**Warning: You Will Want to Adopt an Orphaned Baby Squirrel After Reading This**

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Updated: Jun. 23, 2016

Our children learned to cherish life, no matter how small, by caring for an orphan baby squirrel.



My husband, Shawn, and I enjoy seeing life through the eyes of our five children. It’s amazing to watch as they discover their world.

While we were outdoors last summer enjoying the sunshine, our oldest daughter, Kaytlin, called me to the porch. Beneath the steps was a baby red squirrel.

We watched it from a distance, not wanting to disturb it or scare off its mother. But after a long wait—and looking all around our property for traces of a nest or a mother—we realized the tiny squirrel was likely an orphan.

Shaking terribly, he was frail, thin, and hungry. We tried to find an expert to help, but the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife website showed that there were no wildlife rehabilitators in our county. After some quick research, we concluded that the best way to give the squirrel a fighting chance was to care for him ourselves. So a trip to the local Tractor Supply store for puppy formula and supplies was in order.

More extensive research taught us how much to feed him, how to estimate his age, how and when to wean him, and that we should release him as soon as he could survive on his own.

Our daughters and I shared rotations of feeding “Squirt.” Kaytlin took on the most responsibility. She taught him to eat from a syringe, and she woke in the night for his feeds.

To our relief, Squirt soon began to thrive. Within a few weeks he became more alert and active. He would chatter for his next meal, playfully crawl around on the girls, and curl up on them for a nap. It wasn’t long before he was weaned onto solid food and reintroduced to the wild.

His first few visits to the great outdoors were comical. Just like a child, he would play in the grass some and then run back to Kaytlin for safety. Soon she had him climbing trees and finding nest material.



One day in the trees, he met up with a family of gray squirrels that was none too happy about his visit. They scolded and swatted at him, and he quickly learned some social skills. For several days he played all day in the trees surrounding our house but came down at bedtime.

And then one night, he didn’t. The rain pounded hard, and our girls fretted. But when the sun rose, there was Squirt, begging for a bite to eat. And that remained the pattern for a few weeks.

Squirt became well known in our neighborhood, and visitors knew to be on the lookout when they stopped by. But mostly he played in the trees, chattering away to anyone who happened to cross his path and occasionally swiping snacks from our toddler boys.

The experience was entertaining and heartwarming for our family. In the wild and somewhat silly moments of raising an orphaned baby squirrel, our children learned to value and appreciate life.