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Shifting Sands: Professional Advice to Mothers in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

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A look at the childcare section of any bookstore reveals the ongoing popularity of books written for a parent audience about the care of babies. New editions of old classics such as *Better Homes and Gardens New Baby Book*,¹ *Good Housekeeping Illustrated Book of Pregnancy & Baby Care*,² and a ninth edition of *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*,³ are joined by books with uniquely contemporary themes such as *Raising Baby Green: The Earth Friendly Guide to Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Baby Care*⁴ and *Secrets of the Baby Whisperer*.⁵ Published advice and information directed at parents is not new. Literate mothers in colonial America read “baby books” written by English doctors that reflected both Enlightenment views of the child as an innocent creature and Calvinist thought that pitted mothers against a willful baby who needed careful handling. By 1800, baby books for American families were written by American doctors and published in the United States.⁶ Childhood had emerged in professionals’ understanding as a distinct stage of life, and in middle class homes, children increasingly had their own rooms, clothing, toys and special child-sized furniture. Child rearing literature was directed primarily at mothers, who had come to be viewed as the moral authority in the home.⁷

This essay examines the published advice of experts such as Emmett Holt at the turn of the century, John B. Watson in the 1920s, and Arnold Gesell and Benjamin Spock in the 1940s and 50s, as well as less well-known authors who were widely read in their day. It chronicles the growing popularity of parent advice publications, as well as the role of the federal government in advising parents through printed literature. These books and pamphlets mirrored changes in social structures and family life, and met American parents’ perceived need for expert advice in an era of increasing specialization and scientific study.

1900: The Century of the Child

In 1900, Ellen Key wrote the bestseller *The Century of the Child*,⁸ a book with the premise that the world's children should become the central concern of society during the twentieth century. Key predicted that the status of children in Western society would undergo dramatic change, and that the rearing and education of children would become the focal point of both family life and society as a whole.

A number of historical factors merged to create this “century of the child” and, along with it, an increased market for parenting advice publications. These factors were the emergence of a new role for the family in society, industrialization, urbanization, declining infant mortality rates, and increasing public interest in all things modern and scientific. Philippe Aries described the emergence of a new moral and spiritual role for the family, as the family “raised the wall of private life between family and society”⁹ and organized itself around the child. Industrialization moved production out of the home, leading to an increase in division of labor in middle class families, with men in the workplace and women and children at home. The removal of women's role in production increased focus on their role as mothers and child rearers and possessors of “maternal instincts,” well suited for the valuable but unpaid role of child caretaker.

As production left the household and children had less real work to do, childrearing was no longer shaped around daily tasks that served the family and prepared children for occupations. Childhood was increasingly viewed as a unique and protected period of life.¹⁰ Urbanization limited contact with extended families and took away the communal support for parenting that mothers in earlier times and in different cultures had enjoyed. At the same time, science, rather than traditional ways, came to be highly regarded. These factors combined to create a void filled nicely by advice books for mothers.

American Families at the Turn of the Century

A baby born at the turn of the century might have joined a family consisting of a mother, father, and three brothers and sisters. The mother would likely have been a homemaker, as only 5.6 percent of married women were in the labor force in 1900. Half of all American families lived on farms.¹¹ This was a time of change in the United States as immigrants poured into New York through Ellis Island.¹² A baby born at the turn of the century had a life expectancy of less than 50 years. Approximately 9 percent of children born in this decade would graduate from high school. On average, white children would complete less than seven years of schooling, and non-white children would complete less than four years.¹³ Although improved from previous decades, the specter of early death hung over young families. Infant mortality at a rate of more than 160 per 1000 live births was a concern,¹⁴ and the rate was even higher in New York and other cities.¹⁵

The "Infant Bible of the Nation"

As American society became more specialized and more enamored of science, child raising became one of many aspects of life deemed to require expert advice. Mothers seeking such advice at the turn of the century could turn not only to the accumulated wisdom of generations of extended family, but also to books written for mothers. Most parenting advice literature was authored by male physicians, who expanded their advice beyond health issues, as the new specialty of pediatrics led doctors who had previously been consulted only for the care of sick children to become sources of well baby and childcare advice as well. Prominent among these was Dr. L. Emmett Holt, who expanded a pamphlet he had written for nurses into a "catechism" for mothers entitled *The Care and Feeding of Children*.¹⁶ Over the years, through 12 revisions and 75 printings, the book became the "infant bible of the nation."¹⁷

Feeding the Baby

Most babies through the nineteenth century consumed breast milk, whether from their own mothers or from a wet nurse. By 1900, the science of “formula” feeding (mixing cow’s milk with other substances following a formula that would best supply a particular baby’s needs) had begun to replace wet-nursing. Breastfeeding in this time period, if done according to experts’ advice, followed a modern scheduled approach.¹⁸ Dr. Holt recommended strict feeding schedules, so the clock, rather than the baby, dictated when feedings would occur. He directed mothers to nurse newborns every two hours during the day and twice at night, for no more than 20 minutes, intervals identical to those recommended for a bottle-fed baby. Holt stressed “regularity; it is just as important as in the case of bottle-feeding.” Again like bottle feeding, “the nipples should be kept clean by being washed after every nursing.”¹⁹

For the mother in 1900 who did not breastfeed, Holt provided a multitude of detailed information on how to mix the baby’s formula from cow’s milk: top milk (obtained from having the milk sit for six hours before skimming it off), barley water (boil two tablespoons of barley in a quart of water for six to eight hours, then strain through a cloth) combined with sugar in varying proportions (or formulas) as the baby grew.

While Dr. Holt heartily recommended breastfeeding in his book, responding to the question, “What is the best infant food?” with the unequivocal answer, “Mother’s milk,”²⁰ he devoted 15 pages to formula feeding, and only four to breastfeeding.²¹ Supplying detailed and doctor-endorsed information on a new feeding method exploited the public's interest in all things new, modern, and scientific. Furthermore, Holt recommended that nursing mothers substitute an occasional bottle, so that, “It²² becomes accustomed to taking its food from the bottle.”²³

The expert-recommended age of weaning had dropped from 24 months to 11 months throughout the nineteenth century,²⁴ and by 1900, mothers read in Holt's popular book a recommendation for starting at nine or 10 months, with weaning completed by one year, unless that fell in the summer. The threat of "Summer Complaint" or infant death by diarrheal diseases was a very real problem at the turn of the century.²⁵ Particularly in urban areas, lack of refrigeration and unsanitary conditions combined with summer heat to produce milk that caused severe diarrhea leading to death by dehydration.²⁶ During this period, already high mortality rates for infants in New York City tripled during the summer months, rising from an annual rate of less than 200 per 1000 live births in January to almost 600 in July.²⁷ Holt was a leading figure in the movement for a safer milk supply, and was credited with helping establish sources of clean certified raw milk purchased by middle and upper class parents, and milk stations around the city that distributed less expensive but safe pasteurized milk to poor families.²⁸

Baby's Bath

While babies in previous decades²⁹ had reaped the dubious benefits of cold baths intended to "harden" the young child, Dr. Holt advised a warm bath that took place in a pleasant room. He gave specific instructions: "The room should be warm; if possible, there should be an open fire. The bath should be given quickly, and the body dried rapidly with a soft towel." The bath temperature should be "for the first few weeks at 100 degrees F. Later...95 degrees. After six months, at 90 degrees."³⁰ However, a child who caught cold easily was still prescribed a daily morning sponging of the chest and spine with cold water.

