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Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy (Fourth Edition)

Foundations and Guidelines for Animal-Assisted Interventions

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Chapter 13 - Animals in the Lives of Children

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Abstract

All therapeutic interventions involving animals rest on a powerful assumption: there is something about animals that powerfully attracts and motivates humans. This assumption becomes especially compelling when children are involved. No matter what facet of human–animal interaction one examines—pet ownership, fascination with wild animals, imaginary animals, robotic pets—children are particularly involved. In this chapter we examine the child–animal connection closely for what it can tell us about the meaning of animals in children’s lives. In turn, this provides an important context for examining animal-assisted therapies and activities for children.

Keywords

Animal-assisted therapy; Biophilia; Ecological psychology; Relational and self psychologies

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