



RSPCA EDUCATION NEWS

ANIMAL NEWS FOR KIDS FROM RSPCA

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for all creatures great & small
Education resources for Teachers and Students

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Big Stan caring for our tiniest creatures

This is Stan. Stan is a Borzoi, which is a breed of dog originally from Russia. Stan is also *really* tall, at his shoulder he is taller than a dining table!

Stan is a really gentle dog, who happily lives alongside his dog sister Audrey, a peacock called Fabio and an assortment of other animals and resident wildlife on his farm.

One Sunday afternoon a few weeks ago, Stan's owner Andrea saw Stan looking worried and staring at a piece of fluff on the edge of his mat in the kitchen.



Upon closer inspection, Andrea found that it wasn't a piece of fluff, but a tiny baby Western Pygmy Possum! It was about the size of a cotton wool ball and Stan was clearly concerned about the unexpected visitor.

Andrea scooped up the tiny creature and wrapped it up in a tissue to keep it warm, then called a local wildlife rescue group.

They couldn't collect the baby until the next day, but advise Andrea on what she should feed it and how to keep it warm (tissues as blankets and tucked down the front of Andrea's top for warmth).

The baby possum was collected the next day and is now getting stronger under the guidance of an experienced wildlife carer until it can be released back onto Andrea's farm.

There are 5 types of Pygmy Possum and 4 of them are only found in Australia. They are tree dwelling, nocturnal marsupials and feed mostly on nectar and pollen from eucalypts, banksias and bottlebrushes.

They live in a variety of habitats and while they have a home range, it is not exclusive and they will sometimes share nests with other Pygmy Possums.

Different types of Pygmy Possums are different sizes, but they are all small. Adults can be as tiny as 5 centimetres in length and only 7 grams!

We love the care that Stan showed for this tiny baby and hope that it can be back on the farm very soon.



Keeping your dog comfortable

Beds, crates, kennels and jackets

Dogs and puppies come in all shapes and sizes. From the giant Irish Wolfhound to a tiny Chihuahua and everything in between, how you help your dog to feel safe and comfortable can sometimes be a little confusing. We are here to help!

Dog beds

Would you like to sleep on the hard floor the whole time? Definitely not, that would be really uncomfortable! It's the same for our dogs, they like somewhere squishy to lay down too.

There are many types of dogs beds suitable for all sizes and ages of dogs. Some are fluffy, some are heated and some have extra padding. A tiny small breed puppy is going to need a different bed to a large, elderly dog, so do your research about what works best for your own dog.

Your dog's bed should always be dry, cleaned regularly and free from holes or rips where they might be able to pull out stuffing that could become a choking hazard.



Dog crates

Some families like to crate train their dogs. A crate is an inside enclosure that the dog has free access to and somewhere the dog can be enclosed in for short periods of time. Dogs should not be kept locked in crates for extended periods of time. Crates can be useful when you are toilet training a dog. Most dogs will not wee or poo in their crates, so it can be a way of minimising toilet accidents inside by taking your dog straight outside onto their toilet area (usually the grass) once they wake up.

Some dogs like to sleep in their crates so they can have somewhere private and quiet, so if you see a dog in their crate, it is best to leave them alone to have some time by themselves.



Protection from the weather and dog kennels

All dogs should spend quality time with their family each day, but if your dog will be spending periods of time outside, for example when the family are at work and school, then you need to make sure they have enough protection from the weather.

If you have a verandah where the dog will be protected from the sun, wind and rain, then you can put a raised dog bed undercover. Being off the ground will protect your dog from cold or hot flooring, but you can always add a blanket or two in winter for extra warmth.

If weather protection is difficult in your dog's outside space, then a kennel like this one can do the trick to keep your pet dry, shaded and comfortable.



Dog jackets

Most dogs are good at regulating their own body temperature, especially if they are a dog with a longer coat.

Some dogs however really feel the cold and so in the cooler months might need the extra warmth of a dog jacket, especially outside or at night.

A few things to remember when putting a jacket on your dog;

- don't exercise your dog wearing its jacket, they can overheat really quickly
- make sure the jacket is the right size for your dog and isn't too tight, particularly around their neck and stomach
- your dog should be comfortable and not struggle to take their jacket off. If they are being difficult when you try to put their jacket on, or trying to pull their jacket off, then they probably don't want to wear it!



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED: A Kitten?



If you would like an interactive, affectionate, crazy, fun, demanding sleepy head for a pet, then a kitten has got you covered.

A kitten is a young cat that is under 12 months of age. Just like small humans, kittens are growing quickly, learning fast and likely getting up to all kinds of mischief. They play a lot, then need to sleep a lot to get ready to go again!

There are many different pure breeds of kittens, but the most common cat in Australia is a Domestic Short Hair, which means it's probably a mix of a few different breeds.

Until they are at least a year old, kittens need to be fed a special diet as they develop very quickly and you need to make sure that they are receiving the correct nutrients. There are commercial foods available for different growth stages, so it is a good idea to consult your vet, and carefully read the information on the food packets to ensure the food is appropriate.

Kittens should also have access to clean drinking water at all times, as just like humans it is important they stay hydrated. Kittens cannot drink cow's milk, as it will give them an upset tummy!

It is essential that a kitten has a litter tray, where they can go to the toilet. The litter tray should be placed in a quiet, private area for your kitten to use and will need to be changed daily to help your kitten stay as clean as possible.

Kittens LOVE to play. If you have a kitten at home, you need to make sure your kitten has access to different toys. They don't have to be expensive store-bought toys, your kitten will be just as happy with toilet rolls, cardboard boxes to hide in and scrunched up balls of paper! Make sure you are checking all of your kitten's toys regularly, you want to make sure that there are no small pieces that might break off and become a choking hazard.

All cats love to scratch, it relieves stress and is good for keeping their nails trim. It is good to provide your kitten with a scratching post, they will love it and it will keep your furniture and curtains intact.

Guiding your kitten through a fun, healthy and safe 'childhood' will see them turn into a beautiful adult cat that will keep your family loved and entertained for many years to come.



Working at RSPCA



Name: Tiana

Job: Marketing Co-Ordinator, Western Australia

How long have you worked at RSPCA?: One and a half years

What is your favourite part of your job?: I run our social media – Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and more! My favourite part is when I get to hang out with the animals to get content. It's never a bad day when you get to film a dog being a little bit silly

Favourite animal: My favourite animal is an elephant, but we don't see them at RSPCA! I really love dogs too.

How many animals do you help each year?: RSPCA WA post to our social media nearly every day. We have nearly 120,000 social media followers and that really helps with looking after the nearly 2000 animals we see each year.

Tell us about one memorable day in your time at RSPCA: One of the most memorable days at work for me was when a dog called Jackson got adopted! He was an older boy who had been in the kennels for a long time and he had won all of our hearts. Jackson waited and waited for the perfect home for months. As soon as he met his new owner you could see the happiness on his face and they were a perfect match. Jackson trotted out of the shelter and jumped straight into his owner's car, ready to live the rest of his life as a loved part of his new family.

Community Highlight



Thanks to 10 year old Indi and her friends at 2nd Capalaba Guides in Queensland! Animal lover Indi has two Guinea Pigs called Winter and Cookie. She decided to do a project on her Guinea Pigs for her Pet Badge.

We love her detailed poster and all the valuable information she has included. Indi's piggies are lucky to have her as their carer!

Indi and her Guides unit also collected some much needed donations for the animals of RSPCA which will be put to good use.

Thanks Indi, we love your care for animals.