Bedtime for Baby

Until the mid-eighteenth century, bedtime for a child meant sleeping in the parents' bed until age two or older, at which time he or she would share a bed with brothers or sisters.³¹

During the nineteenth century, separate beds became common. Newborn babies slept with their parents but were to be moved to their own beds before age one. In 1878, Dr. Pye Henry Chavasse wrote in *Advice to a Mother on the Management of her Children*, “Ought a babe to lie alone from the first? Certainly not...he requires the warmth of another person’s body.”³²

However, by the turn of the century, Holt advised: “*Should a child sleep in the same bed with his mother or nurse?* Under no circumstances ... nor should older children sleep together.”³³

Babies were expected to sleep “about nine tenths of the time” as newborns and “two thirds of the time” at age one year.³⁴ Holt recommended putting the baby to bed in a crib, awake, in a darkened room. Rocking was “by no means [necessary] and a habit easily acquired, but hard to break and a very useless and sometimes injurious one.”³⁵ Crying was good for expanding the lungs, “necessary for health. It is the baby’s exercise,” Holt wrote.³⁶

Toilet Training

Very early toilet training was the recommended practice of this time period. Dr. Holt offered the following advice:

How may a child be trained to be regular in its bowels?

By endeavoring to have them move at exactly the same time every day.

At what age may an infant be trained to use the chamber or chair for its movements?

Easily by the third month if training is begun early.³⁷

Holt’s recommendations for regulating and training the young baby’s habits—sleeping, toileting, and play-- contrast with present-day emphasis on the importance of stimulation for intellectual growth. In fact, Holt’s advice of playing with the baby was, “The less of it at any time the better for the infant.”³⁸

While Holt’s didactic prose, as well as his practice of referring to the baby as “it,” might be off-putting to readers today, his writing was popular with mothers, as he attempted to address

serious health issues of his time. He expressed concern that mothers not become overwhelmed by the care of their babies; in particular, he sought to discourage leaving the child in poor care with an untrained caregiver or a hired wet-nurse.³⁹ Part of promoting motherhood as a noble profession for women at home involved making it sufficiently attractive, and Holt aimed to do this by scheduling the baby. Holt's dogmatic and paternalistic style reflected the certainty with which experts wrote for mothers, giving scientific credibility to recommendations grounded more in changing middle class social norms than science.

1918: Raising the “Greatest Generation”

American Families between the World Wars

American families experienced another period of change in the years after World War I. Women achieved the right to vote in 1919, and Prohibition became the law of the land in 1920. Infant mortality had dropped dramatically, to less than 90 per 1000 live births,⁴⁰ as a safer milk supply, better food, and immunizations were available to more families.⁴¹ By the mid-1920s, parents could have their babies vaccinated for diphtheria and typhoid, as well as smallpox, and death rates from those diseases declined rapidly. A white child born in 1920 could expect to live to be 55 years old, and a non-white child, 45. A child born in the 1920s would attend school for almost eight years on average.⁴²

Baby book writers responded to changing times with a new generation of childcare advice literature, once again presenting their recommendations as universal and scientific, but in fact reflecting social priorities as much as a professional knowledge base. Growing numbers of new mothers in the 1920s were looking for such parenting advice. Sociologists Robert and Helen Merrell Lynd observed changing attitudes in working- and middle-class families. In *Middletown*, their 1929 landmark study of a small Midwestern city, they noted, “The attitude that child

rearing is something not to be taken for granted but to be studied appears in parents of both groups. One cannot talk with Middletown mothers without being continually impressed by the eagerness of many to lay hold of every available resource for help in training their children.”⁴³

The Lynds enumerated the mothers’ sources: Holt’s *Care and Feeding of Children* was still popular in reprints, now supplemented by public health pamphlets, multi-volume “child training” book sets peddled door-to-door, articles in women’s magazines, and federal government bulletins from the Children’s Bureau.⁴⁴

“Uncle Sam Will Help You Raise [your] Baby”

The United States government played an important role in the expansion of parenting advice literature. In 1909, the first White House Conference on Children had convened, leading to the founding of the Children’s Bureau in 1912.⁴⁵ Providing expert childcare information and advice was now viewed as a need to be addressed by the federal government. The January 10, 1915 edition of the *Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle* wrote of the new government baby care bulletin, *Infant Care*, “Do you want your baby to be big and strong and healthy, sound of mind as well as body? Uncle Sam will help you raise just that sort of baby; the kind he wants for future citizens.”⁴⁶

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created a corps of 2,000 county extension agents (now called Cooperative Extension agents) who, in addition to their agricultural work, carried on demonstration projects in homemaking and childcare and distributed parenting literature.⁴⁷ Further support for the federal government’s role came with the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act in 1921.⁴⁸

The Children's Bureau was charged with addressing "all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people."⁴⁹ Initially a program of the

Department of Commerce and Labor, after World War II, the Bureau became part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and is now part of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families.⁵⁰ The Children's Bureau published highly popular manuals for parents, written by their largely female staff, a departure from most contemporary parenting advice literature.⁵¹ *Infant Care* was a runaway "best seller," distributed free of charge or for ten cents a copy by government agencies, health departments, well-baby clinics, and members of Congress.⁵² The pamphlet's text was reprinted in other baby care publications. One and a half million copies were distributed between 1914 and 1921. By 1929, aided by funds from the Sheppard-Towner Act, the booklet reached parents of half of all babies in the United States, according to Children's Bureau personnel.⁵³ Thus, this publication reached a wide audience of mothers, including those living on farms and small towns.

