
Books on parenting

Posted by JtS - 23-05-2008 14:10

The missus and I have decided that the time is right to try to have a baby.

In light of that, are there any good books I could read that might help prepare me for the missus being pregnant, and books on being a dad?

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 23-05-2008 15:49

Although it's the cliché response, you'd be hard pressed to find more thorough books than "What to Expect When You're Expecting" and "What To Expect In Your First Year". You'll have time to read all of the first, and none of the second.

And congrats.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Caliban - 23-05-2008 15:59

What he said. And the HypnoBirthing book, natch. And just to forewarn you, step away from the parenting books. Especially anything by Gina Bloody Ford or the Baby Bloody Whisperer.

And congrats.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Purves Grundy - 23-05-2008 16:00

You'll probably find Razzle quite useful.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by ursus arctos - 23-05-2008 16:11

The best advice I can give about parenting books is.

- 1) Read more than one.
- 2) Never treat any of their opinions as being the last word on a subject; if your gut tells you that their view on a particular issue is bollocks, go with your gut.

I'd second what WoM said about the "What to Expect" series. They are good at conveying the basics. We also liked Penelope Leach and found that Dr. Spock's book was good to have around as a reference. We didn't like Berry Brazelton. This very straightforward book on first aid is something we still use.

Your mileage may vary. I'd suggest spending 30 minutes in a bookstore looking at the relevant section and seeing what makes sense to you (you may not think that you have any clue whatsoever, but you do).

As for fatherhood, I never found anything that was particularly useful. Not that that interfered in any way with it being the best thing that ever happened to me.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Inca - 23-05-2008 16:12

I found the What To Expect books to be best. They seem to be best in recognizing that fathers and fathers-to-be might be reading them and actually have some passages directed towards dads. I noticed that most other books are solely directed to moms, which doesn't offend me or anything--I recognize that it probably is mostly mothers-to-be purchasing the books--but I did get miffed off at some passages in some books my wife was given that have the standard jokes about dads being incompetent or scared over changing diapers.

I like the website babble.com as well--sometimes it can be annoying in trying to be too hip (it's directed towards younger, urban parents), but it's straightforward and thankfully short on the quasi-religious platitudes that a lot of mainstream writing on babies tends to be.

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by ursus arctos - 23-05-2008 16:22

One more thing.

Don't pay full price for any of this stuff (you'll need to save money). This is one of the ultimate used book store/borrow from a friend genres, and you absolutely don't need the "2009 Edition".

I'd be happy to send you ours, but a) they are American editions, so the reference bits aren't very useful (not to mention spelling outrages) and b) they are ten years old, which is a bit long in the tooth (five years is fine).

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Lyra - 02-06-2008 13:19

Jason you should start hanging around on mumsnet - apparently it's now practically obligatory.

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by JtS - 02-06-2008 14:18

We're still in the pre-planning stage (or the "we've-fired-at-the-target-but-don't-know-if-anything-hit-yet" stage).

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Lyra - 02-06-2008 14:25

Oh they have acres of threads on trying to conceive.

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by hobbess - 02-06-2008 15:13

Enjoy it while you can mate.
It'll be the last time for a while...

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by WornOldMotorbike - 02-06-2008 19:08

I used to chuckle when old married guys said that to me.
Used to.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Kurt Mondschein - 03-06-2008 20:19

One more piece of advice:

Don't read too much.

Of course it's highly sensible to know about the biological and psychological processes of the foetus and baby as well as of the mother and father, but apart from that I'd strongly advise against reading too many books. You might end up completely confused.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Kiwi40 - 22-06-2008 14:06

Our first experience of having children turned out to be twins and we found Gina Ford's advice very helpful.

I only mention this because she does seem to have many vociferous critics - but her ideas worked for us.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by NetzerHölzenbeinHrubesch - 22-06-2008 15:22

There's two types - fact stuff (ie, what is the weird feeling my wife has) and opinion stuff (why your wife should avoid onions/wine/wheat during pregnancy).

For the former, Mumsnet or google; avoid the US based-sites ones as they're much more risk averse (one woman once farted whilst pregnant whilst having eaten Corn Flakes and suffered a prolapse so best avoid corn flakes).

The trouble with books is that they reinforce the dangerous idea that there is one way to feel or be and that if you don't have it, something is wrong. Mumsnet is great for this, as you get people flatly contradicting each other (I threw up five times a day / I never threw up at all) and all stories end well as little babies get born fine regardless. That's really reassuring, and drums in the message.

We didn't like the What to Expect book, as it wasn't themed in the right way so finding that one thing you wanted to know about was hard. It was also obsessed with the mother's diet. We preferred Pregnancy for Dummies.

I can't be doing with Gina Ford and I found her stuff really distasteful. She seems to assume the baby is an active and duplicitous conniver, rather than a living thing which only has one way of communicating its basic wants. The whole gist of Ford's book felt like how you can make having a baby fit into your life with minimum hassle. She's obsessed with a routine which regardless of any longer-term benefits, has a immediate practical benefit which leaves them sleeping through the night as soon as possible.

