The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care written by Benjamin Spock, is a manual on infant and child care first published in 1946, almost instantly, selling 500,000 copies in its first six months. By Spock's death in 1998, over 50 million copies of the book had been sold, making it the best-selling book of the twentieth century in America, aside from the Bible. As of 2011, the book had been translated into 39 languages.

Spock and his manual helped revolutionize child-rearing methods for the post-World War II generation. Mothers heavily relied on Spock's friendly, reassuring tone. Spock emphasizes in his book that, above all, parents should have confidence in their abilities and trust their instincts. The famous first line of the book reads, "Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do."

HISTORY

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care

Author: Benjamin Spock
Country: USA
Language: English
Subject: Child care
Publisher: Duell, Sloan and Pearce (New York City)
Publication date: July 14, 1946
Pages: 527 (1st edition)
OCLC: 654127882

CHILD CARE BEFORE SPOCK

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Spock's book helped revolutionize child care in the 1940s and 1950s. Prior to this, rigid schedules permeated pediatric care. Influential authors like behavioral psychiatriest Infant and Child in 1928, and pediatrician Luther Emmett Holt, who wrote The Care and Feeding of Children: A Catechism for the Use of Mothers and Children's Nurses in 1894, told parents to train babies at an early, specific age. Watson, Holt, and other child care experts oversold rigidly because they believed that irregularities in feeding and bowel diseases seen among babies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Furthermore, these experts, whose ideas were embodied in Infant Care pamphlets distributed by the U.S. government, warned against “excessive” affection by parents who had suffered from becoming spoiled or fussy, these experts recommended kissing children only on the forehead and limiting hugs or other displays of affection.

INTENT

As a practicing pediatrician in the 1930s, Spock noticed that prevailing methods in pediatric care seemed cruel and ignored the emotional needs of the child. He was common problems seen during practices like breastfeeding and toilet training, in order to give less arbitrary advice to mothers who came to his practice. He thus became a pediatrician with a psychoanalytic background. Seeking useful ways to implement Freudian philosophy into child-rearing practices, Spock would try out his advice on himself.

Unlike leading child care experts prior to the 1940s, Spock supports flexibility in child-rearing, advising parents to treat each child as an individual. Drawing on his psychoanalytic training, he explains the behavior and motivations of children at each stage of growth, allowing parents to make their own decisions about how to raise their children. For example, Spock has an entire chapter explaining that babies at this age like to explore the world around them. He then suggests ways to arrange the house and prevent accidents with a “wandering baby.”

Spock emphasized that ultimately, the parents’ “natural loving care” for their children is most important. He reminds parents to have confidence in their abilities as pediatricians, and not to feel too much that their parents’ instincts were usually best.

REVISED EDITIONS

During Spock’s lifetime, seven editions of his book were published. Several co-authors have helped revise the book since the fifth edition. Since Spock’s death in 1998, two more editions have been published.


Each subsequent edition of the book brings medical information up-to-date. Other revisions have emerged to deal with contemporary social issues, such as daycare in the 1950s and gay parenting in the 1970s.

In the second edition, Spock emphasizes in several new chapters the importance of “firm but gentle” control of children. He warns against self-demand feeding, a type of feeding that had become popular in the 1940s. Because parents were letting their baby dictate when he or she should be fed, some parents began indulging all of their child’s desires, resulting in unregulated feeding. Spock clarifies in his manual that parents should respect their children, and still ask for respect in return.

By the fourth edition, Spock adapts to society’s shifting ideas of gender equality, especially after the rise of the women’s liberation movement. In the chapter on breast feeding, Spock emphasizes the importance of the mother’s right to work, and explains that any mother who comes to his practice, they also must ask for respect in return.

By the sixth edition, Spock has revised his earlier advice, and now advocates a vegan diet. Spock’s views, however, were criticized by some experts as likely to result in nutritional deficiencies for children unless carefully planned.

REATION

Within a year of being published, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care had sold 750,000 copies, mostly by word-of-mouth advertising. Mothers found Spock and instead very empathetic towards mothers, acknowledging how tiresome child care can be. Although he believed that much of a child’s personality and behavior was a large responsibility of raising a “good” child, like earlier child care experts had. He was lauded for writing with a friendly, reassuring tone.

Spock was popularized by mentions in household magazines and famous television shows, such as Life magazine magazine, and Dre Weizenberg's book Baby and Child Care.

SYNOPSIS

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care is a comprehensive information to all mothers, giving advice that combined the physical and psychological aspects of child care. Spock’s reassuring advice gave parents the confidence to use their best judgment to raise their children.

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NOTES


Parenting

Types

Adoptive | Alloparenting | Complex family | Coparenting | Foster care | Kinship | LGBT | Matrilineal family | Noncustodial | Nuclear family | Orphaned | Shared | Single parent | Blended family | Surrogacy | In loco parentis

Theories - Areas


Styles

Attachment parenting | Concerted cultivation | Gatekeeper parent | Helicopter parent | Nurturant parenting | Slow parenting | Soccer mom | Strict father model | Taking Children Seriously | Work at home parent

After-school activity | Allowance | Bedtime | Child care
### Techniques
- Co-sleeping
- Homeschooling
- Latchkey kid
- Parent Management Training
- Play (date)
- Role model
- Spoiled child
- Television
- Toy (educational)

### Discipline
- Blanket training
- Corporal punishment in the home
- Curfew
- Grounding
- Tactical ignoring
- Time-out
- Child abandonment
- Child abuse
- Child labour
- Child neglect
- Cinderella effect
- Incest
- Narcissistic parent
- Parental abuse by children
- Parental alienation

### Abuse
- Child support
- Cost of raising a child
- Marriage
- Parental responsibility
- Deadbeat parent
- Paternity
- Disownment

### Legal and social aspects
- Child support
- Cost of raising a child
- Marriage
- Parental responsibility
- Deadbeat parent
- Paternity
- Disownment

### Experts
- Tanya Byron
- Rudolf Dreikurs
- David Elkind
- Jo Frost
- Haim Ginott
- Thomas Gordon
- Alan E. Kazdin
- Truby King
- Annette Lareau
- Penelope Leach
- Madeline Lennox
- William Sears
- B. F. Skinner
- Benjamin Spock

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often referred to simply as Baby and Child Care), written by Dr. Benjamin Spock, was first published on 14 July 1946, and is one of the biggest best sellers of all time. By 1998, it had sold more than 50 million copies...

In its most general sense, discipline refers to systematic instruction given to a ...

Wikipedia. TheYoungandtheRestlesminorcharacters – The following are characters from the American soap opera The Young and the Restless who are notable for their actions or relationships, but who do not warrant their own articles.

Contents 1 Current Characters 1.1 Genevieve ...

Wikipedia. TheLastPuritan – The Last Puritan: A Memoir in the Form of a Novel was written by the American philosopher George Santayana. The groundbreaking American childcare manual urged parents to trust themselves, but was also accused of being the source of postwar 'permissiveness'. Spock also projects a seductive, aw-shucks pragmatism on every page of Baby and Child Care. He insists his is not the last word, that mothers and fathers always know best and that "natural loving care" is the only way to go. Spock is also profoundly American in outlook. "Your baby is born to be a reasonable, friendly human being," he writes, in words that could have been written by Thomas Jefferson or Benjamin Franklin. Later, reflecting Enlightenment thought, he would argue quite passionately that the growing child is fundamentally and naturally good, sensible, joyful and healthy.
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