The Parents Association

Another popular source of advice for mothers was the Parents Association, publisher of numerous small volumes, as well as *Children, the Magazine for Parents*, later re-named *Parents Magazine*, which debuted in 1926. Funded by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Foundation and with an editorial board of leading academics, the magazine targeted educated, middle-class parents who were looking for guidance in raising their children. The magazine's motto, "on rearing children from crib to college," alludes to this middle-class readership. Experts in child health, psychology, and education translated research studies into popular terms and offered practical suggestions to mothers.⁵⁴ As time went on, *Parents* publications included advertising promoting such items as ready-made baby food, private schools, and summer camps. By 1946, *Parents Magazine* had a readership of over one million.⁵⁵

Baby's Day, 1917

An early Parents Association publication⁵⁶ written by Ray Beery, with credentials from Columbia and Harvard Universities, cited the Children's Bureau's *Infant Care* pamphlet as the source of some of its content. Beery gave the following daily routine for an older infant:

6 a.m. baby's first nursing
Family breakfast; children off to school
9 a.m. baby's bath, followed by second nursing
Baby sleeps till noon
12 to 12:30, baby's noon meal
Out-of-door airing and nap
3 to 3:30 p.m. afternoon nursing
Period of waking
6 to 7 p.m. baby's supper and bed

He went on to offer the following explanation:

You will be interested to know how mothers succeed in carrying out instructions given by experts. Consequently we add here a report of the actual procedure as conducted by a careful and intelligent mother.

Dickey, aged eight and one-half months, usually wakes up in the morning a little before six o'clock (5 or 10 minutes perhaps) and no attention whatever is paid to his repeated demands for breakfast until 6 o'clock. Sometimes he cries outright at not being looked after immediately and keeps it up, but usually if 3 or 4 little squeals do not bring results, he begins to amuse himself...

Beery described Dickey playing happily after his 6:00 a.m. nursing, until he was nursed again at nine o'clock, given a bath, and placed on a "tiny commode" as part of his toilet-training regimen.

The account then described his long morning nap outdoors, followed by another long nap in the afternoon.

About four o'clock his mother brings him downstairs and gives him his music lesson which consists of two or three records on the Victrola and a song or two from her or anyone else who might be able to sing for him. He has come thoroughly to enjoy the music and laughs out loud sometimes at particularly loud tones. He is amused by various things until five o'clock when he is taken upstairs and given his second bottle of milk and put back into his crib until nine or half-past nine o'clock, when he is awakened, dressed for the night and given his last meal for the day; indeed his last attention, too, for he never wakes up at night and disturbs no one to nearly six o'clock the next morning.⁵⁷

The reader was reassured that Dickey was a happy and healthy baby, and that he caused the other members of his household “very minimum annoyance or trouble.”⁵⁸ Notable are the combination of breast and bottle feeding, no evidence of solid food at eight and a half months of age, some use of toys, lots of fresh air in all kinds of weather, and extremely high expectations of Dickey’s capacity to entertain himself or sleep for long periods of time.

Toilet Training

Beery’s description of very early toilet training echoed Holt’s recommendations in the 1890s. He recommended beginning toilet training early and with regularity, aided by suppositories if necessary. The 1926 U.S. government publication, *Infant Care*, also gave this advice, “Toilet training may be begun as early as the end of the first month...The first essential in bowel training IS absolute regularity.”⁵⁹ Dr. Frank Howard Richardson, a consultant to the New York Department of Health with teaching affiliations at many New York hospitals and universities, provided detailed instructions, with illustrations, for whittling a soap suppository and preparing to “apply the chamber” as the baby was trained. “She should lay him on his back across her lap...holding the lap chamber close up to the buttocks...If, after waiting for a few minutes, the expected stool does not come, she may facilitate matters by inserting the small soap suppository...”⁶⁰

Other books of the period also recommended early, but non-punitive, toilet training. In his 1921 book, *The Care of the Baby*, Dr. J. P. Crozer Griffith, professor of pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania, recommended beginning training at three months in, but also warned, “It need scarcely be remarked that punishment for delinquencies in this line is totally out of the question at any age.”⁶¹

Feeding the Baby

Experts of this period provided extensive detailed information on formula preparation, while at the same time recommending breastfeeding as the ideal. Undercutting this stated support of breastfeeding were recommendations that attempt to schedule and standardize breastfeeding to resemble formula feeding, apparently reversing the original conceptualization of formula as a substitute for mothers' milk. According to the 1917 *Parents* publication⁶² and the 1926 federal government-issued *Infant Care* bulletin,⁶³ mothers should limit nursing to 20-minute sessions, on schedule. The recommended interval between nursing sessions was now three to four hours, in contrast to the two-hour interval Holt recommended in the 1890s. Dr. Richardson advised the mother to nurse the baby in a quiet place, with no one else in the room, and to prepare by washing her hands, cleaning her fingernails, and washing her nipples.⁶⁴ She should eat fruit, green vegetables, and milk, if the quality was good. "If she lives in the country and keeps her own cow...she is indeed fortunate."⁶⁵ Mothers who had difficulty nursing were advised to use nipple shields made from lead.⁶⁶ Many mothers struggled to meet these requirements for isolation, cleanliness, timing, and diet, and breastfeeding rates continued to decline during this period.⁶⁷

Experts in the 1910s and 1920s advised mothers to wean the baby gradually. While in 1900 Holt had advised starting solid food at 10 months,⁶⁸ Richardson wrote that "many of the best men" now recommended that mothers "give solid food much earlier in life than used ever to be thought of. According to this new trend, it is now no uncommon thing to begin the feeding of green vegetables, usually spinach, as early as six months of age."⁶⁹ The "old fear of weaning in the summer" was no longer an issue because the milk supply was now safer and more reliable,⁷⁰ as the infant mortality rate had dropped overall and no longer spiked in the summer.⁷¹

Bedtime for Baby

Mothers were advised against the “bad habit” of letting the baby go to sleep at the breast. Dr. Richard A. Bolt, president of the American Child Health Association, supporter of federal government efforts on behalf of mothers and children, and author of parenting pamphlets, warned in 1924 that, “It is dangerous for it [baby] to go to sleep in the same bed with her. A number of instances have been reported where a mother has unknowingly rolled over on the baby during a sound sleep.”⁷² Beery warned that the baby should not to have too much play or excitement, as this would interfere with sleep.⁷³ Mothers were told to watch unscrupulous nurses (hired private childcare providers) to make sure they did not give medicine to babies to make them sleep,⁷⁴ and “under no consideration resort to the ‘pacifier.’”⁷⁵

All experts recommended “copious amounts” of fresh air in the baby’s room at all times,⁷⁶ as they believed it purified the blood and was essential for the baby's health. Fresh air was touted as a cure for many ills, as it provided needed oxygen, and helped prevent colds and pneumonia. Napping in the open air was recommended in the winter as well as in warmer weather, whether on a porch or in a special “balcony cot” designed for city dwellers, a bassinet that hung from an apartment window.⁷⁷

Who Was Reading Baby Books?

