

A new life begins

When a male kangaroo and female kangaroo mate, the male **fertilizes** a tiny egg inside the female's body.

↓ The male and female kangaroos get ready to mate.





Only a fertilized egg can grow into a new joey.

The joey grows inside the female's body for nearly five weeks.

When the female is ready to give birth, she cleans her pouch.

↑ Before a female gives birth, she licks a path across her belly to her pouch.

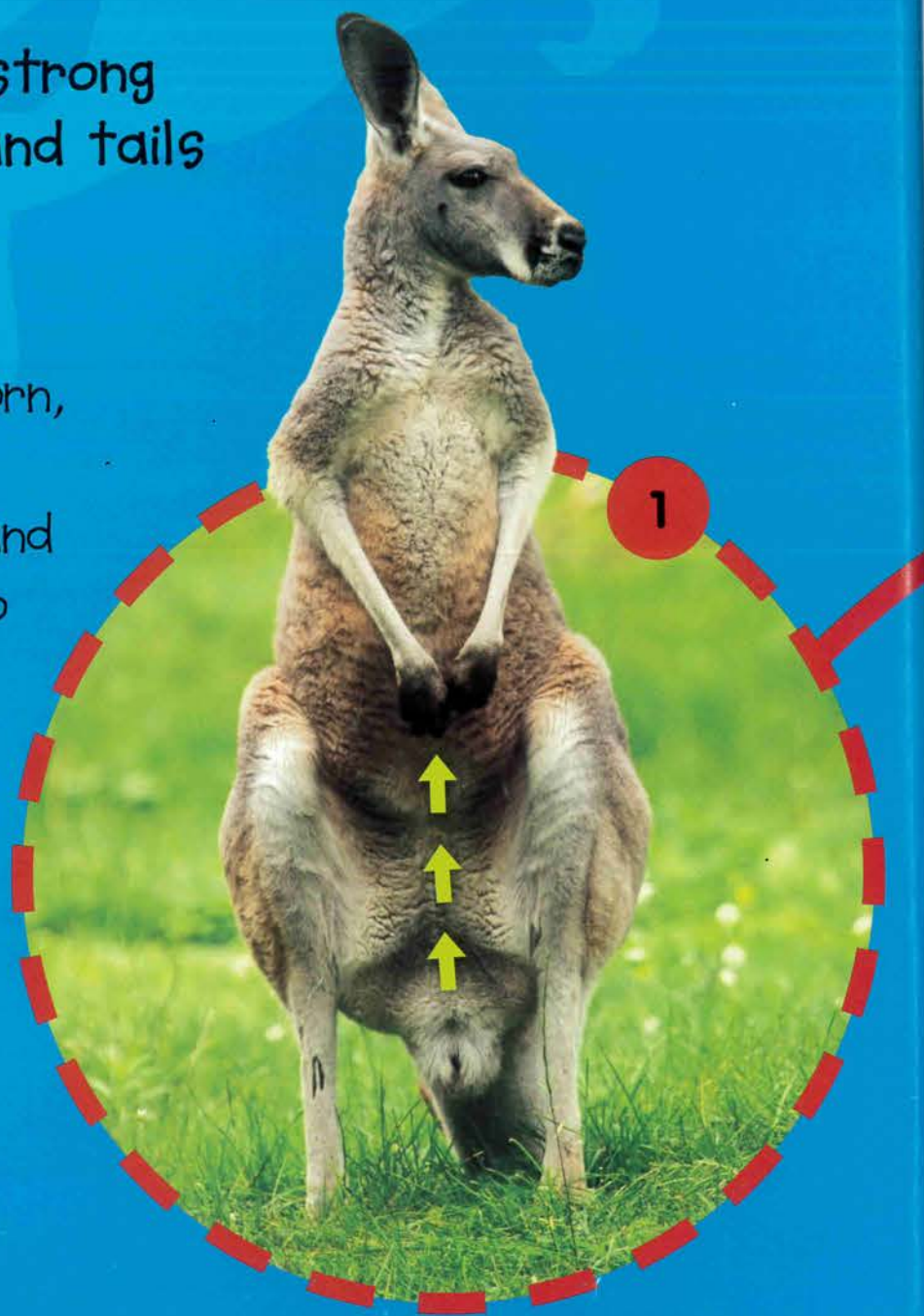


Joey on the move

Newborn joeys have strong arms, but their legs and tails have not yet grown.

