

Animal Life Cycle
Rabbit Rearing Program

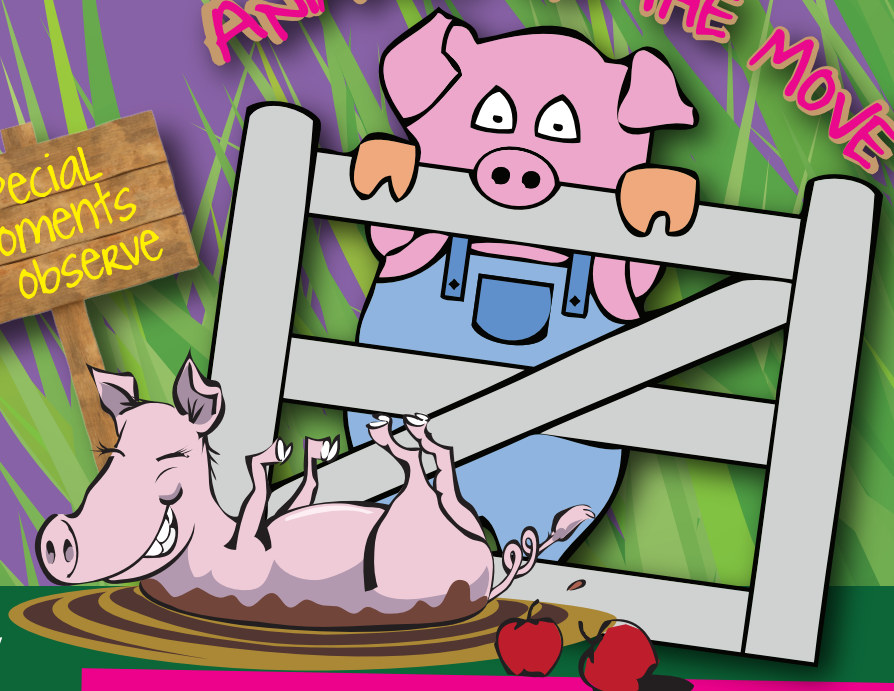
HANDBOOK

A unique hands-on learning experience where you observe the first month of a litter of baby rabbits lives with their mother.

We'd like to share some useful information on what to expect, how to care for your bunnies and so much more...



ANIMALS ON THE MOVE



Cardinia Shire Council
WINNER
Business of the Year

www.animalsonthemove.com.au

Hi There!

Thank you for inviting Animals on the Move's Animal Life Cycle:
Rabbit Rearing Program into your Place.

Our information booklet is designed to give you a thorough understanding of:

- * How to care for your Rabbits
- * How to observe and monitor their growth
- * What to expect along the way

We've also included a few educational and interesting rabbit facts as well as some fun activities to share with your group through the Animals on the Move experience.

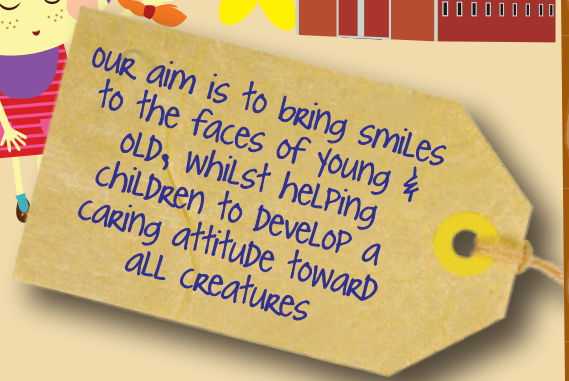
We trust you will enjoy the Rabbits as they grow and your children/students explore the opportunity to gain a hands-on understanding of an animal's life cycle, with these little miracles.

Leonie Woodham (Farmer/owner & Animal Lover)
Animals On The Move Pty Ltd



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A bit about our Animal Life Cycle Rabbit Rearing Program...

Learning about Animals Life Cycles is a motivated experience as most children are naturally interested and curious about animals. The Rabbit Rearing Program provides a highly visual, hands-on, fun and educational experience that children (and adults) love.

The aim of the Rabbit Rearing Program is to introduce children to the development and life cycle of rabbits, as well as learn the daily responsibilities involved in taking care of pets.