Baby books of this period, similar to those in the 1890s, portrayed a lifestyle in which the baby’s family had a home with separate bedrooms, running water, plenty of food, possibly household help, and a non-employed mother. While this may have described the baby-book reader of 1900, by the 1920s, this literature, especially government bulletins, reached an audience beyond the middle class. Molly Ladd-Taylor’s *Raising a Baby the Government Way* includes many letters from poor and rural women with low literacy skills and little access to

prenatal or pediatric medical care who wrote to the Children's Bureau for advice. While the staff responded with concern, the contrast between the middle-class flavor of their publications and the grim taste of rural poverty is stark.⁷⁸

Little information exists on the racial and socioeconomic status of baby book consumers. One study, conducted in 1930 and cited by Julia Grant in *Raising Baby by the Book*, claimed that 46.1 percent of African American parents of the "lowest socioeconomic status" reported reading at least one book on child rearing in the previous year, in contrast to 26.7 percent of white parents of similar socioeconomic status. Among parents of the higher socioeconomic group, 71.0 percent of black parents and 79.4 percent of white parents had read at least one book on child rearing. In addition, 78.1 percent of African American parents and 88.2 percent of white parents reported reading at least one article on child rearing in a newspaper or magazine.⁷⁹ Despite apparent diversity in readership, none of the baby books reviewed for this essay showed any non-white parents or children in any photographs or illustrations.

In fact, the gap between many mothers' lives and the focus of the parenting literature was immense. Parenting advice literature rarely mentioned external forces that affected parents' lives, in fact, it typically ignored the harsh realities of many parents' lives altogether. With unrelenting images of white, upper-middle class urban and suburban life, parents were given advice on issues and uncertainties of child raising in which all solutions to any problems these parents experienced lay in changing themselves and their families.

1928: Behavioral Psychology Weighs In

In the late 1920s, John B. Watson's work in behavioral psychology influenced the advice given to parents. Watson's *Psychological Care of the Infant and Child*⁸⁰ sold 100,000 copies in its first few years. *Parents Magazine* recommended that it belonged "on every intelligent

mother's shelf,"⁸¹ and Julia Grant's study of mothers' groups in Upstate New York in the 1920s documents discussion of Watson's book.⁸² Watson's advice against touching, cuddling, or rocking the baby to sleep was similar to Holt's advice several decades earlier, but while Holt justified his directives with concern for the baby's physical health and survival and mother's workload, Watson gave a psychological rationale. He believed that too much handling and kissing was detrimental to babies, as this treatment would condition children to expect such behavior as they grew up. A boy might become a "mama's boy" and expect undue attention and affection from his wife. (Although Watson used the pronoun "he" in his writing to refer to all babies, rather than the customary "it" of his predecessors, in this instance, he appears to address only parents of male children.)

In his chapter "Too Much Mother Love," Watson wrote, "Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task."⁸³ He cited concern that too much handling and attention would deter an infant from exploring and manipulating his environment, clearly valuing such exploration and revealing a perspective on infant development quite different from Holt's at the turn of the century. However, there were limits to Watson's valuing of such exploration, revealed by his statement disapproving of bath toys as an unneeded distraction from the task at hand. During this period, the contemporary Children's Bureau's *Infant Care* pamphlet also cautioned, "The rule that parents should not play with the baby may seem hard, but it is no doubt a safe one." *Infant Care* also advised mothers to give up the practice of "soothing a child to sleep."⁸⁴ Playpens became popular, advertised as an alternative to too much handling, now thought to be detrimental to the developing child.⁸⁵

Changes in childbirth practices during this period helped create an increased audience for published parenting advice. Home births dropped from 50% to 15% between 1915 and 1930, and hospitals provided new mothers with instructional pamphlets. Sometimes these were reprints of the government *Infant Care* bulletin, with illustrations and advertising added.⁸⁶ Another text source was the work of Chicago health commissioner Dr. Herman Bundesen, whose baby care publications sold over 10 million copies between 1925 and 1944.⁸⁷ His 1927 pamphlet, touting approval by the American Medical Association, stated that the hospital was “a good place to have the baby.”⁸⁸ He recommended breastfeeding, claiming, “The breastfed baby is the best-fed baby” with “ten times as many chances to grow up strong.”⁸⁹ Bundesen recommended that the baby be fed on a schedule, every four hours from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Bundesen valued good habits and regularity, stating that the baby should be “trained to sleep” at the same time every day, as sleep was needed for rapid brain growth. One of his “Ten Commandments of Motherhood” was “Thou shalt not let the baby sleep with anyone else.”⁹⁰ Bundesen described babies crying because of hunger, thirst, and discomfort, but also “bad habit.” He recommended leaving the baby to “cry it out” until the habit was broken, “even though the crying lasts for hours and is repeated for a number of days.”⁹¹ Dr. Bundesen highly recommended fresh air, sunshine, and outdoor naps, as cold air was “strengthening.” Parents could hold the baby sometimes and talk quietly, but most of all babies needed rest, and should not be tickled or rolled, as this would make them fussy and restless.

1940: “Don’t Watch the Clock, Watch the Child”

In the 1940s, psychologist and pediatrician Arnold Gesell at the Yale University Clinic of Child Development and his associate, pediatrician Frances Ilg, developed normative information for professionals on typical child development, promoting a new way of looking at young

children. Ilg was one of the few female authors of commercially published baby books of this period. Their 1943 *Infant and Child in the Culture Today*⁹² was advertised to parents with the claim that it “does not contain a single ‘Do’ or ‘Don’t’ for parents.”⁹³ They advised mothers, “Don’t watch the clock, watch the child,” and spoke of “organic time” (the baby’s internal clock) as different from “clock time.”⁹⁴ They recommended that young babies sleep in their parent's room. Mothers were urged to adopt the practice of “demand feeding,” nursing or giving a bottle whenever the baby was hungry. Gesell believed that babies fed this way would work themselves into a schedule naturally. The baby would probably nurse 20 to 40 minutes, and gradually decrease the number of feedings on his own. Like Watson, Gesell and Ilg referred to the baby as “he,” unlike earlier writers who used the pronoun “it.” They also used new terms, “toddler” and “preschooler,” to describe young children.

Baby’s Day, 1943

Gesell and Ilg’s schedule for a 40-week-old baby differed markedly in content and tone from the schedule for little Dickey prescribed a generation earlier. Their description reflected flexibility in times for sleeping and waking, feeding schedule, toilet training approach, and amount of attention paid to the baby. They described the baby beginning to talk and develop fine motor skills. Most strikingly, they portrayed the baby as having valid preferences and interests, in contrast to their predecessors who presented the baby’s actions as attempts to manipulate caregivers. They emphasized fresh air less. In the following account, the baby naps indoors. Gesell and Ilg’s description assumed bottle feeding and included earlier feeding of solid foods than in earlier periods. Their detailed description of the baby’s day began:

The forty-week-old baby wakes anytime between 5 and 7 o’clock. He is likely to be wet but his fussing is often primarily for social attention. He is also likely to be keenly hungry and imbibes his bottle with dispatch. He holds and pats his partially propped bottle. ...

