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 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

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
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 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 how to raise children according to the Freudian philosophy of the time. However, Spock's approach was more flexible and personalized, focusing on the emotional needs of the child and the needs of the parents.

In the 1940s, Spock noticed that parents were losing the ability to connect with their children. He noticed that parents were often too busy with their own schedules to pay attention to their children's needs. He wrote his book to help parents understand their children and how to communicate with them.

Spock's book, Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care, was first published in 1946 and has been revised and updated several times since then. 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 and gay parenting.

The book is arranged by topics corresponding to the child's age, ranging from infancy to teenage years. Drawn from his career as a pediatrician, Spock's advice is comprehensive, dealing with topics such as preparing for the baby, toilet training, school, illnesses, and “special problems” like ‘separated parents’ and ‘the fatherless child’.

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 past experiences as a pediatrician with a psychoanalytic background, Spock sought to implement Freudian philosophy into child-rearing practices. Spock would try out his advice on patients and their mothers, continuously seeking their response.

He contradicted contemporary norms in child care by supporting flexibility instead of rigidity and encouraging love for children by their parents. 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 a pediatrician had proven to him that 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, Dr. Benjamin Spock's Baby and Child Care has been sold 750,000 copies, mostly by word-of-mouth advertising. Mothers appreciate and instead very empathetic towards mothers, acknowledging how tiresome child care can be. Although Spock believed that much of a child's personality and behavior patterns in this large responsibility of raising a “good” child, like earlier child care experts had. He was lauded for writing with a friendly, reassuring tone and using conversational, easy-to-read language.

Spock was popularized in several chapters and editions. In the seventh edition, the book brings medical information up-to-date. Other revisions have emerged to deal with contemporary social issues, such as daycare and gay parenting. The fourth edition, Spock adapts to society's shifting ideas of gender equality, especially after the rise of the counterculture of the 1960s. He advocates for society to recognize the importance of “normal, gentle” control of children. He warns against self-demand feeding, the type of feeding that had become popular in the 1960s. 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 sleep schedules and a loss of control for the parent.

By the mid-1960s, however, book sales quickly slowed due to Spock's tarnished reputation after his publicized involvement in protests of the Vietnam War. Skepticism of his work increased, especially a academic researcher and relying too heavily on anecdotal evidence in his book. By the late 1960s, Spock faced widespread criticism for condoning an overly permissive parenting style. Many commentators blamed Spock for helping to create the counterculture of the 1960s. Critics said because they had been brought up by Baby and Child Care. Spock, however, continued to defend himself, saying he had always believed in firm leadership by parents.

In the 1970s, the rise of the women's liberation movement, feminists began to publicly criticize Spock for the sexist philosophy apparent in his book. Spock's book helped revolutionize child care in the 1940s. And it is currently a best-seller, encouraging flexibility, common sense, affection, and Freudian philosophy. Spock's reassuring advice continues to influence parents today.
Parenting

Types

Adoptive |
Alloparenting |
Complex family |
Coparenting |
 Foster care |
Kommune 1 |
LGBT |
Matrilineal family |
Nuclear family |
Orphaned |
Shared |
Single parent |
Blended family |
Surrogacy |
In loco parentis

Theories - 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

Adapted 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
- Tanya Byron
- Rudolf Dreikurs
- David Elkind
- Jo Frost
- Haim Ginott
- Thomas Gordon
- Alan E. Kazdin
- Truby King
- Annette Lareau
- Penelope Leach
- Madeline Levine
- William Sears
- B. F. Skinner
- Benjamin Spock
Benjamin Spock's *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* is one of the best-selling books of the twentieth century, selling 500,000 copies in the six months after its initial publication in 1946, and 50 million by the time of Spock's death in 1998. 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 common sense baby care baby. 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.