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. The book, along with Dr. Spock, attained fame almost instantly, selling 500,000 copies in its first six months. By 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 advice and appreciated his 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

CHILD CARE BEFORE SPOCK

Spock’s book helped revolutionize child care in the 1940s and 1950s. Prior to this, rigid schedules permeated pediatric care. Influential authors like behavioral psychiatrist John B. Watson, who wrote Psychological Care of Infant and Child in 1928, and pediatrician 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 feed babies on strict schedules and start toilet training at an early, specific age.

Furthermore, these experts, whose ideas were embodied in Infant Care pamphlets distributed by the U.S. government, warned against “excessive” affection by parents for their children. To maintain sterility and to prevent children 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 wanted to explore the psychological reasons behind common problems seen during practices like

References
Zimmermann, Gereon. "A Visit with Dr. Spock." International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences "Dr. Spock's Children." NOTES New York Times Although Spock's reputation has changed over time, Spock continued to be a leading authority on child care until his death. In 1990, 

Baby and Child Care LEGACY Near the end of his life, Spock's changing ideas on nutrition were reflected in the seventh edition of his book, where he advocated a 

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In the second edition, Spock emphasizes in several new chapters the importance of "firm but gentle" control of children.[29] He warns against self-demand feeding, a type of feeding that had become popular in the 1940s. Because parents were letting their he or she should be fed, some parents began indulging all of their child's desires, resulting in unregulated sleep schedules and a loss of control for the parents. Spock clarifies in his manual that white parents should respect their children, they also must as return.[31]

By the fourth edition, Spock adapts to society's shifting ideas of gender equality, especially after the rise of the [22] He warns against praising girls only on their appearance and notes the sexism present in a household where girls learn to do housework while boys do not. Spock also continues to expand on the role of fathers and acknowledges that parents should have an equal share in child-rearing responsibilities, while also both having the right to work.[30]

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REACTION Within a year of being published, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care had already sold 750,000 copies, mostly by word-of-mouth advertising.[32] Mothers appreciated that Spock was not condescending in his writing and instead very empathetic towards mothers, acknowledging how tiresome child care can be.[33] Although he believed that much of a child's personality and behavior rested in the parents' hands, he did not scare parents with this large responsibility of raising a "good" child, like earlier child care experts. Spock was popularized by mentions in household magazines and famous television shows, such as [34] Spock quickly became a household name in the 1950s and is frequently credited for helping to raise a generation of "Spock babies" in the post-war pe heavy relied on his advice; by 1956, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care was already selling a million copies each year.[35]

By the mid-1960s, however, book sales quickly slowed due to Spock's tarnished reputation after his publicized involvement in the protests of the Vietnam War. Skepticism of his work increased, especially among colleagues, who criticized Spock for not being researcher and relying too heavily on anecdotal evidence in his book.[36]

By the late 1960s, Spock faced widespread criticism for condemning an overly permissive parenting style. Many commentators blamed Spock for helping to create the counterculture of the 1960s. Critics believed the current youth were rebellious and defiant because they had been brought up by Baby and Child Care. Spock, however, continued to defend himself, saying he had always believed in firm parenting by parents.[37]

In the 1970s, with the rise of the women's liberation movement, feminists began to publicly criticize Spock for the sexist philosophy apparent in his book. Spock was thus forced to confront his own ideas about gender roles and gender stereotyping.[38]

Near the end of his life, Spock's changing ideas on nutrition were reflected in the seventh edition of his book, where he advocated a low-fat, plant-based diet for children due to rising trends in obesity and Spock's own switch to a macrobiotic diet after facing serious health issues.[24] In 1959, Look magazine praised Spock, noting that "perhaps no other doctor has influenced an entire nation's ideas about babies... My views have brought naturalness, common sense, reassurance, Sigmund Freud and even joy to parents all over the world."[39] Spock's optimistic book reflects the hopelessness of the post-war period and society's focus on children. Because post-war affluence helped parents give children more opportunities, parents became more concerned with providing the best for their children, the widespread move to the suburbs broke up families, increasing parents' reliance on experts' advice over grandparents' advice.[40]

Although Spock's reputation has changed over time, Spock continued to be a leading authority on child care until his death. In 1990, Life magazine named Spock one of the 100 most important people of the twentieth century.[41] Upon Spock's death in 1998, The New York Times noted that "babies do not arrive with owner's manuals... But for three generations of American parents, the next best thing was Spock's Children."[42]
Theory - Areas

- Attachment theory
- Applied behavior analysis
- Behaviorism
- Child development
- Cognitive development
- Developmental psychology
- Human development
- Love
- Maternal bond
- Nature versus nurture
- Parental investment
- Paternal bond
- Pediatrics
- Social psychology

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

Styles

- After-school activity
- Allowance
- Bedtime
- Child care
- 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

Abuse

- Child abandonment
- Child abuse
- Child labour
- Child neglect
- Chernobyl effect
- Incest
- Narcissistic parent
- Parental abuse by children
- Parental alienation

Legal and social aspects

- Child support
- Cost of raising a child
- Marriage
- Parental responsibility
- Deadbeat parent
- Parental
- Disenfranchisement
What and why: The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care by Dr Benjamin Spock was first published in 1946 and was, bluntly, a phenomenon, selling more than half a million copies in the first six months alone. By the end of the 20th century, it had racked up sales of more than 50m, second only to the Bible. Initially priced at a modest 25 cents, so that any parent could afford it, it was revolutionary in the approach it advocated. Prior to Spock, the advice given to parents as to how to raise their children was... I'm trying to think of a diplomatic way of putting this, but I'm just going to pl