ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Out of the Mouths of Babes: Parenting from a Childs Perspective
Dyan Eybergen
iUniverse
978-1-936236-57-2
Three Stars (out of Five)

Throughout the eight chapters of her slim yet powerful parenting book, Dyan Eybergen—a Registered Nurse and Certified Parent Coach—delves into children's perspectives on various situations, from toilet training and nighttime fears to sibling rivalry and self-esteem. Eybergen subscribes to the practice of "attachment parenting," which holds that a child's relationship with his or her caregivers can have a significant lifelong impact.

Out of the Mouths of Babes has been honored with a Mom's Choice Award, and it is easy to see why. While informative, Eybergen's voice is often self-deprecating and humorous. She begins the preface with: "As a registered nurse working with psychiatric children and adolescents, there wasn't a behavioural situation I wasn't trained to handle—until I had my own children." Eybergen dislikes parenting advice of the "one-size-fits-all" variety, and uses her own experiences raising three boys to provide numerous examples of the need for a tailored approach to every child.

The frustration, of course, with the "every child is different" principle is that there are no easy answers—to anything. As entertaining and revealing as Eybergen's family stories are, readers are left with a problem of simple logic: if every child is different and requires different solutions, then how much value is there in reading these accounts of what worked or didn't work for her?

The answer is that *Out of the Mouths of Babes* does work—as a high-level overview of a more compassionate and sensitive way to raise children. The details might be different on a case by case basis, but the basic principles remain the same.

At times, *Out of the Mouths of Babes* falls flat as it walks the line between being a subjective book of anecdotes and an authoritative guide to parenting. Eybergen's use of research is also inconsistent. She references past studies, but in certain instances mentions no other authorities than herself. Eybergen writes, "As a teenager, [a child] will be far more likely to succumb to peer pressure with regards to drugs and alcohol and sexual promiscuity than if his

feelings regarding food were valued early on." This type of assertion requires some kind of scientific documentation or support to convince readers of its validity.

To the author's credit, she is not afraid to tackle disciplinary sacred cows like the "timeout." Her analysis of its use is exemplary as she cites a recent study, offers alternatives, and thoroughly explains the reasoning behind those alternatives.

For Eybergen, parenting is a creative process that requires the bending of rules. This might be more than the average parent feels willing or able to do, especially because there are so many parenting guides that seem to offer "the right answer" to every question posed. In *Out of the Mouths of Babes*, parents looking to explore alternatives to the mainstream approach will find their efforts rewarded.

Peter Dabbene