Children will be able to observe and be guided to learn about, the changing needs of the new born rabbits (kittens), as they grow and develop over a period of 4 weeks.

During this time children will see the dramatic changes which take place with the rabbits, from the total dependance of their Mother right through to gaining complete independence by approx. 4 weeks of age.

A perpetuate motive is to give children the idea that people can do things to help conserve animal life and that children themselves can carry out a plan of action to assist in the care of animals.



Things to know before you begin

A few helpful hints to remember along the way

For the health and safety of both animals and children and to give you piece of mind.. we've outlined some important things for you to be aware of in order to get the best out of your Animal Life Cylce, Rabbit Rearing experience.

- ✿ Please insist children DO NOT poke their fingers in the rabbit's mouth, rabbits are curious just like us and may bite.
- ✿ It is a good idea to put a barrier or a line on the floor, approx. ½ a meter from the cage just to allow room so that the children are not tempted to put their fingers in.
- ✿ Please do not feed the bunnies extra vegetables or food other than what we have supplied as this can cause upset tummies or worse.
- ✿ Sudden loud and unfamiliar noises can cause stress in a rabbit, consider placing rabbits in another room whilst vacuuming
- ✿ During the first 14 days a teacher/adult can remove the tray for the children to view and observe the kittens development.
- ✿ **IMPORTANT:** When newborn kittens are touched by human hands, they can inherit a human scent and be rejected by their mother. For the well-being of all the rabbits, **we advise not to handle the kittens in the first 14 days** they are with you.
- ✿ Once the babies are furred and mobile, hopping in and out of their nest (approx. 2 1/2 weeks) your group will be able to handle them and chart their progress through weighing and measuring etc.
- ✿ At the end of the program we will return to collect the rabbits and accessories. Should anyone in your group wish to keep any of the rabbits as a family pet, they can be purchased for \$40 each. Animals On The Move also have a range of hutches, feed, bedding and accessories available for purchase. If you have curious parents, please get them to give us a buzz on 1300 760 354 or they can visit our website at www.animalsonthemove.com.au.



A female or Mother Rabbit is called a "DOE"



Baby bunny rabbits are called "Kittens"



A male or Daddy Rabbit is called a "BUCK"

A family or group of rabbits is called a "Litter"

What's included and why...

After running our Rabbit Rearing Program for over 15 years we have tried and tested our set up for ease of use and manageability. We know it's imperative to provide you with the best possible housing, equipment and healthiest Doe (Mother Rabbit) and kittens (baby rabbits), for you to up keep and observe the growth of your kittens effectively and easily.

We deliver a Mother Rabbit (or Doe) with her new born babies in a specially designed hutch for a clean, rabbit and child friendly environment.

Our set up is thoughtfully laid out to ensure easy viewing so the animal experience can be thoroughly enjoyed by all.

This is a 4 week program, with the rabbits generally being delivered on a Monday and picked up 4 weeks later on a Friday.

We deliver everything needed for the 4 week program (as per list below) and set up the enclosure with food, water and wood shavings.

Before we leave each venue we give a brief explanation of what to expect and advise that that you can call us on 1300 760 354 during business hours, (03) 59681644 after hours or email info@animalsonthemove.com.au if you have any queries or concerns along the way.



Why do we need Mother Rabbit Poo?

What we Deliver...


- ✓ Rabbit Hutch
- ✓ Mother Rabbit
- ✓ Kittens in tray
- ✓ Food bucket
- ✓ Brush and shovel
- ✓ Bag of hay
- ✓ Bale of Wood shavings

For happy & healthy Rabbits, Hutches must contain...

- Clean wood shavings
- Small amount of Mother Rabbits poo in one corner (this helps her feel at home & to know which corner to toilet in and which end has the babies)
- Water bottle
- Food container

N.B:

We're happy to help. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

1300 760 354 



Feeding the rabbits What's On The Menu...

Feeding times The rabbits food bowl should be filled once daily.

Special Dietary Requirements Rabbits are particularly fussy about changes in diet and variation in food supply. An improper diet is the major cause of lack of gastric and intestinal motility (stasis and ileus), overgrowth of dangerous intestinal bacteria (enterotoxemia), soft stools, obesity of the liver, and urinary tract infections. Needless to say, a rabbit with any degree of these problems will be an unhappy pet.

