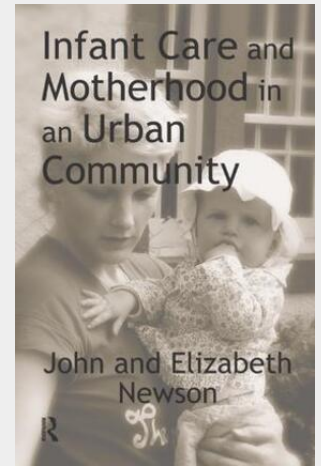


Infant Care and Motherhood in an Urban Community

Infant Care and Motherhood in an Urban Community investigates the behavior and attitudes of 709 mothers towards their year-old babies. John and Elizabeth Newson, impatient with the voluminous and contradictory literature telling parents how their children should be brought up, decided to find out how they were being brought up. Infant Care in an Urban Community is focused on sources of advice that influence parents, how they feel about their children, and how they react to situations in handling young babies. Infant handling today is still a subject on which many different specialists use the full weight of their professional authority to back up their private prejudices concerning what is good and what is bad in the care of young children. In the face of the conflict which results, intelligent parents are rapidly forced to the conclusion that the experts know little more about the matter than they do themselves. The truth is that in the present state of knowledge there is not a sufficient body of well-substantiated evidence about the facts and consequences of child rearing on which to base sound practical advice to parents. This is where this book comes in. It shows that much of the advice offered is often out of touch with the practical needs, circumstances, and beliefs of the ordinary mother. Few theories of child rearing have been subjected to the inconvenience of being reconciled with the empirical evidence. This is the first study which has obtained information of this sort from a large and representative sample of mothers, and which has investigated the behavior of both mother and baby here and now rather than relying on fond maternal memories. A special feature is the use of tape-recorded interviews which has allowed extensive quotation of their mothers' own opinions.



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