



How to Hold a Glue Stick: And Other Clues to Parenting

Froukje M. Matthews

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How to Hold a Glue Stick is a concise reference guide for the parents of toddlers, suggesting means of developing healthy lifelong habits.

Froukje M. Matthews's guidebook for parents of toddlers, *How to Hold a Glue Stick*, collects strategies for adapting to children's growing needs.

Noting that the toddler stage of a child's development comes with new, sometimes unexpected challenges, this book draws upon science and the Montessori method for its categorical guidance through the initial, nurturing stages of toddlerhood and on into meeting the psychological and mental needs of a child. It names ten areas that it calls key to toddler development, including setting routines, language development, and dealing with negative or troublesome behaviors like tantrums. It also places considerable focus on the topic of mindfulness—here, being aware within single moments and exercising patience and consistency. Indeed, the book's topics often less represent advice for raising toddlers than they do result in a better sense of how toddlers think, with complementary guidance for parents to adjust to toddlers' ways of understanding the world.

Clear and concise throughout, the book's chapters are designed to be accessible and referable, though their material is quite dense within their limited spaces. In the chapter on tantrums, for example, space is devoted to insights into toddlers' minds, encouragements toward creative thinking on the part of parents, and means of understanding and addressing specific tantrum situations. Indeed, each of the ten topics is embellished in a similar manner—with examples, discussions, and strategy overviews that help parents to break down what went wrong or right in a given situation.

Throughout its pages, the book takes care not to frame even its more negative concepts in terms of parental failures. Indeed, it makes the recurrent claim that better ways of handling situations can always be sought, and it reassures its audience that anything a parent does with a clear understanding of how a child learns and grows is helpful, reminding parents that their child "has not been in this world before; [they have] never done the activity before and [will be] completely engrossed in the novelty of it. Give [them] time to finish." And it promises happy returns if such care is taken: "One may find that the child suddenly 'sees' the parent and flows over with affection!" The result is an empowering book that includes useful, if often familiar, information and skill-building advice. A handful of pencil drawings accompany the text, though they also undercut its general authority with their amateurish style.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (December 28, 2023)

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