STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT AND CARE GUIDE FOR RACCOONS

BASED ON EXPERIENCE OF WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS

IN THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES AND CANADA

There is a geographic difference in size for raccoons in North America. Body mass increases as you go further north, so young born in the north will likely be bigger on average than those born further south – although features of each age (for example time when eyes open, or teeth erupt) will be the same. This chart is based on the experience of wildlife rehabilitators in the northern part of raccoon habitat. Weights for young at the same stage of development will vary not only between individuals but across regions as well. Therefore it is best to decide how much formula to feed based on individual weights using this chart as a general guide only.

AGE (weeks)	FORMULA FEEDING	HOUSING	SPECIAL CARE
Birth to 1 week **60-140 grams** - eyes and ears closed - face mask and tail rings barely visible - scant fuzz of fur on back and sides, none on stomach	Feed 3-7cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) 7-8 times a day - every 2.5 - 3 hours including overnight feeding **Example of a feeding schedule for 8X a day:** 7am, 9:30am, noon, 2:30pm, 5pm, 7:30pm, 10pm, plus once overnight **Example of a feeding schedule for 7X a day:** 7am, 10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm, plus once overnight Formula should be a bit warmer than body temperature during the entire feeding. Set the cup/bottle of formula in	**FIRST HOUSING** House in a pet carrier or small enclosed box with breathing holes in a warm room. Protect from drafts. Add layers of soft non-raveling cloth. Change bedding twice a day. Do not wash with fabric softener (harmful to their respiratory system). Do not use wood chips for bedding. Provide heat source either with heating pad (only put half heating pad on/under carrier/box) or hot water bottle (well wrapped in soft cloth). Make sure it does not leak. Refill every second feeding or when its no longer	Cup babies in small cloth and rest your hand on top of hot water bottle for feeding. Feed in warm, distraction free room. Provide extra sucking time - Wear latex/light cotton gloves to allow them to suck on your fingers for 10-15 mins after each feeding Stimulate after each feeding - Stroke genital area with wet finger, Q-tip, soft wet cloth until they finish urinating/elimating Wash face, neck, chin

	a larger container of hot water to keep it warm.	warm.	after each feeding. Formula will produce golden brown stool. Practice proper hygiene as raccoon feces contain parasites.
2 weeks **190-225 grams** - lightly furred - no fur on belly - eyes and ears closed	Feed 9.5-11.3cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) 6 times a day every 3 hours. **Example of a feeding schedule for 6X a day:** 7am, 10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm	Same as above	Same as above
3 weeks **320-400grams** - furred all over - **eyes open at about 3 weeks** (18 – 24 days of age)	Feed 16 - 20cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) 6 times a day every 3 hours. **Example of a feeding schedule for 6X a day:** 7am, 10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm	Same as above	Same as above As they become aware of surroundings, ensure feeding still happens in a warm distraction free room. After they are comfortable nursing from a bottle, simulate feeding in a group. See XX for improvised feeding tool. After they have learned to nurse well from a bottle you may want to improvise a way to feed them as a group. See photo for one improvised feeding tool made by attaching a strip of plastic mesh to a small piece of wood trim, and then threading thick elastic through the mesh, creating loops to hold several

			bottles.
4 weeks **450-550 grams**	Feed 22.5 – 27.5cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) **OR** Feed 31.5 – 38.5cc or ml (for 7% per feeding) 5 times a day every 3.5 hours **Example of a feeding schedule for 5X a day:** 7am, 10:30am, 2pm, 5:30pm, 9pm	Same as above	Same as above
5 weeks **600-700 grams**	Feed 30 – 35cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) **OR** Feed 42 – 49cc or ml (for 7% per feeding) 4 times a day every 4 hours **Example of a feeding schedule for 4X a day:** 7am, 11am, 3pm, 7pm	Same as above	Should be peeing on their own. Can start to litter train them to paper towels in their carrier. - Line front section of carrier with paper towel or cat litter pan - Stimulate them to pee on paper towel After they are litter trained, monitor often, remove feces promptly (use rubber gloves, wash hands thoroughly)
6 weeks **750-820 grams**	Feed 37.5 – 41cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) **OR** Feed 52.3 – 55.4cc or ml (for 7% per feeding) 4 times a day every 4	**INTERMEDIATE HOUSING** House in a warm, quiet room. They will need more space. If possible, give a small room, add a very large dog carrier (33” x 22” x 28”) for their nest, but remove	Can use sand or kitty litter instead of paper towels once they are litter trained. Clean housing and litter pan often. Provide toys - Natural: acorns, pinecones, small branches, bark,

