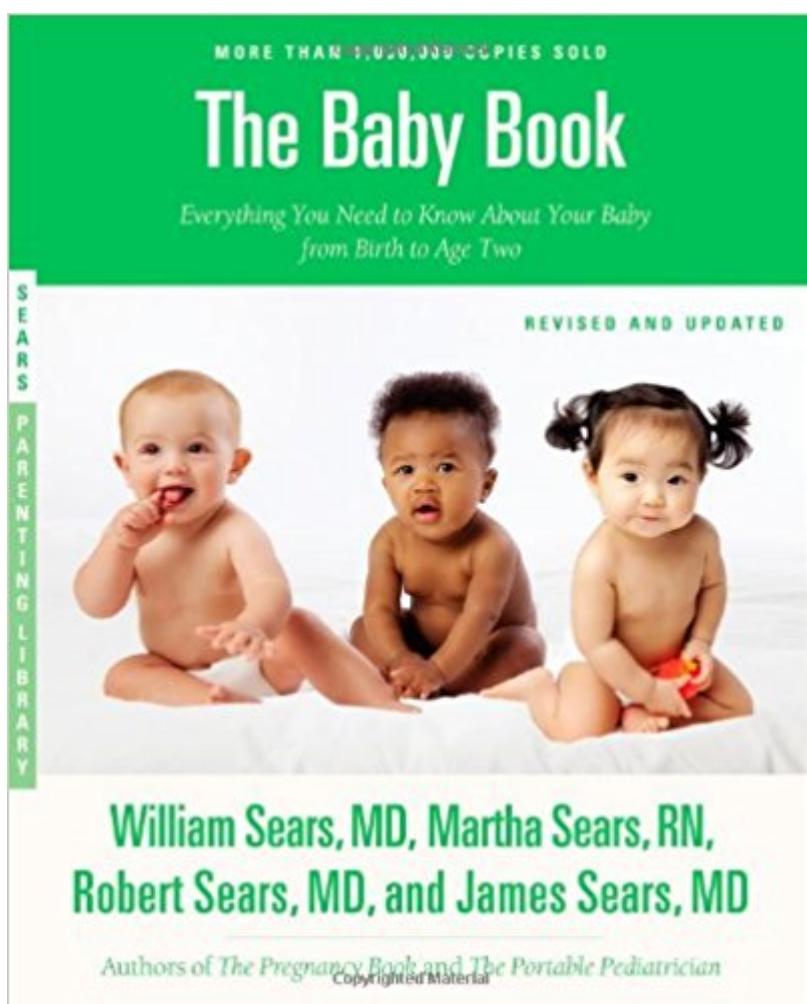


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# The Baby Book, Revised Edition: Everything You Need To Know About Your Baby From Birth To Age Two (Sears Parenting Library)



## **Synopsis**

The classic guide of the post-Dr. Spock generation has been revised to include the latest information on virtually every aspect of infant and baby care. THE BABY BOOK is unrivaled in its scope and authority, and presents a practical, contemporary approach to parenting that reflects the way we live today. Focusing on the essential needs of babies--eating, sleeping, development, health, and comfort--it addresses the questions of greatest concern to parents. The Seareses acknowledge that there is no one way to parent a baby, and they offer the basic guidance and inspiration you need to develop the parenting style that best suits you and your child. THE BABY BOOK is a rich and invaluable resource that will help you get the most out of parenting--for your child, for yourself, and for your entire family.

## **Book Information**

Series: Sears Parenting Library

Paperback: 784 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown and Company; Rev Upd edition (January 8, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316198269

ISBN-13: 978-0316198264

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 1.6 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ (296 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,547 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 inÂ Books > Parenting & Relationships > Parenting > Early Childhood

## **Customer Reviews**

I am about halfway through this tome on baby rearing. I've read the infant-specific sections but have skipped over many of the toddler sections for now. After digesting all that I have read so far, I have some mixed feelings about the book. The more I read, the more I realize that this is really just one man's very strong opinion on how to raise an infant seemingly based on his experience watching his wife raise their 8 children (his book focuses 90% of the time on the mother's role). He is also a pediatrician to his credit - though he states that you should never ask pediatricians parenting advice, that's not what they are trained in in medical school. While he claims that all his assertions have been researched, most are stated as a personal opinion. My biggest complaint with the book, is many of practices he advocates seem like they would be very hard to follow for anyone who doesn't

have a flexible work schedule in which they were able to spend significant amounts of time with their child during the day and night. I've posted some of the themes that will be repeated and restated throughout this book time and time again. Consider how realistic it will be for you to follow these themes before purchasing this book. As other reviewers have stated, I could see someone feeling a great deal of guilt and failure as a parent if this was the only baby book you read and tried to follow. Consider this book if:

