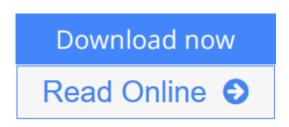


The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind

By Alison Gopnik, Andrew N. Meltzoff, Patricia K. Kuhl



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This exciting book by three pioneers in the new field of cognitive science discusses important discoveries about how much babies and young children know and learn, and how much parents naturally teach them. It argues that evolution designed us both to teach and learn, and that the drive to learn is our most important instinct. It also reveals as fascinating insights about our adult capacities and how even young children -- as well as adults -- use some of the same methods that allow scientists to learn so much about the world. Filled with surprise at every turn, this vivid, lucid, and often funny book gives us a new view of the inner life of children and the mysteries of the mind.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A trio of nationally respected childhood-development scientists hailing from Berkeley and the University of Washington has authored *The Scientist in the Crib* to correct a disparity: while popular books about science speak to intelligent, perceptive adults who simply want to learn, books about babies typically just give advice, heavy on the how-to and light on the why. The authors write, "It's as if the only place you could read about evolution was in dog-breeding manuals, not in Stephen Jay Gould; as if, lacking Stephen Hawking's insights, the layman's knowledge of the cosmos was reduced to 'How to find the constellations.'"

The Scientist in the Crib changes that. Standing on the relatively recent achievements of the young field of cognitive science (pointing out that not so long ago, babies were considered only slightly animate vegetables--"carrots that could cry"), the authors succinctly and articulately sum up the state of what's now known about children's minds and how they learn. Using language that's both friendly and smart (and using equally accessible metaphors, everything from *Scooby-Doo* to *The Third Man*), *The Scientist in the Crib* explores how babies recognize and understand their fellow humans, interpret sensory input, absorb language, learn and devise theories, and take part in building their own brains.

Such science makes for great reading, but will likely prove even more useful to readers with a scientist in their own crib, acting as tonic to pseudoscientific how-to baby books that recommend everything "from flash cards, to Mozart tapes, to Better Baby Institutes." As the authors put it, "We want to understand children, not renovate them." *--Paul Hughes*

From Publishers Weekly

Although Gopnik, Meltzoff and Kuhl have each conducted groundbreaking research into the cognitive development of infants and its philosophical implications, this book evokes less excitement than their more straightforward research. With breathless enthusiasm, the authors review recent findings in developmental psychology and explain, in a tone somewhat self-consciously aimed at the "lay reader," their hopes that they will help answer fundamental philosophical questions. They focus on Kuhl's work in early infant phonetic recognition and language acquisition, Meltzoff's work on imitation in infants and Gopnik's exploration of philosophical development in infants, as well as other important work in the field. How do babies learn? they ask, answering that "they are born knowing a great deal, they learn more and we are designed to teach them." They also give refreshing emphasis to the evolutionary basis for infant-caregiver interactions. For example, they explain that "motherese" Athe high-pitched, slightly louder than normal speech with elongated and articulated consonants and vowelsAis not only preferred by babies but also optimally suited to their developing auditory systems. It's ironic, though, that these authors, who from the first pages decry illinformed condescension to children, should be themselves so unthinkingly condescending in their tone and presentation: "children and scientists," they repeatedly aver, "are the best learners in the world." Agent, Katinka Matson, Brockman Inc.; 5-city author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Babies solve problems in exactly the same way that scientists workAby repeatedly testing "hypotheses" against real occurrences, then modifying their initial theories to fit reality better. The three authorsAall parents as well as noted specialists in infant developmentAuse this idea to organize their summary of research on cognitive development in early childhood. Chapters cover the development of language, of

understanding, and of minds and brains (the "software" and "hardware" of cognition). The authors do a good job of staying appropriately neutral on the big political issues of childcare and emphasize that this is not a book of child-rearing advice. It is instead a readable, concise summary of the recent explosion of research on early childhood development. Recommended for public and undergraduate libraries. AMary Ann Hughes, Neill P.L., Pullman, WA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dan Williams:

Do you have something that you prefer such as book? The book lovers usually prefer to decide on book like comic, short story and the biggest some may be novel. Now, why not attempting The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied by simply reading this book. Reading habit all over the world can be said as the opportinity for people to know world better then how they react to the world. It can't be explained constantly that reading routine only for the geeky person but for all of you who wants to possibly be success person. So , for all you who want to start studying as your good habit, you can pick The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind become your current starter.

Brian Mejia:

Reading a book to be new life style in this year; every people loves to learn a book. When you read a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read publications, you can improve your knowledge, since book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what sorts of book that you have read. If you wish to get information about your analysis, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, along with soon. The The Scientist in the Crib: What Early Learning Tells Us About the Mind will give you a new experience in studying a book.

Brian Bauer:

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