

GENERAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR HAND REARING FELID NEONATES

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ABSTRACT

There are many reasons to hand rear felid neonates in a zoological setting. The criteria for doing so should be set in advance of parturition and all preparations made for the process. The possibility of illness or common ailment should be anticipated and plans should be made for routine veterinary checks. Staff involvement, feeding schedules, formula, feeding supplies and methods should be determined as well. Housing options for all stages of the neonate's growth should also be part of the plan. Other considerations include weaning and socialization. Throughout the entire process, detailed record keeping is essential for both the current situation and for future reference. While preparation is crucial, so are flexibility and the ability to adapt any plan. Success in hand rearing of felid neonates can be determined and measured by their growth and well being.