Pets in Family Child Care Settings

Pets can be an important and memorable part of your family child care program. It is important to think carefully about how to keep the pets and the children safe. Some pets present a danger to children and providers. Use these Inspection Standards for pets to guide your choices.

1. Make sure the pets other than fish are inspected by a veterinarian or a qualified individual every month.

2. Make sure pets are contained in appropriate cages, enclosures, or areas when not part of the activity.

3. Make sure the pets’ cages or enclosures are clean and sanitary.

4. Notify parents at registration if animals are in your facility. Notify parents any time a new animal is added to the program.

5. Never bring pets bred or trained for attack or pets known to be dangerous (predators, venomous reptiles, spiders) into your program.

6. For health reasons, do not bring the following animals into your program:
   - Wolf-dog hybrids
   - Reptiles and amphibians
   - Psittacine birds unless tested for psittacosis (includes parrots, parakeets, budgies, and cockatiels)
   - Ferrets
   - Note: tadpoles can be in programs for science observations, but once they become frogs they should be removed.