

MORE THAN A SURVEY: THE CHANGED PERSPECTIVE OF A NEW PARENT

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I have always believed in the transformative power of data. Whether by diligently tracking mileage and time splits in preparation for running a marathon (five and counting!) or by delivering insights as the analytics manager for PJ Library, I am always curious to know what the data says.

So when my wife and I found out we were expecting our first child, my first instinct was to turn to the data. I read as much as I could about trimesters, labor and delivery, sleeping and feeding, postpartum support, etc. I figured the more data I could digest, the better prepared I could be to support my wife and child. Of course, I soon learned that all the data and reading in the world simply cannot prepare you for the experience of holding your child, enduring sleepless nights, seeing their smile, or having them fall asleep in your arms.

Since joining the Harold Grinspoon Foundation three years ago, I have led our monthly book survey process. Surveying thousands of families each month, we create visual dashboards of those responses to ensure that our PJ Library Book Selection Committee understands how parents and children feel about the books we send each month. Until I became a parent, I could only think about this process in the abstract, knowing in principle how significantly this data collection informs future decision making.

Then I became a father and my whole perspective shifted. After signing up our daughter Razie for PJ Library, I received my first book survey invitation email – not as the PJ Library analytics manager but as Razie’s *abba* (father).



I was so excited to share how Razie’s eyes went wide when she looked at the big blocks of color on the page and how her mouth went even wider when she crammed as many board book pages as she could against her teething gums. I realized that the monthly book survey flattens these moments into usable data, and for the first time, I had a window into what those magical experiences look like before they are reduced to aggregated figures.

The ultimate creators of the PJ Library experience are not the book authors, not the book selection committee, but rather all of you: the families that engage with the PJ Library books that get shipped every month. Hearing from so many of you helps us to better tell the story of each of these powerful moments, show the true impact behind the data, and continue to expand PJ Library to share that joy with even more families. We at PJ Library deeply recognize our partnership with all of you. To know where we should go, we need to know where you – our readers – want to be going. Whether with my analytics hat or my abba hat on, I cannot wait to see where we go next together.