It's like the Atkins diet - a diet marketed at people who don't want to inconvenience of actually changing their behaviour. Ditto this - how to have babies and carry on working like a slave in the rest of your life. Babies change your life, which is kind of both obligatory and the point. I blame Thatcher, obviously.

Oh, and sign up for NCT classes. You'll learn loads, and your wife will acquire a support group for the first few months which is local.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Kiwi40 - 22-06-2008 15:51

With twins, we found routine was important to protect sanity (and I'd like to quickly point out that my wife is the heroine here - my main contribution was taking them out for walks and holding one while the other was breastfeeding. And then my wife mastered the double breastfeed leaving me with just the walks.) We were novices at this game - the feeling of 'what do we do now?' when we first brought two new people into our house is still fresh in my mind six years on.

We were older parents - mid to late thirties - and we were ready to give up our (pretty paltry) social life to get the parenting thing right. Gina Ford fitted into that plan. I do know other parents who have said bugger the routine, we're going to take our kids out to pub lunches etc - and, frankly, had a number of nightmares because their child doesn't know if he/she is coming or going regarding sleep patterns.

Not saying it's for everybody.....and believe me, not everything went perfectly.....but if you ever have twins the Gina Ford plan is worth a look.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Caliban - 05-07-2008 20:56

If you absolutely HAVE to have routine (ie if you have multiples or have to go back to work early) then it's a necessary evil, but there is tons of evidence to show rigid routines are NOT the best thing for babies, especially before the age of about four months and then even after that it's dubious. Responding to their needs is far more important, and babies tend not to follow set patterns of behaviour.

I know of far more people who have said "bugger the routine" and then haven't had nightmares with their children, in fact it's been quite the opposite. On the flip side, I know many parents who were very routine-orientated and their children won't sleep anywhere other than in their own cot at the designated time. Even BST causes them all sorts of problems.

So unless you have twins or absolutely have to enforce something rigid (and I can see why you'd have to with twins), I'd say go with the flow. It honestly won't harm your baby, your life won't be over and you won't still have to rock your child to sleep when they're at university (as most of the routine books suggest you will).

In fact, for the most part I'd say just avoid the books and follow your instinct. You'll be right more often than any so-called expert who has never met your baby will be.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Bored Of Football - 05-07-2008 22:48

I know it may sound stupid but I found the Frank Zappa autobiography very interesting on being a father although I haven't read it since fatherhood

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by JtS - 07-07-2008 09:21

My current plan (as and when it occurs) will be to write my own book.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Donald Potts - 07-07-2008 09:25

What most people said above.

Do: Read articles online. Do NOT: Read the comments sections, or follow conversations.

Do: Get advice from friends/relatives. Do NOT: get stressed and start believing that if you get advice from someone they are secretly criticising you.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Otto Katz - 07-07-2008 11:24

Bored Of Football wrote:

I know it may sound stupid but I found the Frank Zappa autobiography very interesting on being a father although I haven't read it since fatherhood

What did it say?

I was under the impression he stayed in his recording studio pretty much 24/7 whenever he wasn't out on tour, and hardly ever saw his kids.

I thought I read somewhere that Moon Unit's appearance on Valley Girl was the result of her coming into the studio to confront him about not giving them any attention. So he thought okay, sure, we can do stuff together. While you're here, there's this song that needs some vocals. Go and make yourself useful.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by loose cannon - 07-07-2008 12:16

Fortunately Frau Kannon read loads of books and told me about them or pointed out passages. In the end we followed what felt right for us.

Quick remark - tiny babies make a lot of grunting sounds which can be kind of alarming. Equally alarming is when they stop making the grunting sounds and are quiet and motionless. No win. The whole thing is amazing.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by AMMS - 16-07-2008 20:08

Gonna stick up for Gina Ford a bit too. I've 3 with 16 months between them all and without a routine you just couldn't do it. Some of her stuff is unrealistic but her basic routines are great and in my experience work a treat. Even when we only had 1 her routines made life a lot more manageable.

I'd also recommend 'What to Expect in the First Year'. A man needs a manual to follow and I found it helpful to know what was normal behaviour and what's coming up next.

Lastly good luck with the pregnancy, if it has indeed happened, and enjoy the wee one(s) as they don't stay wee for long.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by JtS - 24-07-2008 14:16

Thanks for the advice people.

The missus is due to have her first scan next week or the week after as she's now about 9/10 weeks pregnant.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 24-07-2008 14:19

Congrats young Jason.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Caliban - 24-07-2008 15:02

Woohoo! Congratulations! Enjoy the scan.

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by JtS - 24-07-2008 15:55

My life is over isn't it?

=====

Re:Books on parenting

Posted by Caliban - 24-07-2008 18:02

No, it's lovely. Definitely get a copy of "What to Expect" though. And a copy of "The Baby Book" by William Sears. Oooh, and get the Harvey Karp DVD. And join Attachment Parenting Interational.

See, life isn't over, you've got tons to do. Get cracking.

=====