

# Connection and Disconnection: The Paradox of Israel Education in the Digital Age

*Sivan Zakai*

## Introduction

Contemporary Jewish youth are growing up in a world quite different from that of their progenitors. As the first generation of “digital natives,” today’s youth know only an era in which information is easily accessible and remote places can be accessed through a screen.<sup>1</sup> Children are learning from a very young age to use connective technologies to build ties to distant people and places, and in a way unimaginable a generation ago, today’s youth have opportunities for “connected presence” to places around the globe.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in an era of unprecedented global connectivity, Jewish youth who do not live in Israel have opportunities to witness the sights and sounds of life there through video-conference platforms, social media, live-streamed newscasts, and other forms of digital communication.

For Jewish youth in the United States, the advent of connective technologies has coincided with an era of “direct engagement” in which American Jews have built direct and personal ties to the Jewish state.<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that Israel plays an increasingly contentious role in American Jewish discourse, American Jews have

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SIVAN ZAKAI, Ph.D., is the Sara S. Lee Assistant Professor of Jewish Education at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and an affiliated scholar at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University. She directs the Children’s Learning About Israel Project and co-directs Project Orli: Research and Leadership in Israel Education. The author would like to thank the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education for funding the longitudinal study, and the Lisa and Michael Leffell Foundation for supporting this particular project. Additional thanks to research assistant Hannah Tobin Cohen and to Eric Rosenstein for research support.

“stepped up” their political activism, philanthropic giving, travel, and cultural ties to Israel.<sup>4</sup> As political scientist Dov Waxman explains, “American Jews increasingly want to be active participants [in Israel], if only from afar.”<sup>5</sup>

In such a milieu, teaching American Jewish youth to understand and feel connected to Israel is increasingly viewed as an integral part of Jewish education in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Although helping American Jews learn about Israel has been part of the Jewish educational agenda since before the establishment of the state, in recent years “Israel education” has emerged as a distinct subfield of Jewish education aimed at “more deeply and explicitly weav[ing] present-day Israel into the enterprise of American Jewish education.”<sup>7</sup> This shift has ushered in both the expansion and professionalization of Israel educational programming in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the increased focus on Israel education, little is known about how American Jewish children make sense of Israel, its role in the American Jewish community, or its place in their own Jewish lives. Although there has been a recent push to understand “young Jews,” existing scholarship has focused almost exclusively on how American Jews in their teens and twenties think and feel about Israel.<sup>9</sup> Educational scholars have highlighted both the Israel-centered practices of Jewish schools and the experiences of students in middle and high school, but the research on younger children is much less developed.<sup>10</sup> Scholars have identified the common practices of elementary school Israel education, but little has been written about how Israel factors into the Jewish lives, experiences, and beliefs of elementary school-aged children.<sup>11</sup>

Yet contemporary American Jewish children, growing up in an age of global connectivity and an era of direct engagement with Israel, have unique conceptions and experiences of the Jewish state. In this digital era, American Jewish children cannot only learn *about* Israel, but they can also *connect to* life there. Through the use of digital technology, and with the encouragement of parents and teachers who urge them to form direct and personal connections to Israel and Israelis, American Jewish children can witness the sights and sounds of Israel without either the physical proximity or the contextual understanding that would come from actually being there. These children can embody what scholars of migration and Diaspora call “presence-absence,” the ability to be both physically

removed from and emotionally present in a faraway place with the aid of connective technologies.<sup>12</sup>

For children, this easy access to a distant place acts as a paradox: it simultaneously collapses distance between American Jewish and Israeli life and reinforces it, allowing children to develop both multilayered understanding and deep misunderstanding of life in Israel. By examining two cases in which this paradox operates—in American Jewish day school students' conceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and in their beliefs about their own responsibilities towards Israel and Israelis—this article demonstrates the unique ways that a group of Jewish children in the United States position themselves in relationship to Israel. In each case, the children situate themselves as both distant from and proximate to life in Israel, neither insiders nor outsiders to a place that they view simultaneously as ours and Other.

