



# Tale for Two Orientation



## What does the SPCA stand for?

- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
- Located at 300 Harlem Road, West Seneca, NY 14224



# The Facts

- The SPCA does not receive any funding from the county, city, state, or federal governments. Our humane society does not receive tax dollars of any kind . . . we're only able to assist the people and pets in need thanks to donations.
- The SPCA cares for more than 12,000 animals each year through programs that include adoptions; admissions; animal rescues; animal emergency transports; stray lost and found services; animal cruelty investigations and seizures; care for wildlife, reptiles, exotics, and farm animals; and much more.

# How does the SPCA help?

## OUR MISSION

At the SPCA Serving Erie County, our mission is to create a more humane community through education; rescuing, protecting, and enhancing the lives of animals; and nurturing the bond between animals and people.

## OUR VISION

A community where animals are treated with compassion and respect.



The fee for this program fees enable us to continue our mission!

# Why Tale for Two?

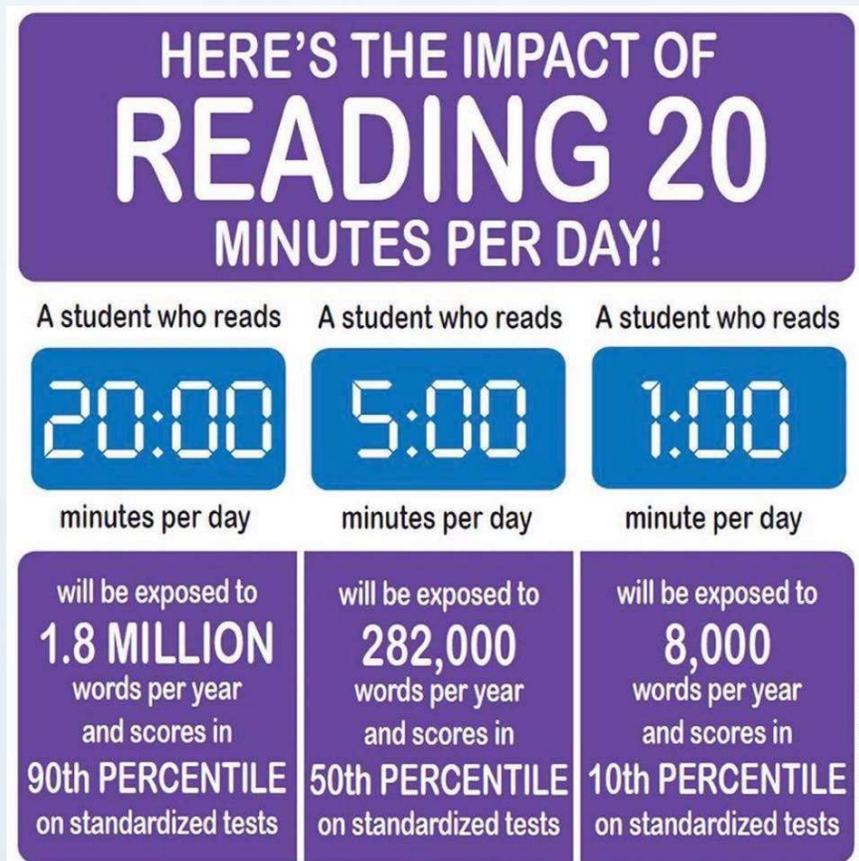
We believe children of any age can make a positive impact on the lives of animals and vice versa!



# Why Tale for Two?

- Children practice reading to a non-judgmental audience which helps acclimate often timid or anxious shelter cats, dogs, and other animals, to the presence of humans. Participants sit within designated cat enclosures, outside of dogs' kennels, and inside the small animal room and read to whatever animals they choose.
- The program benefits everyone involved! It allows children to practice their reading skills in a safe and fun environment and it helps animals become more comfortable with people and kids.
- This activity provides soothing company to dogs, cats, and other animals as they wait to be adopted.

