Barnyard Safety

Objectives:

* To develop social skills and facilitate cooperation.
* To promote self understanding and learning skills.
* To develop physical skills
* To develop decision-making skills.
* To enhance self-esteem.
* To create awareness of the many hazards that can cause illness or injury to the horse.
* To sharpen children’s observation skills.
* To gain an appreciation for proper safeguard and preventative measures of responsible horse ownership or stewardship.

Group Size: 6 to 8 children per adult volunteer.

Time Frame: This lesson is designed for a 30 to 60 minute gathering.

Background: There are many dangers of which the horse owner or caregiver is not aware. Understanding what these dangers are can help prevent an unfortunate situation. Dangers to the horse may come in the form of feed, equipment, housing, and other environmental factors.

Life Skill Areas:

* Social interaction skills will be developed through group participation resulting in accomplishment of experiments and activities.

* Through categorizing and ranking order decision-making skills will be developed.

* Experimentation activities followed by group discussion will produce learning skills.

* Eye hand coordination and small motor skills can be developed through pencil and paper manipulation activities

Helps to the Volunteer:

Try these suggestions:

* Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.

* Try to create appropriate atmosphere by decorating the room with posters and props, using costumes related to the activity, pre-meeting preparation by the 4-H members, thinking about special seating arrangements, and playing background music.
Learning Activities:

I. GETTING STARTED...

Activity: "Hazards in the Barnyard" (3 - 5 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: A small piece of board with a nail pounded through it (head flush with board)
A piece of cloth

Ask the children how horse shoes are attached. "Does the nail hurt the horse?" "How many of you bite your nails?" "Does it hurt when you bite your nails?" "Does it hurt if you bite your nails down to the skin?" Explain that the horse hoof is like a fingernail, parts of the nail are sensitive and parts are insensitive. "Would it hurt if a horse stepped on a nail and it went into the middle of the hoof?" "How would we know if it hurt the horse?" Have you ever stepped on a nail and gotten a puncture wound? Explain that nails are pounded into a board thoroughly, but after time and use nails often become loose and protrude out of the board. Ask the children what will happen if the cloth catches on the board. Demonstrate how easily the nail will tear the cloth. Explain that the cloth is about the same thickness as skin. "What do you think will happen if a horse rubs up against a nail?" Follow up the discussion by asking children to name other sharp objects that might be found in the barn area where horses are kept.

Application:
~ Ask the children to identify protruding objects which might cause injury in their own home and / or barn.

Activity: "Poisons" (5 - 7 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: Plastic bags containing any or all of the following items:
Steer feed with rumensin
Buckeyes
Azaleas
Ponderosa pine needles
Fresh grass clippings
Moldy hay

Ask the children why a horse might eat something that is bad for them? "Don't they know better?" Have the children observe the items. Ask them if they have any of these at their home. Ask the children what they know about poisons, and what to do if poisoned. Explain that these items are all poisonous to the horse. Remind them that poisons are very dangerous and that they should never play around fertilizer, yard chemicals, or eat any thing outside without adult permission.

Application:
~ Ask children to go home and identify poisons around their house, yard, and barn.
II. DIGGING DEEPER...

Activity: “All Tangled Up” (10 - 12 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: String or clothesline Various gauges and styles of wire

Explain that fencing can cause a lot of damage to horses. Have children pretend they are horses. “There is some really yummy looking grass on the other side of the fence and the horse wants to eat it. The horse sticks his head through the fence and gets a bad cut on his neck. Now he goes to find his master and get some help.” Have the children come up, one at a time, and stick their arm thought the string. Have an adult wrap the string around their arm. “The horse tries to get loose which twists the wire tighter.” Not too tight to cause injury to the child. Ask the children how it felt to be all tangled up. How can they prevent an animal from being injured in this manner? Follow up with displaying and explaining various types of wire commonly used for fencing materials, like barbed wire. Also show various thicknesses of wire. Ask the children which is more likely to cut a horse, a small diameter or a thicker diameter? Explain that the thinner the diameter the more easily it will cut. Have the children pair up and rank the wires from least safe to safest. Be sure to encourage both partners to work cooperatively and reward desirable behavior.

