

Timeline of Events

Days 1-17

Keep tray of water in incubator full. If you opt to use cups, please add cups to all four corners of the incubator to provide equal humidity throughout the incubator. Check on the humidity in the AM and PM (when you arrive at school and before you leave for the day). Keep note of the position of the turners throughout the day. The turner should rotate the eggs several times a day. If the turner isn't working, the chicks will not continue to develop properly. If you notice that the turner is not working, please contact the Extension Office for a new turner.

Days 7-15

These are good days to candle the eggs to check for chick development. Discard any eggs that the light passes completely through or those that show early deaths.

End of Day 18

Remove turner from incubator *if applicable* and increase humidity by adding more water to the tray or ensuring cups are filled.

Days 18-19

The chicks will need a home shortly. Begin constructing the brooder and secure supplies.

Days 18-23

Keep humidity increased until the end of Day 23 when unhatched eggs should be discarded. Discard shells as chicks hatch.

Days 21-24

Chicks should begin hatching on the 21st day, but can sometimes hatch later.

When the Chicks Start Hatching

DO NOT TOUCH CHICKS! Even though you may feel the chick is struggling too much, that is part of the process! You may feel like you want to help, but in the end this will harm the chick, potentially causing it to die. It is not uncommon for chicks to take hours to come completely out of the shell.

Once the chick is out of the egg, leave it in the incubator until it is completely dry. If a chick hatches completely around noon, typically you will be able to move it to the brooder box at the end of the school day.

Try to limit the number of chicks left in the incubator overnight. It can be detrimental if there are too many chicks in the incubator. This can cause the temperature to rise too much.

End of Day 24

Chicks should all be hatched by this time.

Discard unhatched eggs.

Clean incubator and prepare supplies and chicks to be picked up.