# How Does Tale for Two Benefit Your Child?

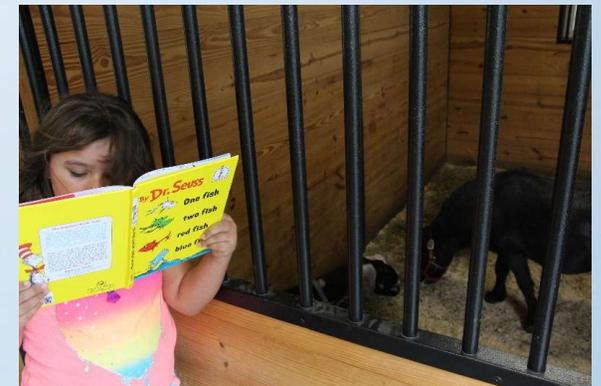


- Increased confidence in reading
- Increased reading skills
- Animals provide a non-judgmental environment
- Children who read to animals gain experiences that will last a lifetime

# How Does Tale for Two Benefit Your Child?

- Children who read aloud to dogs for 10 to 15 minutes per week experienced a 12% increase in reading proficiency.
- They say that practice makes perfect and reading aloud is an important skill to master. But reading to other people can be nerve-wrecking, which can make it difficult to practice. That is why we've recruited our animal ambassadors to lend a non-judgmental ear to kids who want to become more confident readers.
- Struggling readers can improve their fluency skills by reading to animals! The benefits of reading to animals have been documented to include increased reading fluency and improved attitudes about reading aloud.
- Children will build compassion for animals one story at a time. The focus of the interaction is on reading rather than the animal, which teaches children how to be respectful of an animal's space and body and provides a safe, positive interaction for the animal.

# Tale for Two in Action!



# How does it benefit the animals?

- The program is designed to help our adoptable animals to become more comfortable with children because there is no forced interaction. Reading out loud has an overall calming effect for our dogs, cats and rabbits as well.
- Just as children enjoy hearing a story before bedtime, cats and dogs are soothed by the gentle, rhythmic sound of the human voice when we read books aloud!
- This kind of interaction is the highlight of the shelter pet's day. It makes their confidence levels skyrocket and helps them be more comfortable around people. This will eventually help them in their new homes or around potential adopters! These kinds of interactions also lower the stress levels of the animals, which helps them feel more comfortable in the shelter.
- It gives them more practice so that they can gain confidence in their ability to read aloud. The readers also will benefit from the incredible feeling of helping and spending time with a shelter pet in need.

# What Parents Saying about Tale for Two

In addition to the reading practice, we like that he can “give back” to the community by helping animals.

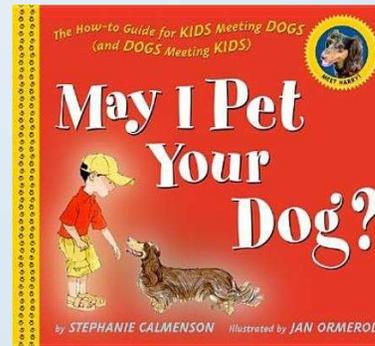
It is a win-win situation. Your child gets reading time in and the animals get attention and love.

Best thing about the program... The way the animal calms down and listens.

Seeing the kids build their love of reading and how they were always excited to interact with the animals every week.

# Come Prepared

- Children should wear long pants, closed-toed shoes, and bring their reading bag.
- Children may bring a book or borrow one from the SPCA.
- Arrive 5 - 10 minutes prior to the start of the reading session.



# When Children Arrive

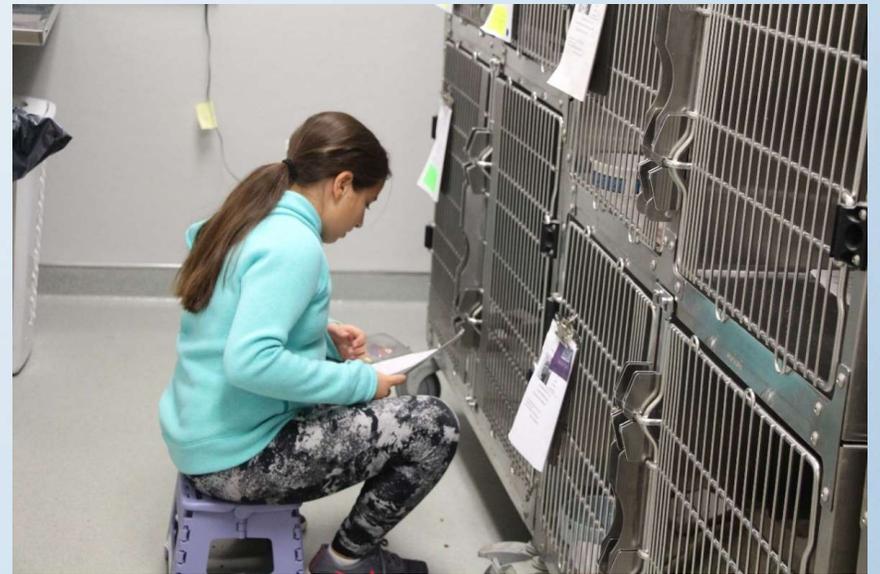
- Gather your materials
- Sign in at the Tale for Two table
- Grab a stool, carpet square, or book
- Choose the animal (dog, cat, small animal, or farm animal) you'd like to read to
- Animals who are available to be read to will have a purple Tale for Two sign hanging on their kennel



