



The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum Meets National Health Education Standards



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed National Health Education Standards as expectations for what students should know and be able to do to promote personal, family, and community health. Included are comprehending concepts related to health promotion, using interpersonal communication skills to enhance health, using decision-making and goal-setting skills, and advocating for personal, family, and community health. Based on those standards, the CDC also identified characteristics that are important components of an effective health education curriculum¹. Teachers who use the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum can be confident that when they are using the Curriculum for health education, they are addressing the National Health Education Standards. Below we itemize each of the characteristics the CDC identified, with bullet points explaining how The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum contains these characteristics.

- 1. Focuses on clear health goals and related behavioral outcomes.**
 - Behavioral objectives are included in each Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum lesson plan
 - Lessons focus on activities to promote resiliency, positive social interaction, and self-awareness
 - Lessons provide students with tools and strategies they can use to cope with stress and maintain a positive mindset
 - Lessons describe what we can learn from dogs about maintaining good physical & mental health
- 2. Is research-based and theory-driven.**
 - The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum is based on research on emotional intelligence, social-emotional learning, and human-animal interaction
 - Developed in context of a whole-child approach to education, recognizing the importance of all aspects of development: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical
- 3. Addresses individual values, attitudes, and beliefs.**
 - Lessons and activities in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum are aimed at cultivating successful students & citizens, making responsible & ethical decisions, and engaging in healthy & pro-social behaviors
 - Provides opportunities for service learning
 - Promotes connectedness to the community
- 4. Addresses individual and group norms that support health-enhancing behaviors.**
 - In the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, students are given opportunities to examine their ability to acknowledge the thoughts & feelings of others and recognize this as a prerequisite for establishing & maintaining healthy relationships
 - Students learn about humane education and the needs of homeless pets; they work collaboratively with community-based animal shelters and other organizations; they learn collaboration & team work
- 5. Focuses on reinforcing protective factors and increasing perceptions of personal risk and harmfulness of engaging in specific unhealthy practices and behaviors.**
 - The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum recognizes one of the most crucial protective factors in resiliency is the ability to seek help & give a helping hand
 - Opportunities for students to practice how they can ask for help and identify those who can help them
 - Provides students with opportunities to identify their strengths & talents, areas where they need help, and times when they should reach out and ask for help
- 6. Addresses social pressures and influences.**
 - The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum encourages students to work collaboratively
 - Several lessons include activities for students to identify positive and negative aspects of peer pressure, using fun anecdotes with animals
 - Selected lessons focus on diversity and appreciation of others' talents & differences
- 7. Builds personal competence, social competence, and self-efficacy by addressing skills.**
 - Lessons & activities at each grade level provide opportunities to hone and practice the skills of effective listening and other communication, informed decision-making, goal-setting, impulse-control, and labeling, understanding & managing emotions

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/characteristics/index.htm>



8. **Provides functional health knowledge that is basic, accurate, and directly contributes to health-promoting decisions and behaviors.**
 - Mutt-i-grees® shows students the link between physical health and mental health
 - Promotes an understanding about how negative thoughts can impact physical health, well-being, and social relationships
9. **Uses strategies designed to personalize information and engage students.**
 - Activities in the Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum are designed to engage students with hands-on activities and role playing real-life situations that students experience inside & out of school
 - Role play enables students to experience social situations within an emotionally safe context, as well as experience opportunities to explore new skills and solutions to problems
 - Although some students may be self-conscious and hesitant about role playing, the focus on dogs generally enables students to think outside of themselves
10. **Provides age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate information, learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials.**
 - Developed for Prekindergarten through Grade 12 with age and developmentally-appropriate activities that are sequenced within five themes, each one reflecting a key principle in social and emotional learning – self-awareness, understanding and managing emotions, empathy, cooperation, and decision-making
 - Implementing the lessons in sequential order is associated with effective implementation
11. **Incorporates learning strategies, teaching methods, and materials that are culturally inclusive.**
 - Students and staff explore the ideas of diversity & uniqueness through the lens of the shelter pet
 - Lessons facilitate students' sense of self and awareness of their unique physical, behavioral, and emotional traits, while enhancing students' abilities for perspective taking, capacity for empathy, and appreciation of diversity
12. **Provides adequate time for instruction and learning.**
 - Designed to be taught in a series of 25 lessons that last approximately 30 minutes
 - Provide a variety of options from which teachers can select
 - Lessons can be implemented once or twice per week
13. **Provides opportunities to reinforce skills and positive health behaviors.**
 - Designed as a sequential curriculum, the core concepts of social-emotional learning are introduced and reinforced in developmentally appropriate ways as students advance in age
 - Older students are encouraged to become mentors who model and teach the concepts of the curriculum to younger students
14. **Provides opportunities to make positive connections with influential others.**
 - Designed to bring communities together as a way of improving the lives of individual students, community leaders, and the animals in their care
 - Teachers are encouraged to develop relationships with the local libraries, animal shelters, K9 police officers, and veterinarians – all of whom can serve as positive role models
15. **Includes teacher information and plans for professional development and training that enhance effectiveness of instruction and student learning.**
 - The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum has a staff of local and national peer trainers that are able to provide high-quality on-site professional development and training to enhance the use of the program in any setting
 - There are a plethora of resources available on the curriculum website: <http://education.muttigrees.org>

For more information about The Mutt-i-grees® Curriculum, please visit <http://education.muttigrees.org>
You may also contact us at info@muttigrees.org or (203) 432-9944.