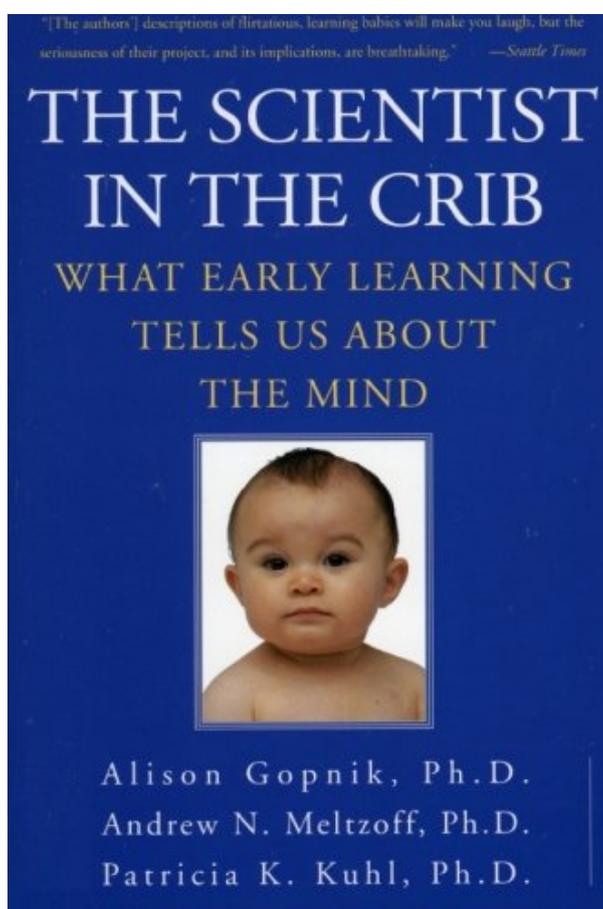


**THE SCIENTIST IN THE CRIB: WHAT  
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MIND BY ALISON GOPNIK, ANDREW N.  
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TELLS US ABOUT  
THE MIND



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

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- Sales Rank: #46050 in Books
- Brand: Brand: HarperCollins e-books
- Published on: 2000-12-26
- Released on: 2000-12-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .68" w x 5.31" l, .52 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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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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