## Methods

Data used in this inquiry come from the Children's Learning About Israel project, a longitudinal study of American Jewish children's thoughts and feelings about Israel. In the 2012–2013 school year, thirty-five participants were recruited from the kindergarten classes of three Jewish day schools in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The schools were selected because they cater to different segments of the American Jewish community, making it possible to enlist participants who varied in their Jewish practices and affiliations, as well as their experiences and relationships to Israel. Thus, the schools represent different religious denominations within American Judaism: one is Reform, one Conservative, and one a nondenominational community school. The ethnic background of the schools' typical families also varies; one has a large Persian-Jewish population, one has predominantly children of Ashkenazi descent, and one serves a large number of Israeli expatriate families. At present, all of the children in the study are in fifth grade, and all but two have been participating in the research since kindergarten.

By design, the children exhibit varying exposure to and experiences with Israel (see Appendix). Some of the children have never been to Israel, while others have visited for extended periods of time. Some have Israeli parents and/or relatives living in

Israel; others do not. Although all of the children have been taught about Israel in some form during their day school education, their schools' approaches to Israel education—including both the formal curriculum and Israel's role in the school environment—differ widely.<sup>13</sup> The goal of analysis is to find commonalities in the ways that the children think, feel, and talk about Israel despite the differences in their family and educational backgrounds. When such commonalities emerge, therefore, they are not indicative of a particular family's or school's approach to teaching about Israel, but rather of larger trends in the ways that these American Jewish day school students make sense of Israel and what it means to them.

This research employs a variety of qualitative methods designed to uncover the ways that children think and feel. These methods include:

1. **Semi-structured interviews.** Interviews solicit demographic information about the participants and offer them a chance to reflect upon the ways that they understand, think, and feel about Israel. The interviews are semi-structured, based on a pre-written script but allowing for fluid conversation and follow-up probes.<sup>14</sup> The semi-structured nature of these interviews allows both focus and flexibility, each of which is useful when interviewing children.<sup>15</sup>
2. **Photo and music elicitation exercises.** Children are asked to examine and discuss a variety of visual and audio prompts that highlight different aspects of Israeli (and, for contrast, American) political, religious, and cultural life.<sup>16</sup> Visual and audio prompts elicit both what participants see or hear, and also what is brought up for them internally when they interact with the prompt.<sup>17</sup> When combined with interviews, photo and music elicitation evokes responses from children that are more detailed and comprehensive than those provided by interviews alone.<sup>18</sup>
3. **Storytelling exercises.** Children are asked to tell stories about Israeli history and current events, revealing how they view and explain the world. For children in particular, telling stories can be a way of making sense of the world, serving as "a child's way of exploring, inquiring, probing, and . . . playing her way into deeper understanding."<sup>19</sup> Thus inviting children to become storytellers can offer "windows into children's thinking."<sup>20</sup>

Together, these methods reveal a wide array of children's thoughts and feelings about Israel and how Israel factors into their own self-understanding as Jews. Data are coded in the spirit of grounded theory, based on the children's own categories and ways of speaking, but also with an assumption—drawing upon the work of education scholars VanSledright and Brophy—that children can construct coherent narratives of events even when they mix up or imagine some details.<sup>21</sup> The analysis examines children's ways of speaking about Israel not to ascertain their accuracy, but instead to illuminate their ways of thinking about Israel and their relationship to it.

### Findings

As the children in this study connect to Israel from afar, they gather information about it from a diffuse set of sources, some traditional and some digital. The children report learning about Israel from the adults in their lives—parents, grandparents, teachers, and rabbis—in conversations both deliberate (e.g., “we talked about . . .”) and overheard (e.g., “I heard them saying . . .”). Some have read stories or articles about Israel, and most have discussed Israel with peers and/or siblings.

The children also report that digital media plays a large part in their learning about Israel, and especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some of their sources of information—including watching live-streamed Israeli television newscasts, viewing Israeli *hasbarah* (public relations) videos online, and reading headlines on their parents' Facebook accounts—offer children a time-delayed window into events in Israel. Other sources—including receiving updates from the Red Alert rocket app and videoconference platforms (such as Skype and FaceTime)—allow the children to connect in real-time to experiences or people in Israel.

