

Classroom Hatching

Haldimand-Norfolk



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Chicks hatch from eggs which are laid by the mother hens. The eggs that are laid are then placed into an incubator and kept warm for 21 days until they hatch. The baby chick grows inside of the eggs a little more each day until it is ready to hatch.

The eggs in your classroom have already been in the incubator for 19 days. They will hatch VERY soon! Your eggs arrived on Monday morning. Some chicks will even start hatching on Tuesday. The chicks should be done hatching by Thursday morning.

Once the new chicks are completely dry, they can be placed in the brooder and love to be held by children. Baby chicks are used to being very warm so if they start chirping very loudly, place them back in the brooder for a little while so they can warm up.

Baby chicks don't need to eat or drink for the first 3 days after they hatch. They have absorbed the yolk inside of the egg before they hatched and use it for nourishment for a few days. Even though they don't need to eat, baby chicks will still peck at things that they think look delicious. They may even peck at a freckle on your hand. They might think your freckle is a treat.

There are many different kinds of mom and dad chickens so there are also many different kinds of baby chicks. The chicks you will see hatch are called BARRED PLYMOUTH ROCKS. They are a breed that people love to raise in their backyards for eggs and for meat. Barred Plymouth rocks are a very special chicken in many ways. One way that they're special is their striped feathers. Another way they are special is that you can tell the boy chicks from the girl chicks as soon as they hatch.

All chicks are hatched with a special "tooth" on the front of their beak called an "egg tooth." This isn't the kind of tooth you have to brush with toothpaste. An egg tooth is what the chick uses to break open the egg as it hatches. The Chick's egg tooth will fall off of its beak in a day or two. The chick doesn't need the egg tooth anymore. It was only used to hatch out of the egg.

The chicks that hatch in your classroom will be going to a new home at the end of the week. They need to start to eat and drink and grow up into adult chickens. Sometimes the chicks are taken home by one of the kids in your classroom. Sometimes the chicks are taken home by a friend of Mr. Strain. The chicks that hatch in your classroom will all grow up and live a long, happy life and may even have chicks of their own some day.

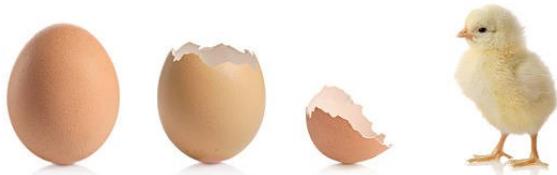


Barred Plymouth Rocks

The Barred Plymouth Rock is a dual purpose breed. It is used for meat and egg production. They are unique because they have white and black stripes on their feathers called bars. They are a gentle breed and make great pets. They lay brown eggs that take 21 days to hatch. Barred Plymouth Rocks have sex-linked genes, which help identify the boys from the girls. The boys typically have a larger white triangle on the head and yellow legs. The girls have a small white spot on the head and dark legs when they hatch. Can you tell them apart?



How do Chicks Hatch?



The chick first breaks through the air cell inside the egg and takes it's first breath of air.

The chick will then use it's EGG TOOTH to break the shell open from the inside. It creates what's call a "PIP" in the egg. "PIPPING" is the first stage of the hatching process



Pipping



Zipping

The chick will rest after pipping for a long time before moving forward. The chick may stay in the pipping stage for an hour and even as long as 3 or 4 hours. This is perfectly normal. During this time, the chick is resting and absorbing the yolk into it's body.

The next step happens fast so watch carefully! The next step is called "ZIPPING." The chick will Rotate in the egg a little, make another "PIP," rotate some more and pip again. By "zipping" all the way around the egg, the chick breaks a ring around the egg, splitting it into two pieces.

Now it's time to push! The Chick will stretch its body out, gripping the shell with its feet and push the two pieces of the shell apart.

This process happens fast and can be easily missed. Even if you're watching closely, you are very lucky to see the moment the chick emerges.



The chick is tired, weak and wet and needs to stay in the incubator for awhile until it becomes fully dried out and fluffy. The chick needs to practice standing up. It can be funny to watch the new chick try to move around the incubator.



The newly hatched chick seems very weak and wobbly. It may appear to be stuck in part of the shell.

The chick may flop around in the incubator as it tries to free itself from the shell. Don't worry! Everything is OK and the chick is perfectly fine.





You did it! All of your waiting and encouragement and cheering the chicks on, has paid off!

Now enjoy! When holding a chick, place the chick's feet on the palm of one hand and gently place your other hand over top of the chick. This allows the chick to stand up but protects it from accidentally jumping off of your hand. Don't worry! You won't hurt them if you're careful.

When a chick is too cold, it will chirp loudly. That's the chick telling you, it's time to go back in the brooder to warm up. Thank you for welcoming these baby chicks in to the world and into your classroom!





Notes for teachers:

- Temperature on the incubator should read very close to 99.5 degrees however, if temperature is slightly higher or lower for any period of time, there is no danger to the chicks. If temperatures are off by more than 2 degrees without returning to normal, please call me
- Incubator needs to remain **PLUGGED IN** at all times. If the incubator needs to be unplugged temporarily, please plug it back in as soon as possible and do not open the lid while it's unplugged.
- Please avoid having children knock or shake the table the incubator is on. Jostling the eggs around can cause trauma to the chicks with disappointing outcomes
- It is best to wait until there are a few chicks dry and fluffy before you open the incubator to move them to the brooder. Moving chicks to the brooder should be done with two people to minimize the time the incubator is opened and minimize heat loss.
- The light in the brooder is a normal incandescent 60 watt bulb. If it burns out DO NOT replace it with an energy saver and/or fluorescent or LCD bulb. The bulb needs to create heat for the chicks.
- Please do not add any more water after the incubator is set up. It is designed to work with what I put in upon delivery.
- Please don't stress out over the chicks. Chicks are built tough and can easily survive drops from a standing child or adult. If a chick is dropped or stunned, just place it in the brooder for a little while to let it recover and it will be fine.