Thanks for enquiring about joey care.

Caring for joeys is very rewarding, a lot of fun and can be heartbreaking. You don’t need to have a lot of time if you only have one joey at a time, but you do need to be able to adjust your daily schedule to fit in feeds and toileting, cleaning, laundry and exercise.

Only the tiniest joeys need night feeds (and they are cared for by our most experienced carers), most will have four feeds a day, and while you need to have a schedule for this, your joey may not always stick to it. An approximate schedule might be 6am, 11am, 5pm, 10pm. Older joeys can be left home alone provided their bag is in a safe place where they can’t harm themselves; alternatively you may carry your joey with you. Many workplaces are tolerant of pouch joeys – you just need to ask. A pouch joey is no inconvenience or distraction – you simply need a place to hang a bag, and a few minutes to give the midday feed. As they get older and start to explore a bit more they will follow you down the corridor to the tea room and toilet, so you need a more sympathetic employer. Once your joey can hop you need to be able to give him some time outdoors each day – this might just be 5 minutes morning and evening initially but then needs to increase as he grows.

   

Many joeys have several carers during their time with us as their needs change and you may not be able to meet their new needs as they grow older. As joeys wean they need to start spending time outdoors with other joeys. This requires a safe and securely fenced yard, with sunny & shaded areas. They may still need a morning and/or evening bottle and some may need to come in at night, whereas others may spend the night in a shed or shelter. By this stage they should be able to lap milk and water so shouldn’t need attention during the day.

Several of our current carers take pouch joeys then hand them over to outdoor carers and take on a new little one. Outdoor carers generally have several joeys at a time.

Occasionally you may need to give medication or take a joey for vet treatments or for checking and weighing in with an experienced carer. You need high hygiene standards to protect your joey and yourself – joeys may have worms, ringworm, manage and are susceptible to ear and chest infections. Some joeys can be toilet trained, but not all and you will at some point have to deal with diarrhoea – which means lots of laundry! ☺

You may have a joey for anything from 3 – 12 months and you will form an attachment with them. Our aim is to rescue, rehabilitate and release. It’s a fantastic feeling to know that you have helped a roo / wallaby / euro recover, grow and return to the wild, and yes, tinged with sadness that the little furry critter you know and love is no longer at your heels, but there is always another one waiting to take its place. These animals are on loan to us for a short

time and are not our pets – that means carers need to limit cuddles and allow them to interact with other joeys from as early an age as possible.

Joeys need to grow up without becoming familiar with cats and dogs as feral cats and wild dogs are their main predator once released. We prefer that carers don’t have dogs or cats, but if you can demonstrate that you are able to keep them separate then it may be possible. You may need to have a carer visit your home to check it out.

You will need to be a registered Wildcare member (individual membership currently $50 per year, family membership $70 per year) and have a wildlife permit available (free). Forms can be found on our documents page

Members are also asked to help with fundraising and other activities throughout the year. Wildcare submits applications for various grants as and when they become available, but we are still heavily dependent on public donations and fundraising activities. As a member you will receive formula, bottles, teats and a start-up set of bag & blankets at no cost to you. Any required medication will also be provided. Many carers supplement their own supplies (particularly if you’re travelling and can buy stuff at Spotlight) and whilst Wildcare will cover any necessary, approved vet fees, many carers choose to pay these themselves.

**Can’t care for joeys? Here are a few other things you could help Wildcare with …**

Breed mice

Be available to pick up animals and drop them to appropriate carer

Come over and help feed or clean

Collect pruning to put in aviaries / joey enclosures

Take the phone

Help at fundraising BBQ etc

Collect and drop off cans

Sewing joey pouches

Driving to release sites

Offer your expertise and skills for computer, gardening, drip system, fund raising, photography, publicity …