That these children have access to abundant sources of information about Israel, and that they often consume information from those sources in small sound bites, results in a situation in which the children are, at once, intimately familiar with certain aspects of life in Israel and entirely unaware of others. They feel both part of and set apart from life in Israel, and their understanding of and connection to Israel reflects the pull in both directions. The pages that follow detail two cases from the larger data set in which this

phenomenon manifests: how the children make sense of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, and how they view themselves as responsible for the welfare of Israel and Israelis. When viewed in tandem, these two disparate cases highlight a larger pattern in the children's relationship with Israel: a paradoxical status in which the children are both distant from and proximate to an Israel that they view as both ours and Other.

### **Insiders and Outsiders: Children's Understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

All of the children in this study have indicated awareness of Israel's involvement in an ongoing, often violent conflict. In fact, for many children, the conflict is the very first thing they think of when they think about Israel. As early as kindergarten, children responded to the question *When I say Israel, what does it make you think about?* with answers like "I think about all the people that died in Israel and the wars with other people that died" (Rina, kindergarten) or, from a child at a different school, "I think about Jews in [a] war" (Hayim, kindergarten). The children's focus on Israel as a place steeped in violent conflict has not dissipated as the children have grown; it is, in the children's minds, a "place with war" (Maya, first grade), "so many soldiers" (Isabelle, second grade), "lots of guns and bombs" (Seth, second grade), "people shooting at Jewish people" (Tzvi, third grade), and a lot of "army people fighting for their lives" (David, third grade).

By the time they were seven or eight years old, most children were able to recount in explicit detail *how* the violence manifests. Children have told stories, often graphic ones, involving rocket attacks on civilians (6 participants), bombing campaigns (6 participants), and Israel's "Iron Dome" missile defense system (3 participants). Others have discussed the kidnapping and murder of "the three boys," Israeli teenagers Eyal, Naphtali, and Gilad in 2014 (2 participants); the use of human shields (1 participant); underground "terror tunnels" (2 participants); stabbing attacks (3 participants); and other terrorist attacks (2 participants).

Many of the children attribute their knowledge of these violent incidents to "seeing" them. Of course, the children did not actually witness any of these events firsthand, but many did view them through a screen. For example, Carly attributed her knowledge

of the kidnapping of “the three boys” to watching live-streamed Israeli television newscasts, Seth reported regularly checking the Red Alert missile app on his mother’s phone, and Lior’s description of “terror tunnels” stemmed from a Skype conversation he had with a relative in Israel. This kind of access to information allowed the children to feel as if Israel were much closer than it was in reality. The children made claims like, “I just felt like I was in Israel” (Dina), and “[It’s] like it’s near” (Gabe). As Avigail explained, Israel is “miles from where I live, [but] I always feel Israel is right near me.”

In addition to detailed accounts of *how* violence in Israel manifests, many children were able to offer multiple explanations as to *why* Israel was involved in a violent conflict. As the children attempted to explain the root causes of the conflict, their reasons generally fell into one of three categories: disputes over land, discord rooted in religion, and differing conceptions of what constitutes good and free societies. The children who attributed the conflict to disputes over land made claims like “Who[ever] wins, it gets to be their land, and whoever loses, Israel is not going to be their land” (Isabelle) or “Israel people were fighting with mean people because mean people wanted Israel to be their land” (Tzvi). Those who viewed the conflict as one about religion offered explanations like, “They don’t want us to be chosen. They want to be chosen too by God” (Jacob) or “A lot of people that are Muslim people don’t like Jewish people” (Carly). They either framed the conflict as one over differing beliefs or tension among adherents to different religious traditions. While the children’s most common explanations of the conflict were about land and religion, some of the children also framed the conflict as one about differing ideas of what constitutes a good society. For example, Pearl explained that Israel and enemies each “don’t think [the other] is a good state.” Drawing upon abstract ideas, these children explained that the conflict was a fight about “the world [and] how it’s supposed to be” (Isabelle).

More notable, approximately two-thirds of the children offered more than one of these explanations by the time they were in second grade. Not only were these children capable of identifying some of the root causes that adult scholars attribute to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but they also were able to understand that intractable conflict often cannot be attributed to a single cause.<sup>22</sup> By



age seven or eight, many children understood that the conflict has, in the words of Nomi, “so many reasons.”

