

Patience

Our new bird is so cute! Not having parakeets for years has made me forget how pleasant they are to have around. JJ chirps and sings, and even when he's quiet, he's adorable to look at. My husband (who is not known for his patience anyway) mentioned the other day that he's having trouble with his temptations to reach into the cage and grab the bird to play with him. It's partly his impatience, and it's partly because he's used to just reaching out and grabbing his obnoxious parrot. But my husband knows that if he is disruptive to the training process I've chosen for JJ, there will be big trouble!

I'm having trouble being patient too, but I understand how innately nervous parakeets are. Once you build their trust, they can make wonderful interactive pets – but the key is taking it slow and being consistent. As much as I want to cuddle my baby bird, I can respect his need for space right now too. But try telling that to my excited kids. The older ones (ages 10, 5 and 3) are ok about it; for the most part, they're content to just stand there watching JJ and talking to him. But my 18 month old toddler is another story. He is fond of banging on metal cages because that's what makes the most noise, and the rats don't really mind. My poor little baby bird, on the other hand... We usually shut the door to our bedroom since that's where JJ lives, but the other day, we forgot. I figured shutting the gate at the bottom of the stairs would keep the dog away from our bedroom, but kids opened the gate. While the dog was fine (I don't think she even realizes there is another bird in the house), I found little Beeber (that was our then-2-year-old's nickname for her baby brother) next to JJ's cage, and he hasn't been the same since. He still chirps and acts happy, but he now tries to fly around the cage whenever I come near – he used to let me put my finger right up next to him... He was doing so well with

the training, we were bound to take a step backward. I still have confidence that I can train JJ to be a nice family bird, or at the very least, a little buddy bird for me. We just need to have a little patience.