- 1) You are the child's birth mom. The book offers very little advice for dads and almost all the advice involves "supporting your wife" by stepping in to give her a break while she does the bulk of the care. See point 2 for adoptive moms.
- 2) You are planning on breastfeeding - and I don't mean, pumping. Bottles are tolerated in this book (eventually) but not in any way shape or form embraced. If you are an adoptive mom there is a section for you on how to breastfeed. However, it takes 1 month of advance preparation and then can take several times of day of pretend breastfeeding for 4 months to finally produce a minimal supply of breast milk (not enough to actually provide the baby with adequate nutrition). That is, if it works at all. There are also options of jerry-rigging dad to "breastfeed" if mom is not around.
- 3) You have the means to make the baby your priority 24/7 for a significant period of time. If you can't afford to stay at home with the baby or are the kind of person who WANTS to go back to work after having a baby your first recommendation will be to find a job in which you can take the baby to work with you. More specifically, the advice is to \*wear\* the baby at work with you in a sling. Keeping an infant in a sling is Sears' advice to pretty much everything. Clean houses for a living? Great, wear the baby in a sling to work and carry on! Your employer will admire your dedication. Your job won't let you wear your baby to work? Maybe try to find a different one. Get invited to a black tie affair? Bring the three-month-old along in a sling, everyone in the room will be impressed with your mad baby-wearing skills. Have a speech to deliver for 150 professionals or getting interviewed on television? No problem, stick that little sucker in its sling and carry on. If the baby starts to fuss, you can easily breastfeed from the sling while on TV. The black tie affair, speech and TV interviews actual examples from the book of things the doctor's wife has done over the years.
- 4) Following point 3 - babywearing in a sling is a must for you during your waking hours. Not just you actually. If you have a child care provider, you should insist that they also wear the baby for \*at least\* 3 hours out of the day.
- 5) Cosleeping in your bed is a must for you. Chapter after chapter talks about sharing a bed with your infant. There is very little discussion of other options except in one small section of the book. Eventually, Sears will tell you not to feel guilty if you can't cosleep but after reading chapter after chapter where the only option he talks about is cosleeping, it's too little too late.
- 6) You have expendable income. A few more bits of practical advice from the book: Your birthing experience will

be so much better if you hire a doula or midwife. Getting a housekeeper will give you more time to worry about the baby and not the dirty toilet. Not working will allow you to breastfeed on demand for at least the first two years of your child's life (although you might want to consider taking 3 years off in case your child isn't fully ready to wean until age three). As you can see this book offers one very specific and very intensive parenting style. It's not so much that I disagree with the bulk of the ideas - I do plan to breastfeed, have a sling ready to go for baby wearing and I'm lucky to be able to take an extended time off work to spend with the baby - it's just that so many of these points are belabored over and over and over again section while alternatives are lumped together and given lip service in one chapter. I am glad that I have this book as a reference but I would not want it to be my only reference. I think most parents would benefit from having another, more objective and comprehensive baby book to complement this one, especially if someone other than the breastfeeding mom wants something to read. Someone gave my husband the Baby Owner's Manual which he has found straightforward and useful. I've also ordered the Mayo Clinic: Guide to Your Baby's First Year as I liked their pregnancy guide and have heard that book is similar. Full disclosure, I'm about to be a first time mom, so I haven't put any of these child-rearing theories to the test. I'm just trying to learn as much as possible before the baby comes so I can find a strategy that works best for me. This book certainly offers up one such strategy and I do not regret having read it; however, I would not consider it a stand-alone resource. I do feel like it is priced very reasonably considering its heft and has enough useful sections that it has a place in my library.

This book is great for a lot of things, a lot of the time - good info on nursing, infant feeding, (most) illnesses, caring for minor illnesses, and especially child development and milestones. For those things, it's a great parenting bible. I give it 3 stars, though, because it's caused me about as much unnecessary heartache and guilt as it has reassured and informed me. Here's where the book and I have issues:  
\*The parenting style it encourages - while I really like it generally - is at odds with modern life. It's not the book's fault, but the book doesn't do enough to acknowledge that this style of parenting, in this day and age, is seriously hard work, and possible to implement fully only if you have lots and lots of support.  
\*The book is skewed toward upper-middle class families. The section on Mom returning to work more or less poo-poos any reason you might think you have for returning to work and strongly suggests you're making the wrong "choice" if you go back to work. It only begrudgingly acknowledges that many of us live in two-incomes-are-necessary households. It does not acknowledge that Mom might have other very good reasons besides economics for wanting to return to work.  
\*The book claims to encourage Dad's involvement, but it's mostly pitched as a

"break" for Mom. We're not talking about full-on shared-parenting here.\*The book makes light of the catastrophic toll that long-term sleep deprivation and frequent sleep interruptions take on parents' mind and body. It downplays the needs of parents in the sections about baby sleep, suggesting that you should be just fine with getting woken up frequently throughout the first two years of life, because don't you see your baby needs you?? Plus, you can nap when baby naps, right? Because you're not doing anything else with your life, of course. I'm less than a year into my parenting adventure, and I'm about dead because I thought I needed to be a sleep martyr. I'm not a cry-it-out proponent, but I do think parents need to know that it's OK to have limits - really OK. The book pays only lip service to this concept. Babies needs don't just come first, they are everything.\*The book will convince you that your child has reflux and/or food allergies and is suffering greatly and you will not be able to think of anything else and no one will be able to tell you different, not even your pediatrician whom you claim to love and trust. Every mother I know has freaked out about food allergies and gone on a crazy elimination diet at some point while nursing. Me, too. Only one of our babies actually had any, though.All that said, now that I have some experience with the book's pitfalls, I can make better use of it and forgo the guilt. When you read this book, keep in mind that it offers ONE way of describing ONE point of view about parenting - as well-respected as the Sears family is, this book is not the last word in parenting styles or even this particular parenting style.Also, this book is NOT a substitute for an experienced pediatrician that you are willing to trust fully. Get one of those, for sure.

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