

Transcript

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The 4 R's are Reflect, Respond, Respect, and Reward. This lesson focuses on Respond, by dealing with responsibility. As a pet owner, you are responsible for your pet. When out and about, you may come across someone's lost pet. Do you know what to do if you lose a pet? Do you know what to do if you find a pet? Do you know what to do if you lose a pet? Do you know what to do if you find a pet?

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This lesson guides you through the process of safely and thoroughly dealing with a lost or found pet. At the conclusion, you will be able to:

- Identify and order the steps involved in reuniting a lost pet with their owner

- Explain the importance of a microchip

- Describe the purpose of a shelter.

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There are 5 things you need to consider and do if you find a lost pet. Think Safety. Try to Capture, Check for identification, Search for the owner, and notify or take the animal to the shelter.

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First, always consider the safety of you and the animal.

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A frightened and possibly sick or injured animal may behave unpredictably. A sudden move may spook him or her, causing them to bolt into traffic or even attack you. If the animal looks or acts threatening in any way, or if for any reason you feel uneasy about the situation, stay away from the animal and notify local animal control authorities. If the dog appears approachable, remember to use caution and common sense. If you are able to get close enough to touch the animal, there is still a risk of being bitten. Seek adult help before approaching any stray animal.

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If you can safely secure the animal, do so. Otherwise call it in to the authorities.

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When approaching the animal, speak calmly and reassuringly to them. Make sure they can see you at all times as you approach, and perhaps entice him to come to you by offering a morsel of food. But be careful with your fingers around the animal's mouth. Once you've managed to get near the animal, secure it with a leash. If the dog doesn't have a collar, any leash with a loop on one end, can be made into a lasso to tether the animal. Just be careful, once the dog is on a leash it may still try to run. Your safety is still a priority. If you can't capture the animal or feel unsafe doing so, call the local authorities. Animal Control Officers have the skills and tools to capture an animal. It is their job to help lost pets.

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As long as you feel safe, with the animal captured, look for any identification.

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Does the animal have a collar with tags? If the dog is calm, you can check it for a tattoo. Tattoos are often found on the ears or the belly of dogs and cats. Sometimes the animal is not lost, but it simply wandered away from home. Unfortunately, some people allow their animals to roam. It is possible that you found, a dog especially, that knows exactly where home is. Try telling them "Go Home!" See if the dog will lead you to its home. If it does, ask any people you pass along the way if they know who owns the dog.

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Try your best to find the animal's owner.

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Check the area in which you found the dog for any "LOST" posters. Keep in mind that the animal might have traveled a distance and the posters could be posted elsewhere, up to one mile away or more. Also consider that the dog may have recently escaped and posters haven't gone up yet. It is possible that the animal's owner is disabled and unable to create and hang posters. Just because there is no poster, don't automatically assume that there is no owner! Chances are there is an owner who desperately wants his or her companion home.

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Remember that collars and tags can get lost when an animal roams. If no visual identification is found, try taking the animal to a veterinarian and ask them to look for a microchip. A microchip is the size of a grain of rice and is implanted under the skin between the shoulder blades. Using a scanner, a person can read the chip and find the registered owner.

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If you exhaust your efforts to locate the animal's family, turn them over to the local authorities where their owner or guardian will be able to claim them.

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Now that you know how to help a lost pet, you have the foundation for what is needed, if you lose a pet. First, file a report. Go to TriangleLostPets.org and post the descriptive information about your missing pet. There you can also view maps of where pets have been seen or found. Then get out and search your neighborhood and nearby community. Try calling out the animal's name as you look for it. Many times an animal will hang around or return to an area where it last saw its owner. This is especially important if your pet is lost while traveling or visiting somewhere unfamiliar to them. Post "Lost Pet" fliers or posters. You can make posters out of the listing on TriangleLostPets.org or create your own. Be sure it includes a color picture, a description of the size, breed, age, sex, name and any identifying features of your pet, where and when your pet was lost, and information for how they can contact you. Hang the posters all around your neighborhood and community, including Supermarkets, Pet stores, Veterinary offices, Drug stores, Churches, Libraries, Gas stations, and anywhere you know there is a bulletin board.

Be sure to check the Lost and Found pet listings daily. The best sources in our community are Triangle Lost Pets, the Wake County Adoption Gallery, SPCA of Wake County, Craigslist, and the News & Observer. Visit the Wake County Animal Shelter and SPCA. When you go bring your lost pet flier or a picture of your pet. Also bring any form of identification you have to prove the animal is yours. This can be their health records, adoption papers, rabies tag/paperwork, or microchip information. Check each center at least every three days and hopefully you'll be reunited quickly.