At 8:00 he is ready for breakfast. He may take this in his high chair. He vocalizes “ma-ma” and “nam-nam” in his eager anticipation; but he has learned to inhibit some of his excitement and waits for the presentation of the dish of cereal. The demanding eagerness, however, returns if the mother is too slow in following one spoonful with the next. He associates an empty dish with the termination of the meal and he makes a ready transition to a period of play.

Between 8 and 10 o’clock he likes to be part of the household group. He is content to play in his high chair, pen or crib, and may enjoy a shift from one station to another by way of variety.⁹⁵

The account then described bathing, with toys (disapproved of by Watson,⁹⁶ but now presented as routine⁹⁷) a long morning nap, a partially finger-fed lunch, a carriage ride, and a short afternoon nap. The baby then woke, drank orange juice, and joined the family.

This is typically the most social period of the day. He enjoys being a member of the household group. He enjoys social types of play including the usual nursery games....

A supper of cereal and fruit follows at about 6 o’clock. He is usually ready for the night’s sleep in a quarter of an hour. He may “talk” to himself from fifteen minutes to an hour, or he may promptly fall asleep. He may cry out momentarily during the course of the night, without waking and without requiring attention.⁹⁸

Gesell and Ilg’s description showed a notable a change in how mothers were encouraged to view their babies. In *How a Baby Grows*, another of Gesell’s books comprising extensive photographs of babies from birth to one year of age, he wrote, “...the baby must be allowed to display initiative, self-reliance, and even a little refusal.”⁹⁹ In sharp contrast to the authoritarian advice of Holt and the “scientific pediatricians”¹⁰⁰ and Watson and the behaviorists, Gesell and Ilg’s emphasis on the baby as a small person with “his” own way of developing paved the way for a new style in parenting advice literature that came after World War II.

1950: Raising Baby Boomers

American Families after World War II

In late 1940s and 1950s, birth rates soared as new family units were created at a high rate after World War II. Only 17 percent of American families lived on farms, as many left rural areas and cities for the new suburban lifestyle made possible by a building boom, new highways, and affordable cars.¹⁰¹ Parents sought the advantages of better schools and more opportunities for their children, but they left behind the opportunity to consult close-by extended families on baby care issues.

Less than one-fifth of mothers in the 1950s were in the labor force. Children's futures seemed more secure, as new vaccines were developed and infant mortality for white babies plummeted to less than five per 100 live births; and less secure in other ways, as the "Red Scare," McCarthyism, and fear of nuclear bombs occupied the public consciousness. A baby born in the 1950s could expect to live to age 70. Almost 60 percent of children born in the early 1950s would graduate from high school, and, of those, more than 25 percent would go to college.¹⁰² A mother in the 1950s would likely have owned a copy of a new and different baby book, Dr. Benjamin Spock's 1946 *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*,¹⁰³ a best-selling paperback that cost 25 cents and sold over 50 million copies.¹⁰⁴ At the time, Spock's book was outsold only by the Bible, and still ranks among the all-time top 10 bestselling books.

Dr. Spock—America's Baby Doctor

Spock offered reassuring advice from the opening lines of his book, "Trust yourself. You know more than you think."¹⁰⁵ The book featured an index in which mothers could look up almost any subject of concern: "Nose, objects in, 453" would guide a mother whose baby stuffed a bead up his nose.¹⁰⁶ In contrast to Watson, who felt that "no one today knows enough to raise a

child,” Spock urged parents not to be overawed by experts, and to relax and trust their common sense. “The natural loving care that kindly parents give to their children is a hundred times more valuable than their knowing how to pin a diaper on just right.”¹⁰⁷

Spock himself attributed his book’s popularity and new mothers’ desire for advice books to the fact that knowledge was advancing rapidly, so advice from grandmothers that might have aided new mothers in the past was not viewed as up-to-date. Additionally, he observed that many young parents were close to adolescence themselves and were trying to prove their independence from their own parents, as the average age of first marriage dropped in the 1950s to the lowest point of the century.¹⁰⁸ As in previous decades, families feeling the pressures of changing times sought the reassurance of experts in the increasing absence of extended family, or as a response to the perception of their diminished relevance.

While parents of previous generations were advised against too much rocking, cuddling, or kissing of babies, and were told that loud, strong cries were healthy exercise, Dr. Spock told them that a baby who was comforted when he was miserable would not continue to demand comfort when he did not need it. Spock consistently urged mothers to love their baby, to enjoy their baby, to show the baby that “they think he’s wonderful” (Like Watson and Gesell, Spock’s baby was always “he”), and to be friendly, as the baby needs “to be smiled at, talked to, played with...just as much as he needs vitamins and calories.”¹⁰⁹

Feeding the Baby

Like Gesell, Spock advised mothers to feed the baby when hungry, rather than by the clock, advising, “Start with what he seems to need and work toward what is convenient for all.”¹¹⁰ While he described breast-feeding as natural and healthy, the 19 pages of the book devoted to breastfeeding primarily described breastfeeding problems,¹¹¹ in contrast to the 29

pages about bottle-feeding.¹¹² Rates of breastfeeding had been declining since the 1880s and continued through this period.¹¹³ Whether Spock's book contributed to or simply reflected this trend, the nursing mother found little positive support from Spock.

Prior to the twentieth century, children were first given solid foods around twelve months of age. Over time, concern about preventing overeating and digestive stress was replaced by advice about making sure children ate all the food that they were offered.¹¹⁴ During the first half of the twentieth century, doctors experimented with giving solid food earlier and earlier. Competition among parents and aggressive advertising by the baby food industry contributed to this trend. In the 1950s, Dr. Spock advised giving orange juice at six weeks and starting solids between one and four months. By six months, Spock's baby ate regular meals of fruit, vegetables, meat, cereal, and eggs.¹¹⁵

Mothers liked Spock's reassuring style. Unlike Gesell,¹¹⁶ he included no developmental norms in his book, in an apparent effort not to worry parents. He described even difficult situations in comforting ways, for example, his advice on seizures: "A convulsion is a frightening thing to see in a child, but in most cases it is not dangerous in itself." In contrast, a contemporary book aimed at the same audience, *Better Homes and Gardens Baby Book*, offered a less reassuring version of the same information: "A convulsion is terrifying to parents, but a baby rarely, if ever, dies from one."¹¹⁷

Baby's Bedtime

Like his predecessors, Spock told mothers, "Better not let the child in your bed...I think it's a sensible rule not to take the child into the parents' bed for any reason."¹¹⁸ In contrast to the flexible tone of much of his advice, he recommended a strictly enforced bedtime, and advised mothers to leave the baby to cry for up to 30 minutes.

