



# **Animals in Our Lives: Human-Animal Interaction in Family, Community, and Therapeutic Settings**

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What do we know about the benefits of human-animal interaction (HAI)— and what future research needs to be done to ensure high-quality, evidence-based practices? Find out in this book, a resource that presents the latest research on the positive effects of animal therapies and interactions on child health and development.

Gathering contributions from the leading experts in the HAI field, this state-of-the-art research volume is essential for anyone interested in the impact animals have on child development, whether through interaction with pets or through more formal interventions like therapeutic horseback riding or assistance dogs. Program administrators, researchers, and practitioners will explore the current evidence on

- how children with disabilities— including autism— can benefit from animal therapies
- how animals can strengthen empathy, trust, relationships, and other hallmarks of social competence
- why animal-assisted intervention is valuable for children with mental health issues and physical illnesses
- how animals in classrooms can motivate children to learn and enhance a wide range of developmental skills
- which key factors help ensure ethical HAI practices
- how to reduce risks associated with child– animal interactions, including allergies, bites, and viruses
- why pet ownership can benefit both a child and the whole family

To help them shape the future of the emerging HAI field, readers will examine the fundamental principles of evidence-based practice, learn how to meet the challenges of designing and sustaining HAI research, and get a framework to use as a starting point for new research studies.

Whether used as a text or as a reference for researchers and decision makers (or as a source of information for pet owners and parents), this book will help readers take the first important steps toward ethical, evidence-based HAI practices that really improve child outcomes.

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