

WEANING BABY PARROTS

Typically, a chick will reach about 6 to 8 weeks of age and begin to eat less, depending on the species. At this stage, they are starting to learn how to fly, which is a lengthy process. They need to learn to coordinate two wings, two feet, and one brain!

They must figure out how to take off, establish a flight path, and coordinate their feet to open and close on the new perch. They also need to trust that the new perch will support them while simultaneously flapping both wings in unison to hover and land safely. It's quite a lot to manage!

Unfortunately, some breeders find it easier to trim chick's flight feathers once they are at the point of fledgling to prevent them from flying around the room in case of injury. This also makes it easier to feed a large number of chicks at once (For a lazy breeder, and it is not in the best interest of the chick's health or wellbeing, sadly). We recommend a chick learns how to fly land and turn in the air. This way, they have already developed the skills necessary to be a bird and live a long, healthy life when they go to their forever new homes.

It can take about two weeks to learn this, especially when they are in a house with walls and a roof, unlike the wild where there aren't such barriers. After this, they can focus on eating properly again and regaining the weight they lost while learning to fly. This is when they start to rely on their parents (or hand-raisers) for help with feeding, as they need to become eating machines!

This is why responsible breeders hold onto the chicks until they are at least 8 - 10 weeks old for smaller Conures (Pyrrhula's) and 16 weeks for larger Conures (Aratinga's) and other larger birds. They want the chicks to be fully independent and not reliant on anyone before they leave the breeders' facilities for their new forever homes.

Unfortunately, many inexperienced breeders mistake this readiness for weaning, often leading to what is referred to as "crash" or "abrupt" weaning, which is not in the best interest of the birds. We recommend that breeders adopt a natural "abundance" weaning approach, where they continue to offer formula to fledged birds for a few weeks or even months for larger species. This allows the birds to spend time in a crèche, learning bird behaviour from other chicks they are raised with.

We cannot emphasize enough the lifelong positive benefits of abundance weaning and extended crèche periods on the mental health of our companion parrots. Chicks are going to a new environment with a different family, which can be quite daunting.

A good breeder doesn't want to see the bird come back or hear that it's not doing well. A responsible breeder will inform you about what to expect regarding behaviour in the coming weeks and offer you a healthy, well-socialized chick. They'll provide you with as much information as possible so you

don't have to rely on social media or Dr. Google. Experienced breeders have been working with conures or other species they have to offer for years, so they know what to expect from their parrots.

All your good breeder wants is to see a happy chick. If you are prepared, know what to expect, and have a basic training plan, They can become a happy new family member.

This is why we see established breeders feeling upset when encountering chicks who haven't had the proper upbringing. We encourage you to listen to, watch, and learn from our groups' established parrot Breeders/specialists, as they have much to offer. We don't want anyone to become disillusioned or turn away, but rather, we want to see healthy relationships and happy birds.

Sadly, most listen to and believe the many myths they have seen or read on social media or Dr. Google or the people answering their questions, but many of these have no more or even less experience than those asking for advice.