And yet, despite their ability to offer multiple explanations about the root causes of the conflict, there was one idea that was entirely missing from the children’s explanations: not a single child in this study framed the conflict in terms of competing nationalisms.<sup>23</sup> Although seven- and eight-year-olds generally have at least some conceptual awareness of nationality and national identity, none of the children framed the conflict as one about competing or warring nations.<sup>24</sup> The idea that the conflict is, in part, about the fact that Israelis and Palestinians want to be able to rule themselves in their own countries was entirely beyond the children’s grasp.

This is because, despite their detailed knowledge of *how* the conflict plays out, the children have very little understanding of *who* is involved in the conflict. Most children use generic language like “bad guys” (Micah) or “the people that Israel is fighting against” (David) to describe those with whom Israel clashes. Some children explicitly name the Israel’s enemies as Other, using phrases like “the other team that was fighting Israel” (Ari) or “the other guys” (Gia).

Even the small number of children (seven of thirty-five) who have given a specific name to Israel’s enemies—talking about Palestinians, Arabs, Gaza, or Hamas—readily admitted that they didn’t actually know what those terms meant. They made comments, in halting tones, like “There was a war going on with Israel. With the, I think it was the Ga-, wait, Gaza. Palestine, I don’t know . . . Either the Gaza people or the Palestine people?” (Samantha). Avigail, when asked to define the terms she had just used, said, “Well, I just know the name, nothing else,” and when asked the same question, Hayim said, “Uh, I do not know.” For these children, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is missing the second half of the dyad, transforming instead into a conflict between Israel and a generic “other team.”

It is this lack of awareness of Palestinians that calls to attention the children’s unique positionality vis-à-vis the conflict. For children with *direct* experiences of violent conflict, conceptual awareness of the enemy is one of the most salient features in their concept development of war and violence.<sup>25</sup> Israeli and Palestinian children in the region certainly have a clear, often stereotypically negative awareness of one another.<sup>26</sup> Of course, American Jewish



children aren't *in* the region. But children who have only knowledge of conflict in the abstract tend to attribute it to interpersonal disputes between people rather than to larger concepts like religion, land, and differing visions for society as these children did.<sup>27</sup> The kind of interpretations they offered usually exist only for children whose own home communities are engulfed in violence.

Thus, in their understanding of the conflict, these American Jewish children sit in a middle ground; they manifest neither as insiders nor as outsiders. In large part due to the digital technologies that connect them, sometimes in real time, to events in Israel, they have a much more textured understanding of the conflict than children generally have of places elsewhere on the globe. Their familiarity not only with the specific ways that violence manifests, but also with several of its underlying causes, mimics that of children in the region. And yet, in part because they are physically removed from harm's way, they have no sense of the very first thing that Israeli and Palestinian children learn about one another: who constitutes "the other team." Their unfamiliarity with the very existence of Palestinians sets them apart from their Israeli counterparts. Thus, the distance between American Jewish and Israeli children is, at once, collapsed and reinforced as these American Jewish children connect to the conflict from afar.

### **Ours and Other: Children's Sense of Responsibility towards Israel and Israelis**

Another way that the children in this study position themselves neither as insiders nor outsiders to life in Israel is how they think and speak about their responsibility to care for Israel and Israelis. The children conceive of Israel and Israelis as both ours and Other. On the one hand, they view themselves as connected to Israel and responsible for its well-being. On the other hand, they view Israeli society as a place quite different from their own communities, believing Israel to be a particularly impoverished place. As was true for the children's understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the children's conceptions of Israeli society indicate how these contemporary American Jewish children are, at once, distant from and proximate to life in Israel.

In the children's minds, just as Israel is a place marked by violent clashes with its enemies, so too is it a society battling widespread

poverty and hunger. In kindergarten, Hayim discussed “the parts [of Israel] where Jews are poor,” and Maya talked about “my people, [the Jewish people], that didn’t have food.” In first grade, Ari described an Israeli kibbutz as a place where “there’s a lot of people there, but they don’t have a lot of food.” In second grade, Samantha recounted a story told to her by her Israeli-born teacher, who “said when she was in Israel when she was a little girl, they had not a lot of food.” She told a second anecdote about a classmate’s Israeli grandfather, who faced such poverty in his youth that “all he wanted for his birthday was a box of cereal.” In third grade, Bella explained that even though Israelis were happy, “they’re a little poor.” Other children talked about problems of homelessness in Israel and a perceived gap between the wealth of American Jews and the poverty of Israeli Jews.

