



# CHICK care sheet

## BROODER SET UP

A brooder is a place for the chicks to live. You can use many things for a brooder. I suggest something with at least 1 sqft per chick, a breathable lid, easy to clean, and safe from family pets. Set the brooder up at least 24 hours ahead of time to be sure the heat is working. You'll need a feeder, waterer, and heat source. A roost and hanging parrot toys are great additions to keep them entertained. My favorite bedding is hemp bedding because it is absorbent, low on dust, and great in the compost. Keeping the brooder clean is the best way to prevent illness and death. I sprinkle bedding on top of the dirty bedding daily and clean out the whole brooder weekly. Depending on how many chicks you have and the size of the brooder, you may have to do that more/less often. Give them plenty of time to explore outside of their brooder. No one likes being stuck inside!

## FOOD/WATER

Chicks need food 24/7 until they are in the coop full time. Offer chick starter from weeks 0-8 and then chick grower until 18 weeks. After that, hens can have layer feed. Some brands sell chick food as combination starter-grower. You can use that from 0-18 weeks. Offer them chick grit if they are outside at all or eating things other than chick feed. Keep the water clean!! Adding electrolytes can help with stress. Adding probiotics can help with digestive issues.

## BONDING

Some people like to bond with their chickens. Even if you don't want "pets" it is great to get them used to you so you can handle them when the need arises. Avoid picking them up from above as this creates instinctual fear. Let them come to you be feeding them from your hands as much as possible. Scoop them up from below instead of grabbing from above. Remember: Most chickens aren't "cuddly pets" and that is normal!

## HEAT

Your chicks will need to be kept warm while they learn to acclimate to the outside temps. Many sources online focus on the temperature starting at 95 degrees and decreasing each week. When using a heat lamp, you must pay attention to the temperature but I use a brooder plate and that does not need monitored. You simply raise it as they grow. It acts more like mother hen because they will just go under when they are cold. For the first week I will keep my chicks indoors unless my garage is above 65 degrees. After that first week they are a bit stronger and can go outside in my protected garage with the brooder plate. As time goes on, the chicks will naturally stop using the heat and I will take it away. I move them out to the coop after they have been successful without heat for a few days. If the nighttime temps are below 50 I will keep them in the garage until they are fully feathered.