Tale for Two  
Reading Buddy

# Ready to Read

- Enter the area quietly, and calmly have a seat to begin your reading session.
- For your child's safety, physical interaction with the animals is discouraged.
- Adults must always stay with the child.





# Please Note

- Not all animals are suitable for children – the humane education staff will pick the animals most appropriate. Some dogs and cats in the shelter are not suitable for children.
- Please be aware some animal's behaviors can be unpredictable.
- There is no physical interaction with the animals, only verbal interaction. (Non-physical interactions are less intimidating for the animals and will help the child focus and practice their reading skills.)
- If you and your child are in an area where there is direct contact with animals and the animal interacts with you, please encourage your child to keep reading.
- Children and parents are welcome to bring a blanket or pillow to sit on while reading.

# Things to Remember

- Please do not open the dog kennels while reading or stick fingers under the doors.
- Please do not bring any food or drinks into the animal areas.



# Animal Body Language and What To Look For



# What to look at for signs: T.E.E.M.P.

- Tail
- Eyes
- Ears
- Mouth
- Posture/  
Position

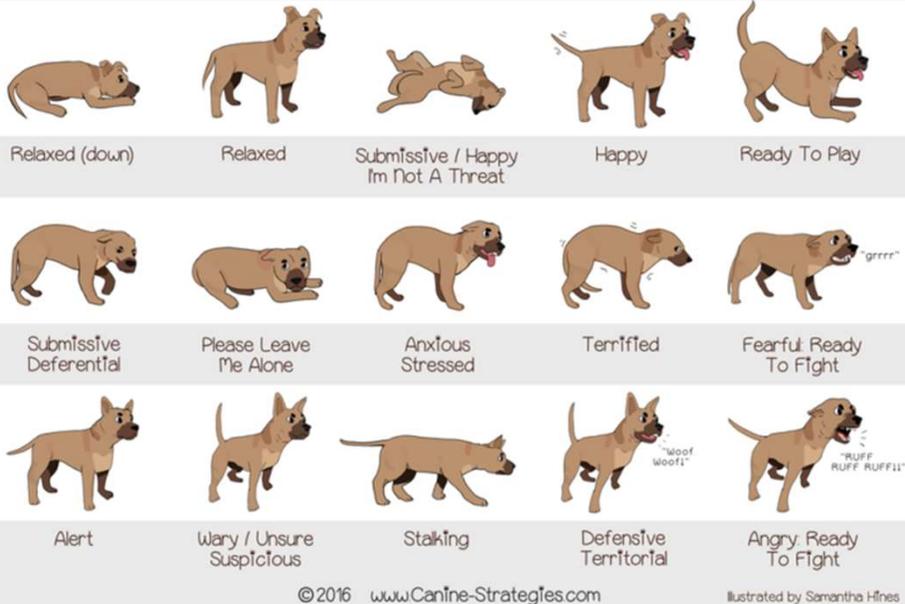


# Dog Body Language

## Reading Canine Body Language: T-E-M-P.

(with Tickle the Pit Bull)

Tail, Ears & Eyes, Mouth, Posture



Dogs communicate with sound (barking, growling, whimpering, etc.), but most of their communication is done through body language.

Dogs use their ears, eyes, mouth, teeth, tail, body position, muscle stiffness, and the fur on their back to communicate.

# Dog Body Language continued . . .

## TALKING DOG

Dogs communicate using body language more than they do vocally. Here's a quick guide to get a good idea of what your dog is telling you. Look at the whole of the dog: head, face, body and tail to get a more accurate idea of what the dog is saying.

