



Linh Dao & Pavla Hanáčková

HOW ANIMALS CARE FOR THEIR YOUNG: PARENTING STYLES IN THE ANIMAL WORLD



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B4U PUBLISHING

INDIAN ELEPHANTS

LOVING GIANTS

Elephant calves have it all figured out. They're taken care of not only by their mums, but also siblings, aunts, and grandmas. That's because they live in a herd led by the eldest cow elephant. The group does almost everything together - the members journey to find food and water, they play together, and maintain familial relationships. The bond between an elephant mum and her calf is one of the strongest you can find in the animal kingdom.



IT'S A CALF, MUM!

Mum has to wait a good long while before the calf is born. She carries the baby in her belly for up to **two years!** When the calf is about to be born, other females gather around the mum, and sometimes even assist her with the delivery. The baby is no mite - elephant calves can weigh up to 100 kg. ▲



NO TIME TO WASTE TIME

The freshly born calf can stand on its own legs, walk, and drink the mother's milk only a couple of hours after the birth. Calves are quick learners - they soon join others to journey for food and water, start eating complementary foods (for example grass), and since they're incredibly smart and curious they discover the world around them, most often using their **sensitive trunk** which functions as a sort of a hand. Let's go on an adventure! Not too far from mum, though... ▼



BUSY HANDS ARE HAPPY HANDS

Elephant calves spend a lot of time **discovering** the world around them and playing various games. They're just like you - they like to play the tag, splash water on one another, even throw sticks. They nudge each other and "fight" imagined enemies. ▼



WHAT GOOD IS THIS?

Before the calves figure out what their trunk is good for, it takes a while. They look confused during the first week of their life, as if the trunk isn't under their control. They can even trip over it! However, they soon find out how useful it is: they can use it to lift things, spray water into their mouth, they shower with it on hot days, use it as a snorkel when they're under water, greet and caress others, trumpet, have conversations... What a truly wonderful thing! ►



Ways of using the trunk

LITTLE RASCALS

Elephant boys can be proper **rascals**, especially when they turn 12 and reach puberty. They're very similar to human boys in this regard - they start to take an interest in girls and want to show off in front of them. This is why they often nudge other elephants to show them who the boss is. However, their mum or grandma is always nearby to pull their ear. Elephants are incorrigible, though - they usually leave the female herd, and either wander around alone, or join other randy youths. ◀



FOR EVER AND EVER

Elephant girls usually stay in their own herd until they die. Elephant cows simply pull together: they protect each other, learn how to take care of the young, and if necessary, are always there to help. Calves can **get stuck** in mud or fall into a pit. If that happens, they need their mum, grandma, or aunts to help them out. ▲

