

# 'I Wish They Had Birthright for Adults!': The Effect of Birthright Israel on Jewish Parents' Interest in Visiting Israel

Janet Krasner Aronson<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract** This study assesses the impact of the Taglit-Birthright Israel travel program on parents of participants—in particular, on the ways in which parents' indirect exposure to their adult children's experiences in the program affect those parents' connections to Israel. Birthright Israel is a large-scale, successful, educational travel program that provides a gift of 10-day trips to Israel to Jewish young adults. A substantial body of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Birthright Israel in strengthening the Jewish identity of young diaspora Jews. Anecdotal evidence suggests that participants whose interest in Israel is enhanced by their Birthright Israel experience share what they have learned with their parents, and that this results in an increase in Israel interest for the parents. This study is the first to systematically analyze the program's impact on such parents. Based on semi-structured interviews of Birthright Israel parents and on pre-trip and post-trip surveys of more than 1,500 parents, this paper shows that, for Jewish parents, the primary impact of Birthright Israel is an increased interest in visiting Israel and a reduced concern about the safety of Israel travel. The effect of the program was most pronounced for parents who had never been to Israel. Parental interest in trips like Birthright Israel presents an opportunity to reach the generation of American Jews during midlife in ways not previously considered.

**Keywords** Birthright Israel · Parents · Adult children · Israel travel · Baby boomers · Midlife · Emerging adults

The continued popularity of Taglit-Birthright Israel prompts questions about its full impact on diaspora Jewish communities. Birthright Israel, a free gift of a 10-day trip

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✉ Janet Krasner Aronson  
jaronson@brandeis.edu

<sup>1</sup> Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, USA