### FEARFUL / ANXIOUS / STRESSED

In all cases, respect the dogs need for space and offer signs of appeasement and peace: See the Doggy Dos and Don'ts poster



If not read correctly, stress, anxiety and fear often lead to behaviour commonly termed "aggressive", as the dog attempts to make it clearer that they are uncomfortable: raised hackles are a sign of fear:



### CONTENT / HAPPY / SOCIAL

These dogs pose no immediate threat.



#### TAIL POSITIONS

tucked



in line with spine



high and rigid



low and wagging slowly



#### TAIL POSITIONS

relaxed



high and wagging quickly



casually at 45 degrees



Brought to you by [JezRose](http://www.JezRose.co.uk)

For further resources and information on dog training and behaviour, see [www.JezRose.co.uk](http://www.JezRose.co.uk)  
Copyright 2011 Jez Rose. All rights reserved.

## Identifying Fearful Body Language in Dogs

These body language signals indicate that a dog may be fearful.



Ears back



Tucked tail



Trembling



Avoids eye contact



Crouching



Cowering



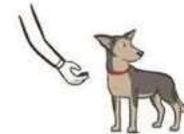
Lip licks



Backing away



Running away



Not interested in food



Does not approach

CENTER FOR  
**Shelter Dogs**  
A DIVISION OF THE ANIMAL RESCUE LEAGUE OF BOSTON

© 2013 Center for Shelter Dogs, Animal Rescue League of Boston  
Illustrated by Lili Chin [www.doggiedrawings.net](http://www.doggiedrawings.net)

# Understanding Animal Body Language

- Even though reading to the dogs is done outside of the dog's kennels, we still want you to be able to understand what the dog is communicating to you as you read.
- Once most dogs are comfortable, they will often come up to the front of the kennel to listen and even take a nap. The non-physical interaction is less intimidating which allows dogs to relax as the shelter can be a very busy and scary place.
- Dogs who are shy or have come from puppy mills will often look like the fearful dog pictures on the previous slide. Reading is a calm, peaceful activity that allows dogs to decide whether they want to keep to themselves or engage with the reader. Often, they choose to engage, which is a huge step for these dogs!

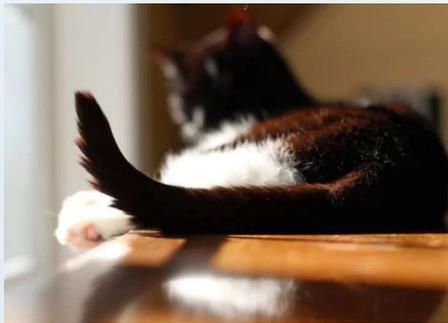
The goal of the program for our dogs is to have them feel comfortable engaging with visitors so that they experience a shorter length of stay in the shelter before being adopted. Through their positive interactions with the readers, dogs become more willing to approach the front of the kennel to greet potential adopters. Quicker adoption is also better for their well-being and provides more room for additional dogs in holding areas to move to the adoption floor.



# Cat Body Language

While cats may seem mysterious to some, understanding a cat is simply a matter of paying attention, watching the cat's body language, and responding accordingly. Cats use a variety of ways to communicate their feelings, needs and desires.

Cats often tells us how they are feeling with their...



Tail



Ears



Eyes



## Understanding cat behaviour

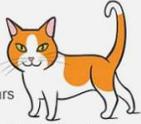
YOUR CAT'S BODY LANGUAGE CAN HELP YOU TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY ARE FEELING

### A happy cat

These cats are relaxed and happy.

1

Cat is standing, has a relaxed body posture, ears are in a natural position, tail is held upright with the tip of the tail curved, eyes are a normal shape, mouth is closed.



2

Cat is lying down, belly is exposed, body posture is relaxed, body is stretched out, ears are in natural position, eyes may be partly closed, mouth is closed.



3

Cat is sitting, body posture is relaxed, tail is held out loosely from body, ears are in natural position, eyes are a normal shape, mouth is closed.



### A worried cat

These cats are telling you that they are uncomfortable and don't want you near them.

1

Cat is in a crouched position, muscles are tense, body is held tightly, tail is tucked tightly into body, ears are slightly swivelled sideways, head is slightly lowered and tucked into body, pupils are dilated, mild tension shows in face.



2

Cats who are worried or anxious may hide.



### An angry or very unhappy cat

These cats are not happy and want you to stay away or go away.

1

Cat is lying down, body is flattened, ears are flattened to the head, pupils are dilated, tail is held tightly into body, body is tense, limbs are held tight and close to body.



