

## Chimpanzee trains martial arts with human baby

by Helena Pedreira  
staff writer

In a small town in Brazil, a human toddler and a chimpanzee have become unlikely training partners in the martial art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

The two first met when the toddler, who is now 3 years old, wandered into the chimpanzee enclosure at the local zoo. Chococoloco, who is now a 10-year old male chimp, was initially aggressive towards the baby, but the two eventually became friends.

The toddler's parents, noticing the bond between the two, began to take the chimp out of the zoo for visits to the toddler's home. During these visits, the chimp would watch as the toddler played with his toys and would often try to imitate him. It was during one of these visits that the toddler's father, who is a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu instructor, had the idea to see if the chimp would be interested in learning the martial art.

To everyone's surprise, the chimp was not only interested, but he proved to be a natural at it.

Now, the toddler and the chimp train together several times a week and have even competed in a few local Jiu-Jitsu tournaments.

There is a long and storied history of human children engaging in combat sports with lesser primates. In ancient times, such contests were often seen as a way to prove one's bravery and strength.



*10-month old Rafael Azevedo maintains guard against 2-year old ChocoLoco.*

In more recent times, they have been used as entertainment or even as a form of education.

One of the most famous examples of human children engaging in combat sports with lesser primates comes from the movie "Rocky III."

In the film, Rocky Balboa's son, Robert, is shown sparring with a chimpanzee. The two fight for a few rounds before Robert eventually emerges victorious.

While the movie may be fictional, the idea of human children engaging in combat sports with lesser primates is not. In fact, there are a number of schools around the world that offer such classes.

These schools typically use lower-level primates, such as gibbons, as their opponents.

There are a number of benefits to these types of classes. They can help children to build confidence and learn self-defense.

### **But it's not without risk**

There is always the potential for injury, both to the child and the primate. There is also the risk of the child becoming too aggressive.

Human children engaging in combat sports with lesser primates can be a positive experience. Teaching children valuable lessons and helping them to build important skills.

Just be sure to carefully consider the risks before enrolling your child in such a class.