Sweet treat Rabbits thrive on a coarse diet high in indigestible cellulose and our Animals healthy mix is enjoyed by all the rabbits. They will get sick if they are fed too rich a diet. Do not offer extras such as cabbage or lettuce etc. A small carrot every couple of days would be quite okay.

Hydration Water should be available at all times to keep rabbits hydrated.

Menu

Rabbit Feed

Served daily in a clean feed bowl

Animals On The Move's Lucerne Chaff,
Pasture Replacement Pellets and a mixture
of cooked grains & Molasses (barley, oats, corn,
legumes, sunflower seeds, lucerne chaff,
oaten chaff)

Beverages

Fresh Water

Served in a clean water bowl or sipper bottle
The perfect rabbit hydration fix with continuous
refills for a never ending supply:)

Carrots are a
sweet treat & a
sometimes food



Handling, Hygiene & Accommodation Care & Management...

Rabbits are social animals and love company, however as like all living creatures the rabbits need a clean, stable and well maintained habitat to thrive in.



PLEASE WASH YOUR HANDS

✿ **Handling the rabbits with care** A teacher may pull the nest box out of the cage each day and part the nest hair to show the children how they have grown

✿ **Adult Supervision** A teacher, carer or adult should be present at all times when the rabbits are to be handled.

✿ **Rabbit Hygiene** Droppings, especially in the corner where they choose to do their poo, should be cleaned DAILY.

✿ **Children & Adults Hygiene** Wash hands after handling the rabbits, cleaning the rabbits home or feeding the rabbits.

Keeping it a 5 star rating ✿✿✿✿✿ Bunny Accommodation...

Providing a great service to your bunnies will keep them happy and healthy, as well as teaching children the responsibility that comes with caring for pets and the work that goes into it.

✿ **Bedding & floor surface** sawdust in rabbit cages should be changed completely once per week.

✿ **Clean daily** animal droppings, especially in the corner where they choose to do their poo should be cleaned DAILY.

✿ **Location, Location** under a sheltered area outdoors during the day and to be moved indoors in the late afternoon for overnight accommodation. When indoors, please position away from windows and/or direct sunlight.

✿ **Safe & Secure** our hutches are provide a safe and child friendly habitat for the little ones.



✿ **Infection Free & Risk Mitigation** Our rabbits are vaccinated against calici virus, however, please keep rabbits indoors in the afternoon and evening, when mosquitos are most active. We would like to minimise their chances of catching myxomatosis.

Providing a familiar & stable environment What to do on weekends...

If you add an extra food bowl & a large coke bottle of water over the weekend that should be sufficient. But if someone is able to go in and check them that would be even better.

Your rabbits should remain at the place to where they were delivered not taken home over the weekends. Contact with other pets can cause stress, as can letting the rabbit run around your back yard (unfamiliar territory).





THE BIRTH & MONITORING OF NEW BORN KITTENS

Gestation of a rabbit is 1 month (may vary from 28 – 33 days). Towards the end of her gestation period the Doe will start to carry nesting material around in her mouth and put it all in one corner of the hutch (usually the darkest corner). She will also pluck fur from under her belly to add to her nest a few days before kindling.

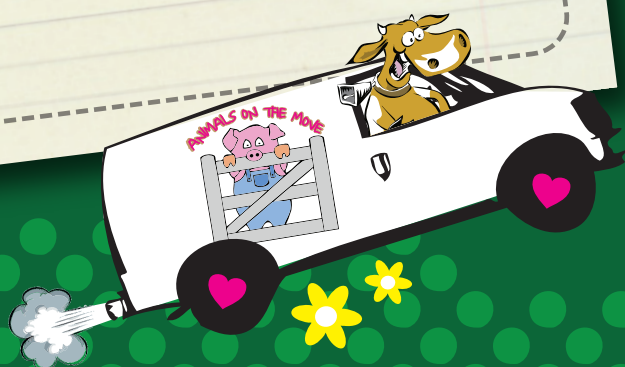
After giving birth she will cover her young with her fur and nesting material to keep them warm.

Unlike cats and dogs, rabbits do not spend much of their time with their young. They only return to the nest once a day to feed them....So don't be too concerned if the Doe seems to be ignoring her litter, this is normal!!!

