

Alloparental Care Protocol

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Abstract

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Protocol

Set up

Step 1.

1. Obtain the experimental animals and breeder cages. The experimental animals must be 8 weeks or older. The pups must be 2-6 days old.
2. Get a rat cage from across the hall. If it has bedding in it, remove the paper. If there is no bedding, add just enough bedding to cover the bottom of the cage.
3. Set up the tripod and camera. Adjust the cage or camera until the whole cage is in view.
4. Place the colored notecard, with the number that corresponds to the experimental animal's ear tag number, beside the cage. Make sure the number is visible on the camera.
5. Record the experimental animal's information on the worksheet. [Behavior Worksheet](#)

Alloparental Care

Step 2.

1. Choose a breeder cage and obtain two pups. Record the breeder cage number and the age of the pups. Place the pups into one of the two corners farthest from the camera and hit record.
2. Get the experimental animal and place it in the cage on the opposite side as the pups. Start a timer for 5.5 minutes.
3. Record the start time of the test.
4. After 5.5 minutes, stop recording. (If there is aggression, stop recording and remove pups immediately.) Record the stop time of the test. Hand the experimental animal to whomever is running Resident Intruder.
5. Each pair of pups is used twice. (When running experimental females, only one pup is used at a time.) The sides of the cage need to be wiped down with 70% ethanol between the first and second time the pups are used. After the second time, the cage needs to be emptied and wiped down with 70% ethanol. Then new bedding should be added.
6. Put the new ear tag notecard beside the cage.
7. Repeat.