

Sandi's Biography

by Elizabeth Vinson Lonsdorf:

When I first started going to Gombe, Sandi was the most timid and shy mother that I studied. I remember one day, as I was following her, she met up with a large group of chimps that included Fifi's family. Sandi's son, Sampson, clearly wanted to play with some of Fifi's kids, but every time he tried to go to them and get involved in their play, Sandi scurried down the tree, pulled him out of the play session, and moved safely back up into the tree. Poor Sampson didn't get to have much fun that year. However, by the next year, Sandi had undergone an amazing transformation. While she was still a bit shy around humans, she had finally gotten comfortable enough to let Sampson romp and play like a normal, young chimp. One day, I even saw Sampson jump down out of a tree onto the alpha male's back and start playing with him. I looked around to see Sandi's reaction and she was happily munching on fruit, totally unconcerned. Who knows what happened to make Sandi relax, but I'm sure her son appreciates it.

by Joann Schumacher-Stankey:

Sandi is one of the shyer females at Gombe. She grew up in the group, but her mother was not very social and as a result, she remains a bit timid. Sandi is still quite close to her mother, Sparrow, and the two seem to prefer each other's company over anyone else's. Until recently, she was very nervous around large groups of chimps and even tried to prevent her offspring from playing with others. However, in the past year, she has become much more confident, and as a result, her offspring have blossomed. Daughter Sherehe is nine and still prefers to stay out of the center of attention, but she loves to play with other chimps. In contrast, Sandi's son Sampson loves to be in the thick of things, even being so bold as to jump on the alpha male's back and invite him to play!