“Our relations with dogs are changing and we need to learn new things in order to live well with them as pets.”

Lee Maracle

Medicine wheels are traditional ways to remember new ideas. This medicine wheel teaches people what we need to be healthy. Dogs and people need the same things to be healthy. They need Water, Fire, Earth and Air to live well. You will learn about each of these ideas in this Activity Book.
Traditionally, First Nations People had a relationship with their dogs that was one of respect and caring; we helped each other out. Dogs played important roles in our families, our communities and our nations. Listen as Lee Maracle tells us about how our relations with dogs are changing. She also tells us what she learned about meeting the needs of her pet dog.

Eyd Swayel Lee Maracle

Elder Lee Maracle is a member of the Stó:lō nation and was born in British Columbia. She is a mother of four and a grandmother of seven. She is an author and a professor at the University of Toronto, as well as a traditional teacher at First Nations House, which is at the University of Toronto. She has had many dogs in her family at different times in her life.

This medicine wheel shows some things dogs and people need to live.

AIR (shelter, house)

WATER

EARTH (food, exercise)

FIRE (Warmth)

Draw a picture for each part of the medicine wheel. Show a dog or you in each picture.
Dogs Need Water and Warmth

Water – Dogs need to drink water.

Each day, dogs need their water bowls filled. Dogs are wise and know how much they need to drink, but they need you to help keep their water bowls full.

How do you know when dogs are thirsty?

- They stick their tongues out and pant.
- They may sit by their water bowl.
- They try to drink water from puddles.
- They have been playing or running.

Fire – Dogs need warmth in the cold months.

We all need to be warm to live. Some dogs need to be inside in the winter because the Creator did not make them to live outside when it is cold and snowy. They have very short fur—like a T-shirt.

Other dogs were made to live in the north. They grow special thick fur in the winter to keep them warm even outside when it is really cold. This is called their winter coat. People wear coats in the winter and dogs who have very thick winter fur can be outside.

Which dogs have a warm coat?
Which dogs have “T-shirt” fur?

Draw lines to match the dog with its type of fur.
Dogs Need Food

Earth is where all our food comes from.

The plants we eat come from the earth. The meat that dogs eat comes from animals who walk on the earth. Food is something all dogs need at least twice a day. People need to eat several times a day as well.

How can you tell if your dog is not getting enough food? Some dogs will whine or bark for food, but some may not tell you by using their voices that they are hungry. A dog might get so skinny that her ribs or hips show. If you see that happen, feed her more. Keep feeding more until you can’t see her ribs or hip bones.

Dogs need to be fed every day—at least two times a day. They need a food bowl and the amount of food they need depends on how small or big they are, how young or old.

A dog who is going to have puppies or is feeding puppies will need more food. When puppies start to eat solid food they can be fed five times a day.

A dog may need more food when he exercises a lot.
When we go to a grocery store, we can buy a bag of dry dog food or cans of soft dog food. In addition, many First Nations families feed their dogs country foods which they get from the land such as moose meat, goose and fish. Food from the land can be fed to dogs. Scraps from fish, birds and animals are healthy for you and also healthy for your dogs. Dogs also eat some fruits and vegetables.

Meaty bones are one of a dog’s natural foods. Dogs were made to eat meat and bones and fat. They can even eat raw meat as long as it has not gone bad.

**Foods Dogs Can Eat**

Find and circle the words that tell some of things dogs can eat.

apples  berries  carrots  fish  goose  
green beans  meaty bones  moose  pumpkin  spinach  

Some people mix wild meat and veggies with rice or oatmeal and cook them together for their dogs.

**WARNING!**

These foods can make a dog sick.

*Never feed a dog*

chocolate  grapes  onions
Sky has a food bank for dogs and cats at her house. A food bank is a place where food is kept for people or animals who need it. Everyone on Sky’s reserve knows that she has the food in her basement. If they run out of dog food and have no money to buy more, they can visit her house and get food. The food is gifted to her by people and stores in the city. The people from the city drive about eight hours to bring the food to her reserve. They bring a truckload to her house. The families know that they only can come get food if they really need it for their dogs and cats. Otherwise, it will run out too soon and pets may go hungry and get too skinny. Sky gets money from her band office to buy special puppy food.

Aanii Sky Commanda and her dog Miika

Sky Commanda grew up in Northern Ontario. She and her family moved around a lot when she was a child, and she never had any pets. After she grew up she continued to move around a lot and has lived in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia taking her cat with her. Sky came back home to Serpent River First Nation to live and it was then that she decided to get a dog. That’s when she started helping to rescue animals.

Think about what you learned about healthy foods for dogs. Circle the healthy foods on the shelves. Cross out the foods that are not healthy for dogs.
My mom’s friend, Jeff had a dad who looked like Santa. He did not have a sleigh. He drove a big truck. He did not have any reindeer. He had a dog, Footz.

When I was a little child, I loved Skittles candy. I also liked dogs, but I didn’t have one.

I love Skittles!

