"Kangaroos"

MAGAZINE PAGE 13

In this article, students will read about how kangaroo mothers are known for taking extremely good care of their newborn babies. Through discussion and text study, students will explore the human parent-child relationship through a Jewish lens. They will then create a contract befitting the relationship in a year 2007 context.

OBJECTIVES

- **Students will read about the relationship between mother kangaroos and their children.**
- **Using the relationship of the kangaroo mother to her child as a starting point, students will list the responsibilities human parents should have for their children and responsibilities children should have for their parents.**
- **After studying a Talmudic text that explores the relationship between parents and children, students will draft a parent-child contract relevant for the year 2007.**

VOCABULARY

כָּבוֹד	honor
יִרְאָה	reverence
קֶנְגּוּרוּ	kangaroo
אַחֲרָיוּת	responsibility
הוֹרִים	parents

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

"A doe carries her joey everywhere, and the joey depends on its mother for everything—food, warmth, shelter, and transportation."

Is there anything or anyone you depend on for everything?

Does anyone or anything depend on you for everything?

"Human children depend on their parents for those same things and more. We rely on our parents for help with our homework, and rides to dance rehearsals and soccer practice. Judaism recognizes this, and gives clear instructions how children should show their parents appreciation. It's a mitzvah to 'honor your father and mother' (*Shemot* 20:12) and to express thanks for all that they do."

How does honoring your parents show appreciation?

Can you think of any personal examples when honoring your parents has shown them appreciation?

As you get older, do you rely on your parents more, less, or the same amount? Why?

Do your parents rely on you for anything?

ACTIVITY: REDFINING RESPONSIBILITY

1. Read the W.O.W. article on page 13 of BabagaNewz and have a discussion using the Quotes & Questions provided.

2. As a class, discuss and generate a list of responsibilities a parent has toward his or her children. Included in the conversation should be the question:

Do you think fathers and mothers should have different responsibilities toward their children?

3. Discuss and generate a list of responsibilities a child should have for his or her parents. Included in the conversation should be the question:

Do you think sons and daughters should have different responsibilities toward their parents?

4. In small groups, have the students study the two Talmudic texts below using the discussion questions.

TALMUD KIDDUSHIN 29A

A father is obligated, with respect to his son, to circumcise him, to redeem him, to teach him Torah, to take a wife for him, to teach him a craft, and some say even to swim in water.

Why do you think these responsibilities fall on the father? Should the mother be responsible for any of these?

Are there any additions you would make? Why? Any subtractions? Why?

Should these rules also refer to daughters? Why or why not? If not, what rules do you think should apply to daughters?

"Everything that happens to the parents is a sign to the children."
RAMBAN ON BEREISHIT 12:6

W.O.W.

Kangaroos

BY AVIVA WERNER

ROOS DOWN UNDER

- The western grey kangaroo is nicknamed the "stinker" because of the males' awful odor.
- Red kangaroos can run 40 miles per hour and leap 42 feet with each jump.
- Kangaroos can only jump if their tails are touching the ground.

POUCH POTATOES

Marsupials (animals with pouches), especially kangaroos, are some of Australia's famed attractions. There are at least 60 known species of kangaroo in Australia. The big, furry animals with long back legs and pouches live in family groups, called mobs, of between two and 50. Male kangaroos are called boomers, females are called does, and babies are called joeys.

A kangaroo is born about the size of a honeybee, and blind as a bat. The tiny newborn climbs through its mother's fur to her pouch. It hangs out there—drinking milk and growing—for about five months, until it can stick its head out to look around. A doe carries her joey everywhere, and the joey depends on its mother for everything—food, warmth, shelter, and transportation.

By the time the baby roo is nine months old, it can leave the pouch to explore the outside world and begin to learn survival skills, like eating grass, by watching its mother. If a doe senses danger while her joey is out of the pouch, she thumps her foot in warning, and the joey dives headfirst into the pouch. The mother then seals it off with her pouch muscles.

The joey continues to come home to its mother's pouch for food and comfort for another few months, until it grows too big. By this time, it's an expert at grazing (eating grass) and digging holes to find water, and a little brother or sister has moved into the pouch.

FAMILY TIES

Joeys develop strong bonds with their kangaroo mothers. They spend the first months of their lives completely dependent on their mothers for food, warmth, shelter, and transportation. Human children depend on their parents for those same things and more. We rely on our parents for help with our homework, and rides to dance rehearsals and soccer practice. Judaism recognizes this, and gives clear instructions about how children should show their parents appreciation. It's a mitzvah to "honor your father and mother" (*Shemot* 20:12) and to express thanks for all that they do.

FAMILY HARMONY 5767 TEVET BABAGANEWZ 13

TALMUD KIDDUSHIN 31B

The rabbis taught: What is reverence and what is honor (the two responsibilities of the child)? Reverence—one may not stand in a parent's place and one may not sit in a parent's place; one may not contradict a parent's words and one may not offer an opinion. Honor—one must give food and drink; dress and cover; bring in and take out.

What do you think is the difference between reverence and honor?

How do you show reverence? How to you show honor?

Why do you think that the Talmud makes such a distinction?

Are there any rules you would add? Why? Any subtractions? Why?

5. Students should individually draft a contract of rules for both parents and children that relate to the year 2007.

When finished, students should share their contracts with the rest of the class. Discuss:

Are any of your new rules the same as those in the Talmud? Which ones and why?

What rules from the Talmud did you leave out? Why?

What are some of the new laws that you created? Why did you think they were necessary?

Do you have different rules for fathers and mothers? Sons and daughters?

Encourage students to bring their contracts home to discuss with their parents.