Application:
~ Ask the children to locate a fenced area (farm, field, yard) and observe the condition and type of fencing used. See if they can make recommendations to improve the fencing.

Activity: “It’s So Hot!” (12 - 15 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: Household thermometer Variable speed fan
200 watt bulb Lamp stand or lamp clip
Poster board A large piece of dark fabric
A large piece of light fabric

Ask the children to describe the current weather. “Is it hot, comfortable, or cold outside?” “Was it hot last summer?” Ask the children how the heat felt, and what did they do to stay cool? Like wise, how do they keep warm when it is really cold outside? Explain that animals can be hurt when it is either really hot or really cold where they are living. Here are some sample exercises the volunteer can do with the children to emphasize these points.

Method 1 - BEING TOO CROWDED.
Have the children sit on the floor in a tight circle. Using the thermometer, take the temperature of the seating area. Wait a minute and do it again. Is the temperature rising? “If several animals were placed together in the same pen, crowding each other for a period of time, will the temperature rise?” “Will it be comfortable for the animals?”

Method 2 - THE AFFECT OF DIRECT HEAT.
With the children remaining seated on the floor in the circle, place the lamp three feet from the group, holding the lamp above the group and pointing it directly down on them, turn it on. Now take the temperature surrounding the group. “What is happening?” Ask the children if it is too hot, too cold, etc.
Method 3 - THE AFFECT OF COAT COLOR.

Now place the large piece of dark fabric over the children sitting on the floor. Take the temperature surrounding the children. How do the children feel? Note: the dark fabric absorbs more of the radiant heat from the lamp and results in a warmer temperature. "How would an animal feel if it had a dark blanket on in the summertime?" Repeat the exercise using the light colored fabric. "Which is cooler?" "What can this tell us about how the animals coat color would affect it when out in the direct sunlight?"

Method 4 - THE AFFECT OF SHADE.

Uncover the children, but have them remain seated together. Place a piece of cardboard or poster board between the lamp and children. Take the temperature. How do the children feel? Ask the children how shade is important in making animals feel more comfortable.

Method 5 - THE AFFECT OF WIND AND WIND BARRIERS.

Remove the lamp and shading device. With the children remaining seated, turn on the fan. Try different speeds. Take the temperature. While the temperature probably will not change, the children should most likely feel more comfortable. Now tell the children to pretend they are outside and it is really cold. Turn on the fan. Would they be cooler now with the cold wind blowing on them? Now put the poster board between the children and the fan. Does blocking the wind help them to be warmer? Ask the children how providing protection for all of our animals from cold, wind, and wet is important in preventing illness and injury.

* source: Page 60 and 61 of Quality Assurance and Animal Care, Youth Education Program, Ohio Agricultural Education Curriculum Materials Service, 1194.

Application:

Ask the children next time they are at the zoo to observe how the zoo provides protection for their animals.

III. LOOKING WITHIN...

Activity: "I Don't Feel Well" (5 - 7 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: None

Continue the discussion about possible poisons. Ask the children if they have ever been sick. "Being sick is not fun." "Probably when you were sick, your parents took care of you." "Maybe you had to see the doctor and get a shot or medicine." Explain that animals get sick, especially when the people taking care of them are not careful. Ask the children how they could tell if an animal is sick. Relate children’s answers to how they may act when they don’t feel well (sleepy, grouchy, no appetite, upset tummy, etc.).

IV. BRINGING CLOSURE...

Activity: "Let's Go on a Hazard Hunt"

Grade Level: K - 2

Materials: Hazard hunt handout (make a poster containing environments that horses would encounter including dangers that may harm the horse or rider, e.g., sharp objects, low limbs, etc.) Crayons or pencils

Divide children up; two or three per group. Distribute hazard hunt handouts and a pencil or crayon, one per child. Have the children circle all of the possible hazards they can find on the handout. Allow them time to