

# Animals in the Early Learning Environment Policy

Policy No. 205

Animals are allowed to visit or be housed when these steps have been followed:

1. A Puget Sound ESD Health/Nutrition Coordinator is consulted.
2. There is a documented animal care plan in place.
3. Parents are notified and written consent is obtained prior to housing or visitation. This consent must be unanimous.

Animals are not allowed in any classroom where a child or staff person has a health condition and exposure to the animal would put that child or staff person at risk.

Service animals are allowed for anyone with documented disabilities.

Children 3-5 years of age may pet or hold an “allowed” animal under the direct supervision of a staff person. No direct contact is allowed for children under age three.

Animals are not allowed to be housed:

- In any area used by infants and toddlers.
- Where any child eats or sleeps, active play areas, entrances, or hallways.
- In food preparation areas.
- In children’s restrooms.
- In or near children’s hand washing sinks.

The age and developmental level of the children must be considered when selecting an animal to be housed or visit.

The following animals are not allowed:

- Aggressive or unpredictable domestic animals
- Amphibians
- Animals, spiders and/or insects that are venomous or poisonous
- Birds
- Cats/Kittens
- Chickens, chicks, or eggs
- Crustaceans (i.e. hermit crabs)
- Dogs over 12 months *without* proof of the Delta Society Pet Partners training course
- Ducks, ducklings, or eggs
- Ferrets
- Puppies under 12 months
- Reptiles
- Wild or untrained animals

Some examples of animals that are allowed:

- Ant farm
- Caterpillars/Butterflies
- Dogs over 12 months *with* proof of the Delta Society Pet Partners training course
- Fish
- Rabbits
- Rodents (mice, rats, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs)

**Petting zoos, barns, reptile shows, or marine touch-tanks cannot be visited by Early Head Start, Head Start, or ECEAP children whether on or off the premises.**

Approved by Policy Council: July 19, 2016

Approved by Board of Directors: August 13, 2016

ECEAP Performance Standards: D-13, D-18

Head Start Act: n/a

Head Start Performance Standards: 1304.22, 1306.36