face' Activity

This simple activity teaches children about the basic needs that animals have and how we as humans have the same basic needs.

The **Smiley Face** activity is important in helping young people develop empathy for animals, and can encourage positive human and animal interactions!

What you will need:

- Photos of your pet or an animal such as a dog, cat or rabbit.
- Two felt pens in different colours.
- Scissors.

That's it!

What to do

Step 1:

Ask them to think about what they need to be happy and healthy, and to write each need around the smiley face, using a coloured felt pen. In the discussion, relate each suggestion to the young person's everyday life. For example, we need food, so why not ask them what they like to eat?

Step 2:

Look at each suggestion and ask the young person to think how they'd feel if they had to live without it. Would it be possible for them to be happy and healthy? If they say yes, cross that idea out, so you are left with just the basic human needs (hint: you should be left with food, water, love and care, exercise, somewhere to live, medical care and company).

Step 3:

Place a picture of your chosen animal over the smiley face or as an alternative, ask the young person to turn the smiley face into the face of an animal – a cat or a rabbit are easy but any pet animal is fine.

Step 4:

Look at each basic need in turn and ask whether that animal needs it too. Use a different coloured pen to tick those the animal does need and put a cross by those the animal doesn't need. For example, does he or she need water? Does he or she need exercise?

Step 5:

Discuss the connection between the basic needs of humans and animals. Did you cross out many things? What did you discover? What similarities are there between the basic needs of humans and animals? Does an animal need anything that a human doesn't?

This activity should be a fun way to help children understand that animals have the same needs as we do!



