



Executive Summary

From Jewish Books to Jewish Life

Results from PJ Library's 2016 Triennial Family Study

Prepared for PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation | Prepared by Informing Change

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation launched PJ Library® to distribute free, high-quality Jewish children's books to families with children ages 6 months through 5 years old on a monthly basis. The program began in the US and Canada and has rapidly spread to over 160,000 subscribers from 120,000 families in more than 200 communities. PJ Library has also expanded its offerings to more age groups and countries around the world. In 2016, PJ Library served families with children ages 6 months to 8 years old in 12 countries around the world.

Since 2010, PJ Library has engaged consultants to evaluate the program through family surveys every three years. Informing Change partnered with PJ Library in 2013 and again in 2016 to learn about who their subscribers are, their experiences with PJ Library, changes in their family's Jewish home life and practices, and their involvement in community programs. This 2016 Triennial Family study netted 25,270 survey responses for a 20% response rate, and 45 of these families participated in an additional telephone interviews.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

As PJ Library has expanded its subscriber base over the past three years, different types of families have welcomed PJ Library into their homes. The evaluation found that PJ Library not only reaches these families, but plays an important and meaningful role in their Jewish lives. What follows are the key takeaways from this study.

"PJ Library brings Judaism into our house in an active way and gives us an opportunity to connect to a culture that we lost connection with."

– PJ Library Subscriber

This summary draws upon findings from Informing Change's "From Jewish Books to Jewish Life: Results from PJ Library's 2016 Triennial Family Study," April 2017.

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Broad Jewish Backgrounds

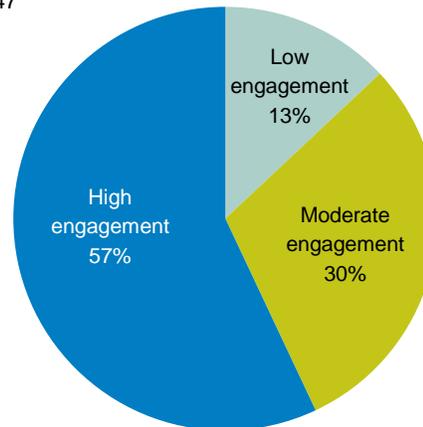
PJ Library families represent the full breadth and spectrum of Jewish families in the US and Canada.

About one in four families is intermarried (28%), and one in six has a family member who is Jewish by choice (16%). Families tend to fall on the high end of the spectrum of Jewish engagement (Exhibit 1), holding *attitudes* that Judaism is very important in their lives (e.g., 99% are proud to be Jewish) and *behaviors* of involvement in their Jewish communities (e.g., 81% have belonged to or participated in the activities of a synagogue or temple in the last year). Parents responding to the survey are on average 38 years old and primarily speak English at home.

Exhibit 1

The majority of PJ Library families scored high on our Index of Jewish Engagement.

n=23,347



Overwhelmingly Positive Family Experiences

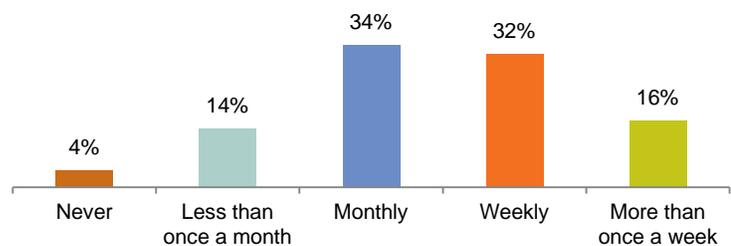
Families embrace the experience that PJ Library books and resources spark in their homes.

Over half (63%) of families pull PJ Library books down from their bookshelves at least once a week for story time, and nearly half (48%) discuss the content from their books at least once a week (Exhibit 2). Almost all families are satisfied with their PJ Library experience (95%) and would recommend it to their family and friends (91%). Supplemental materials, such as the notes from PJ Library on the book flaps (83% of families report using the book flaps), enhance the experience and guide parents in ways they can connect the books to their Jewish lives. Most families (70%) report that these supplemental materials have considerably added value to their family's PJ Library experience.

Exhibit 2

PJ Library books are part of families' regular activities.

Family discusses concepts or values from PJ Library books (n=23,823)



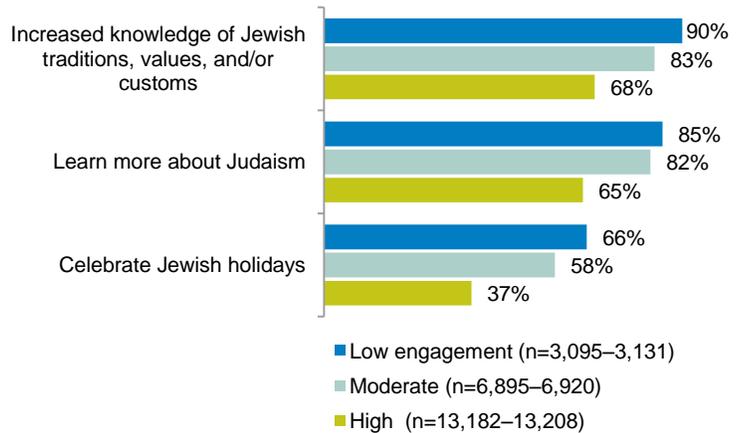
Influencing Jewish Parenting

PJ Library is a supportive parenting tool that creates family moments and memories.

