



LANDEN KETTERL (above) held a yellow chick upside down while Franklin Smith touched its feet. Avery Witt (below left) held a chick while sitting on the floor in Kathy Tacha's second-grade classroom last Friday.

Students raise chicks in the second grade

Sitting on the floor in a small circle, nine second graders talked, played with and took turns holding 10 little chicks that were running around.

Each spring, the second-grade classes put eggs in an incubator in the classrooms at Oberlin Elementary School and wait for three weeks to see what happens.

Incubators and heat lamps are provided by the Twin Creeks Extension Office, said teacher Kimberly Witt.

Teacher Kathy Tacha said the chick project is about studying the circle of life. The kids keep a notebook on the stages of development and answer questions about what they think will happen next.

The second graders are like the chicks' parents, she said. Once the eggs are put in the incubators, the students are in charge of turning them and checking the temperature. The kids learn a sense of responsibility, and after the chicks hatch, continue to be in charge of their care until the birds go to a farm.

Mrs. Witt, who has 11 second graders, said each class put 24 eggs in an incubator three weeks before the chicks started to hatch. Mrs. Tacha's class had the first chick last Monday, and Mrs. Witt's class had its first one the next day.

The kids are super excited, said Mrs. Witt. They counted down the days until hatch day. The project, she added, is part of the science curriculum.

After the first one hatched, she said, they ended up with 12 chicks in her class and 10 in Mrs. Tacha's.

Through the project, said Mrs. Witt, the students learn all the parts of the egg right up to the hatching. After that the kids get a chance to



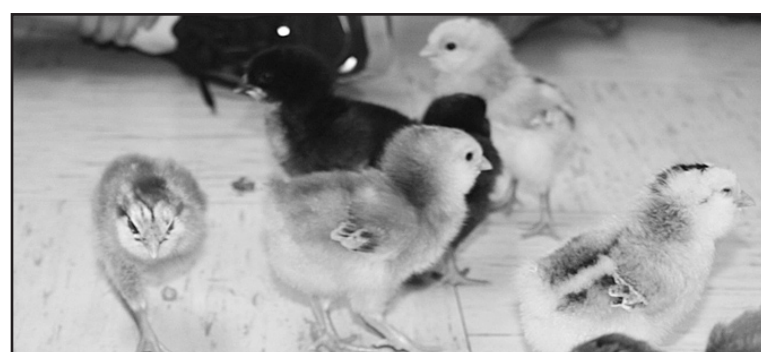
get on the ground and play with the chicks every day.

This year, said Mrs. Witt, her class had an escapee. The only little gray

chick disappeared one day last week and has never reappeared.



SECOND GRADER Bryant Addleman-Gillund (above) held his chick up high and smiled. Kathy Tacha's class watched 10 little chicks hatch this year. Every day, the chicks (below) are let out of their cardboard box to play.



— Story and photos by Kimberly Davis