Animal Welfare Education

What interventions work and for whom?

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(Scottish SPCA)
Promoting a ‘duty of care’

The multi-disciplinary team
- Dr Janine Muldoon (University of Edinburgh)
- Prof Jo Williams (University of Edinburgh)
- Prof Alistair Lawrence (SRUC - Scotland’s Rural College)
- Prof Candace Currie (CAHRU - Child & Adolescent Health Research Unit, University of St Andrews)
- Gilly Mendes Ferreira (Scottish SPCA)

- Funded by Defra
- 2008-2012
- Focus on children (primary school age)
- 3 components:
  1. Literature review
  2. Child studies
  3. Intervention & evaluation
Our child studies

- Children have limited welfare knowledge
- Not confident in identifying needs in own pets
- Reluctance to take responsibility for pets

Unintentional harm and neglect through lack of knowledge of welfare needs & how to apply that knowledge:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst
- Freedom from discomfort
- Freedom from pain and suffering
- Freedom to express natural behaviour
- Freedom from fear and distress


Intervention design

**Intervention**
- 3 x 40 minute sessions using pedagogy based on collaborative learning and range of thinking skills (e.g., observation, categorization, problem solving, decision making, hypothesis testing)
- Focus on pets, farm animals, and wildlife

**Evaluation**
- Intervention and control groups (n = 410, age 9/10, 11 primary schools)
- Pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test
- Intervention delivered by Gilly (Scottish SPCA), but evaluated by research team

**Workshop 1:** Animal Needs (photographs)
**Workshop 2:** Animal Detectives (videos)
**Workshop 3:** Who is responsible for looking after animals? (moral dilemmas)
Workshop 1: Animal needs

Dogs need....

- A comfortable place to live
- Things to eat/drink
- To be able to act like dogs
- To be safe & healthy
- To be happy & not scared
- Other pictures
Workshop 2: Animal detectives
### Workshop 2: Detective’s notes

1. Does the dog look hungry or thirsty? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
2. Does the dog have a comfortable place to live? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
3. Does the dog look hurt or ill? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
4. Does the dog look free to do the things that dogs do? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know
5. Does the dog look scared or upset? □ Yes □ No □ Don’t know

Anything else the detective has noticed? .................................................................
On your way home from school, your friend notices a hedgehog under the football nets in the park. It is struggling to move.

(1) Who should do something about this?

(2) What should they do?

(3) What should you do?
Key findings

- Most impact on knowledge (for all animals)

- Improved understanding of role of others (owners in particular)

- Increases in child’s own sense of duty of care

- No changes in attitudes or attachment
Evaluation of ‘Prevention through Education’

- Scottish SPCA programme
- Primary school children 7-12 years
- Prevent unintentional animal cruelty
- Pre-test, post-test, delayed post-test
- Test: 1090 children from 22 primary schools
- Control: 127 children from 3 primary schools
- Self-complete questionnaire

Range of measures: knowledge, compassion, attachment, humane behaviour, attitudes, acceptance of cruelty, belief in animal minds
Evaluation of ‘Prevention through Education’

Results:

✓ Knowledge about animals (all)
✓ Knowledge about the Scottish SPCA (all)
✓ Beliefs in animal mind (pets, farm)
X Compassion
X Attachment
X Humane behaviour
X Attitudes
X Acceptance of animal cruelty
iPad game development

• Pet Welfare, Farm Animal Welfare, Wild Animal Welfare
• Game specifications drafted
• Collaborative process with SPCA
• 3 levels:
  1) Animal sentience
  2) Animal Welfare
  3) Appropriate and safe behaviour (farm = welfare vs money)
• All information was based on scientific research and advice/knowledge from SPCA. Images validated
• Games developed by three teams using Unity (Farm Welfare) or Articulate Storyline 2 (Pet Welfare and Wild Welfare)
• Colourful, engaging, interactive functions, feedback with sounds
iPad game development
iPad game development

**Target:**
- Children aged 7-12 years
- For use in SPCA education programme
- General population

**Intervention:**
- Educational iPad game
- One-off session in class, 15 mins
- Aim: promote positive child-animal interactions
- Play 3 levels:
  1. Animal sentience
  2. Animal welfare needs
  3. Behaviour impact on animals

**Outcomes:**
1. Increased belief in pet minds
2. Increased knowledge of the five freedoms
3. Increased knowledge of appropriate and safe behaviour
4. Increased compassion*
5. Lower acceptance of animal cruelty*

**Change mechanisms:**
1. Understanding of animal sentience and ability to recognise emotional signals
2. Understand what animals need to be happy and healthy
3. Understand impact of human behaviour towards pets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Pet Welfare</strong></th>
<th><strong>Wild Welfare</strong></th>
<th><strong>Farm Welfare</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Welfare knowledge</td>
<td>✓ Welfare knowledge</td>
<td>✓ Welfare knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>X Compassion</td>
<td>✓ Compassion</td>
<td>X Compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Attitudes towards cruelty</td>
<td>✓ Attitudes towards cruelty</td>
<td>X Attitudes towards cruelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Appropriate and safe behaviour knowledge</td>
<td>✓ Appropriate and safe behaviour knowledge</td>
<td>✓ Understanding of welfare consequences of intensive farming systems</td>
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- Engaging for children, contribute to digital learning
- Results will feed into future education materials and impact educational strategies. Will be added to Scottish SPCA ‘Prevention through Education’ programme
Key take home messages

• Incorporate research into development
• Logic models and theoretical basis
• Key age is 7-12 years
• Challenge inaccurate/partial knowledge/welfare = easiest
• Safety knowledge and appropriate behaviour
• Animal sentience as core theme
• Tackle attitudes towards animal cruelty
• Technology: engaging, interactive computer-based games, VR? Robots?
• Difficult to change compassion and attachment?
• Need for targeted interventions
Thank you!

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