



We're Kin!

A family is a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit.

Animal families work in various ways.

Prairie dogs live in coterries, small family groups within a larger colony, consisting of a male, multiple females, and their offspring. They build underground dwellings with separate areas for sleeping, toileting, and raising young. They share food, groom one another, kiss and nuzzle to show affection, and from other prairie dogs away. They use short barks, to convey information about predator species, color, size, direction, and speed.



Orcas stay with their family for their entire lives. The black and white whales live in pods ranging from 5 to 50 members. Raising young is a group activity with the adolescent females helping to care for the babies. Orca parents teach their young to hunt and share their prey with the pod.



African wild dogs live in packs of two to 40 individuals led by one monogamous breeding pair. Males and females take care of the young. When the adults hunt and kill their prey, the strong members of the pack step back and let the pups eat first. When the pups are finished, the rest of the pack eat and venture back to the den to regurgitate some of the kill to feed young pups, injured or elderly dogs, or the individuals who stayed behind to care for the young ones; everybody is looked after.



Chimpanzees live in communities ranging from 15 to 120 members. The social structure, called fusion-fission, changes with individuals breaking off into smaller subgroups, with six or fewer chimps. Relationships between chimpanzees can last a lifetime. Mother-daughter relationships among chimps are strong; mothers stay with their young until they become independent between the ages of six and nine. Siblings and pairs of male chimps are also often observed together. Grooming is an important behavior within chimp communities, keeping members close, and calming and reassuring. Communication is common with chimps using the pant hoot, a form of verbal communication.



Dwarf mongoose live in family groups headed by the top female, or matriline. Her monogamous mate is second in charge, watching for danger. Only the head female can mate, and she gets first choice of food. After that, the youngest are given food first, ensuring the babies getting enough to eat. The older offspring help care for the youngsters, cleaning them and bringing them food. When the mother dies, her children leave the group to either start their own or join another. These animals also stay connected, even when not together. Searching for food, they call with short chirps, checking in through the day.



Gray wolves live in small packs including a male and female pair and all their young. Usually only the lead pair mate, often for life. Most packs are small, with five to nine individuals. Within the group, wolves work together teaching their young to hunt and avoid threats. Wolves communicate with vocalizations, sharing locations and warning pack members danger.



Emperor penguins have strong male influence. When the males arrive each year to the nesting site, they show off to the females, lowering their heads to their chest and letting out a courtship vocalization. Once paired, emperor penguins remain monogamous for the length of the breeding season, or longer. They are social and nest within large colonies. The females lay one egg and give it to the male to incubate and protect. When not nesting, adult emperor penguins travel and forage in groups.



Dolphins have strong bonds, exhibiting caring behavior towards their own species and others; – they have saved humans, seals and whales.



Elephants have deep family bonds. Each herd has eight to 100 elephants, led by the oldest, usually largest, female, the matriarch. Her memory stores knowledge of water and food location. Male offspring leave the group at puberty, usually between the ages of 8 and 13. Several generations of females help each other raise the babies, protecting them. Elephants mourn the death of loved ones returning to the place where a friend has died, touching the bones.



Lions are the most social of the wild cats, living in prides. Males have a harder life when older, but even old females with missing teeth are waited on and shared food. Nuzzling lionesses lick each other and males rub their heads to strengthen social bonds.



Animal groups can have funny names:

- A crash of rhinoceri, a sloth of bears, a nursery of racoons, an ambush of tigers, a shrewdness of apes, a pride of lions, a lepe of leopards, a corps of giraffes, a troop of kangaroos, a skulk of foxes, a cete of badgers, an array of hedgehogs.
- A wedge of swans, a sedge of herons, a nye of pheasants, a siege of bitterns, a stare of owls, a walk of snipe, a watch of nightingales, a fall of woodcock, a party of jays, a congregation of plover, a colony of penguins, a rafter of turkeys, a company of parrots.



Gatherings, groups and kin....

Families have a mom,
And families have a dad,
To take care of the babies,
And protect from something
bad!



What's the Purpose? To the tune of *Clementine*.

What's the purpose,
What's the purpose,
Why do animals
Have family?
To feed the young
And to protect them ,
Keeping them
Both safe and free.



We Are Kin

Gathering,
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Can you find places where animal families can meet their basic needs?

Living creatures need space, shelter, water and food. Take a Basic Needs Scavenger Hunt and find the places where the living things can find:

Space

Shelter

Food

Water.