The newborn kittens are blind, hairless and weigh less than 100 grams. Over the first 6 days the kittens double their weight and grow a good covering of fur. As most Does ONLY have 8 teats and frequently give birth to large litters, there are sometimes dead kittens. (Remember – in nature only the strongest survive) The dead kittens should be removed from the nest box as soon as possible. – Daily checking of the nest box is essential. It is a good idea to check first thing in the morning before the children arrive.

The kittens open their eyes between 7 – 10 days. At about 10 days of age they start to jump out of their nest box and within a further 2-3 days all will come out.

Kittens can be weaned at about 4-6 weeks, once they are eating solid food.



Growth Timeline

Observe and monitor your baby rabbits growth

Observe the miracle of life as you watch closely and see your babies develop.

Birth - at the Animals On The Move Farm

Tiny hairless, wrinkly, wombat looking babies with tiny little ears and closed eyes.

Rabbit kits are born with their eyes and ears sealed shut, and completely furless. Don't be alarmed at how they look - it'll take them a couple weeks for the fur to grow in enough to keep them warm outside the nest box.

3-4 Days - We deliver them to you

Slowly begin to grow fur, still look a lot like wombats but now will have round little bellies full of milk.

7-9 Days - Fully furred

With only a sleek thin coat of fur the baby bunnies will stay in the nest all huddled up to keep warm.

Mother rabbits only ever feed their kits once a day, rarely twice, and that for just 5 to 10 minutes. In this short time frame, the kits get their whole days milk supply. So, if you never see the Doe go near the nest box, but the little kits have round tummies, everything is fine. You don't need to help nature along. The doe is doing her job while you're in bed asleep.

11-14 Days - Bright eyed and bushy tailed

Open their eyes and start trying to leave their nest, fur slowly becoming thicker

17-20 Days - Out and about

Now curious and hopping in and out of their nest with thicker warmer furr- able to be held with great care for short periods of time.

24-24 Days - Solid food

Growing fast now fur is full and fluffy, slowly starting to eat solid food with mother rabbit.

Rabbits are available for purchase after the program

We encourage people who want a rabbit as a pet and are able to provide a good home for them, to purchase the rabbits. As they're social creatures, it's ideal to take 2 together, so they always have a furry friend to communicate with.

Birth-
Here's Kittens
that are a few
hours old



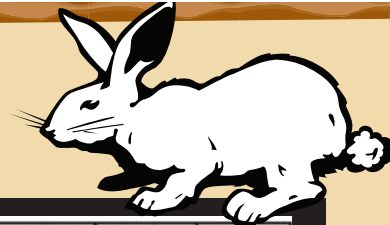
A rabbit Litter
can number
anywhere from
1 to 15!!!



Regularly talking to
the rabbits while
offering them a treat
and petting them,
keeps them social

Rabbits are
available for
purchase after
the program

A little word-finding fun Find the rabbit words...



C	A	R	R	O	T	R	Q	Z	B	U	C	K	F
R	O	A	F	M	P	L	S	M	N	S	D	K	H
T	P	B	B	H	F	U	R	L	E	S	S	T	L
Y	I	B	Z	U	C	X	D	I	S	E	R	T	I
V	K	I	T	T	E	N	B	T	H	G	R	P	P
H	J	T	S	C	W	A	W	T	E	X	O	A	S
Y	I	P	G	H	F	H	R	E	C	K	D	O	E
K	I	N	D	L	I	N	G	R	T	G	Y	D	B
J	P	R	A	Q	B	D	M	C	T	Z	F	Y	M
O	X	N	I	B	B	L	E	N	P	L	H	G	P

KINDLING
FURLESS

CARROT
DOE

LITTER
HUTCH

RABBIT
NIBBLE

BUCK
KITTEN

Cook with the kids Carrot Cake...

Ingredients

- 1 Cup Flour
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp bicarb soda
- 1 cup grated carrot
- ½ cup drained and crushed pineapple
- 1/3 cup ground sesame seeds
- 2 oz. Coconut
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup oil
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup sugar

Directions

- Pre heat oven 350 degrees F
- Beat in a large bowl eggs, oil, milk and sugar
- Mix carrots, pineapple, nuts, sesame seeds and coconut separately
- Add carrot mixture, then add flour, cinnamon and bicarb soda



FAQ's (feel free to give us a call if you have any more questions)

Things to watch out for:

Q: Mother tips babies out of nest box.

