

Enrichment Training = Fun for JR Buddy!

Junior Buddy, born at the zoo, the son of a problem jaguar sheep killer, was rejected by his mom just two days after he was born. What happens when this happens? Zoo staff takes on the responsibility of being a Jaguar mother, providing constant tender loving care.



Unfortunately, a captive raised jaguar is not suited for return to the forests of Belize. "Tame" cats simply lack the skills necessary to compete with their wild counterparts. Being used to receiving care from humans, a captive-raised jaguar would fail to survive in our jungles. Of the four species of great cats, the Lion, Tiger, Leopard and Jaguar, our mighty Jaguar has the largest brain in relation to its body size. Simply stated, this is one very smart animal! Our important task at The Belize Zoo is seeing that Junior Buddy is kept challenged, so that his inquisitive instincts remain positive and balanced. In the zoological world, this type of animal management is given the title, "Enrichment Training". Besides teaching Junior Buddy basic tricks (he loves to somersault!), Zoo staff sees that this playful young jaguar enjoys activities which bring added fun to his life at the Zoo. Monday afternoon is Jr. Buddy's "ideal day".

Late in the afternoon, the happy cat receives his very own "ideal": chicken parts frozen solid in ice! And does he ever have fun licking the ice to get to those chicken gizzards. On Wednesday, thanks to Running W Meats in Cayo, Junior receives a very large bone. Thrown into his pond, the bone becomes a major "attack item" for Junior Buddy. He wastes no time at all, diving into the water so that he can retrieve, and then devour, his Running W bone—delight! And Friday afternoons bring him a big, big challenge. Junior gets his "jaguar piñata". A rock-solid plastic ball is tied to a tree, chicken feet protruding from it, and he gets to jump and bat the ball in an ardent effort to get to those feet. He has fun, and it is a joy for visitors to share in his frolicking activity.

Sunday afternoon is his Belikin beer happy hour! Junior Buddy has a "keg party". Thanks to the Belize Brewing Company, he romps and plays with his very own and much beloved, Belikin beer keg. This hard green plastic barrel provides the perfect romper—stomper toy for Junior Buddy, keeping him enchanted and happily occupied. Keeping up with Junior Buddy's quest for fun things to do has fostered a high level of creative and innovative animal management here at the "Best Little Zoo in the World". Thank you, Running W and the Belize Brewing Company for assisting with Junior Buddy's joy!!

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