Nearly every family (99%) reports that PJ Library has influenced how they talk about, think about, or practice Jewish traditions in their homes. Almost all families (96%) also report that PJ Library has supported their family in having conversations about Jewish traditions, values, and customs. PJ Library helps parents feel more knowledgeable and confident to engage in Jewish traditions with their children (83%) and has been an overall valuable parenting tool (91%). For families who have been less engaged Jewishly, PJ Library has helped them feel more knowledgeable and confident in talking about and introducing Jewish traditions and values into their homes (Exhibit 3). Families from more engaged backgrounds talked about PJ Library’s benefits in supporting efforts they were already doing in their homes.

Exhibit 3

PJ Library has less engaged families learn about and connect to Judaism.



“I’m learning about Judaism, and my daughter’s enjoying Judaism.”

– PJ Library Subscriber

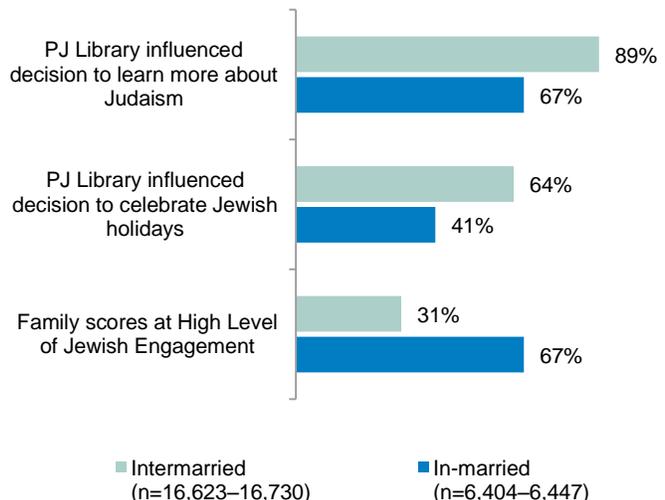
Embracing Family Diversity

Families of all types welcome PJ Library into their homes.

While there may have been concern that some different family types (e.g., intermarried families, Russian-speaking families, multi-racial families) may not enjoy the books as much or are not gaining as much value from the experience as other families, quite the opposite story appeared in the data. Particular sub-groups of families tend to be on par with the aggregate results for satisfaction with PJ Library, influence of PJ Library, and connection to their Jewish community. Intermarried families, in particular, are more likely than in-married families to say that PJ Library influenced their decision to celebrate Jewish holidays and learn more about Judaism, though they are less likely to have a higher level of Jewish engagement (Exhibit 4). Nearly all intermarried parents (94%) feel that PJ Library has increased their confidence to engage with their children in Jewish values and practices.

Exhibit 4

PJ Library influences intermarried families to a greater degree than in-married families when it comes to celebrating Jewish holidays and learning more about Judaism.

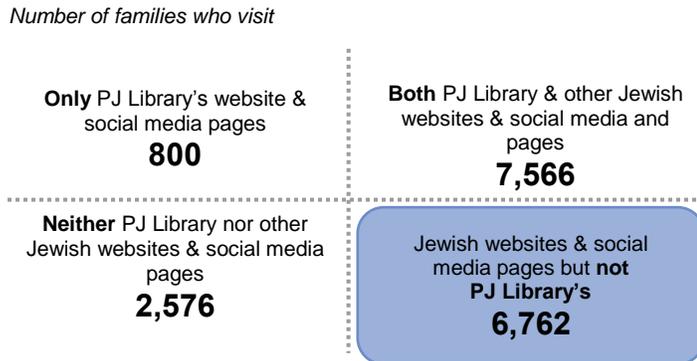


Expanding Options for Families

PJ Library continues to expand offerings for families “beyond the envelope,” and families, in turn, are embracing these new opportunities.

PJ Library has added and expanded elements that require families to reach out to them for connections “beyond the envelope,” such as book programs for older children and parents, and their online and social media presence. Nearly half (46%) of families report using one of the online or social media options to connect electronically with PJ Library, primarily PJ Library’s Facebook page and the e-newsletters that communities send. For those who are not using PJ Library’s online resources, 72% are using other Jewish sites and online resources besides those offered by PJ Library (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5
Over 6,000 families use other Jewish online sites, but not PJ Library’s.

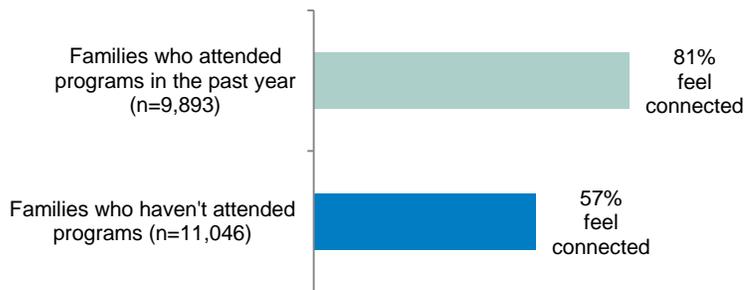


Inspiring Community Involvement

PJ Library inspires families to engage with and participate more in their Jewish communities.

PJ Library families describe in their interviews how they gravitate toward events for younger children that provide opportunities to socialize, such as arts and crafts, cooking, holiday events, or book readings. Nearly half (47%) of PJ Library families attended events for families with young children in the past year. Of these families, 72% of the parents connected socially with other adults to extend their own social networks, and 75% are very likely to recommend the events to a friend. Significantly more families who attended programs in the past year report that PJ Library has helped their family feel connected to the community, compared to families who have not attended events (Exhibit 6). Across all families, 75% are interested in getting more connected to local organizations, activities, and people.

Exhibit 6
More families who attend programs for families with young children say PJ Library has helped them feel connected to their Jewish communities.



“Through the monthly receipt of the books and then almost monthly programs, it’s a nice opportunity to get the kids out and socializing in a Jewish atmosphere that’s not necessarily just synagogue.”

– PJ Library Subscriber