

BOOK REVIEW

The New Baby and Child Care Handbook

By Marina Petropulos. Pp. xi + 465. Illustrated. R250.00. Published by Marina Petropulos. 2011. ISBN 978-0-620-4933-4.

Our children grew up under the guidance of Marina Petropulos as understood and interpreted by my conscientious young wife. I, as a young medical practitioner, played second fiddle to this doyen of all knowledge regarding baby and child care. I admit that I was often jealous of the authority Marina exerted in our lives! To have to read through and digest this new handbook has made me aware of the debt of gratitude I owe to Marina in the confidence she imparted to us as new parents. This book covers a wide range of topics relevant to parents, from preparation before birth, the birthing process, feeding choices, through to the childhood developmental phases, to an A-Z of illness, poisoning and other emergencies.

What I have enjoyed so much about Marina's book is that it gives parents a set of tools to help them on their own road. As she highlights, each child is an individual, so we as parents need to get to know them in order to provide their particular needs. There is no single right way, and Marina is very clear that we have to trust our knowledge of our particular children in order to help them grow up to be adults who can negotiate their way in life.

This is not a book to read from cover to cover; it is best seen as something to dive into again and again – to pick up tips in various areas, or to consolidate information required. There is a lot of information which is repeated and can irritate in a cover-to-cover read, but it is repeated on purpose to ensure that important details are not missed when focusing on a specific topic.

This is a book to have always available on one's bedside table. It comes highly recommended!

Alan Wood

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