

Book Reviews



*Teach Me to Do It Myself

By Maja Pitamic
RRP \$29.95
(paperback)
165 pages
Australia 2004

If you're a parent interested in things to do with children aged 2 to 5, you will enjoy this book. It is filled with simple, step-by-step activities to share with your child.

The activities are based on Montessori principles of learning through experience. They are not only fun, but also designed to help children gain essential life skills and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

The Montessori motto is "Help me to do it myself". The adult acts as a guide, assisting the child towards greater independence.

Activities are grouped into five chapters, beginning with Life Skills and Developing the Senses, and then Language Development, Numeracy Skills and Science Skills.

Activities are inexpensive, making use of everyday household items.

Each activity includes a list of further related activities, so you can continue to develop the theme if your child is interested, or if not, move on to something else.

Some activities are quick, whilst others require more time. The choice is for you and your child to make.

The book is clearly laid out and beautifully illustrated, which enhances the sense of enjoyment.

I can report that my three-year-old son and I have sampled a number of the activities and are keen to do more.

Dr Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952) devised a method of education that revolutionised schooling around the world. Her approach emphasised the importance of creating a child-centred environment for learning. For information on the Brisbane Montessori School see: www.bms.qld.edu.au

*A Book About Me

Edited by Fiona Collie & Annabel Cornfoot
RRP \$44.95
(hardcover)
Brisbane 2005



I have seen many record books over the years and *A Book About Me* stands out for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it is comprehensive, providing space to collate memories of pregnancy and birth, as well as the family, home and world into which your baby is born.

The journey continues with the opportunity to record interesting items during each month of your baby's development.

Then come all the firsts, including first Christmas, birthday, haircut, and painting.

Pages I particularly enjoyed were My Australian Childhood (first vegemite, freddo frog, day at the beach etc) and Unforgettable Moments (strangest place I've had my nappy changed – I'd love to hear all the different answers to that one!)

The record continues at yearly intervals up to five, with ample space for photographs.

But perhaps the best feature is the book's versatility. It's loose-leaf format enables parents to add or remove pages to create a book that expresses the unique story of their child.

A Book about Me has been a labour of love by two mothers.

Fiona and Annabel have three children between them, with another two on the way, so they well understand the demands of parenting. They have even included a plastic pocket at the back so you can store things until there is time to include them in the correct places.

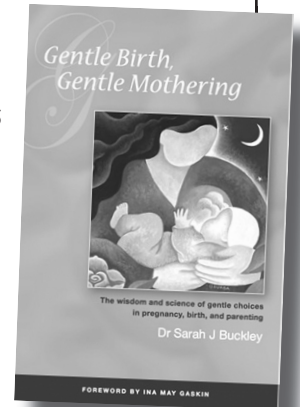
Finally, the book has been printed on thick paper so any pen can be used without smudging or showing through.

Happy creating!

Reviews by Madeleine Bonutto

Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering: The wisdom and science of gentle choices in pregnancy, birth and parenting.

By Dr Sarah J Buckley
\$36.95 + \$7.50 p+h
(paperback) 327 pages
Brisbane 2005



The foreword of this book, "Hooray for Sarah Buckley" by internationally renowned midwife and author, Ina May Gaskin, says it all.

Brisbane doctor, writer and mother, Dr Sarah J Buckley, reveals the little-told risks of today's high-tech maternity care in her self-published book.

Each of the chapters is a discrete article so it's perfect for busy mothers. Some of the most important information, such as the power of our birthing hormones is discussed in more than one chapter so you can't miss it. We learn the complex physiological and hormonal processes that have enabled women to birth naturally since the beginning of time.

Sarah gives us a personal insight into each of her four home births, including her fourth baby which was born unexpectedly breech in her spa birth. She discusses the concept of 'ecstatic birth' by sharing her own ecstatic birth experience and highlights the medical evidence on the subject. Reading the book would give all pregnant women the inspiration and conviction to believe in her body's innate ability to birth.

For me, some of the most interesting chapters were on diagnostic testing, epidurals and caesarean sections. We learn how modern, high-tech birthing practices often impede our body's natural ability to birth powerfully and strongly. If you've ever wondered about the impact on mother and baby of ultrasound scans, drugs in labour or a surgical birth, then this is the book for you.

Unlike many other birthing books, she continues to offer advice beyond the birth experience: on gentle discipline, extended breastfeeding and introducing your new-born to a nappy-free world, among other topics. I have already recommended this book to my pregnant friends.

Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering can be ordered from www.sarahjbuckley.com

Review by Joanne Smethurst

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