A: That's OK. Some mothers don't like the nest box. We put that in for your convenience to make it easier to show the children the baby rabbits. If the mother doesn't want it in there, take it out but make a nice nest with all the rabbit hair etc. in the corner of the end of the cage that doesn't have the water bottle.

Q: One of the babies was out of the nest box.

A: Sometimes the mother feeds the young and when she is finished, she jumps out of the nest box with one still attached to her teat. Pick it up and put it back with its siblings. They can die of cold if they are out of the nest.

Q: The nest is wet with soggy nesting material and wet babies

A: The mother is using the nest box as a toilet. When the rabbits were delivered, some of her droppings should have been put down near the water bottle end of the cage to encourage her to use that end as a toilet. To fix the problem, remove the nest box, clean and dry the babies as best you can. Provide with new dry nesting material (shredded paper, hay etc) and make them comfortable in a new nest not in the nest box. Put the wet nesting material down the water bottle end and she should continue to use that as her toilet leaving the babies clean and dry.

Q: One of the babies is smaller than the others and doesn't seem to be doing so well.

A: In nature, only the strong survive. If a runt is born as sometimes happens, unless it is strong enough to push and shove for food, it misses out. Just let nature take its course.

Q: Mother rabbit doesn't appear to be feeding her babies.

A: Rabbits are not like cats and dogs. They don't feed their babies often and stay with them for warmth and protection. In the wild, they give birth in a nest in a burrow and leave the babies alone. The only protection they might give them is to plug up the burrow with soil or dirt so predators can't get to them. When baby rabbits are new born, the mother only feeds them once a day. They require more frequent feeds as they get older. So don't expect to see mother rabbit laying in the nest box feeding the babies every couple of hours.

Q: Mother rabbit is hopping in and out of the nest box and appears to be squashing the babies.

A: This happens when the mother is agitated. Remove the nest box from the cage, cover the cage with a blanket and move to a quiet spot until the mother has settled in. When she appears more settled, the nest box can be returned. This may take a couple of hours. Don't worry, the babies won't be missing out on feeding and the babies really can be squashed if you allow the mother to keep hopping in and out of the nest box. A good thing to do when you wheel the cage back into the classroom is to ask the children to be extra quiet while the Rabbit is with you so as not to upset her.

Q: When can the children hold the baby rabbits.

A: At about 2½ - 3 weeks. When the babies are hopping in and out of the nest box, you can start holding them but remember to start slowly. A little the first day, a little more the second and please supervise the children whilst they are holding them.

Q: Can we feed the Rabbits veggie scraps & fruit.

A: Our rabbits are used to carrots, hay and the pellets provided. If you change their diet suddenly, it can lead to digestive disturbance which could get messy. We'd prefer it if you could continue only feeding them what they are used to.

Q: Can we buy the rabbits when the program is over?

A: Yes. As long as the babies have started eating solid food they are good to go. If they are still a little young, we will take them back to the farm and you may purchase them from there. We also have a range of hutches available for purchase. Please look for them on the website. If you order a cage before the pickup date of the rabbits, it can be delivered to your kinder/school on that day.

SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PROGRAM, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL A STAFF MEMBER AT 'ANIMALS ON THE MOVE' ON THE FOLLOWING:

PHONE: 1300 760 354
For after hours call (03) 5 9681 644



Thank you for booking the Rabbit Rearing Program...

We trust your group has enjoyed the experience of interacting with our Mother Rabbit and her Babies and have gained an understanding of the responsibility involved in caring for a pet.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could please take a few moments to evaluate the program by answering the questions below. Any feedback would be welcome and will assist us in improving the running of this program.



What did your group learn from the program?

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.....

What activities did your group undertake involving the rabbits?.....

.....

How did it fit in with your curriculum?.....

.....

.....

Was 4 weeks too long/too short?.....

.....

.....

Were you provided with enough information and advice at the start?.....

.....

.....

Was all the equipment provided satisfactory? Ie Hutch/Food etc.....

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How could this be improved?.....

.....

.....

Were the pick up and drop off arrangements satisfactory?.....

.....

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for improvements?.....

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Any further comments.....

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