



# Update . . .

April 2013

5773 Iyar



## Hardships of an Israeli Child

My name is Yatom Israeli and I am 9 years old. I want to thank you for helping kids like me. I remember when I was small how my father used to carry me on his shoulders to the park next to our house.

One night when I was 5 years old, my parents got into a big argument. The police came and took my father away. I didn't see him again for many months and missed him very much. Before that night, our Shabbats and holidays were very happy. Afterwards, our house was empty.

The worst part was listening to my mother cry every night in her bedroom. She did not know I could hear her crying, but it always scared me. Nobody would tell me why the police took my father away and why my mother was so sad. All of the adults were hiding something and I became angry.

One day I came home from kindergarten and my mother told me she was taking me to see my father. I was so happy - I dressed up and drew a picture for him. We took a bus to a visitation center to see my father. We had to go through a lot of security to go to the room where my father waited. Instead of having my mother with us, there was an old woman who never smiled in the room taking notes.

The hardest part was seeing how much older my father was after a few months. He looked more like he should be my grandfather. Still, he smiled and hugged me and gave me a toy train. For the next six months I met my father at that visitation center once a week for an hour. Every week I wanted him to take me out for ice cream or play in the park like we used to, but we played games in that room with that woman.

At the end of our last visit, I clutched him for a long time and begged him to take me home to live with him. I thought I could hold onto him forever, but I fell asleep. When I woke up, the security guard was pulling me away and brought me to my mother. She took me home and I never saw my father again. My mother says he moved away.

I saw on television somebody was doing a memorial for my father. I do not know what a memorial is, but at least somebody knows where my father is. Maybe they can help me find him.

It has been a very hard life and I got into a lot of fights at school. I didn't trust my teachers, so they moved me to a new school a few weeks ago. The new principal's name is Itzhak and he is really funny. My new teacher is very nice to me. Whenever I get upset, she lets me go see the school's counselor.

Yesterday at school we learned about the Knesset. Everyone in the class pretended to be a Knesset Member who wants to change something in our government. I pretended to be the Minister of Welfare. I said I wanted to make a new law to help families with no money stay together. Today I know that I want to be the Minister of Welfare when I grow up.

**Yatom Israeli** is a fictitious boy whose profile the Love for Israel Relief Fund compiled from numerous interactions with children, parents, teachers, and child welfare professionals. The purpose of Yatom's story is to objectively show how adult problems all-too-easily impact our children in Israel. No matter which adults are to blame, the affect on Yatom is the same. Sadly, child welfare in Israel currently ranks at the bottom of the OECD. Call us biased, but we believe Israeli parents are the best in the world and our child welfare system needs to reflect that. That is why our holiest work is speaking out on behalf of these vulnerable children who have no voice of their own. The Love for Israel Relief Fund welcomes your support in this holy work.

**Special events**, like weddings and bar mitzvahs, happen year round for hundreds of at-risk kids and needy young adults in Israel. Donations designated "special events" will be set aside for such use.

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<http://love4israel.org/donate.html>

**On behalf** of the Israelis you help - Todah Robah!

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