Toilet Training

Interpreting Sigmund Freud's complex theories,¹¹⁹ Spock urged parents against excessively early and severe toilet training, as he explained "second year possessiveness and balkiness" that might set back early training efforts. He advised parents, "I don't think there is any one right time or way to begin toilet training," and presented a variety of approaches that began between 12 and 24 months, depending on the child and the degree to which parents wished to direct the training process.¹²⁰

The 1942 and 1945 editions of the government *Infant Care* bulletin also advised relaxed handling, enjoying the baby, "demand" feeding, and later toilet training. The bulletins stated that either breast or bottle-feeding was fine for the baby. No age was given for weaning; mothers were advised to follow the child's lead. Dr. Bundesen, Chicago health commissioner and author of hospital pamphlets, had also softened his advice since his 1927 *Baby Book*, advising four hour feeding schedules in his 1945 pamphlet but allowing that "some babies" would need more flexibility. He recommended starting solid food at 4 months. Gone were the "Ten Commandments of Motherhood." He recommended putting the baby to bed at a scheduled time, but if the baby cried, "it may be a good idea to leave such a baby for a short time after the 6:00 p.m. feeding, where he may watch persons and hear household sounds, or see the lights until he falls asleep."¹²¹ Bundesen still warned against crying as a bad habit, and advised mothers to leave the baby to cry, but only after they had explored many alternatives.

While Spock's book is popularly credited as a radical departure from the strictness of the past, it built on Gesell's work in the early 1940s and the mood of the post-war years away from the behaviorism of the late 1920s. In fact, both the *Infant Care* pamphlets and Bundesen's work

cited above pre-date Spock's landmark book, suggesting that Spock reflected, rather than pioneered, new ideas about parenting.

Unanswered Questions: Need for Further Study

This study of printed literature directed at a parent audience sampled popular works from the turn of the twentieth century, post-World War I, the World War II years, and early baby boom periods. It highlighted recommended infant care practices, particularly feeding, sleep, and toilet-training, revealing significant change in those recommendations over a relatively short period of time. However, it did not answer an important question about the extent to which the experts' recommendations reflected actual parenting practices, or the impact this literature had on parenting practices. While some historians and child psychologists have weighed in, with contrasting opinions,¹²² the question of the degree of correspondence, as well as cause and effect relationship, between expert advice and contemporary parenting practices deserves further study.

Conclusion

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, sociological and economic changes including industrialization, urbanization, and lower infant mortality changed family structures and mothers' lives, and helped create a growing market for published parenting literature. Smaller, nuclear, and more mobile families, with higher literacy skills and more leisure time, furthered the demand for parenting literature. New research in the field of child development also added to interest in this material. As families' circumstances changed over the decades studied, mothers reached out to experts for guidance in the task of raising babies and children.

Much of that expert advice, presented to parents as scientific and universal, changed considerably over a relatively short period of time. It would seem reasonable to assume that parental advice literature served the important function of bridging the gap between those who

studied children and mothers who stood to benefit from that work. However, the advice provided was informed as much by the experts' own image of what American families should look like as it was by any scientific findings. In the span of half a century, expert advice changed dramatically. Infant feeding recommendations changed from rigidly scheduled feedings, whether breast or bottle, to "demand" feeding, as the baby described in this literature morphed from a creature in need of strict management to a small person with legitimate needs and preferences. Mothers were told to introduce solid foods earlier and earlier in the baby's life—over the span of 50 years, that age decreased from 12 months to one. Over the same time period, the recommended age for initiating toilet training changed, in the opposite direction, even more dramatically, from one month to one or even two years of age. Expert recommendations for baby's sleep habits changed from scheduled periods, preceded as necessary with a period of crying, to a baby-led schedule. Complementing changing recommendations for sleep were corresponding changes in daytime practices, as the experts came to value play and stimulation over maximizing the amount of baby's sleep, and the dominant characterization of the baby (along with the pronoun change from "it" to "he") changed from manipulator to small developing person with legitimate needs.

While all of the experts' recommendations were touted as scientific and offered unequivocally, in fact, those recommendations reflected changing patterns of thought in middle-class society rather than an empirical body of knowledge that stood over time.¹²³ These changes belie the absolutism of the experts' advice. Human infant physiology, behavior, and development did not change drastically in that relatively short time span of 50 years;¹²⁴ however, experts' recommendations did just that. These "expert" recommendations reflected societal changes and goals, not changing knowledge of the physical and psychological needs of infants. The experts

changed their ideas, guided not by new professional knowledge about babies, but by the social and cultural environment in which they lived and wrote.

The parenting literature cited in this essay illustrates these changes and provides a window into the past, a record not so much of parenting behavior, but of cultural values and goals. British psychologist and baby book author Penelope Leach, author of *Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age Five*,¹²⁵ describes published parenting advice as “a complex and...entrancing folklore of child care.”¹²⁶ This essay documents and explicates a portion of that literature.

Notes

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1. *Better Homes and Gardens New Baby Book* (Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Publishing Company, 1999).
 2. *Good Housekeeping Illustrated Book of Pregnancy & Baby Care* (New York: Hearst Books, 2004).
 3. Robert Needlman, Dr. *Spock's Baby and Child Care* (New York: Pocket Books, 2011), advertised as “fully revised and expanded for the 21st century.”
 4. Alan Greene, *Raising Baby Green: The Earth Friendly Guide to Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Baby Care* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).
 5. Tracy Hogg, *Secrets of the Baby Whisperer* (New York: Random House, 2005).
 6. Alice Judson Ryerson, “Medical Advice on Childrearing, 1550-1900,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 31 (1961): 305.
 7. Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 3.
 8. Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909). Originally published in Swedish in 1900.
 9. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 413.
 10. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 2005), 204-205. This upper and middle-class vision of home life contrasted with the reality of poor and working class family life, as more than two million children under the age of 15 worked full-time in coalmines, textile mills, canning plants, and in the homes of the wealthy described.
 11. US Census Bureau, “Families and Living Arrangements,” <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/historical.html>
 12. “History in the 1900s,” http://www.1930census.com/1900_the_year_in_history.php