2

Cat is lying down, body is flattened, ears are flattened to the head and drawn back, body is slightly rolled over to one side, pupils are dilated, mouth is open and tense, teeth are showing.



3

Cat is standing, back is arched, body is held sideways, hair is raised, posture is tense, front paw is slightly lifted off the ground (ready to swipe if needed), ears are lowered and pointing out to the side, mouth is open and tense, teeth are showing, tail is tense.



## When the Ears Speak, Listen!



1) Relaxed and Happy



2) Alert, Listening Intently



3) Agitated and Nervous

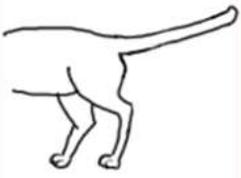
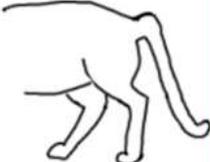


4) Frightened, in Attack Mode

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals  
Wilberforce Way, Southwales, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS  
www.rspca.org.uk facebook.com/RSPCA twitter.com/RSPCA\_official

The RSPCA helps animals in England and Wales. Registered charity no: 219099 The RSPCA only exists with the support of public donations.  
Illustrations: Lil' Chin, © 2011. All rights reserved. With thanks to Julie Bedford, certified clinical animal behaviourist.

# The Teltale Tail

friendly and content 	non-threatening, unsure 	derisive 
friendly, but unsure 	amicable, not fearful or aggressive 	defensive aggression 
angry 	potentially aggressive 	submissive 
very happy to see you 	excited, angry or irritable 	alert, interested 

catsmeowblog.com

# Body Language of Feline Anxiety



Slight crouching

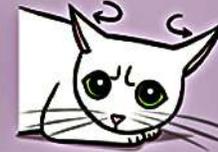


Major crouching

## More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Dilated Eyes



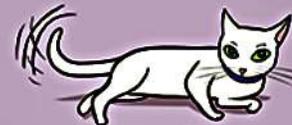
Ears Turned Back,  
Furrowed Brow



Staring,  
Focused on Object



Hiding,  
Looks Half Asleep



Laying on Side,  
Tail Flicking



Hair Raised, Staring,  
Ears Turned Back



Walking with Flat Back,  
Tail Down, Head Down



Ready to Jump Off Perch



Suddenly Grooming,  
Excessive Grooming

# Reading to Cats

- Reading to cats can be done inside the colony rooms or outside the caged cat area.
- We strongly advise against petting the cats during your reading session. Cats tend to show subtle changes in their body language when they have had enough or become annoyed, so if you are reading and petting a cat, it is easy to miss these signs. We do not want anyone accidentally being bitten or scratched.
- Like dogs, cats also benefit from the calming sound of the reading and the non-physical interactions are more beneficial for cats, especially if they are afraid.
- We choose special cats for this program who may have had a previous bad experience with children because the reading helps the cat learn that not all children are scary, which can quite possibly help them be successful in their next home!

# Things to Keep in Mind

- This is just a general overview of animal body language.
- Please be aware of the body language signals in the dogs and cats when reading to them. The shelter can be a stressful place for a lot of animals.
- Again, if your child is reading to a cat, it is especially important to avoid direct physical interaction. For your safety and the cats' safety, we ask that you avoid petting. The soothing sound of your child's voice may be all the interaction the cat wants.
- If you happen to be bitten or scratched, please let a humane educator or volunteer know right away.

# Things to Remember

While we strongly discourage any physical interaction with the animals especially cats (because they are more likely to accidentally scratch when they have had enough), some interaction may be unavoidable!



Should you end up with a cat in your lap, on your coat, or on your shoulder, gently move the cat at the end of your reading session. Please avoid petting the cat while you are reading.

# Policy and Procedure Reminders

- Keep the animals comfortable by being quiet, calm, and responsive to their needs and wishes.
- Wear long pants and closed-toed shoes.
- Document your child's time by signing in and out and have your flex card punched.
- Please have only verbal interaction with the animals.
- Remember to read the animal's body language.
- Report any injury that may occur immediately to the Tale for Two volunteer or staff member.
- In the event a potential adopter is interested in the animal you are currently reading to, you may be asked to change animals.
- Have fun making a positive difference in the lives of shelter animals!
- Talk with you friends and family about what you have learned and the animals you have helped!

# Questions?

Please send an email to Christine Davis  
at [christined@yourspca.org](mailto:christined@yourspca.org).