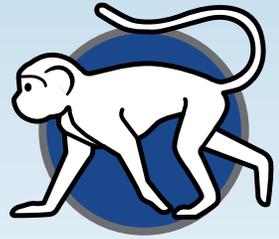


Options for Meeting Social Needs of Primates



SOCIAL HOUSING

In most cases, stable social housing with one or more partners of the same species is the simplest and most effective way to meet a primate's social needs. Having the right companions that allow them to engage in species-typical social behaviors is very important to their overall well-being.



PRACTICAL TIP



When assessing primates housed with other species, look for positive signs of interest between enclosure mates. One example would be both animals choosing to spend time near each other.

Just living in the same enclosure without aggression does not mean that the grouping meets either animal's social needs. In fact, it may be that the animals are avoiding each other, which could indicate that the pairing is a source of stress rather than benefiting either animal.

OTHER OPTIONS

When stable social housing with the same species is not possible, you may be able to meet your primate's social needs in other ways. For example, you can try housing your primate with:

- Protected contact with others, such as through a mesh panel
- Intermittent social contact or scheduled social interactions
- A different but compatible species of primate
- Another type of animal that is compatible



DID YOU KNOW?

Meeting your primates' social needs is a key part of promoting their psychological well-being. If you are unsure of how to provide for their social needs, here are some questions to get started:

- Are your primates socially housed?
- How are animals introduced to new partners or groups?
- If animals must be separated, what is done to make this less stressful for the animal?
- If a primate does not have a full-time social partner or group, why not?
- For those primates without a social partner or group, how are their social needs met?



Primates that must be housed alone may benefit from human companionship through regular positive interaction.

What If a Primate Must Be Housed Alone?

Companionship is very important to most primates, so you will need to consider whether your primate truly needs to be alone. But finding appropriate social partners can be a challenge. Some animals may be too aggressive or debilitated to safely house them with a partner.

This Animal Care Aid is part of a series developed to help with promoting psychological well-being in primates. Topics covered in the series include social grouping, supporting species-typical activities, and special considerations.

Questions? Email us at CenterforAnimalWelfare@usda.gov

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