The children’s impression of Israelis as particularly poor and hungry is worth further examination. In some ways, the children’s perceptions are accurate: Israel does have high poverty rates, especially among its elderly, Chareidi, and Arab populations, and approximately one in every five Israelis is currently living below the poverty line.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, it is striking that so many of the children focused on Israel’s poor when not a single child in this study has mentioned the existence of poverty in the United States despite the comparison questions they were asked about the U.S. context. All of the children in this study are living in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, which has among the highest poverty rates of any large city in the United States, and yet the children appear to be much more concerned about—and much more aware of—poverty, and especially Jewish poverty, in Israel.<sup>29</sup>

The children may regard poverty as a problem that happens elsewhere, but they don’t view it as irrelevant; many of the children see themselves as personally obligated to help. Kindergartener Pearl spoke in one breath about “when the poor people were sad in Israel” and how happy she felt “because we help them.” First grader Bella believed that part of the beauty of Israel is that you get “to make food and for, to help other people.” Second grader Dina insisted that Jews like her “always do mitzvot to help other people less fortunate [than] them, and they always help poor people in Israel, because they give them *tzedakah*.”

Perhaps the most striking example of the children’s sense of obligation toward Israel comes from Avigail, who in kindergarten

explained, “I just have to help Israel . . . I’m going to make money, and then I’m going to give it to . . . [Israeli] people that don’t have any money.” In Avigail’s mind, “Israel is not a great place. It’s all dirty and ucky, and yicky, but you have to make it a better place. You have to clean and work hard.” Avigail views herself as personally obligated as a Jew to assist in efforts to improve the Jewish state. She believes that “Israel is counting on all the Jewish people” to make it better. Avigail and her compatriots exhibited a trend similar to that of Jewish teens and young adults who engage in service-learning in Israel, for whom “exposure to Israel’s challenges and problems . . . did not weaken participants’ commitment to and interest in the country.”<sup>30</sup> For the Jewish day school students in this study, Israel is a beloved and imperfect place that demands personal participation in its betterment.

While American Jews have long invested in Israel’s social infrastructure, the particular ways that these children imagine working to improve Israeli society is noteworthy.<sup>31</sup> For the most part, the children believe that they can best help Israel through physical labor, not financial contributions. Avigail imagines traveling to Israel to pick up trash from the streets. She explains, “Every time people drop trash in Israel, I’m just going to take a bag every single day, and help [clean].” Bella envisions herself cooking meals for hungry Israelis. Lior talks about visiting sick people in Israel. These are not tasks that can be done from afar; they necessitate physical presence. This emphasis on physical, rather than financial, contributions may stem from the fact that children take years to develop an understanding of money and its worth, but it may also be because contemporary Jewish children—like the American Jewish community writ large—are seeking experiences with Israel that are more personal and experiential.<sup>32</sup>

The children’s tendencies to view Jewish poverty as an Israeli—not U.S.—phenomenon, and yet a problem for which they were nonetheless responsible for tackling, is indicative of a larger trend in the way that they viewed Israel: as both home and not-home. The children understood that Israel is elsewhere on the globe, and not the place where they or their immediate families reside, and they also knew that it is a place that many Jews—including themselves—designate as home. In kindergarten, Esther made a distinction between her home in Los Angeles and Israel, which makes her feel “*like I’m home*” even though she has never been there. In first

grade, Rina talked about how Israel is “the Jewish people’s home” even though she herself did not live there. In second grade, Avigail explained that Israel is, at once, “my home and it’s one of the most important things in my life that I love” and also “four thousand miles [sic] from where I live.”

