



LSART Ralph's Responders Kids

Purpose: To teach children about the responsibility of pet ownership and the importance of including their pet in family emergency planning. We focus on the three aspects of health, training, and having a pet go-bag.

Outcomes:

1. To understand the importance of microchipping, vaccines, proper food/water, and heartworm prevention
2. To understand the importance of training their pet to be calm in a kennel or cage, walking on a leash/harness, basic commands such as coming when called, and preparing for travel.
3. To understand what goes in their pets go-bag and why it is important.

Recommended Readings/Activities:

There are many resources under the Kids Corner of the LSART website at www.lsart.org that are available in both English and Spanish.

Rowen and the Animal Shelter By Sara Deen Kimball- Learn who animal control is, what an animal shelter does, about heartworms, and how you can help your local animal shelter. Book includes discussion questions and games at the end.

Hurry, Hurry Hurricane- A book about a boy getting ready and evacuating with his dog during a hurricane. There are educator questions at the end to promote discussion.

RALPH- Ready and Living Prepared: Horses- An activity book that features an owner and their horse, Ralph preparing for natural disasters ahead of time.

Ralph's Responders Pet Activity Book- An activity book that includes small, large, and exotic pets. There are coloring pages, matching, mazes, connect the dots, crosswords, seek & find, and learn to draw pages.

Heartworm Freeze Tag- Kids will learn the importance of heartworm prevention. Instructions for how to play are on the LSART website. Play multiple times and add the number of mosquitos and/or decrease the playing space to demonstrate how disasters can cause diseases and parasites to spread faster.

Pet Go-Bag bingo- After learning about what should go in their pets go bag, children are given a blank bingo card. They are to write or draw what goes in a pet go-bag as well as types of pets. Cards with instructions are available to print off the LSART website.

Pet Disaster Pictionary- Special cards with types of pets, items needed for pet travel/go-bags, and people who help pets in disasters are in a stack. Just like in the game Pictionary, teams must guess what someone is drawing based on a card they drew. The person drawing is not allowed to speak, make noises, or draw letters/numbers.

Pet profile sheet- This is a pet information sheet that is included in a pet's go-bag. It includes a space for the pet's photo, pet info, owner info, vet info, vices, known commands, and care instructions.

Pet Go-Bag Tag- This is a general packing list for a pet go-bag. It can be printed from the LSART website and put on the pet's bag as a quick check list.

Course Outline:

This curriculum lasts about 1 hour.

- **Identification**- Start by talking about your own pet and how it can find its way home with identification. Talk about pet tags for temporary identification and microchips for permanent identification. Explain that a vet can give a pet a microchip and it allows for the owner to update their contact information should it ever change. Allow a student to scan a pet or stuffed animal with a microchip. Talk about how hard it would be to find a lost pet during a disaster but how a microchip can help reunite the pet with its family. Vets and animal control can check a pet for microchips.
- **Vaccines/Heartworm Prevention**- Explain that the veterinarian is also the best person to help keep a pet healthy. Talk about vaccines and how they will help prevent the spread of diseases. Next talk about how mosquitos spread heartworms and how important it is for pets to have heartworm prevention. Explain that during a disaster, pets can come into close contact with other animals and wildlife, and stress from a disaster can also lower a pet's immune system. These two things make it easier for diseases to spread. Disasters can also create breeding grounds for mosquitos that spread heartworms. Play the heartworm freeze tag game to help kids understand.
- **Proper nutrition**- It is important to provide pets with clean drinking water and the appropriate type and amount of food. Pets should be neither under or overweight. You should consult your veterinarian and read the recommended feeding instructions on your pets food bag. Pets should not be fed table food and family gatherings can increase this temptation. The AKC has some fun recipes to make a special treat for your pet to enjoy during holidays.
- **Training**- It is crucial to spend time with a pet and train it. This will give your pet physical and mental exercise, as well as strengthen your bond. Your pet should be comfortable walking on a leash or harness, as well as staying in a kennel or crate. This will make it less stressful if the pet must be boarded or stay at an animal shelter. Your pet should also get comfortable with you touching its paws, ears, and body as this can help lower stress during vet visits. Bathe your pet as well so that it will be used to being cleaned and groomed. Another important thing for your pet to learn is to come when called should it get lost or start to run. Pets will enjoy the quality time you spend training and grooming them! If you brought a demo dog, have the kids sit in two lines facing each other about four feet apart. Tell the dog to stay and then come to you. Walk up and down the line and allow the kids to pet the dog. Talk about how important this socialization is. A pet that is not properly socialized will be more stressed or fearful in strange environments or people. Tell them to always ask permission before touching someone else's pet and remind them that pets may bite or scratch out of fear if they are snuck up on, run up to, startled, or fearful.
- **Go-Bag**- A go-bag is a suitcase for your pet with everything they need for a trip. These also make great bags for travel and vacations. Explain that some pets will travel with a kennel or carrier, while others will be in their entire habitat when staying in a shelter, such as a bearded dragon. Pull out a go-bag and start by talking about the pet profile sheet and what is on it (photo of pet, pet info, owner info, vet info, vices, known commands, how to feed, etc.). Continue through the go-bag until you talk about the importance of each item. Let them know they can get a pet go-bag tag for free off the LSART website to help them build their own pet go-bag. You can play Pet Go-Bag bingo (give them a pet- go-bag tag for help) or play Pet Disaster Pictionary.