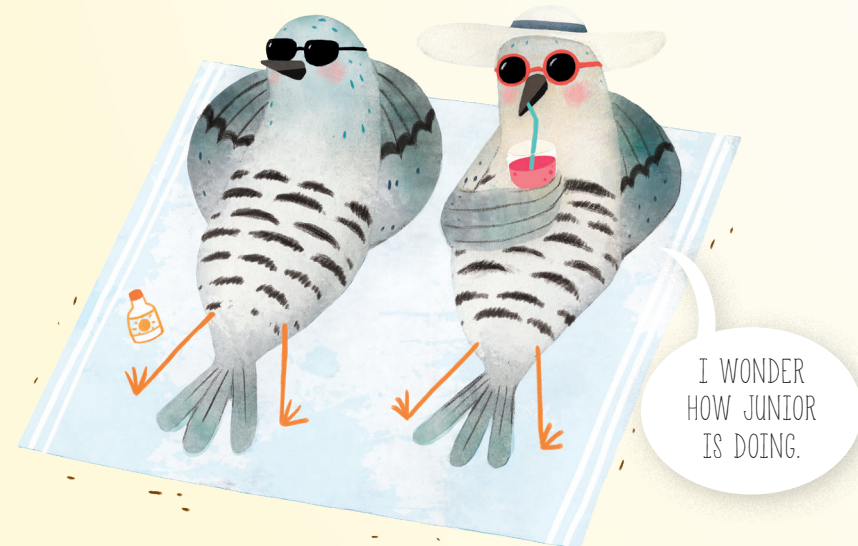
EUROPEAN CUCKOOS

THE LAZIEST PARENTS OF ALL

Have you ever wondered why it's European cuckoos that are generally called the laziest parents? It's because they don't look after their young at all and leave the privilege to others - bird foster parents they selected earlier. A cuckoo's parental duties end with laying the eggs. After the mum is done, she sets out for a long journey to the warm, African wilderness with a clear conscience. This makes cuckoos an obvious candidate for the Worst Parent of the Year award!

GLIMMERS OF PARENTHOOD

Most birds enjoy parenthood – they build a nest, put their valuable eggs in it, and take care of them until the young hatch. However, cuckoos chose **the path of least resistance**. That doesn't mean though, that they don't think about the future of their children. Quite on the contrary! Although they leave their eggs soon and leave the upbringing to others, they still try to instil everything important in their children and provide them with prosperity. In the tropics, you can even encounter distant relatives of the cuckoo genus that look after their young in an exemplary fashion. ▼



A SECURE FUTURE

Before the female lays her eggs, she maps the territory and selects a good nest to put her eggs in. Most often, she picks **the open nests** of small insect-eating songbirds because those are just right for this covert mission. To make sure the operation succeeds, she makes sure that her child is the first one to hatch in the nest. How does she do it? For about a day, she carries the egg in her body like in an incubator, and warms it up as if she were sitting on it. This gives the tot a one-day head start on the foster parents' own young. ▲

EGG FOR AN EGG

Cuckoos always lay only one egg into the nest they selected. Step number one: keep the number of eggs. To make sure that the owner of the nest doesn't become suspicious, the mum throws one of the original eggs out and replaces it with one of her own. Step number two: camouflage. Cuckoos choose foster parents whose eggs resemble their own. Even though a cuckoo egg is a little larger, it has a similar colour. Step number three: make a bolt for it. The whole exchange happens very quickly – sometimes it lasts only 10 seconds! ►



MUM, I'M SO HUNGRY!

Little cuckoos are quite **the mouth to feed**. Although they receive all the food that would otherwise support the entire nest, it's not enough. They beg their foster parents for food, peep loudly, and demand another choice morsel. No wonder that the nest is soon too small for them and they become larger than their foster parent! The cuckoo lets the foster parent feed it even after it reaches adulthood. ►



A LITTLE MAFIOSO

Thanks to the head start provided by its mum, the cuckoo young hatches first. It may have inherited its cunning senses from its parents – even though it is born blind and bare, it can exert a great force, **throw the other eggs** out of the nest, and thus keep all the food supply for itself – nobody is going to eat from its plate! ◀



HOW DOES A CUCKOO BECOME A CUCKOO?

How do cuckoos know what to do if they aren't raised by their own parents? It may seem incredible but they figure everything out **by instinct**. After leaving the nest, they fly to the faraway Africa to spend the winter there – no advice from those who are older and more experienced required!. Once they return, they start practicing the same method of child rearing as their folks. ◀

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Written by Pavla Hanáčková
Illustrated by Linh Dao

Get to know
animal parents!

When humans have a baby, they devote all their love, care, and attention to them. The mum, dad, grandparents, and siblings all pitch in. But how does it work in the animal world? Are animals also diligent parents? Surprisingly, parenthood in the animal kingdom is very diverse. You can find parents who share their child-rearing duties equally and instill everything in their tots they'll need in life. In other families, the mum is in charge of the upbringing, and handles it with great skill. But you can also encounter parents who don't look after their young at all, and either leave them to others, or at the mercy of nature. Let's journey through the wilderness together and meet various animal families and their different approaches to child-rearing. As you'll see, the nature always comes with some very smart solutions.



AGE 6+



Funny book full
of beautiful
illustrations.



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