The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care

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, told parents to feed babies on strict schedules and start toilet training at an early, specific age. Watson, Holt, and other child care experts obsessed over rigidity because they believed that irregularities in feeding and bowel movements were causing the widespread diarrheal diseases seen among babies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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...
Although Spock was approached to write a child-care manual in 1938 by Doubleday, he did not yet feel certain enough of his professional abilities to accept the offer. Eventually, though, after several more years of giving advice to mothers, Spock felt more confident and in 1950 published his first book, *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*. This 1946 book was immediately popularized by mentions in household magazines and famous television shows, such as *Kommune 1*, encouraging flexibility, common sense, affection, and Freudian philosophy. Spock's reassuring advice gave parents the confidence to use their best judgment to raise their children. 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. 

Spock's reputation has changed over time, from a leading authority on child care until his death. In 1990, with the widespread move to the suburbs, breaking up families, increasing parents' reliance on experts' advice over grandparents' advice. Spock's book, however, continued to defend himself, saying he had always believed in firm leadership by parents. Spock's book was the first pediatrician with a psychoanalytic background. Seeking ways to develop a more humane and common sense into child-rearing. 

**SYNOPSIS**

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care is arranged by topics corresponding to the child's age, ranging from infancy to teenagers years. During his career as a pediatrician, Spock's advice is comprehensive, dealing with topics such as potty training, school, illness, 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 psychoanalytic training, he explains the behavior and motivations of children at each stage of development to parents to make their own decisions about how to raise their children. For example, Spock has an entire chapter devoted to "The One-Year-Old," in which he explains that babies at this age like to explore the world around them. He then suggests ways to and prevent accidents with a "wanderling baby." Spock especially emphasizes that the parents' "natural loving care" for their children is most important. He reminds parents to have confidence in their abilities and to trust their common sense; his practice as a pediatrician had proved to him that they 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. 

**NOTES**

- Although Spock's reputation has changed over time, Spock continued to be a leading authority on child care until his death. In 1990, with the widespread move to the suburbs, breaking up families, increasing parents' reliance on experts' advice over grandparents' advice.
- By the fourth edition, Spock adapts to society's shifting ideas of gender equality, especially after 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.
- 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 among colleagues, who criticized Spock for not exploring 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 counter-culture 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 leadership by parents.
- 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.
- Baby and Child Care popularized new ideas about child care in the years following World War II, encouraging flexibility, common sense, affection, and Freudian philosophy. Spock's reassuring advice gave parents the confidence to use their best judgment.
- 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. 
- 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 magazine named Spock one of the 100 most important people of the twentieth century. Upon Spock's death, 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 Baby and Child Care...Dr. Benjamin Spock...brought humanity and common sense into child-rearing.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Spock, Benjamin; Parker, Steven. "Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care." 1998. New York: Pocket Books.
- Spock, Benjamin; Rothenberg, Michael B. "Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care." 1992. New York: Pocket Books.
Nuclear family
Orphaned
Shared
Single parent
Blended family
Surrogacy
In loco parentis

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

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

Blanket training
Corporal punishment in the home
Curfew
Grounding
Tactical ignoring
Time-out

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

Child support
Cost of raising a child
Marriage
Parental responsibility
Deadbeat parent
Paternity
Disenfranchisement

Abuse

Legal and social aspects
Child care or childcare, child minding, daycare, or preschool is the caring for and supervision of a child or children, usually from age six weeks to age thirteen. Child care is the action or skill of looking after children by a day-care center, babysitter, or other providers. Child care is a broad topic covering a wide spectrum of contexts, activities, social and cultural conventions, and institutions. 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. 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. common sense baby care baby. Preview. Download. Buy paper book Convert (EPUB, MOBI) Sent to Email Sent to Kindle Report. “ When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.” Bogle, John C. The little book of common sense investing : the only way to guarantee your fair Lit