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13. U.S Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Child Development, *200 Years of Children*. DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 77-30103 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), 33.
 14. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *200 Years of Children*, 26.
 15. Robert Luther Duffus and L. Emmett Holt, Jr., *L. Emmett Holt: Pioneer of a Children's Century*, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1940), 175-177.
 16. L. Emmett Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894).
 17. Duffus and Holt, Jr., *L. Emmett Holt*, 117.
 18. Scheduled breastfeeding, undocumented before 1700, had become a common recommendation in the latter half of the 19th century, as doctors became concerned about serious intestinal infections that afflicted and killed many babies. Experts blamed these maladies on contaminated milk and incorrect proportions of formula, and also on irregularity in feeding of breastfed babies. Ryerson, "Medical Advice on Childrearing," 305-306, 312.
 19. Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, 20-21.
 20. Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, 24.
 21. *Ibid.*, 20-23, 24-38.
 22. The third person singular pronoun "it" is still considered correct when referring to babies, though it is in very limited use. The use of the third person masculine singular pronoun "he" to refer to males or females dates from Ann Fisher's 1745 *A New Grammar*, in which she advocated a less Latin-based approach to English grammar, including the use of "it" rather than third person plural "they" when the subject was singular. See sociohistorical linguist Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade's work (http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/hsl_shl/femgram.htm) and a popular treatment of this subject, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/26/magazine/26FOB-onlanguage-t.html?_r=0.
 23. *Ibid.*, 27.
 24. Ryerson, "Medical Advice on Childrearing," 307.
 25. "Midsummer Mortality," *New York Times*, August 27, 1899, 10.
 26. Samuel Frant and Harold Abramson, "Epidemic Diarrhea of the Newborn: II. Control and Prevention of Outbreaks in Hospital Nurseries," *Journal of Pediatrics*, 11 (1937): 772-781.
 27. Marian Moser Jones, *Protecting Public Health in New York City: 200 Years of Leadership, 1805-2005*, (New York: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene), <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/bicentennial/historical-booklet.pdf>
 28. Duffus and Holt, Jr., *L. Emmett Holt*, 161-178.
 29. Pye Henry Chavasse, *Advice to a Mother on the Management of her Children*, (Toronto: Willing & Williamson, 1878), 3-4, <http://www.canadiana.org/cgi-bin/ECO/mtq?doc=26929>. Dr. Chavasse's book was popular in England and the United States. He wrote that it was "not an uncommon plan to use cold water from the first," but he described this as "a cruel and barbarous practice." He also debunked the idea of washing the baby's head with brandy to prevent catching cold.
 30. Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, 9.

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31. Ryerson, "Medical Advice on Childrearing," 313.
 32. Chavasse, *Advice to a Mother*, 56.
 33. Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, 50.
 34. *Ibid.*, 50-51.
 35. *Ibid.*, 51.
 36. *Ibid.*, 53.
 37. *Ibid.*, 50.
 38. *Ibid.*, 57.
 39. Christina Hardyment, *Dream Babies: Three Centuries of Good Advice on Child Care*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 121; Jacqueline H. Wolf, "'Mercenary Hirelings' or 'A Great Blessing'?: Doctors' and Mothers' Conflicted Perceptions of Wet Nurses and the Ramifications for Infant Feeding in Chicago, 1871-1961," *Journal of Social History*, 33(1999): 97-120.
 40. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Two Hundred Years of Children*, 26.
 41. Duffus and Holt, Jr., *L. Emmett Holt*, 161-178.
 42. U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Two Hundred Years of Children*, 29.
 43. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), 149.
 44. *Ibid.*, 149-151.
 45. National Archives, *Records of the Children's Bureau*, <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/102.html>.
 46. "Caring for Baby--Suggestions from Uncle Sam," *Reading Eagle*, January 10, 1915.
 47. James L. Hymes, *Early Childhood Education Living History Interviews*. (Carmel, CA: Hacienda Press, 1978), 66. In 1974, Hymes interviewed Laura L. Dittman, who worked for the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health and the Children's Bureau and authored government publications including the 1963 revision of *Infant Care*, as part of a series of interviews of pioneers in early childhood education. The book includes of the transcripts of those interviews.
 48. This legislation was opposed by The American Medical Association because they feared that it would lead to "state medicine," and conservative groups claimed that it would promote "birth control, illegitimacy, bolshevism, and government control of children," themes not unfamiliar today. Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 25-27.
 49. U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Children's Bureau, *The Children's Bureau* (Washington, DC: author, 1912), 2, <http://www.mchlibrary.info/history/chbu/20364.pdf>.

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50. National Archives, *Records of the Children's Bureau*, <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/102.html>.
 51. U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Children's Bureau, *The Children's Bureau*.
 52. Hymes, *Early Childhood Education Living History Interviews*, 57-58.
 53. Ladd-Taylor, *Raising a Baby the Government Way*, 2.
 54. Steven L. Schlossman, "Philanthropy and the Gospel of Child Development," *History of Education Quarterly*, 21 (1981): 275-299.
 55. Diana Selig, "Parents Magazine," *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* (December 12, 2011) <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Me-Pa/Parents-Magazine.html>
 56. Ray C. Beery, *Practical Child Training* (Pleasant Hill, Ohio: The Parents Association, 1917).
 57. *Ibid.*, 946-951.
 58. *Ibid.*, 952.
 59. U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau. *Infant Care* (Bureau Publication No. 8). (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1926), 42-43.
 60. Frank Howard Richardson, *Simplifying Motherhood*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 48.
 61. J. P. Crozer Griffith, *The Care of the Baby*. (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1921), 186-187.
 62. Beery, *Practical Child Training*, 948.
 63. U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau. *Infant Care*
 64. Richardson, *Simplifying Motherhood*, 42-43.
 65. *Ibid.*, 81.
 66. Griffith, *The Care of the Baby*, 27; Richardson, *Simplifying Motherhood*, 96
 67. Jacqueline H Wolf, "Low Breastfeeding Rates and Public Health in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 12 (December 2003): 2000-2010.
 68. Holt, *The Care and Feeding of Children*, 38.
 69. Richardson, *Simplifying Motherhood*, 192-193.
 70. *Ibid.*, 198-199. While Richardson's statement reflected the reality of decreased mortality from "summer complaint," other contemporary baby books retained their caution. See Richard A. Bolt, *Baby's Health* (New York: Funk & Wagnall's Company, 1924), 16. Bolt states, "No attempt should be made to wean the baby until the seventh or eighth month, and not then if it happens to be in the summer months," similar to Holt's earlier caution.
 71. Duffus and Holt, Jr., *L. Emmett Holt*, 176-177.
 72. Bolt, *Baby's Health*, 9.
 73. Beery, *Practical Child Training*, 956.

