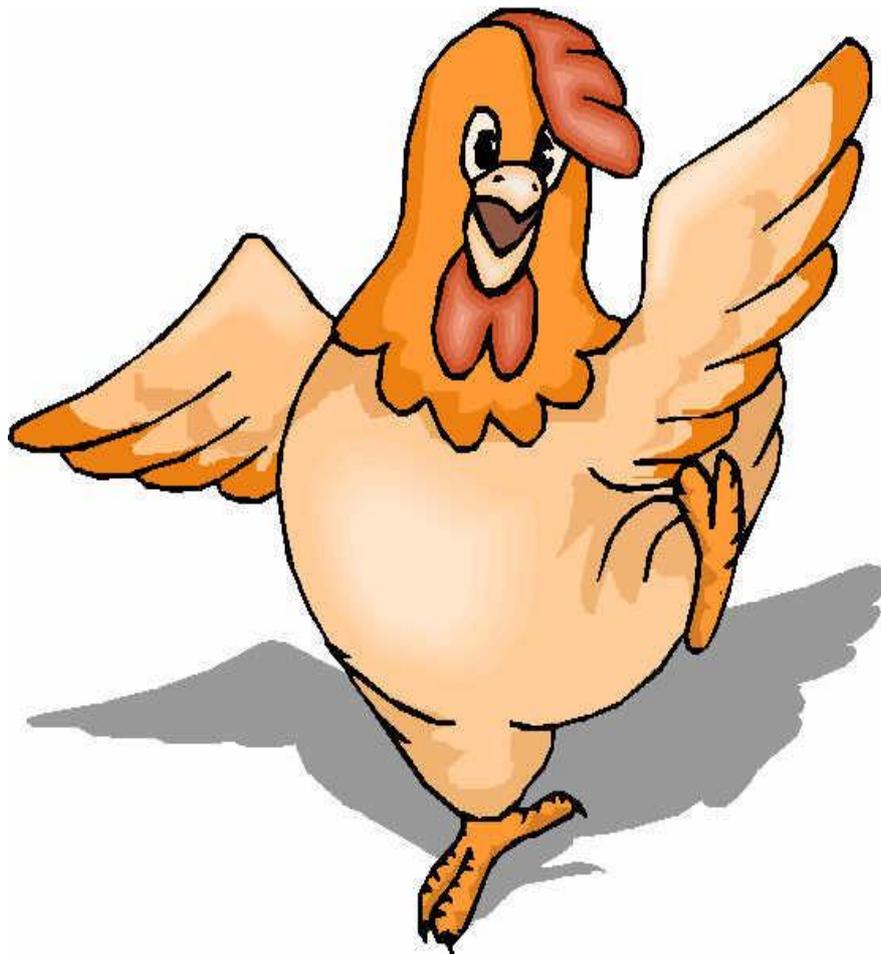


# CHICKEN REARING INFORMATION



## GLENBROOK SCHOOL

### Chicken Rearing Information



#### **Introduction:**

You are going to take home a baby chicken that is less than one week old (from school it is only one day old). It is covered with fluffy down. Very quickly you will see your chicken grow and change, if you feed it regularly and look after it carefully. The notes here have been prepared to help you look after your chicken.

#### **How to Make a Brooder:**

Until your chicken is about 4 weeks old, it has to be kept warm in a brooder. For the first week after you take it home, the light should be kept on at night and if it is cold, during the day too. If the weather continues to be cold, the light should be left on until the chicken has its feathers. It is also beneficial to have more than one chicken for warmth and company.

#### **To make a brooder you will need:**

- A carton or polystyrene box about 30cm x 24cm x 24cm high. This can be enlarged to a bigger box as the chickens grow.
- A light bulb with a flex and plug (an old bedroom lamp is ideal) with a 60 or 40 watt bulb, and later a 25 watt. Don't use energy saving bulbs.

#### **The brooder should contain:**

- A water container, not too big as the chicken could drown.
- A food container. This could be a dish or jar lid. Use tin or plastic.

#### **Cleaning the Brooder:**

A layer of wood shavings or dry sand can be used and changed every two days. However you can use newspaper instead but this most likely will need to be changed morning and evening.