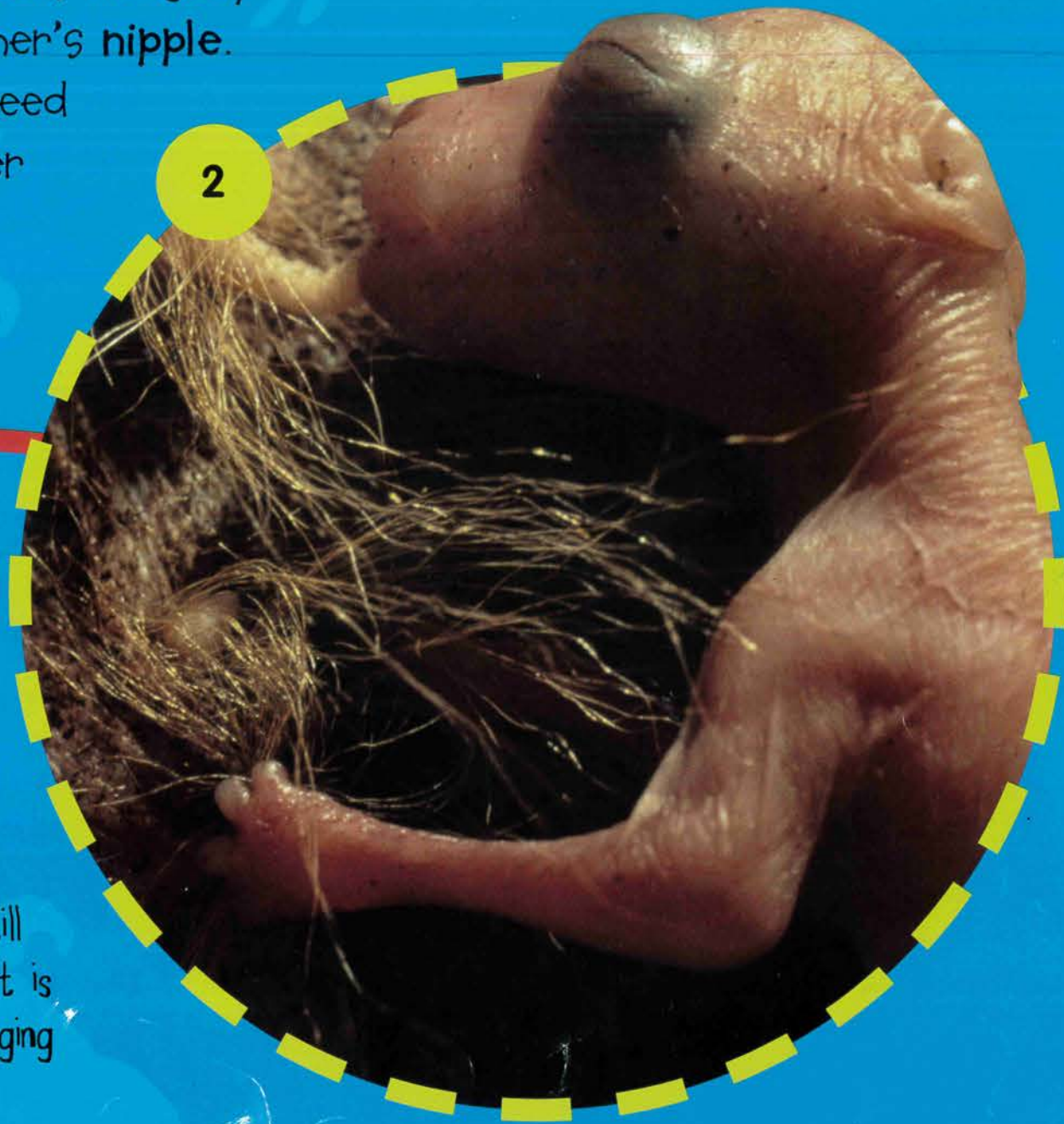
As soon as the joey is born, it begins a difficult climb. It grips its mother's fur and pulls itself up her body to her pouch. The mother does not help her joey.

⇒ The arrows show the joey's journey. This is the path the mother licked across her belly.



Inside the pouch, the joey finds its mother's **nipple**.

It begins to feed on the milk her body makes.



⇒ This joey is four weeks old. It is blind and still has no fur, but it is growing and changing all the time.

Ready, steady, grow!

Inside the pouch, a joey feeds, sleeps and grows. It is a cosy place for a young animal.

The joey stays attached to its mother's nipple for about ten weeks. The joey changes slowly at first. It is nearly five months old before it can open its eyes.

