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 1969, over 55 million copies of the book had been sold, making it the best-selling book of the twentieth century in America, aside from the Bible.[7] As of 2011, the book had been translated into 39 languages.[8]

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.[8][9] 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.[10]

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...
Zimmermann, Gereon. “A Visit with Dr. Spock.”

Spock, Benjamin. “How My Ideas Have Changed.”


**NOTES**

Spock’s optimistic book reflects the hopefulness of the post-war period and society’s focus on children. Because post-war... children more opportunities, parents became more concerned with providing the best for their children. At the same time,...

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.

They had been brought up by... Spock’s reassuring advice gave parents the confidence to use their best judgment to raise their... outside. Spock also continues to expand on the role of fathers and acknowledges that parents should have an equal share in child-rearing responsibilities, while both having the right to work,...

In the seventh edition, Spock endorses 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.

**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.


Spock, Benjamin; Rotherenberg, Michael B. (1992). Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care (7th ed.). New York City: Dutton.

Spock, Benjamin; Parker, Steven (1995). Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care (7th ed.). New York City: Pocket Books.

Spock, Benjamin; Robert Needlenman (2004). Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care (9th ed.). New York: Pocket Books.

Spock, Benjamin; Robert Needlenman (2012). Dr. Spock’s Baby and Child Care (9th ed.). New York: Gallery Books.

Spock was popularized by mentions in household magazines and famous television shows, such as [31] 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 period heavily relied on his advice; by 1956, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care was already selling a million copies each year.[32]

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.[33]

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 believed the current youth were rebellious and delinquent because they had been brought up by Baby and Child Care. Spock, however, continued to defend himself, saying he had always been a leader in father–child relationships.[34]

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.[35]

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 vegan diet. Spock’s views, however, were criticized by some experts as being too extreme; critics were concerned that a very likely result of nutritional deficiencies for children unless carefully planned.[36]

**LEGACY**

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 to raise their... parents’ instincts were right. He was lauded for writing in a friendly, reassuring tone and using conversational, easy-to-read language.[37]

Spock also masked Freudian explanations of children’s behavior in plainspoken language to avoid offending his readers, making... psychoanalysis unpopular for many. However, Spock has yet to fully recover from the backlash faced during the 1960s when his book faced widespread criticism and challenges to his expertise and ideas. This backlash led to a retraction of his previous advice on... beliefs and values. These challenges have led to increased focus on the need for research-based and evidence-driven practice in the field of infant and child care, as well as the importance of acknowledging and embracing cultural differences in parenting practices.[38]

Spock’s optimistic book reflects the hopefulness 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 brought new types of families, increasing parents’ reliance on experts’ advice over grandparents’ advice.[39]

Although Spock’s reputation has changed over time, Spock continued to be an authority in child care until his death. In 1990, Life magazine named Spock one of the 100 most important people of the twentieth century.[40] Upon Spock’s death, The New York Times noted that “babies do not come with owner’s manuals... But for three generations of American parents, the next best thing was Baby and Child Care... Dr. Benjamin Spock... breathed humanity and common sense into child-rearing.”[41]
### 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

### Styles

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

### Techniques

- After-school activity
- Allowance
- Bedtime
- Child care
- Co-sleeping
- Homeschooling
- Latchkey kid
- Parent Management Training
- Playdate
- 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
- Cinderella 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
- Paternity
- Disownment
While common sense books of baby and child care written by the experts are the best choice, know that there are many other ways to get the book that you want for a lesser price. First of all, be sure that the book covers all of the topics that you think that you will be needing help on. Next, be sure that the information is presented in a way that is quite easy to understand. Many common sense books of baby and child care tend to use technical terminology, which certainly does not make solving childcare problems any easier. Make sure that the book also includes some pictures, so that you are