Find signs of living creatures using these places.



Design your own animal family!

Take some play dough and make a Mom and Dad and baby creatures!



Be an animal gathering chef!



- Can you make a caravan of camels
- A school of goldfish
- A paddling of ducks?

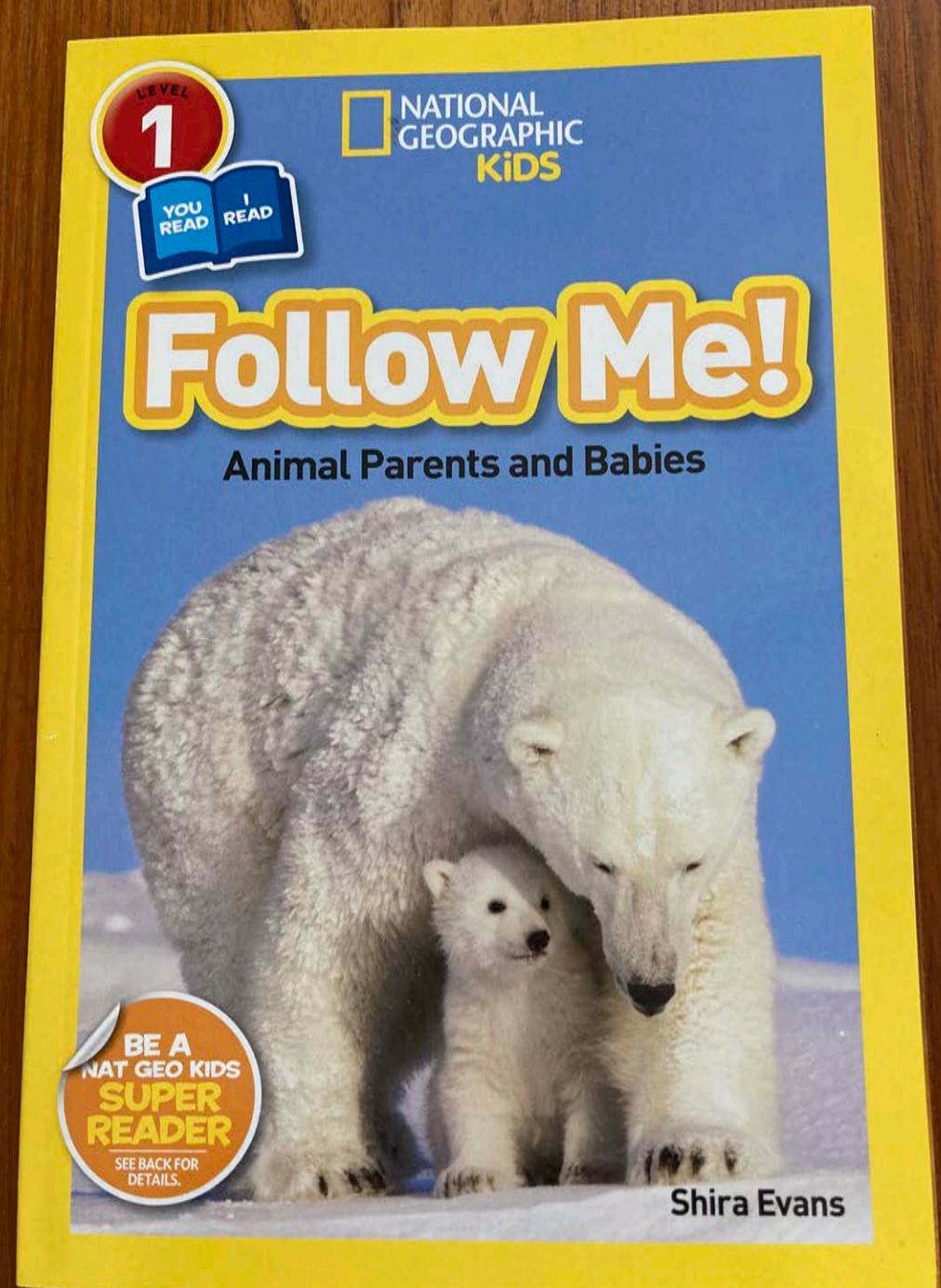


Be an
animal
family
chef!



Animal families....

....and how animal parents take care of their young!



You can make a mini-book!

1. Fold the paper in half
2. Then in half again.