	hours **Example of a feeding schedule for 4X a day:** 7am, 11am, 3pm, 7pm **Introduce solids:** - Good quality puppy chow - Chopped fruit (grapes, bananas) Moisten puppy chow with formula at first and mix mashed bananas with it. Microwave for 5 minutes to allow kibble to soak up fluids.	the door. Remove artificial heat source gradually. Only use wrapped hot water bottle under bedding, do not use heating pad. Provide fresh drinking water using containers to water pigs, dogs, or rabbits. Secure it to something solid. Empty, wash and refill several times per day.	limestone pieces, shells, stones, maple keys, flower seed heads - Pet toys: dog chew toys, cat toys, human baby toys, empty boxes
7 weeks **900-1000 grams**	Feed 45 – 50cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) **OR** Feed 63 – 70cc or ml (for 7% per feeding) 4 times a day every 4 hours **Example of a feeding schedule for 4X a day:** 7am, 11am, 3pm, 7pm Once they are eating the puppy chow, stop moistening it, increase the amount of solids.	Same as above	Same as above

8 – 10 weeks **1000-1450 grams**	Feed 50 – 72.5cc or ml per feeding (for 5% of body weight) **OR** Feed up to 80cc or ml per feeding 3 times a day every 5 hours **Example of a feeding schedule for 3X a day:** 8am, 1pm, 6pm **Weaning**: as they eat more solids, decrease the frequency of their formula feedings to 2 times a day and then to once – aiming to completely wean them from formula by 10 weeks of age.	Same as above	**NOTE ON WEANING:** Do not continue to increase formula past 80cc per feeding, should be encouraged to eat solids, and if formula continues to increase they will not be motivated to do so.
10 – 16 weeks In the northern raccoon habitat are born in the spring (March-May) and should be 15 lbs when released in August or September at 16-18 weeks of age.	**Feed:** - Good quality puppy chow (⅔ of their diet) - Fresh fruit and vegetables (⅓ of diet) - Adult dog/cat kibble is not enough nutrients for them Feed all they want to eat, twice a day (goal: for them to put on weight for their first winter) Empty play pools every couple hours to prevent	**PRE-RELEASE CAGE** After they are weaned, they should be housed outside in a large pre-release cage (8ft x 8 ft x 6ft high) made of 1” welded wire mesh on a wood frame. Do not use chicken wire. Secure wooden nesting box (20” x 24” x 24” high) within the cage attached to a top corner platform, and accessed by ramps. Add straw or dried grass to their box for bedding. Ensure it is dry (check often). The	If caged all the time, ensure enclosure is as large as possible, add many climbing opportunities. Add many natural elements like fresh hardwood branches with leaves, rocks, pebbles, acorns, make seed keys, pine cones, flower seed heads, bark, mosses etc. Create hammocks from tough fabric and thick rope, provide tire swing, and hardwood stump or large hollow log. If possible, take raccoons out for daily walks to promote exercise and

	water born illnesses. Keep their drinking water fresh and clean.	cage should have a roof to protect from elements. Drape tarpaulins around the cage to make them feel safe. Raccoon kits are extremely active in this 6-8 week period and need to exercise and grow strong. This is a very messy stage, so the cage will need to be hosed out and the litter pan cleaned at least twice a day.	climbing. (provides more room to play/exercise). Provide a "soft" release from the cage at 16-18 weeks of age.
16+ weeks	Continue to stock feeding station daily **even if you do not see them**, until they den in November. (use puppy chow to make it easy). When released some will disappear for weeks/days at a time, and some will not be seen after release.	**POST-RELEASE** Leave the cage and nest box open and accessible post-release so they can use it as a back up shelter while they establish themselves. Do not leave food in cage, to keep it safe from other animals, in case the raccoons come back. Leave drinking water out in the cage, until they have found a water source.	