On our reserve, all the dogs roamed freely. They visited the houses looking for food.
One time, I was walking along and I saw Santa’s dog. I was eating a bag of Skittles. Footz was a friendly dog and he knew me. Footz was hungry, too. He jumped up on me. He did not mean to hurt me. My bag of Skittles went flying. Footz ate every last Skittle. I was upset!

The adults thought Footz had hurt me. I said, “No, I am not hurt! He ate my candy!”

My mom gave me another pack of Skittles. She said, “You and Footz have to work this out!”

I went outside, sat close to Footz and I ate a Skittle. Then I gave Footz a Skittle. I shared the whole bag with Footz. We worked it out, him and I, just as mom had asked. After that, every time I got a bag of Skittles, I went to visit Footz and brought some to share!
Making Your Own Dog Treats

Now that Sky is an adult she knows that candy isn’t good food for dogs, so she bakes her dogs special treats. This recipe makes simple dog treats. Ask an adult to help you make them. Don’t give the treats to your dog all at once. One at a time is best.

Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups of flour
- ¾ cup of dry powdered milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- ½ cup of oil or bacon grease or oil from fish or fat from moose, deer or caribou.
- 1 cube of OXO beef bouillon (chicken cubes are also nice)
- ¾ cups of boiling water
- 2 tablespoons of brown sugar

Instructions

- Ask an adult to preheat the oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit; grease lightly one cookie pan.
- Dissolve the bouillon cube in the boiling water, then let it cool off in the fridge.
- Combine all ingredients and mix by hand; knead for 1 minute.
- On a floured surface, roll dough to ¼ inch, then cut into fun shapes. Place cookies on cookie sheet.
- Bake for 30 minutes. Let cool overnight so the cookies harden.

When I grew up, I started working at the band office. On my way to work, there is a house with a dog. She greets me each day. I asked the owners of the dog, if I could have one of her puppies when they were born.

This is how I got my first dog. I had a hard time finding a name for my dog. It was the first pet I had ever had. I got thinking about the dogs I have known and remembered Footz and the Skittles. I laughed about his silly love of candy and decided to name my own dog Skittles.

Now I have two dogs and two cats and sometimes I take care of other animals until I can find homes for them. All the animals that are in my house get treats—healthy ones!
Dogs Need Exercise

Dogs also need to run and play on the earth. They like to dig holes in the earth and they like to chase squirrels and other little animals as they run on the earth. They like to play with other dogs and with people. They follow smell trails with their noses, as they explore the earth.

Listen as Stanford Owl tells about his job as an Animal Control Officer. He tells us how dogs need exercise and play.

Kwesh Kwa Stanford Owl

Stanford Owl is a member of the Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation and lives there with his family. He is married to his lifelong friend Patty Ann and has three beautiful children. Stanford is also a grandpa and lives in a good way as a hunter and fisherman. He works with animals every day. He helps families with their dogs and finds homes for unwanted pets. He runs pet wellness clinics where pets get medical care.

Look at the two pictures of the dog getting exercise.
Circle the seven differences between the two pictures.

Answer: 1. no leash, 2. dog missing one leg, 3. boy’s pant leg down lower, 4. number 2 missing on back of shirt, 5. different color on right elbow of shirt, 6. no pole in background, 7. more grass in background.

www.ifaw.org/owl

What Our Dogs Need Activity Book
Air—Dogs need shelter from the wind and weather.

Air is all around us. Both humans and dogs need to breathe air to live. When it is really cold out the air is cold. When the wind is blowing it gets even colder. Dogs need to go into a shelter like a doghouse or under a porch to get warm and to get away from the wind, rain, and snow.

Help the dogs get to their shelters. Trace the line to connect each dog with a shelter.
Dogs and people both need the same things to be healthy. Listen as Grandmother Lee Maracle talks about getting ready to take care of your own dog.

Think about what you have learned about what dogs need to live well. Ask yourself these questions:

- When have you seen people being responsible for a dog? Think of three things they did.

- How am I being responsible for my dog?
  1. _________________________________________
     _________________________________________
     _________________________________________
  2. _________________________________________
     _________________________________________

Information for Parents and Community Members
This activity book is about dogs and First Nations. It has been written by First Nations for First Nations. It is about how many of the First Peoples of North America have lived with dogs for a long time. Readers will meet Elders and others who share their stories about dogs and about caring for dogs. All of these people love and respect dogs, and they have shared their ideas about dogs with us. All are First Nations (Stó:lō, Ojibwe, Anishinaabe). We are proud to have them share about our peoples and our good ways with dogs.

What Else Do Dogs Need?
Dogs need water, warmth, food, exercise, and shelter to live well.

What else do you think dogs need?
Use the code to find out two more things dogs need.

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IFAW also inspires young people to care about the welfare of animals and the environment.

IFAW knows that communities benefit from healthy and happy dogs and cats. IFAW reduces dog and cat suffering from cruelty and neglect by providing care to animals and support to communities around the world, including First Nations.