

## Proper Treatment of Cats

**Suggested Grade Levels:** K-3

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Character:** Responsibility

**Materials and technology to be used:**

- “Happy Face/Sad Face” sheet – **x1 set per student**
- “Happy in the House” coloring sheet – **x1 per student**
- Coloring utensils – **x enough for each student**
- Writing utensils – **x enough for each student**
- Various cat books and/or internet access – **x enough for each student**
- Poster making materials if desired – **x enough for each student**

**Objective(s):**

Students will learn how to treat cats properly and will gain a basic understanding of cat care.

**Anticipatory Set/Hook:**

Invite students to join you on the floor or in a different space in your room. Ask students to raise their hand if they have a cat at home. What do you know about cats? Encourage students to turn and talk with a partner. Select a few students to share out loud. *Cats are living creatures who deserve just as much care and respect as any other living creature. Sometimes people do not take good care of cats, or they do not like them, because they do not know much about them. Even if you are not a fan of cats, it is important to know how to properly care for one. By doing this, you will better understand their needs and learn how to respect cats.*

**Lesson Beginning/Middle:**

1. Copy a “Happy Face/Sad Face” sheet for each student. Cut all the faces out to give you sets of happy and sad faces. Distribute a set to each student.
2. Read each sentence aloud. After each sentence, ask students to hold up the **happy face** 😊 for *good treatment of cats* or the **sad face** 😞 for *bad/inappropriate treatment of cats*. Discuss the correct, cat care information that is provided below.
  - a. **My cat stays indoors all day.** 😊  
*Keeping cats indoors protects them from diseases such as rabies, being hit by cars, picking up diseases, or being injured in other ways, and it prevents unwanted litters.*
  - b. **I know that getting shots hurts, so I don’t let the vet give any to my cat.** 😞  
*Vaccinating pets is an important part of their care and should be given each year. This ensures pets are safe from certain diseases and sicknesses.*
  - c. **I’m going to surprise my cousin for his birthday! I’ll give him a kitten!** 😞

Getting a pet should be carefully planned. Pets require a lot of care and having them is a huge responsibility. You should NEVER surprise someone with a pet. We want to ensure everyone has researched and is prepared before making a decision on whether or not to get a pet.

- d. **My cat scratches on the couch to sharpen her claws, so we are getting her declawed.** 😞  
*Cats naturally scratch to remove old nail sheaths, to stretch, and to mark their scent. It is important for their health that they are allowed to scratch. However, you should provide your cat with appropriate items to scratch on such as: scratching posts, scent boxes or cat trees. Declawing is painful to cats and includes the removal of part of their fingers/toes. It can also cause health issues in the future.*
- e. **My cat likes to chew on our houseplants. She loves the way they taste.** 😞  
*Certain household plants are poisonous to cats. Keep those plants that are, out of reach.*
- f. **Whenever I eat dinner, I share a bit of my food with my cat. She loves the meat.** 😞  
*Although certain types and a very limited amount of human food may be okay as a treat for your cat, a cat's diet should primarily consist of cat food. Table scraps can make your cat feel sick.*
- g. **I never brush my cat because she doesn't like it.** 😞  
*Cats should be brushed regularly as part of their grooming routine. This helps keep their coat healthy and free of debris.*
- h. **I give my cat water to drink every day.** 😊  
*Cats should always have fresh water available. They should drink fresh water, instead of milk, daily. Milk will upset a cat's stomach.*
- i. **I gave my cat a large plastic bag to play with.** 😞  
*Cats and kittens love to play and should have plenty of safe, cat toys. Bags that are used by humans can cause suffocation if the cat were to get trapped inside. Additionally, if swallowed the bag could cause a medical blockage. They are not safe toys for pets.*
- j. **My cat has a safety collar and ID tag with my name and phone number on it.** 😊  
*Cats should have a special safety collar that is designed to break away if they become stuck. Cats should always wear an ID tag and be microchipped even if they live inside.*
- k. **I pet my cat every day.** 😊  
*Pets need daily attention and love just like we do.*
- l. **I am going to have my cat spayed or neutered to prevent unwanted litters.** 😊  
*Spaying and neutering cats and dogs is important to helping pet overpopulation and it also prevents certain diseases in your pets.*
- m. **I scoop my cat's litter box once a week to keep it clean.** 😞  
*Cats should have their litter boxes scooped daily, not weekly. If the litter box is not clean and fresh each day, kitty may find someplace else to go!*
- n. **My cat never goes outside so it is not microchipped. It does not need one.** 😞  
*Even if your cat does not go outside, all cats and dogs should be microchipped for their safety. You never know when your pet may accidentally escape your house or run off without your notice. This can especially happen when you have visitors at your home.*
- o. **My cat rides in his pet carrier when we are in the car.** 😊

*Riding in a pet carrier keeps cats and people safe. It prevents cats from becoming lost or hurt and drivers from having accidents. It can also save your cat if an accident were to occur.*

**End of Lesson:**

1. Revisit sentences e. and f. above - Either individually or as a class, have students research different types of plants and human foods that can be poisonous and/or make a cat sick. Students may create individual reports or a large, class poster to display in the classroom.

