

CHIMPANZEES HELP CONSPECIFICS OBTAIN FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

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Chimpanzees sometimes behave prosocially toward both humans and conspecifics in experimental situations in which immediate selfish benefits can be ruled out. However, in several experiments chimpanzees have not provided food to a conspecific even when it cost them nothing, leading to the hypothesis that prosociality in the food-provisioning context is a derived trait in humans (perhaps with roots in the cooperative breeding context). Here, we show that chimpanzees help conspecifics obtain both food and non-food items – given that the donor cannot get the food herself. Furthermore, we show that the key factor eliciting chimpanzees' targeted helping is the recipients' attempts to either get the food or get the attention of the potential donor. The current findings add to the accumulating body of evidence that humans and chimpanzees share the motivation and skills necessary to help others in situations in which they cannot selfishly benefit. Humans, however, show prosocial motives more readily and in a wider range of contexts.

Keywords: cooperation, prosociality, instrumental helping, chimpanzees.