

## Think & Discuss

- 1) How could you measure piglet play?
- 2) Why do you think piglets fight when introduced to new families?
- 3) Why did they observe multiple piglets from multiple families?
- 4) Why did they observe the piglets over 6 weeks?
- 5) What are the similarities/differences between the farrowing crate and the PigSAFE Pen?

## Real-Life Research: Does the type of home affect piglet play or fighting?

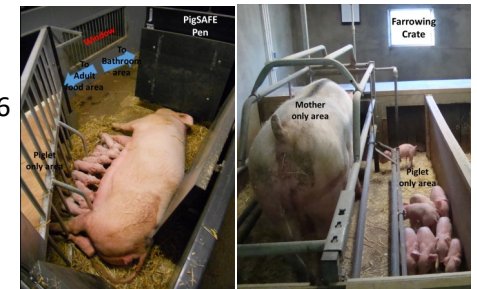
Scientists ask questions and answer them using the scientific method just as you have. Read about Jessica's research then look at the questions.

**Aim** Piglets play when they are happy and fight when they are unhappy. Watching when they play or fight tells the scientists when they are happy. Scientists wanted to know if their home affects whether they are happy or not.

### Materials

36 piglets (6 per family)  
Video camera  
2 different homes (PigSAFE pen/Farrowing Crate)

**Method** Mother pigs were split between the two homes (pictured). 6 piglets from each family were watched for 4 hours over 6 weeks and their play behaviour was recorded. After 6 weeks families of piglets were mixed together. The number of skin wounds on each piglet was counted before they were introduced to new families and 7 days after mixing.



**Results** Piglets raised in the pen played sooner and more often than those raised in the crate. All piglets fought when mixed together but piglets from the pen had fewer wounds than those from the crate after 7 days.

**Conclusion** Piglets raised in the pen had more time to interact with other pigs and played more than those raised in the crate. Piglets raised in the pen, once comfortable, also became less aggressive with new piglets than those raised in the crate.

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Martin J., Ison S., & Baxter E. 2015. The influence of neonatal environment on piglet play behaviour and post-weaning social and cognitive development. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. **163**: 69-79



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