

# Too many pets!

## GOALS

To demonstrate how pet overpopulation occurs and to stress the importance of spaying or neutering pets.

## OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Define overpopulation of pets
- Demonstrate why spaying or neutering pets is important

## MATERIALS

- “Too many pets!” worksheet
- 25+ dog or cat counters per person (or other small markers such as beans, buttons, rocks, etc.)
- Marker, crayon, or pencil
- Video recording of story reading *It’s Raining Cats and Cats*

## ACTIVITY

1. Give each child a worksheet and 12 dog/cat counters (or beans, buttons, etc.)
2. Explain that the board represents a typical U.S. neighborhood and the counters represent pets.
3. Have each child put one counter in five different houses.
4. Tell them that some families choose to have more than one pet. Have them place two more counters in two empty houses.
5. Explain that some families like even more pets. Have each child put three counters in one empty house.
6. Share that some families can’t have pets. Brainstorm reasons why (allergies, housing regulations, not enough time or money). Have the students draw an “X” using markers, crayons or pencils on homes that do not have any pets. This should be four houses.
7. Pass out another small handful of counters (about seven) to each child. These new counters represent kittens and puppies that were born to unaltered pets (not spayed or neutered).
8. The children must find homes for these kittens and puppies. The pets must fit inside the houses without spilling over. Give them time to decide where to put them. Remind them they can’t go in the houses with an “X.”
9. Evaluate what happened when the new pets arrived. Did they all find homes?
10. Continue passing out additional counters until the homes are full (about 7-10 more per child). Discuss what will happen now if the pets have kittens and puppies (they may become strays, be neglected by their families, or wind up in shelters).
11. Now explain that most cities place a limit on the number of pets a family may have. Why would they do this? Suggest an average limit of two cats and two dogs per house. How many of the homes on the worksheet are at or over this limit? What will happen to the “extra” pets?

