

## Welcome With Love Jenni Overend

**Jenni Overend**

**Julie Vivas, Illustrator**

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This delightfully honest and forthright story is told from the point of view of a young boy soon to become a big brother. “We’ve been waiting a long time,” he says at the beginning of the book, when the baby’s appearance is imminent. His family—mom, dad and two sisters—is practical about preparing for the birth, yet excited, too.

They arrange the living room, get out baby clothes (“The socks are tiny enough to fit on my thumbs.”) and help mom as much as they can. Mom has taken the time to explain to her son, who has never seen a baby being born although his sisters have, that she might yell and scream but not to worry. It makes her feel better.

Mom goes for a walk in the blustery night while Dad and son bring in extra firewood. The midwife arrives, as does an aunt and then its time!

The illustrations capture not only the excitement of the birth but manage to show the son’s take on things while still being tastefully true to life. The baby, a boy, is healthy and of course just what everyone was wishing for. Out comes the placenta, which is examined by the midwife, then the mom and her new son lie down in front of the fire. The whole family joins them, sleeping in the living room on this, their brother’s “first night in the world.”

The author and illustrator are Australian, so “mom” is “mum” and the house looks like it’s in the Outback, but they also deal with birth as a fact of life and not something mysterious as Americans tend to make it. The rest of the family is integral in the process, not relegated to grandma’s house for the weekend.

The reading level is easy-second-graders should be able to read it by themselves-and each page is covered with glorious, full-color illustrations.

This is one lucky baby, surrounded by love from its first breath. This book is perfect for other families expecting one of their own.

JODEE TAYLOR (March / April 2000)

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