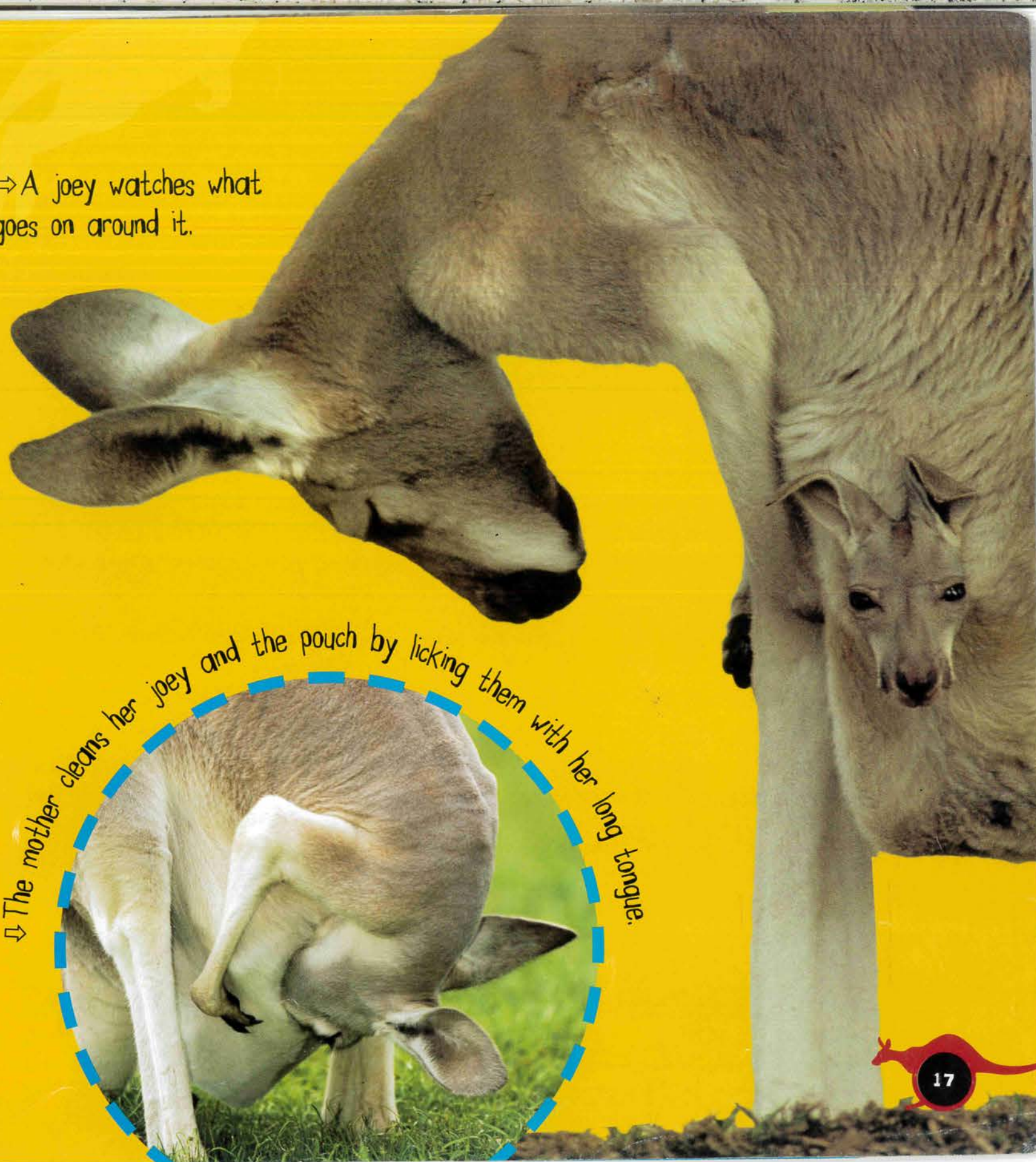
Then the joey pushes its head out and looks around. It will soon be ready to leave the pouch.



↑ For the first few months, the joey slowly grows bigger.

⇒ A joey watches what goes on around it.

⇓ The mother cleans her joey and the pouch by licking them with her long tongue.



Leaving the pouch


When it is about six months old, the joey leaves the pouch for the first time.

The mother leans forwards, and tips the joey out. The young kangaroo quickly climbs back in again!

As the joey gets older, it becomes braver.

Soon it spends more time out of the pouch.

⇐ When a joey is scared, it stays safely inside its mother's pouch.



Joeys return to the pouch for milk or to sleep. When the joey is about eight months old, the mother stops it climbing into her pouch. A new joey is growing there now.

↓ Although this joey is too big to get into the pouch, it still feeds on its mother's milk.

How kangaroos live

Young kangaroos feed on milk until they are about one year old, but they eat solid food, too.

Kangaroos **graze** on plants, such as grass. They can travel long distances in search of food and water.

⇐ Kangaroos spend much of their time eating.