-Use different research methods – books, internet, ask a professional, etc.

2. Play a game of “Simon Says” using cat behaviors. May the best cat win!

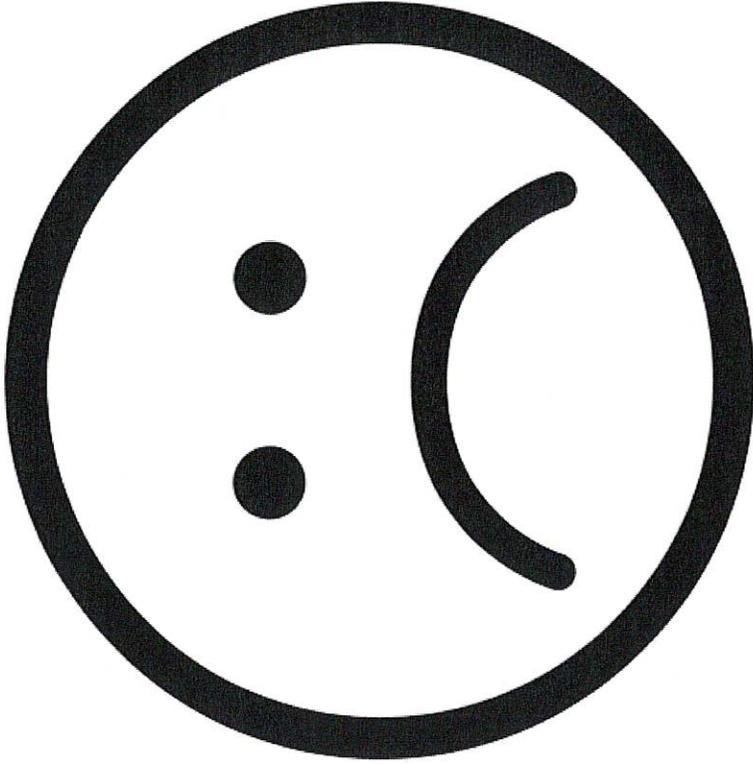
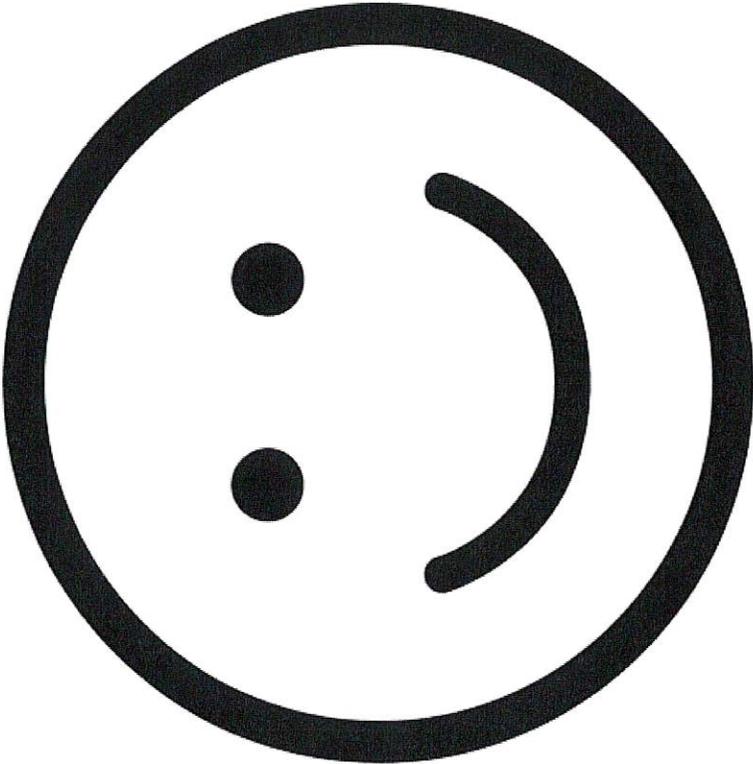
-Have children stretch like a cat, meow, pounce, purr, bat at a toy, swish their tails, hiss, arch their backs, sleep, bathe themselves, etc.

-Ask students how they think cats may be feeling when they exhibit some of these behaviors.

**Closure:**

Ask students to write down two new facts that they learned about cats. Ask: “Why is it important to take good care of cats? Even if you do not like cats, should you be respectful to them? Why?” Allow students time to think on their own, first. Call on select students to share out loud.

\*If time, students may wish to color the “Happy in the House” coloring sheet, or they can take it home for a fun way to extend the learning.



# Happy in the House

Cats like living inside! The outdoors can be very scary. When a cat lives indoors they are safe from cars and other dangers. In bad weather, they stay warm and dry. They have their food and toys indoors. They also have a scratching post to keep their claws healthy. Their owner gives them plenty of love and attention.

Color this happy, indoor cat...



Information adapted from Kind News