

Recognize the Dangers

Objective: Students will recognize physical characteristics of animals that may warn of impending dangers.

Concept: Children love to dress up and pretend. During this activity they will pretend to be animals. Maternal instinct is normal in all animals, including pets. Children should be taught to respect a mother animal when caring for her young.

Targeted Age: Preschool

Materials:

- ▶ Animal print/colored fabric
- ▶ Head bands
- ▶ Tail material (yarn, pipe cleaners, etc.)

Attach animal ears to plastic headbands. Use small ears for babies and large ears for mothers. Find fabric representing animals. Brown felt or fur can represent a dog. Use pink felt for pigs with a pink, cork screw pipe cleaner for a tail. Black and white Holstein material is available for cattle. Cut a slot for the head and attach a tail to the other end.

Have the students act out what a mother animal might do if her babies are approached by a human. Discuss the typical behavior of mother animals and the corresponding, appropriate and safe human behavior.

Discuss what behaviors farm animals portray to indicate danger warnings.

Have the children act out:

- ▶ Arching backs
- ▶ Growling or snorting
- ▶ Pawing ground
- ▶ Laid back ears

Discuss how people should safely behave when they are near animals showing these warnings:

- ▶ Do not approach large animals
- ▶ Stay outside animal fences
- ▶ Follow rules set up by adults

Q: What situations, other than being a new mother, can cause livestock to become agitated?

A: Animals that are sick, hungry or deprived can become aggressive, stubborn or can attack. They will usually give visual or audio signals that their behavior is negatively changing. Be alert at all times around animals. Sires or father animals can also become protective of his herd, causing aggressive behavior.

Q: When approaching unfamiliar pets, what signals should warn you of danger?

A: Barred teeth, growling and a change in the ears are all signs of a change in animals' temperament. Ask the owner's permission before ever touching someone else's pet.

