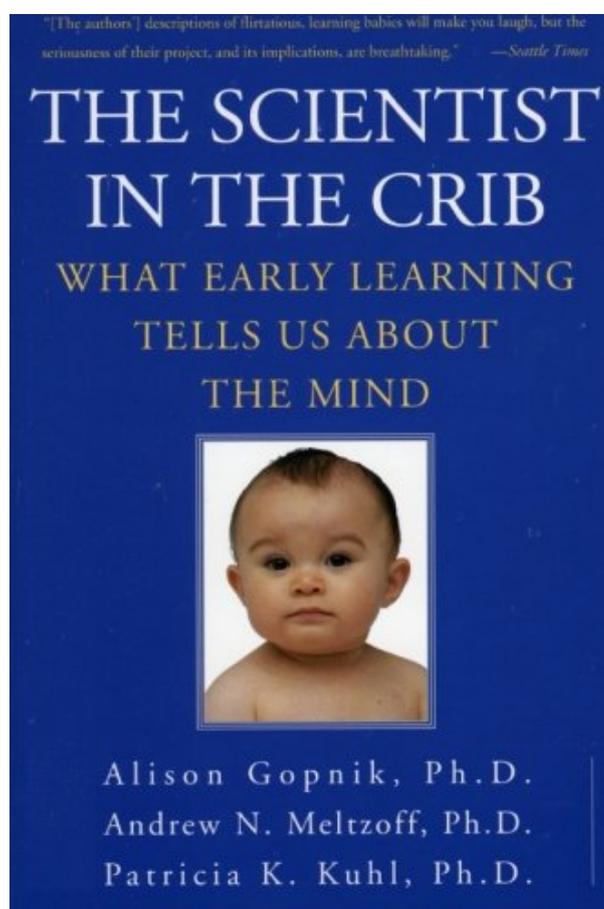


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MIND BY ALISON GOPNIK, ANDREW N.
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"[The authors'] descriptions of flirtatious, learning babies will make you laugh, but the seriousness of their project, and its implications, are breathtaking." —*Seattle Times*

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THE MIND



Alison Gopnik, Ph.D.
Andrew N. Meltzoff, Ph.D.
Patricia K. Kuhl, Ph.D.

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From Booklist

Gopnik and her coauthors are authorities on children's learning development and, in this book, at any rate, quite good writers. They present how children learn to understand and use language, control their emotions and arouse the emotions of others, and establish relationships. Babies are better at the elements and nuances of language than computers are, they show, for natural language far surpasses the artificial varieties. They demonstrate how science and messy reality intriguingly overlap in sections with such piquant titles as "The Three-Year-Old Opera: Love and Deception" and in such observations as "The babies' world isn't concrete any more than it's simple." They also willingly point out areas of development about which current understanding is fuzzy and more information is needed. Prospective and actual parents stand to learn much that may be helpful to them and their children from this lively book. William Beatty

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This exciting book by three pioneers in the new field of cognitive science discusses important discoveries about how much babies and young children know and learn, and how much parents naturally teach them. It argues that evolution designed us both to teach and learn, and that the drive to learn is our most important instinct. It also reveals as fascinating insights about our adult capacities and how even young children -- as well as adults -- use some of the same methods that allow scientists to learn so much about the world. Filled with surprise at every turn, this vivid, lucid, and often funny book gives us a new view of the inner life of children and the mysteries of the mind.

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Purchased for school, but excellent for expecting mothers

By Alexis B. Cano

I purchased this book as required reading for a developmental physiology class in college, but it is still on my bookshelf. The information in this book is insightful and it is a good read. I purchased this book 14 years ago and still remember what it says about how babies develop language skills and their ability to hear differences in any language in the beginning but fine tune their language skills within months of birth. This will be something I re-read when I have my first baby. I highly recommend it.

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

A Great Intro to Baby's Developmental Psychology

By Bradley P. Rich

As the father of a nine month old boy, I have been enthralled with this book. It is not a "how to" book on helping your child learn, but rather is a readable introduction to the current state of the study of cognitive development of babies. If you don't believe that it is possible to know what a baby is thinking, you will be fascinated at the clever experiments that have been constructed to tease out information from a baby's brain. It is surprising who much we can find out about how babies' brains work, and how much that can teach us about the adult human brain.

The tone of the book is chatty, but the content is substantial. The authors discuss the philosophers as well as the scientists who are working in this area. I don't suppose that the average new parent is interested in wading into Chomsky, Ryle or Descartes, but this book actually makes it interesting and compelling.

The book is broken down into the acquisition of particular mental skills. The authors thesis is that babies learn using, more or less, the scientific method, forming hypotheses and then testing them empirically. (The

title of the book is a clever word play, referring to this theory, while simultaneously demonstrating what adult scientists are learning from their empirical studies.) While this may seem pretentious, the authors actually make a pretty good case for this theory.

The acquisition of language deviates somewhat from this general theoretical method, but the authors have some fascinating experimental data to illustrate the way babies actually learn language.

In short, this book is highly recommended, not just to new parents, but also to anyone interested in childhood cognitive development or what can be known about the workings of the human brain.

45 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Not a How-To Guide to Parenting, and a Better Book For It

By Joel Jacobsen

If you want practical advice on child-rearing, check out Penelope Leach or Dr. Mom. But if you're interested in reading about the latest research in the mental development of infants, this book is absolutely wonderful. It's full of surprising information about how observant and analytical babies are (at less than an hour old, they mimic faces), and gives details about the structure of the experiments used to deduce such information, allowing you to decide for yourself how much weight to give it. Much of the information confirms those of us who have always suspected two day old kids are as intelligent and tuned-in as, say, the typical graduate student -- they just have fewer ways to express it, and less experience to build on.

Better yet, the book is written in a thoroughly engaging and often humorous style that possibly owes something to the first named author's brother, the New Yorker writer Adam (or, more likely, both Gopniks inherited the same literary genes).

But don't expect pointers on burping technique.

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