

Special Needs of Primates Unable To See or Hear Other Primates

Captive primates need special attention when they cannot see or hear other primates.



WHY DO THEY NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION?

Being able to see or hear other primates is a key part of many primate's social needs. In fact, it is essential for their psychological well-being.

But, what happens when a primate's housing situation makes it hard to meet his or her needs to interact with other primates? In these cases, special attention must go into planning the primate's care.



COMMON STRATEGIES

Below are a few common ways to offer social stimulation to primates who cannot see or hear other primates. These strategies are often used in combination for the best results.

- **Mirrors**
- **Auditory enrichment, such as jungle sounds and "conspecific" calls (sounds from the same species)**
- **Video enrichment, including movies or videos of primates in the wild**
- **Increased positive interactions with people**

These examples are only suggestions; other options not mentioned here may also be appropriate. Ideally, you will decide which strategies to use based on how effective they are in supporting the social needs of your primate.

PRACTICAL TIP



BEFORE you obtain a new primate, plan ahead. Do you already have a social partner who will be housed with or near your new primate? If not, consider getting more than one of the same or a compatible species, so they will provide companionship for each other. Another option would be to hold off on obtaining a new primate until you are prepared to meet his or her social needs.

Any other primate species won't necessarily be a compatible species. The best option is one of the same species.

Thinking about which species your primate might have positive encounters with in the wild may help you identify other species that would be compatible.



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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