



Taking Back Childhood: A Proven Roadmap for Raising Confident, Creative, Compassionate Kids

Nancy Carlsson-Paige

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An early childhood development expert shows how to craft a nurturing childhood for your sons and daughters, while minimizing negative societal influences.

Based on early-childhood development expert Nancy Carlsson-Paige's thirty years of researching young children, this groundbreaking book helps parents navigate the cultural currents shaping, and too often harming, kids today--and restore childhood to the best of what it can be. As Carlsson-Paige explains, there are three attributes critical to kids' healthy development: time and space for creative play, a feeling of safety in today's often frightening world, and strong, meaningful relationships with both adults and other children--attributes that we, as a society, are failing to protect and nurture. From advising parents on which toys foster creativity (and which stifle it) to guiding them in how to use "power-sharing" techniques to resolve conflicts and generate empathy, Carlsson-Paige offers hands-on steps parents can take to create a safe, open, and imaginative environment in which kids can relish childhood and flourish as human beings.

"Dr. Carlsson-Paige explains the many ways our culture and media are threatening our children's healthy development. She gives adults concrete strategies for fighting back. Today's parents need this book."--**Marian Wright Edelman, Children's Defense Fund**

Taking Back Childhood: A Proven Roadmap for Raising Confident, Creative, Compassionate Kids Details

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From Reader Review Taking Back Childhood: A Proven Roadmap for Raising Confident, Creative, Compassionate Kids for online ebook

John Edwards says

Not my typical fare, but my wife suggested it after reading it herself. We are expecting our first child in the middle of October and I can see that I will have to re-read bits and pieces of this as needed. The author does a wonderful job reminding parents at what age children can and can't process certain types of information, choices, or decisions. In turn this allows parents to customize their reactions to the age of their child and help mediate issues and problems to a quick and satisfactory resolution. The book also provides a wealth of research information on the impact of tv, advertising, and media on young minds. The author doesn't beat the reader over the head with her own opinions, but her presentation is a compelling argument in and of itself. I will be referencing this book repeatedly in the coming years.

Momma says

nothing new, just a lot of "you're doing it wrong"

Daniel says

This is a book that gives very practical tips on how to take care of our children so that they can grow up to be kind, compassionate, self-reliant, resilient and empathetic adults. Most children books describe general steps but this one gives very specific examples from concrete stories on taking care of children. I especially find the chapters on sibling rivalry, tantrums and response to bad news reports. I had started using some of the techniques and they work better than the usual shouting.

Some of the other main points is for us to shield our kids from video games, TV, narrow-use toys and commercialism. I agree totally with those suggestions and know that kids can unleash their creativity and actually read if you remove those distractions from them.

A must read for anyone with children.

Kellie says

There was some new information here that was interesting to me, particularly in the beginning of the book. For example, I did not know that there are regulations in many countries in the world about how/if companies can market to children, or that the US used to have similar regulations until the early 80s. She also makes some interesting points about the sheer volume of marketing directed at young children that is totally inappropriate - like Halloween costumes for four-year-olds that portray characters from PG-13 movies. Other information was useful but not particularly new - how stifling single-use toys are to children's

play (which most toys marketed after TV programs and movies are), how young children simply cannot understand the difference between what they see on the screen and reality, and the benefit of watching questionable stuff with your kid and discussing it in a way that helps them learn to think critically. However, this book was very poorly referenced. I expected a section at the end of the book detailing her sources, and it simply wasn't there. Most of her points make intuitive sense, but I still think that was sloppy.

Emily says

Okay, so I actually only got through about half of this book before Barnes and Noble closed (and I'm too cheap to buy it...I still need to check the library.) But I absolutely LOVED IT! Totally fascinating, and SO needed in our society! Though I don't 100 percent agree with this author's opinions all the time, her research is solid and her writing is based on child development (she only throws in her opinions occasionally.) This book has made me think more deeply about children's developmental needs and has really made a difference in my interactions with children in just a week. I would highly recommend it to anybody who interacts with children, at work, church and especially parents.

Chelsey says

On board with most of this book, except the encouragement at the very end to get local government to ban the sale of material you find objectionable. Don't want your kid playing a violent video game? Great! Don't let them. You have no business banning it for other families. End of rant.

Leila T. says

This book would have been four stars for me if the author's "voice" had been a little different.

It is full of concrete examples, anecdotes, and suggestions of the things that this book is about. I love this aspect of it, because some of the conceptual stuff in here (like interacting in a developmentally age-appropriate way with children) was a bit hard for me to visualise enacting in real life until I read the dialogues etc.

I also loved learning about developmental theories, which is much more useful to me than to read an instructional-type parenting book, which is often one person's opinion of parenting: the scientific-research-based information is what I'm interested in and is also flexible for each parent to apply to their own lives and situations.

What I had a problem with was the "perfect" voice of the author: according to this book she has never made a mistake in speaking or playing with a child. For me it felt a little unrealistic and possibly un-self-reflective? I would have appreciated at least a couple of instances where she learned from mistakes she made. All of the examples that involve less-than-ideal interactions between children and adults are taken from other people's lives. I understand that she is a parent, a grandparent, and has been working with children for almost forty years or whatever, but I'm sure that she has had interpersonal experiences with children where she later reflected and thought about things she could have done differently. This is not acknowledged in this book, however.

