



Reflect on your own experiences with children, families, and colleagues. If you are an supervisor, administrator, or adult educator, how might you use these questions and activities to help other adults reflect on their experiences?

## Seek Multiple Perspectives

**Two different perspectives:**

### Say “NO” to class pets

I have always felt uncomfortable with caged animals. I was raised to respect animals and respect their rights to be in their natural environments. I am very uncomfortable with having caged animals in the classroom. Basically, I believe that young children are not ready to care for them, and that a classroom setting is not conducive to having them learn about how to properly treat and care for them.

### Gabby’s Hen

Gabriela’s chicken visits my toddler program every Thursday. Gabby puts her in a small mobile enclosure on the lawn in our play yard. The hen’s name is Rosie. Each visit Rosie lays an egg in a straw bed and scratches around on the grass for bugs. The children are delighted. They feed her chicken scratch and scraps from the snack table. With supervision, the children can hold her or pet her if they’d like. No one has ever complained about our visiting hen. The children learn so much from interactions with animals. They trust Rosie and care about her.

### *Try This!*

Consider these short selections about animals in early childhood classrooms.

Does one of these perspectives align with your thinking? Put your thinking and your rationale into words that you might use to explain your perspective to a parent or colleague.

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If you have animals in your program or classroom, how does having the animals fit into your curriculum?

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What is your program or classroom policy about animals in the classroom?

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How is this policy reviewed or discussed with families and staff?

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Make a list of the health and safety considerations that need to be addressed when considering including animals in a program with young children.

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