

## **Brain Rules for Baby: How to Raise a Smart and Happy Child from Zero to Five**

By: **John Medina**

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### **Reviewed by Erin Gabrielson**

This book is a wonderful and engaging overview of child development in terms of physical, emotional, relational, and cognitive development. The book is written in easy to read, every day, language for parents, while at the same time being packed full of great research. The book is a great recommendation for parents. So, simply reading this book was helpful to me as I am now happy to recommend it to new parents, like those who might be in my class, if they have questions about development, milestones, growth and what is 'normal'. One aspect of this book that was particularly interesting to me was the discussion of intelligence and cultivating intelligence or cognitive development in babies. I think this section is particularly relevant to parents, because there is a lot of pressure on parents to properly stimulate their children (with the right toys and activities) for optimal cognitive development.

*Brain Rules for Baby* takes a common sense approach to looking at intellectual/cognitive development in babies highlighting the following factors as most important for cognitive development: the desire to explore, self-control, creativity, communication, and interpreting non-verbal communication. I liked these categories because they are easy to understand and relate to. They also help parents see that intelligence is not about learning letters, numbers, and shapes at a very young age. In fact cognitive development is about just basic, general skills, most of which are connected to relating to others or the environment in everyday ways.

This information supports the work of Infant Massage in that it brings home the importance of the relationship, understanding and reading cues (on both the child and parents part), and following the child's lead. Infant Massage helps to promote calm and engaged states, which is connected to self-control as children age. Infant Massage respects the child's desire to explore during the massage and doesn't force the massage when the child is more interested in doing other things. Infant Massage classes also help parents learn how to relate and interact with their child when they are more mobile and exploring, by incorporating massage into the life of a busy exploring toddler. Creativity is not necessarily addressed through Infant Massage, but the neuro-physical benefits of touch and massage certainly don't harm and likely help overall brain development in this area. Most importantly infant massage teaches babies (and parents) about communication (giving cues and having those cues understood and respected, from a very young age), which certainly helps with the development of communication overall. Knowing and sharing this type of information (and other information I read about in this book) with parents will certainly support my work as an IAIM Infant Massage Instructor.