**Caring for chimpanzees who are awaiting transfer to sanctuary**

**A PASA guide**

***Note: this guide is only for short-term care of chimpanzees, before they can go to a sanctuary. Whenever possible, chimpanzee care should be provided by trained professionals at accredited sanctuaries.***

Physical Environment

* For chimps ages 5 and older, signs should be posted to warn strangers (non-caregivers) to keep a distance adequate to prevent physical contact. By age 5, a chimp is stronger than an adult human male. Chimps might grab, bite or steal personal items in an attempt to get attention.

If the chimp is housed outdoors:

* Provide an area with overhead shelter to protect from rain or overexposure to the sun.
* If possible, provide a space to serve as a windbreak to protect from wind or cold. This could be a simple sheet of metal, lashed bamboo, woven palm fronds or wooden boards.
	+ The windbreak could double as a visual barrier, providing an area for the chimp to “hide”
* If the temperature reaches below 15°C, providing a blanket, bedsheet or towel can help provide warmth.

Nutrition

* The diet of wild chimps consists of, on average, 60% fruits, 30% vegetation (leaves, stems, seeds, blossoms, bark and pith) and 5-10% animal matter (insects, eggs and \*meat).\**Feeding meat to rescued chimps is not recommended nor is it a necessary part of their diet.*
	+ Feeding fruits with skins on will supply fiber.
	+ Supplementing with rice, cooked oats or potatoes once a week will supply filler.
	+ Supplementing with beans or hard-boiled eggs once a week will supply protein.
* Vary the types of fruits given as much as possible, with the realization that there are limitations as to what types are available locally and seasonally.
* Some types of vegetation are toxic to chimps. Identify any toxic plants in the area and avoid giving these to the chimps.
* It is best to provide food in such a way as to maximize processing and consumption time. *See Enrichment section for details.*
* Wild chimps are typically weaned before the age of 5. After this time, milk should not be given to adolescent or adult chimps unless they are ill or malnourished.
* For baby chimpanzees: Feed them 120-200 ml every 3-4 hours. Alternate between a powder-based human baby milk formula such as Enfamil or Similac, and Cerelac. The exact amount can depend on what the chimp wants. Do not use plain cow’s milk.
* As soon as they have teeth, give fruits four times every day. Introduce new fruits little by little. Start with avocado and banana. Then add mango, tomatoes, pineapple, boiled sweet potatoes, beans, corn, and rice. Later add cabbage and onions.
* For chimps who are 3-6 years old, give human baby milk formula 3 times per day and Cerelac one time per day. Also give:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **French** | **English** |  |
| **vegetaux** | **vegetables** | Kilos per day(jour) per animal |
| choux | cabbage | 0.25 |
| patate | potato | 0.29 |
| oignons | onions | 0.17 |
| Total | Total | 0.71 |
|  |  |  |
| **fruits** | **fruits** | Kilos per day(jour) per animal |
| Mangues | mangos | 0.96 |
| Avocats | avocados | 0.20 |
| Bananas | Bananas | 0.56 |
| Total | Total | 1.72 |
|  |  |  |
| **cereals** | **cereals** | Kilos per day(jour) per animal |
| Haricot/Mais  | Beans/corn | 0.14 |
| Riz  | Rice  | 0.14 |
| mélange de farines: farine de soja, farine de sorgho et farine de maïs | mix of flours: Soya flour, Shorgum flour and Corn flour | 1.00 |
| Total | Total | 1.29 |
|  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | **TOTAL** | 3.71 |

* Provide a constant source of drinkable water. This could be from a stream or well that is known to locals to be uncontaminated or rain water that has been collected and placed in a plastic tub (weighted with cement so it is not easily knocked over) or a small pool (shallow hole dug in dirt and coated with cement). It should be refilled when empty or soiled by urine or feces.
	+ If a constant water source is not available, a caregiver should offer water a minimum of 2-3 times per day.

Interaction and handling

* Infant chimps in the wild would be in nearly constant contact with their mother. Orphaned infants, especially those under the age of 2, will benefit from as much physical contact as possible with their caregivers. This includes being groomed, held or carried and riding on their caregivers’ back. These simulate the types of attention they would receive from their mother in the wild. Wild infant chimps also explore and play independently but are always close enough to their mother to seek comfort or protection when needed.
* Chimps love attention! Human interaction is beneficial to those without the companionship of other chimps, Types of positive interaction include:
	+ Grooming/being groomed
	+ Playing and tickling
	+ Talking and making chimp vocalizations (including pant hoots or food barks while feeding, breathy laughs while playing and raspberry noises while grooming)
	+ Taking walks together in the forest
	+ Sitting together inspecting leaves, insects and other items in the forest
* Returning a young chimp to its cage after a walk can be difficult. The chimp will most likely resist being put back in.
	+ Put a favorite/rare food treat or toy inside the cage to make it more appealing.
	+ Don’t leave immediately after returning the chimp to its cage. It will be harder to put him back in the future if he realizes that returning to the cage means that the visit and attention is over. Instead, stay and play for a while. Give some enrichment, if possible, and walk away while he is busy with it.
* By the time the chimp becomes a juvenile (5 to 8 years old), it will become increasingly difficult, or even harmful, to take it out of a cage or detach from a rope or chain. At this age, the chimp can overpower a caregiver and inflict serious wounds. If the chimp is still an infant (aged 4 or younger), the caregiver will have the ability to control the situation and protect him/herself or others.
	+ This varies by individual. There are some chimps who are extremely gentle into adulthood and would not harm anyone. However, it is perfectly natural for a chimp to act out and to occasionally be aggressive. It is best to assume that a juvenile or older chimp will be aggressive.
	+ This does not mean that interaction should stop at this age. It just means that the interaction should take place within safe boundaries such as through cage mesh or just outside the boundaries of a chain or rope.
* Ignore any negative behavior, such as throwing feces or spitting water. Giving the chimp attention, whether positive or negative, will only encourage it to continue displaying the behavior. Remember- they love attention of any kind.
	+ An exception to this is if the behavior endangers the chimp or others. First, try to distract the chimp. If this doesn’t work, actively try to stop the behavior, using force only in the most extreme circumstances.