**Remember to wash your hands after cleaning the chicken's brooder.**

### **WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CHICKEN**

1. Make sure it has food and water available all the time. Chicken crumbs are designed to be a complete food for chickens. If you have not got these, the chickens may be started on coarse oatmeal or rolled oats, even a hard-boiled egg chopped finely will be alright. This crumble or crumbs can be obtained from the store or pet shop or a farm agent. Introduce chopped grass after a week.
2. Handle it carefully. It can be killed with rough handling. Make sure you don't drop it.
3. Keep the brooder, and later the cage clean.
4. If the weather is warm, take your chicken outside on the grass for half an hour (longer as the chicken grows). You can make a pen to protect it from cats or dogs or have a cage that it will use when it is bigger.
5. Observe your chicken
  - How does it eat?
  - How does it drink?
  - What are its eyes like?
  - How does it behave on grass?
  - What sounds does it make?
  - What happens to the yellow down?
  - What colour are the feathers?
  - What are its feet like?
  - What grows on its head?
  - What are the new feathers like?

## THE BROODER

The light provides heat for the chickens. They will come close to it when they are cool and move away when they are hot. If they huddle near the light you may need to add a second one for added warmth or increase the wattage of the bulb or increase the insulation of the box.

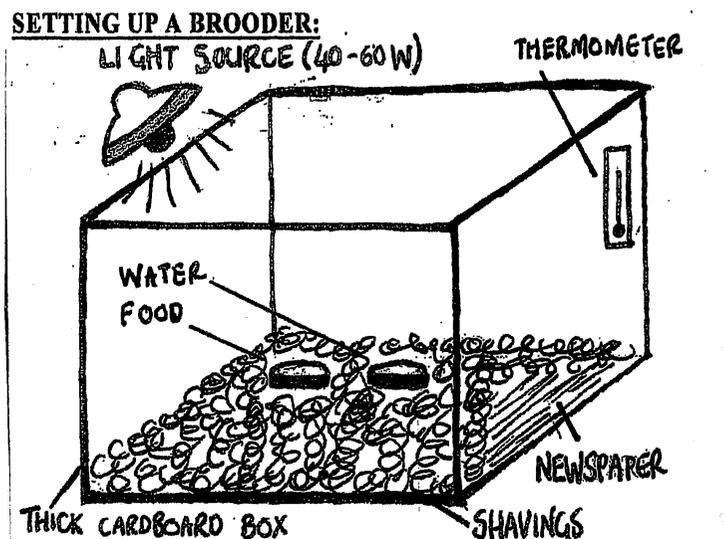
Both the crumpled newspaper and the external box provide insulation so that the temperature inside the brooder does not fluctuate with the outside temperature.

The straw or hay also provides extra warmth for the chicks and allows for easy cleaning of the brooder.

A thermometer could be used to check that the temperature is correct and stable. At 33 to start with reducing to 15.

### SETTING UP A BROODER

- One idea for a brooder is set below.
- Discuss the plan with the children.
- Consider the parts of the brooder.
- Why are they needed?



## ADOPT A CHICKEN:

1. Have each child adopt their chicken after receiving it.
2. Children should name their chickens.
3. The chicken should be allowed to spend time with its adopted parents each day.
4. Each child is to put his/her chicken down on the floor and allow it to run around and investigate as follows:
  - Does it stay near you?
  - Walk away from it and call it?
  - Does it follow?
  - Take your chicken for a walk outside
    - Protect your chicken as a mother would.
  - What does the chicken do outside?

*Emphasise the importance of children washing their hands after handling their chickens because it is important to wash after handling any pet.*

**IMPRINTING:** Newly hatched chickens tend to follow the first large moving object they see after hatching. In the natural situation, the big moving thing would be the mother hen. But young chicks will imprint on almost anything, colour and shape do not appear to matter. The chickens form a lasting attachment for this object (or person).

Imprinting should be carried out in the first day of the chicken hatching. It works best if carried out between 6 and 18 hours and if the object (person) makes a sound while moving from the chicken.

The sensitive period for imprinting is over the in about 36 hours. So it is important for your child to do this the night the chickens arrive at your home. After this the chicken cannot be imprinted.

On the day of Calf club you bring your chicken along to school. At school the Chicken Judge will weigh your chicken and then talk to you about how you raised your chick. You can handle your chicken on the day but this is not compulsory.

Children are also required to complete an informative poster about their chicken. You can include any information you like on it. Some interesting things could be ...

A drawing of your chicken

A drawing of the brooder

Some photos

A weight graph

A height graph

Information on food, housing, care etc...

Paper for your poster will be given out on the day you collect your chickens.

The posters are collected in for marking the first Tuesday of Term 4. The poster is worth 50% and the other 50% comes from your chicken on the day. Posters should be bright and colourful and 100% child effort.

Please note:

Lamps can be brought very cheaply at the Warehouse – just Warehouse – just check the bulb wattage! (not energy saving).

Thermometers can purchased at the \$2.00 shop.

Food for chickens is available from RD1 and other rural supply shops.

Have fun with your little friends.

You provide for them now and later they will provide for you!!

