

The ABCs of Being Mom: Advice and Support from the Mom Next Door, Birth through Kindergarten

Karen Bongiorno

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The ABCs of Being Mom is a resource-filled parenting book that stands to work for all parents.

Creating and maintaining a routine is the path to parenting success, according to Karen Bongiorno's *The ABCs of Being Mom*.

Welcoming a new baby, especially a first child, into a family brings great joy and great fear to new parents, Bongiorno knows: here is this tiny human for whom they are now wholly responsible, and that reality is daunting. To help, Bongiorno shares tips and resources for first time moms from the perspective of a seasoned mom, aiming to relieve some of the anxiety that they feel. She cautions them that sleepless nights, accidents, and tears will happen, but also reassures fellow moms that laughter, snuggles, and playtime will occur, too, and those are moments to be treasured.

The book's chapters are organized by the age of the new family member, from newborn to six years old. This arrangement supports the insights into child psychology and development that the book doles out, and it is consistent with the book's goal of assisting new moms.

The text's addresses to new moms are direct, focused on what they may be going through while caring for their baby. The conversational text also includes personal anecdotes to illustrate its points on topics like finding reliable babysitters, and the importance of recognizing that every baby is unique and has a different disposition and temperament.

Becoming a mother can happen in a variety of life situations, and the book tries to account for all of them. There is no judgement for how a mom chooses to move in the world with her child. Stay at home moms, full-time and part-time employed moms, and single moms are all included in the conversation. Still, the book is sometimes repetitive: in encouraging new moms to reach out to other moms by joining or creating moms' groups, the book shares the same information three times within its first three chapters, or while the baby is under three years of age. Even when the book goes into greater depth about Bongiorno's experiences with moms' groups in its last portion, it repeats the same general information about where to look for or advertise for a moms' group in the community.

The book excels at sharing its resources and templates. Within each chapter are sidebar highlights, though the smaller of these sidebars function more on concept emphasis. The larger sidebars are extensions of concepts within the text; they include websites and checklists that new moms will find useful, including diaper bag essentials, toy box essentials, and information for learning about postpartum depression. Each chapter ends with a summary of its points and a roundup of the reference information considered most necessary for the age range at hand.

The book ends with templates for moms to replicate for their own needs, including charts to keep track of their baby questions between doctors' appointments; a refrigerator reference of important numbers and other information for babysitters and caregivers; and budget trackers, helping to make *The ABCs of Being Mom* a resource-filled parenting

book that stands to work for all parents.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (January 5, 2021)

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