Enrichment

* Place an old tire or empty plastic drum (like the type used to store water) inside a large cage so the chimp has something to play with or sit on.
* For infants, a hammock can be made from an empty rice sack and tied in the cage.
* A supply of fresh and/or dried leaves should be provided for nesting- daily, if possible.
* Fresh leaves are also an important part of their diet, and the leftover stems may be used as tools for termite-dipping, foraging or play.
* Wild chimps spend over half of their waking hours searching for, processing and consuming food. Chimps in captivity may easily become bored, which can lead to the expression of negative or abnormal behaviors. It is highly beneficial to present food in such a way that occupies their time and that requires them to work to obtain it.
	+ A simple but effect foraging technique for chimps in cages is to place small foods such as peanuts just outside of the cage. Then give the chimps a stick (unless there are already branches or stems in the cage) that they can use to drag each morsel close enough to grab with their fingers. This assumes the cage is flat on the ground. If not, peanuts could be placed on shelving or tiers on the outside of the cage.
	+ For chimps on a chain, simply throw and scatter a large handful of peanuts so that the chimp must forage on the ground. If any land out of reach, the chimp can use a stick to drag them closer.
		- Peanuts are a locally-available and usually inexpensive food that is universally loved by primates. Therefore, peanuts are highly recommended as forage. Other types of food that make good forage include roasted seeds (such as pistache or cucumber), popcorn, cooked beans, cooked rice and dried soybeans). Fruit or other foods can also be cut into very small pieces and scattered.
	+ A puzzle feeder can be simply-constructed using inexpensive and locally-available materials.
		- An empty plastic bottle can be partially-filled with honey and/or peanuts and tied to the outside of a cage. A stick should be provided.
		- A plastic bucket can be filled with cut pieces of fruit and tied to the outside of the cage. The chimp must reach with his hands or with a stick to obtain the food.
* A piece of bamboo that is cut open on both ends may be filled with mashed banana, avocado, honey or peanut butter and given to the chimp. It can be passed through the mesh openings of the cage, tied horizontally to the outside of the cage or thrown to a chained chimp.
	+ A piece of bamboo with one end cut open and the other closed can be tied vertically to the outside of the cage or thrown to a chained chimp. Make sure that a stick is available to serve as a tool.
* A piece of cardboard, large banana leaves or sheets of newspaper can be smeared with honey or peanut butter and given to the chimps. These items can also be given without food smears.
* A handful of palm nuts make great enrichment for chimps ages 5 and older. They eat the fruit and then must use a rock to break open the nut and consume the delicious center. This requires time, patience and problem-solving skills, which is great for mental stimulation.
	+ A chimp that is chained should have access to a hard surface and heavy rock(s). If the chimp is in a cage that has a mesh bottom, make sure to provide a rock and a lightweight piece of concrete to serve as an anvil.
		- If a particular chimp has a habit of throwing rocks at people or being destructive (and might, therefore, use them to break the cage), skip this type of enrichment.
	+ Palm nuts aren’t recommended for young infants because they are quite oily and might upset their digestive system. A chimp that is 3 or 4 years old should not eat more than one regular or two small palm nuts once or twice a week. In addition, infants do not have the strength and skill required to break open the nut.
	+ If a juvenile or adolescent chimp has not received palm nuts in the past, it is a good idea for a caregiver to demonstrate how to break open the nut. Chimps learn from social observation.

Prioritizing Welfare Needs

* The quality of care that may be provided is dependent upon the availability of caregivers and local (material and financial) resources.
* It might be possible to only provide food and shelter but not enrichment or interaction. It is best to provide all aspects of physical, emotional and psychological care. However, if that is not feasible, consider using ***Maslow’s hierarchy of (human) needs pyramid*** as a guideline (disregarding the top tier of self-actualization).
	+ Provide **basic needs** in order to ensure that the chimp survives to make it to sanctuary.
		- This includes making sure minimum nutritional needs are met and that shelter is provided to provide warmth and protection from the elements.
	+ Next, provide **safety needs** to ensure not only the safety of the chimps but also the safety of the community in which it resides.
		- This involves secure containment of juvenile or older chimps, so they cannot harm themselves or others. Factors to consider are whether a cage is devoid of sharp surfaces or spaces where body parts may become entrapped and whether a rope or chain may become entangled or pose a suffocation hazard.
	+ Above basic and safety needs are **psychological needs**, which are vital to the emotional well-being of the chimp but *are not critical to their survival*.
		- These include enrichment and positive attention from caregivers.



For more information:

 Contact info@pasa.org.

References:

1. AZA Ape TAG. (2010). Chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes) care manual Silver Spring, MD: Association of Zoos and Aquariums.
2. Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. Psychological Review, 50, 370–396.