

## Crazy about chicks

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Friday, 22 April 2011 13:39 -

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Stripes, Speckles, Lucy, Bob, Midnight and Hershey.

Second graders in a Dudley Elementary classroom chant the names as teacher Wendy Bartels carefully takes each chick from a heated enclosure and hands the tiny fuzz ball to a student.

“Mine pooped on me,” a student exclaims.

Shad Soller explained “holding” etiquette.

“You have to cup your hand and leave a little hole in your hands for their head,” Soller said. “You also have to protect their wings.”

Ashton Riley warned that if the chicks are dropped, their legs could break.

Welcome to the second grade life cycle unit.

Bartels describes the unit as one of her favorite because the children experience authentic learning.

Although they learn about the life cycles of frogs, butterflies and bean plants, the most hands-on is the live chick project.

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This year, the Dawson County Extension office provided eggs from two family farms and an incubator.

A 21-day incubation period followed. Each day of development was shared with the help of technology, Bartels said.

On a website—[gets.gc.k12.va.us/elementary/lifecycles/chickens.htm](http://gets.gc.k12.va.us/elementary/lifecycles/chickens.htm)—students witnessed daily what happened inside the eggs, how they hatched and how chicks grew. They compared the information to the eggs and live chicks in the classroom.

Students also learned how to care for the eggs and chicks.

During the incubation stage, for example, Bartels and the students turned the eggs twice daily so the

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