While most of the children did not use the term “homeland” until third grade, even before then they described Israel as a place where they felt “at home,” regardless of whether or not they had actually been there. They demonstrated a nascent awareness that, for many in the American Jewish community, Israel blurs the boundaries of what is considered home.<sup>33</sup>

Thus Israel is, at once, distant from and proximate to the children. The clearest example of how these contradictory forces operate in their minds can be seen in their responses to the question, *Is Israel near or far from your life?* By second grade, most children indicated that Israel was both, in the words of Ryan, “a little near and a little far.” As Rina (second grade) explained, “Well, in my imagination, it’s so close to me. But out in the world it’s far.” According to Samantha (second grade), “I’m close to Israel; I mean I love Israel, but if you’re counting where we are and where Israel is, it’s like [a] fifteen-hour plane ride.” Similarly, Hannah (second grade) explained that Israel is far “because you have to have a lot of transportation to get there” but also close “since I’m Jewish [so] I feel that it’s near.” As Elliott (third grade) put it, “It’s really far from Los Angeles, but [to] my heart it’s near.” Children tended to view Israel as, in the words of Avigail (second grade), “far from my life and near to my heart.”

And thus, again, these American Jewish children are neither fully insiders nor complete outsiders to life in Israel. On the one hand, the children perceive a great distance between themselves and Israelis—both in terms of geography and in terms of the problems of poverty that they attribute solely to Israeli society. On the other hand, they feel that Israel is “close to their hearts,” and, as such, they view themselves as personally obligated to help Israelis. Israel society functions as a place with which the children affiliate yet from which they are distinct.

## Discussion

Throughout their early elementary school years, the children in this study flitted between two conceptions of and relationships to

Israel, one remote and the other intimately connected to their lives. In fact, the children's relationships to Israel can be best summed up by a series of contradictory dyads: understood and misunderstood, ours and Other, home and not-home, distant and proximate, foreign and familiar.

The very same moments that brought to the fore the children's connection to Israel also highlighted their disconnection from it. It was not that they felt at times near and at other times far from life in the Jewish state, but rather that in a single instant they could express or embody both their association with and their separation from Israel and Israelis. In their attempts to understand ongoing violence between Israel and its enemies—a conflict that many of the children believed themselves to have witnessed—the children acted both as youth personally implicated by the conflict and as onlookers from afar. As they thought about widespread poverty—a phenomenon they believed to be particularly problematic in Israel—the children simultaneously set themselves apart from and viewed themselves part of life in Israel. As they talked about the concept of home, and as they attempted to articulate their own affiliations, the children, at once, distanced themselves from and bound themselves to Israel. In each of these instances, their connection to and disconnection from Israel were conjoined, always functioning in tandem.

### Conclusion: The Paradox of Israel Education

Many adults in the Jewish community—educators, rabbis, parents, grandparents, and others—strive to connect American Jewish youth to Israel and Israelis.<sup>34</sup> When viewed as an educational goal, the idea of connection “builds on the principle that Jewish life is best experienced in an atmosphere of togetherness” in which Jews connect with one another across time and place.<sup>35</sup> When viewed as a *process*, however, connection unearths a series of contradictory roles that Israel plays in the lives and self-understanding of American Jewish children. For, as young Jews living outside of the Jewish state, they experience Israel neither as insiders nor as outsiders. Israel is, in their eyes, a community both ours and Other, a homeland but not a home, a place both distant and proximate.

In fact, it appears that the very ways that contemporary American Jewish children connect to Israel—through digital technologies

and feelings of personal responsibility—pull in both directions; the same forces collapse and reinforce distance, simultaneously bringing connection and disconnection between the children and Israel. As Israel streams into their lives through smart phones and computer screens, American Jewish children develop both textured understanding and serious misperceptions about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and as they learn about Israeli society, they feel both personally obligated to and culturally distinct from Israelis.

This, then, is the paradox of Israel education in the twenty-first century. The advent of digital technologies, and the era of “direct engagement” in which American Jews stake a personal claim to Israel’s future, afford new opportunities for connecting American Jewish youth to Israel in direct and personal ways.<sup>36</sup> Yet the very same circumstances that allow for new forms of connection also highlight the ways that American Jewish children are distinct from their Israeli counterparts and physically removed from the challenges they face.

