

English abstract

The purpose of this article is to highlight effects of interaction with animals for children and young people to develop "life skills". This is topic on the agenda in Norwegian educational system nowadays, and will be included in a new cross-cutting theme in a new curriculum for the school. The importance of nature-based and animal-assisted interventions and of contact with nature and animals is, among other things, referred to in an escalation plan for children and young people's mental health.

Knowledge of the importance of nature and of interaction with animals is rooted in the field of anthrozoology, a cross-scientific field of research which is growing, nationally as well as internationally. Today's welfare services are looking for new and innovative solutions in a number of areas in which the established measures are insufficient, and animal-assisted innovations can represent such new opportunities. The article refers to research on two specific measures in which children and young people are involved in interaction with animals: Care farming and Reading for dogs. Some key dimensions of such measures are discussed in light of the concept life skills: 1) social community, relationships and support; 2) energy, courage and mastery and 3) participation in work and community in society.