

The Parent's Complete Guide: What to Teach, How and When to Teach It

Sherry Rhodes

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The Parent's Complete Guide is a practical and thorough guidebook that takes the pressure of perfection off of parents and their children.

Encouraging and cheerful, Sherry Rhodes's *The Parent's Complete Guide* takes the mystery out of what, when, and how to teach children the skills they need to navigate life, from birth to eighteen.

"This is the book I wish I'd had when our first bundle of joy was born," writes Rhodes, an educator and mother of three. Comprehensive and accessible, the book reveals what parents can expect at each stage of a child's development, and suggests tools to help children get through the tough spots with their confidence and self-esteem intact.

The book first shares a curriculum guide, followed by clear lesson plans for each developmental stage, all supported by research and humorous and humbling personal anecdotes. Its instructions and suggestions demonstrate uncanny awareness of what children are thinking and feeling at each stage, preparing parents in advance for possible resistance or arguments.

Inevitable problems and conflicts are addressed to reduce stress levels and increase the chances of successful resolutions. Suggestions for discussing emotionally charged issues, and helping children prepare positive responses to them, are included: what to do upon accidentally breaking a friend's toy, for example, and how to respond to a party invitation for an event where the parents won't be there. Rhodes emphasizes that choices have consequences, as well as that consistency is important. The book acknowledges that mistakes are an inevitable part of the learning process, but asserts that kindness and assurances of parental love should be a constant.

The topic of whether or not to give a child a religious upbringing is tackled with sensitivity. Rhodes is upfront about her Christian faith, and while the book makes a compelling argument for the benefits of raising children within a religion, its approach is light. Still, not all of the book's advice will appeal to all parents, as with a warning that a child should act responsibly because "God is watching," or with the dated suggestion that doing well in school will result in getting a high-paying job and the ability to purchase expensive toys. More ably addressed are safe cell phone and computer uses (the book includes a contract with rules that must be agreed to); dating; sex, its emotional effects, and sexually transmitted diseases; illegal substances; and money skills. An appendix with further resources is helpfully included.

The Parent's Complete Guide is a practical, thorough guidebook that takes the pressure of perfection off of parents and their children, instead suggesting ways to be the best that one can be.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May 12, 2020)

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