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74. Ibid., 954-955.
 75. Ibid., 956.
 76. Bolt, *Baby's Health*, 6-9.
 77. Hardyment, *Dream Babies*, 142-143; Richardson, *Simplifying Motherhood*, 35.
 78. Ladd-Taylor, *Raising a Baby the Government Way*, 79. Accompanying requests for Children's Bureau parenting literature were letters such as this one, written by a Michigan mother in 1926: "Dear Sir: I read in one of your leaflet that there is no resin why a Mother could not nurse her baby, if she had no bad disease. There is not a thing [wrong] with me, only what I eat hurts me. I have a little Female weakness so it leaves me feeling weak. And we are poor farmers and have 4 children, so I have to over do. All so my milks leaks out...and on the days I wash I have *no* milk...So *please* tell me what to do..." This writer received a reply from Children's Bureau staff with pamphlets she had requested, advice that she nurse lying down (a popular recommendation that at least guaranteed exhausted working mothers some rest), as well as a suggestion to spread her washday chores over several days.
 79. Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book*, 78.
 80. John B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 1928).
 81. Hardyment, *Dream Babies*, 173.
 82. Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book*, 140.
 83. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, 81-82.
 84. U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, *Infant Care*
 85. Hardyment, *Dream Babies*, insert between pages 142 and 143.
 86. *Your Baby's Care* (St. Paul, MN: Carleton J. West, 1939), 2. The pamphlet states, "All of the data (pages 7 to 80, inclusive) contained in this book 'Your Baby's Care' is copied VERBATIM, from the bulletin: Publication Number 8, revised edition, known as "Infant Care" published by the Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor."
 87. Lynn Z. Bloom, *Doctor Spock* (Indianapolis & New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1972), 122.
 88. Herman N. Bundesen, *The Baby Book: A Complete Health Guide in Three Parts* (Chicago: Women's World Magazine Co., 1927), 15.
 89. Ibid., 18.
 90. Ibid., 22.
 91. Ibid., 31.
 92. Arnold A. Gesell and Frances L. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1943).
 93. Hulbert, *Raising America*, 172.

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94. Gesell and Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today*, 53.
 95. *Ibid.*, 118-119.
 96. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, 81-82.
 97. Arnold Gesell, *How a Baby Grows*, (New York: Harper & Brother, 1945), 24-25. Gesell described baby's bath as "an educational event charged with psychological as well as hygienic values." Captioned photos show a 28 week old baby with bath toys that are grabbed, missed, and retrieved, described as "fun" for the baby.
 98. Gesell and Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today*, 119.
 99. Gesell, *How a Baby Grows*, 35
 100. Alice Boardman Smuts, *Science in the Service of Children, 1893-1935*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 183.
 101. U.S. Census Bureau, *Families and living arrangements* (2009).
<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>
 102. U.S. Census Bureau, *The 2009 Statistical Abstract*. http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/hist_stats.html.
 103. Benjamin Spock, *Baby and Child Care* (New York: Pocket Books, 1946).
 104. This is an impressive figure compared to the 1950 population of children age 0-5 of 19.1 million (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2009).
 105. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 3.
 106. *Ibid.*, 511.
 107. *Ibid.*, 3.
 108. U.S. Census Bureau, *The 2009 Statistical Abstract*, http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/hist_stats.html.
 109. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 19.
 110. *Ibid.*, 26.
 111. *Ibid.*, 35-53.
 112. *Ibid.*, 54-82.
 113. Jacqueline H Wolf, "Low Breastfeeding Rates and Public Health in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 12 (December 2003): 2000-2010.
 114. Ryerson, "Medical Advice on Childrearing," 312.
 115. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 163-170.
 116. Gesell, *How a Baby Grows*. Gesell states, "Every baby has his own way of growing up. No baby follows exactly an average time table," however, the book is divided into a number of sections clearly labeled by age.

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117. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 438; *Better Homes and Gardens Baby Book* (Des Moines, Iowa: Meredith Publishing Company, 1943), 298. This example of contrasting tone appears in Lynn Z. Bloom's 1972 biography of Dr. Spock.
118. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 165.
119. For an alternative interpretation, see Michael Gordon, "Infant Care Revisited," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 30 (1968): 578-583. Gordon, looking at changing recommendations for age of onset of toilet training, posited the "Maytag hypothesis" that changing technology, in this case the automatic washers and dryers that freed mothers from onerous diaper laundering and sterilizing tasks, accounted for parents' delaying toilet-training, rather than Freud-inspired expert advice. Supporting this claim is Beatrice L. Cole, "Reflections of a Great-Grandmother," *Parents Magazine* (1988, October), 100. Cole states, commenting specifically on changing practices in toilet training, "The most tedious job in my day was washing the baby's diapers in the washtub in the basement, followed by boiling them in a special agate pot on the stove in the kitchen, stirring them with a long wooden spoon, then lifting the pot into the sink and rinsing the diapers with cold water before hanging them up to dry. In good weather, I hung them on a line the yard; in bad weather, on the line stretched over the bathtub or over the kitchen stove. While the diapers were drying, I washed the rest of the baby's clothes, towels, blankets, etc., in the washtub."
120. Spock, *Baby and Child Care*, 190-199.
121. Herman N. Bundesen, *Our Babies, Their Feeding, Care and Training* (1945), 55.
122. See, for example, Jay Mechling, "Advice to Historians on Advice to Mothers," *Journal of Social History*, 9, no. 1 (1975): 44-63. Mechling held that childrearing manuals reflected cultural values, but not actual parenting practices. A contrasting view was held by developmental child psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, who argued, "mothers not only read these books, but [they] take them seriously, and their treatment of the child is affected accordingly." (Urie Bronfenbrenner, "The Changing American Child—A Speculative Analysis" *Journal of Social Issues* 17: 6-18.) Julia Grant's analysis of minutes and notes from mothers' groups in Upstate New York in the 1920s found that the advice of experts formed the starting point for these groups' discussions of child rearing practices, but also cited that Watson's advice, for example, "met with a mixed response" from mothers. (Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book*, 140.)
123. Clark E. Vincent, "Trends in Infant Care Ideas," *Child Development* 22, no. 3 (September 1951): 205.
124. Infant sleep researcher James McKenna and colleagues refer to "a view of infants that prioritizes recent western social values over the human infant's biological heritage." Specifically, their work calls into question the dominant medical research paradigm of the normalcy of solitary infant sleep, making the point, over many studies, that recommendations, in this case that babies should sleep alone, are grounded not in empirical science or studies of human infant biology, but ideology. See James J. McKenna, Helen L. Ball, and Lee T. Gettler, "Mother-Infant Co-Sleeping, Breastfeeding and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS): What Biological Anthropology Has Discovered About Normal Infant Sleep and Pediatric Sleep Medicine," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology*, 50 (2007): 133-61; James J. McKenna, "Cultural influences on infant and childhood sleep biology and the science that studies it: Toward a more inclusive paradigm," in *Sleep and Breathing In Children and Pediatrics*, eds. Gerald Laughlin, John. Carroll, and Carole Marcos (New York: Marcel-Dekker, 2000), 99-130.
125. Penelope Leach, *Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age Five* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).
126. *Ibid.*, 23.