
solutions in parenting



JANUARY, 2008 BOOK REVIEW

By Kristi Miller, M.A., C.A.P.I.

By Kristi Miller

The Baby Book

By Dr. William Sears, Martha Sears R.N., Dr. Robert Sears, and Dr. James Sears

One of my favorite cookbooks resides beside my stove and has the title, “How to Cook Everything; simple recipes for great food.” While not everything is included in this book (for example, what exactly is in Mulligatawny soup?) Most food items and cooking questions are expertly addressed in a very professional and comprehensive culinary scope.

The Baby Book is very much the same. While not every childhood issue is covered in step-by-step format, most of what new parents will need is there. A big book, nearly 1,000 pages thick, takes new parents on their journey beginning prenatally until their child is two years old. The Sears’ share not only their expert medical knowledge, all three men are doctors and Martha is a nurse, they share their personal knowledge as well. William and Martha Sears raised eight children and have a depth of experience reserved solely for veterans of their stature.

The Baby Book was my original parenting manual. Much like my favorite cookbook, over the years the pages have become dog-eared, water warped and torn from over-use, tears, spills and travel. This is still the number one gift I bring to new parents of all kinds and is an outstanding all-encompassing parenting reference guide.

The Baby Book starts its journey with the baby-care basics. Here parents learn what it means to prepare for a baby, have a positive and safe birth, and how to bond with their newborn. The Sears’ iterate the importance of fostering a healthy and strong connection between parents and newborns immediately through the “five tools of attachment parenting”.

Next, they tackle the task of addressing infant feeding and nutrition. This includes breast vs. bottle-feeding, when to introduce solid food, and a primer in children’s nutrition basics from infant through two years old.

The Baby Book continues its path including information on “Contemporary Parenting” to define nighttime parenting, wearing baby in slings, wraps or other body carriers, soothing colicky babies, issues specific to working parents and even touches on special situations such as adopted children, single parenting, and parenting twins.

An indispensable component of *The Baby Book* is its comprehensive and charming presentation of the baby’s developmental stages. Coupled with sweet drawings and personal and medical anecdotes, the Sears’ tackle all major developmental stages (from birth to age two) including topics such as discipline, biting, hitting, thumb sucking, toilet training, weaning and developmental abnormalities.

They wrap up the book by including a “Childhood Illnesses at a Glance Chart. Here, a parent frightened by her baby’s red rash on her face can look up this symptom and find the potential

name of the illness, the cause, other signs and symptoms, home treatment, medical treatment and anything else of special note. This guide alone can provide parents the information and peace of mind they need at 3 a.m. on a Sunday morning.

The Baby Book is meant to be a guide for new parents to realize that they can “become their own experts”. The Sears’ goal for this book is to help parents and babies “fit”. They emphasize keeping an open parenting mind and after weighing all options, select what parenting style best fits your family’s needs.

However, if you are a parent looking for the “how to’s” of scheduling your baby’s feeding, sleeping and playing lives, then this book is probably not the one for you. You may feel unsupported and underrepresented in these pages. Even though some parents may be a bit surprised or off-put by the concept of attachment parenting, there is still so much more content in this book, that it can cut a wide swath in the parenting world.

Published by Little, Brown and Company
Copyright 2003, William Sears and Martha Sears
ISBN: 0316778001