



# Illinois 4-H | Spark Ideas. Ignite Possibilities.

Learn about a variety of small pets, such as birds, guinea pigs, iguanas, snakes and frogs. Topics include feeding, housing and daily needs, pet selection, body parts, pet communication, handling, genetics, and reproduction.



## Exploring 4-H Small Pets

### Spark Activity: Pet Playtime & Enrichment

Research a small pet and select one that fits your family. Based upon the needs of the selected animal, design a play area or toy that will entertain you and your pet. Determine the costs and items needed to create the play area or toy. Then, gather your materials from things around the house, the recycling bin, or the store. Be sure the materials you use are non-toxic and safe for your pet. Then make your play area or toy, take pictures of your completed work, and share your creation with your 4-H club.



## 4-H Project Levels and Goals

### Beginner

- Gather information and determine the best pet for your family
- Learn about the proper care, grooming and feeding of your pet
- Learn to identify the parts of your pet
- Purchase and use the appropriate grooming equipment and techniques
- Practice appropriate training for your pet

### Intermediate

- Plan a training and exercise program for your pet
- Prepare for participation in a pet show
- Make a decision about breeding or not breeding your pet
- Compare the labels on pet foods to make an informed decision for purchase
- Keep a diary of your pet's health and eating habits

### Advanced

- Develop a business plan for a pet care or pet-sitting business
- Assess careers related to pets and pet businesses
- Help a friend make a decision about pet ownership
- Research diseases in pet mammals, birds and fish
- Identify symptoms and a course of action for a disease in your pet
- Learn how pets affect the environment

## Put Your Project Into Action

### Show Your Skills

- Create a business plan for pet sitting/walking
- Create a training book for your pet
- Put together a pet disaster plan

### Service and Leadership

- Collect pet food or towels local animal shelter
- Organize a pet adoption day with a partner organization
- Volunteer to do a pet presentation
- Organize a pet show for your club
- Organize a fundraiser to benefit an animal shelter
- Research and share with others why keeping wild animals as pets is not a good idea
- Develop a plan to foster pets of deploying service members

### Entrepreneurship

- Pet sitter
- Pet walker
- Pet sales

### Technology Connection

- Pet cameras
- Food puzzles
- Mazes
- Treat dispensing balls/toys

### Connecting with a Mentor

- Pet rescue volunteer
- Groomer
- Trainer
- Breeder
- Teachers
- Species and/or breed associations/societies

### Events

- County Fair exhibition opportunity
- Club demonstration or presentation opportunities
- Chicagoland Family Pet Expo
- Reptile Fest from the Chicago Herpetological Society



### Careers for People Interested in Small Pets

Veterinarian	Chemist developing pet food
Veterinarian technician	Manufacturer of pet supplies
Pet groomer, trainer	Retail sales at pet stores
Pet boarding	
Pet nutritionist	

## Start a Conversation

If you could have any pet in the world, what would it be and why?

Are dogs really a man's best friend?

What pet would you recommend for a beginner?

## Want to learn more?

[go.illinois.edu/4Hsmallpets](https://go.illinois.edu/4Hsmallpets)

## Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

[4-h.extension.illinois.edu](https://4-h.extension.illinois.edu)



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**Credits:** 4-H Project Sheets from Iowa State University Extension & Outreach | University of Florida Extension | North Dakota State Extension | University of California Extension | University of Wyoming Extension | Colorado State University | University of Illinois Extension staff that contributed to this resource include Andrea Farrier and Donna Nuger | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!