Adults who seek to foster meaningful relationships between American Jewish youth and Israel must tune into the twin effects of connection and disconnection. New technologies and social media may allow Israeli and American Jewish youth a glimpse into one another’s lives, but in bridging the geographic distance, they may also highlight a cultural chasm. Attempts to build direct personal ties between Jewish youth inside and outside of the Jewish state—whether through institutional twinning programs or person-to-person *mifgashim*—may simultaneously highlight the collective affinity and the diversity of the Jewish people.

Thus, any educational experience for American Jewish children aimed solely at fostering connection to Israel is insufficient. Children are capable of understanding, and need opportunities to reflect upon, *both* the points of connection *and* the places of disconnection between their own Jewish lives and the State of Israel. In order to truly respond to the needs and experiences of American Jewish children, the adults in their lives must be willing to do so as well.

### Appendix: Participant Demographic Information

	PARTICIPANT	GENDER	DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION	PARENTS' BIRTHPLACE(S)	PRIMARY LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN IN THE HOME	FIRST VISIT TO ISRAEL (IN OR BEFORE GRADE)
1	Avigail	F	Chabad	Israel	Hebrew, English	Kindergarten
2	Ari	M	Reform	United States, Israel	Hebrew, English	Kindergarten
3	Bella	F	Reform	Iran	English, Farsi	N/A
4	Brent	M	Reform	Iran, U.S.	English, Farsi	N/A
5	Carly	F	Conservative	United States, Iran	English, Hebrew, Spanish	Kindergarten
6	Caleb	M	Reform	Iran, U.S.	English, Farsi	N/A
7	David	M	Reform	United States	English, French	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade
8	Dina	F	Chabad	Israel, Swaziland	English, Hebrew	Kindergarten
9	Esther	F	Reform	Iran	English, Farsi	N/A
10	Elliott	M	Reform	Iran	English, Farsi	Kindergarten
11	Gia	F	Reform	United States	English, Farsi	Kindergarten
12	Gabe	M	Reform	United States, Iran	Farsi, Hebrew, English	Kindergarten
13	Hayim	M	Reform	Iran	English, Hebrew, Farsi	Kindergarten
14	Hannah	F	Reform	United States	English	N/A
15	Isaac	M	Reform	Iran	English, Farsi	Kindergarten
16	Isabelle	F	Unaffiliated	Israel	English, Hebrew	Kindergarten
17	Julia	F	Conservative	United States	English	Kindergarten
18	Jacob	M	Conservative	Israel	English, Hebrew, French	Kindergarten
19	Keren	F	Conservative	Israel, Canada	English, Hebrew	N/A



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	<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION</b>	<b>PARENTS' BIRTHPLACES)</b>	<b>PRIMARY LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN IN THE HOME</b>	<b>FIRST VISIT TO ISRAEL (IN OR BEFORE GRADE)</b>
20	Kevin	M	Conservative	United States	English	N/A
21	Lior	M	Unknown	Israel	English, Hebrew, French	Kindergarten
22	Lailah	F	Unaffiliated	Israel	Hebrew, English	N/A
23	Micah	M	Unknown	United States, Israel	English, Hebrew	Kindergarten
24	Maya	F	Unaffiliated	Israel, Czech Republic	English, Hebrew, Czech	Kindergarten
25	Noah	M	Unaffiliated	United States	English	N/A
26	Nomi	F	Conservative	United States	English, Spanish	N/A
27	Owen	M	Unknown	United States	English	Kindergarten
28	Olivia	F	Conservative	Israel, Peru	English, Hebrew	N/A
29	Pearl	F	Chabad	US, Israel	English, Hebrew, Farsi	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade
30	Peretz	M	Unknown	US, Israel	English, Hebrew	Kindergarten
31	Rina	F	Conservative	United States	English	N/A
32	Ryan	M	Conservative	United States	English	N/A
33	Samantha	F	Reform	United States	English	N/A
34	Seth	M	Reform	Israel, Argentina	Spanish, Hebrew, English	1 <sup>st</sup> grade
35	Tzvi	M	Unaffiliated	United States	English, Hebrew	Kindergarten

## Notes

1. Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1," *On the Horizon* 9, no. 5 (2001).
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