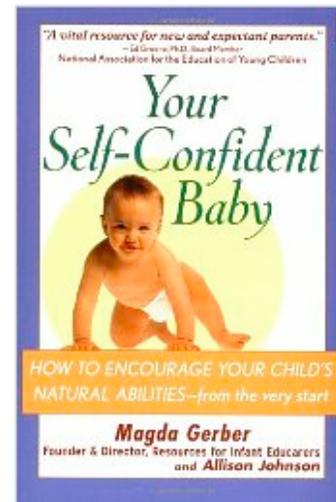


Your Self-Confident Baby: How to Encourage Your Child's Natural Abilities— from the very start;
Gerber, Magda and Johnson, Allison;
John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Publishing; 1998.

Book Review by Mandy Snyder, CEIM

I came across this book while I was working within the infant and toddler program at a child development center, and I absolutely fell in love. The main focus within this book is the program and concept of RIE- Resources for Infant Educators. RIE is “an organization that helps parents and children from birth to twenty-four months learn to treat each others with respect.” The entire idea is grasping that respect is a two-way street. If parents want their children to learn the basics of caring both for themselves in a respectful way and for others in a respectful way, then parents need to model and give respect. This book breaks down in very simple and easy ways for parents to bring this concept into their lives by communicating with their infant continuously. One example of this is to start showing respect for your infant during basic needs times during the day such as diapering and feeding.



My favorite idea is to think about how a child is handled while she is having her diaper changed. She can sometimes be picked up quite abruptly from what she was just doing, carried all the way across the house, plopped down on a changing table with a diaper laid on top of her belly while the parent begins to take down her pants and dirty diaper, wipe her bottom with something very cold and wet then have the new diaper torn out from her little hands just to be quickly placed back on her bottom and pants pulled back up, with then a quick pick back up, carried all the way back across the house and plopped back down to where she just was playing a few minutes ago.

Hearing that scenario for the very first time really made me think about how sad, disoriented, confused and disrespected I would feel if that were to happen to me. Then if you were to think about just how many times that same scenario could happen to an infant in just one single day – Oh my!

**If that parent were to only slow down a little bit and talk with her baby about what she was going to do and what she was doing, what a different experience that would be for both the infant and the parent. When a baby

is spoken to in a calm voice she is not only feeling those soothing feelings of a bond being strengthened, but she is learning language, she is learning what to expect when certain things happen or certain words are said and above all she is learning respect because she is being respected!

The book provides many different examples of how parents can try to refocus and slow down in order to make little routines like diaper changes less rushed, and less stressful for everyone involved. As well as ways to try to have an easier more predictable life during the first few challenges years of parenthood. Through the simple concept of observing a child as a way of parenting, respect and knowledge is fostered.

The ideas discussed within this book fit hand in hand with supporting me as an infant massage instructor. Respect is the key component of the infant massage program and by having additional resources and information that supports this idea is crucial when working with parents. Observing a child and being able to read her cues is just as important while providing infant massage as it is to all of parenting. For some parents, this concept will be entirely new to them and it may take awhile for them to understand why you need to respect a baby. The more educated and well-versed I am able to speak about and convey the importance of respect as it relays to relationships, bonding, and life-long learning the better instructor I can ultimately be for parents.