Otherwise this is a clearly written, sensible, and relatively rigorous (the notes at the end are a bit skimpy) book that has a bunch of great ideas that I plan on trying to implement in my own parenting.

Lindsey says

I wish I could give this 3 1/2 stars. I liked it a lot and I really agreed with many of her points (using open-ended toys to encourage creative play, protecting kids from advertising and limiting screen time) and I learned some new things (like how kids use creative play to work through things that are going on in their lives) but it was one of those books I had to kind of force myself to read, it seemed long and kind of repetitive in parts.

Marissa says

I got it from the library just as school started. Sadly, I am behind on most things right now and had to return it before I could read more than the first chapter. So I am back on the hold list....but let me say, the first chapter seems fairly compelling and I am anxious to get the book back in my hot little hands.

Update:

This book is one I have begun several times--I'm proud that I finally finished it. Every time I read the title, I want to take up arms and invent a time machine to take my kids back 50 years or so. However, after the 100th time that Nancy Carlsson-Paige mentions how horrible our society is now for children, I think, "I know! But I can't change that!"

I didn't find anything too helpful in the book, though there were some very interesting chapters. Reading it will probably help me try to connect my intentions with what I do a little more with my kids. But it will also make me wary for the grandma watching on the sideline judging me and letting everyone else know how it could have gone better.

Michael says

I heard an interview with this author on some podcast that I like last week, so I thought I'd check out her book. Being in the field of education, and having taken many classes in child development, I didn't find much new here, but for someone new to the topic, this would be an excellent introduction. The author is a professor at Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. She also happens to be the mother of actor Matt Damon (more on that in a moment). Basic thesis: kids see too much violent media, have a strong need for feelings of security, and thrive when positive relationships between themselves and other children and adults are present. Also: rather than punish, teach kids how to behave. Give them choices. Limit media time. Encourage unstructured creative play. Not exactly rocket science, but well organized for those who are not teachers.

What struck me was the author's absolute pacifist ideals regarding children and violent media. She rightly points out that kids can't differentiate between what's real and what's fantasy, and will often 'act out' on what they've seen in the media. I couldn't agree more, but I wonder what she makes of her son, who has starred in, and profited from, extremely violent movies (the *Bourne* series, *The Departed*, etc.) In fact, during the build up to the invasion of Afghanistan back in 2002, I remember reading Matt Damon's passionate plea for peace and nonviolence, then watching with amusement as he made violent movie after violent movie.

Maybe his mom didn't parent him well.

A good book, but for a general audience, which I ain't.

Dianne says

This book is full of helpful advice and tips for parents who want to counteract the detrimental influences of popular culture on their children, while avoiding harsh discipline methods. And in spite of what I am about to say in the next paragraph, I highly recommend it.

My one (big) beef with this book is that, in virtually every example of successful parenting, the person doing the successful parenting is the author, Nancy Carlsson-Paige - and in every single example of not-so-successful parenting, someone else is doing the parenting. I was therefore left with the feeling that a mere mortal like me could never be as competent, caring, and just plain good a parent as Nancy Carlsson-Paige, with her Ed. D. and her 30 years of personal and professional experience with children. The book could have been greatly improved if Dr. Carlsson-Paige had included a few more examples of other successful parents, as well as a few anecdotes of how she responded inappropriately to a child. People can, after all, learn from other people's failures as well as their successes, and Dr. Carlsson-Paige admitting that she, too, had made mistakes would have gone a long way toward making me feel that even the experts don't have parenthood all sewn up, so I should cut myself some slack and try again next time.

Uma says

I was not impressed. She has plenty of valid points about child development, mainly using Piaget's ideas. I could have just read Piaget. As for the twist of this book setting itself in a media saturated world -- she did a lovely lit review of the negative studies about media. She left out all of the good ones. I'm not saying you should plant your kid in front of the television 24/7, but I think she could have at least acknowledged some of the benefits of tv and media when used appropriately / when kids watch age appropriate content. In general, it came off to me as though she wanted to write a book about child development and creative play, but some editor told her throwing a media angle in there would help it sell, so she did just that threw some buzz words in and called it a day.

The positives from the book:

1. If you're a parent (which I'm not) and you have no idea how to talk to your child / set boundaries - read the examples.
2. The list of organizations / web sites concerned with keeping children from being inundated with the media and commercialism at the end of the book is great.
3. The stories about her son Matt's childhood. Hey, who doesn't want to know that Matt Damon wanted to be a firefighter. :)

Jennifer says

This book was just OK. Nurture Shock was a much better book that touched on some of the same points. I didn't find anything earth shattering or new presented in this book.

Karla Strand says

I was mainly interested in chapter 4: No More Time-Outs. It was pretty good when discussing sharing power with your kids instead of using your power over them or giving your power away to them. I skimmed the rest of the book fairly quickly and could give or take it. It could be that I was just feeling a bit surly when reading it and so didn't feel very amenable to sharing my power with my 11yo son. lol

Highlights:

power is a continuum, not a black or white thing

there are ways to work with children to the benefit of all

when children resist our authority, it's easy to feel mad, powerless, attacked, but don't base your actions on this

Piaget: how children learn to self-regulate; the more power is wielded over children, the less likely it is for children to learn to regulate their own behavior

time outs don't work in the long run because they diminish intrinsic motivation and reduce self-regulatory opportunities

use your power in ways that connect with children

Andrew says

like it. take with grain of salt for sure, though. Author, like many child rearing authors, is..... passionate about their subject.
