



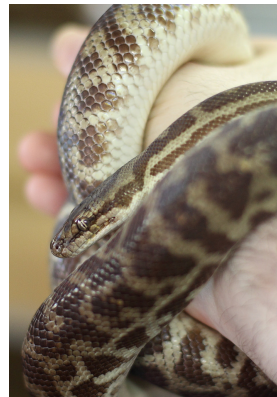
Children's Pythons

Antaresia childreni

BEGINNER · 2.5–3.5 FT ADULT · 20–30 YR LIFESPAN · NOCTURNAL · AUSTRALIA

Australia's answer to the beginner snake, and one of the smallest pythons in the world. They top out around three feet, and they're named for a nineteenth-century naturalist, not for kids. The reputation is for being almost boringly easy to keep, and it holds up. Here's the honest headline: twenty to thirty years is a long time, and nobody warns you that your first snake may outlast your furniture.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Beginner
Adult size	2.5–3.5 ft
Lifespan	20–30 years
Ambient temp	78–85 °F
Basking spot	88–92 °F
Night temps	70–75 °F
Humidity	40–60%
UVB	Low output, beneficial
Feeding	Pinky to small mice, 7–10 days



Captive-bred Children's pythons fill breeder tables at every NARBC show, one of the smallest and steadiest pythons in the hobby.

Photo: S J Bennett / iNaturalist · CC BY

01

The Temperament You're Buying

Docile is the word that comes up every time, and it's earned. Children's pythons are calm, slow to strike and small enough that a bad day never becomes a dangerous one. Hatchlings can be nippy; that fades with short, routine sessions. Understand what you're buying, though: it tolerates handling well, which is different from enjoying it. House them one to an enclosure. Wild *Antaresia* take lizards as readily as mice, so to a hungry snake a cagemate reads as food, not company.

02

Housing, Stage by Stage

Start small and grow with the snake. A hatchling in a 16×8×8 tub feels secure; the same animal in a big open display will hide and refuse food. Adults do well in 36×18×18 minimum, better at 48×18×18. Horizontal is the priority at every stage, but these are opportunistic climbers in the wild, so give an adult a sturdy branch. Two identical hides, warm side and cool side, so the snake never trades security for temperature.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	16×8×8	20×12×12	Pinky mice are the first food. Small space and tight hides beat open floor.
Juvenile	20×12×12	24×18×12	Hardy and forgiving feeders. Racks work well at this size.
Subadult	24×18×12	36×18×18	Slow growers. This stage runs long; size up on the snake, not the calendar.
Adult	36×18×18	48×18×18	About three feet grown. Floor space first, but they'll use branches too.

Minimum and preferred footprints from Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Every stage is horizontal: floor space first, climbing as a bonus.

03

Heat, Light, and Night Drops

Run a thermal gradient down the length of the enclosure: 78–85 °F ambient, with a basking surface of 88–92 °F at the warm end. Let nights fall to 70–75 °F. That dip is part of the design, not a gap in your heating. **Every heat source runs through a thermostat, and never a heat rock.** Low-output UVB isn't required for this species, but it's beneficial, and a steady day-night light cycle helps either way.

04

Humidity & Water

Aim for 40–60% humidity, which is close to what most homes already sit at. That is the quiet advantage of this species: no misting marathon, no fogger. A large, stable water bowl on the cool side carries most of the load and doubles as a soak before a shed. During shed cycles add a damp moss hide rather than wetting the whole enclosure. Wet substrate, not humidity, is what causes scale rot.

05

Substrate and Clutter

Aspen, cypress mulch or a coco-husk blend all work; pick whichever holds your humidity number without going soggy. Skip loose sand entirely, especially for young snakes. Then fill the space. An empty box is a stressed snake: cork bark, leaf litter, a low branch, some fake plants to break sight lines. Children's pythons are ambush hunters that spend their days wedged into something tight, and clutter is what lets a small snake feel safe in the open.

06

Feeding

Hatchlings start on pinky mice; adults take small mice, and the schedule stays every 7–10 days for life. Frozen/thawed is the standard, safer for the snake and easier on you. These are famously reliable feeders, which is half of why they're recommended over ball pythons for a first snake. The flip side of a good feeder is a keen one, so keep cleaning and handling well away from feeding time. Offer with tongs, never fingers, and it stays a non-event.

07

Health Red Flags

Respiratory infection is the one to know: open-mouth breathing, wheezing, bubbles at the nostrils, or a head held up to breathe. Any of that is a reptile vet, not a week of watching. Two other flags point opposite ways. Repeat incomplete sheds and retained eye caps mean air too dry; add a humid hide. Pink or blistered belly scales mean the reverse, substrate sitting wet. Keep a log of weights and feeds. Small snakes hide decline; paper notices it first.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual - when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.