

Who Made the First Mother?  
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My six-year-old asked me a question on the way to school: Who made the first mother?

She asks things like this without trying. She notices simple patterns and pushes them forward to see where they go. It's how she thinks. When I ask her what she's learning in school, she actually tells me. Recently she made me look up ABA patterns because that was her lesson in kindergarten, right in the middle of me overcomplicating a completely different thought.

An ABA pattern is just a repeating sequence: A, B, A, B. It teaches kids how to see structure and predict the next step. She saw the rule, carried it forward, and wanted to know how far it reaches. She does that with everything. She tracks a pattern until it hits a boundary. In other words, she is a natural boundary pusher.

Her question about mothers landed in the same place. I realized she wasn't asking the classic "where do babies come from" thing. She was asking where a role begins. How something familiar today connects back to the smallest, earliest version of itself.

Biology has a clear timeline. Early life didn't reproduce the way mammals do. The first living systems copied themselves. Over long stretches of time, some of them formed membranes, then clusters, then bodies. Reproduction became more structured. Eggs appeared. Parental care grew piece by piece. Carrying young came later.

Across all that time, the behaviors we now connect with motherhood accumulated gradually. Protecting young. Hovering near them. Guarding. Feeding. These steps didn't show up all at once. They layered on top of each other until the pattern became recognizable. By the time anything existed that we would look at and call a mother, the groundwork had already been laid by millions of generations.

So there was no single first mother. That role appeared when enough caregiving behavior had stabilized that the pattern became clear.

Even before this, at the level of proto-life, there were faint echoes of what would eventually become care. Early chemical systems worked to preserve their own structure. They repaired damage, held their boundaries together, and repeated the actions that kept them intact. There was nothing like intention in this, but the function was the same. A system maintained the conditions that allowed its pattern to continue. This was the earliest form of preserving something beyond the present moment.

That impulse eventually scaled into what we call caregiving.

Long before any creature recognized a role, small pieces of care were already present. Guarding offspring. Bringing food. Staying close. These fragments came first. The identity of "mother" came later, once the behavior had enough continuity to stand on its own.

The identity did not create the care.  
The care created the identity.

This is the same kind of structure my daughter already knows how to look for in her ABA patterns. She is learning how repetition becomes form and how simple steps can accumulate into something stable. Her question about the first mother was a continuation of that instinct. She saw a familiar role and wanted to trace it back to the earliest piece that still fits the rule.

Explaining all of this to a six-year-old doesn't require the full biological timeline. We were running late for school, so she got the clean version:

"In the beginning, animals had babies in very simple ways. Small bits of care started early. Over a long time, that care grew stronger. After many generations, that growing care became what we call a mother."

That answer stays true, and it gives her a structure she can follow. It shows that roles in nature form the same way patterns do. Small actions repeat. Repetition builds stability. Stability becomes something recognizable.

Her question also showed something about how she sees the world. She wants to find beginnings. She follows patterns until they reveal their shape. She pushes boundaries to see what holds. This way of thinking is exactly how understanding forms. You start with something simple, trace it back, and watch how it builds itself forward again.

These are the moments where that skill takes shape.

I've noticed this in my own life. Often the thing comes before the thing. Meaning shows up before the concept that names it. A pattern draws your attention before you know why. A joke makes you laugh before you can explain the comedy. Drawing parallel in metaphor causes an idea to click. What I call Aleph Harmonic Qualia is really just the pull toward the next piece of the pattern. It is the recognition that makes you follow the thread. It feels fundamental for the same reason my daughter's question felt fundamental.

Maybe I'm just a six-year-old.  
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