



A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Seven Societies

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Are babies divine, or do they have the devil in them? Should parents talk to their infants, or is it a waste of time? Answers to questions about the nature and nurture of infants appear in this book as advice to parents in seven world societies. Imagine what Dr. Spock might have written if he were a healer from Bali...or an Aboriginal grandmother from the Australian desert...or a diviner from a rural village in West Africa. As the seven "child care manuals" in this book reveal, experts worldwide offer intriguingly different advice to new parents. A World of Babies brings alive infant care practices around the world in the form of baby and child care manuals "written" by members of seven real societies. The information, while presented in an imaginative fictive format, is based on extensive research by anthropologists, psychologists, and historians. Encountering fascinating facts about how people in other societies view and raise their babies, readers may be led to see the beliefs and practices of their own society from a new perspective. The creative format of this book brings alive a rich fund of ethnographic knowledge, vividly illustrating a simple but powerful truth: there exist many models of babyhood, each shaped by deeply held values and widely varying cultural contexts. After reading this book, you will never again view child-rearing as a matter of "common sense." Judy DeLoache is Professor of Psychology at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Alma Gottlieb is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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