



Brain Rules for Baby (Updated and Expanded): How to Raise a Smart and Happy Child from Zero to Five

John Medina

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What's the single most important thing you can do during pregnancy? What does watching TV do to a child's brain? What's the best way to handle temper tantrums? Scientists know.

In his *New York Times* bestseller *Brain Rules*, Dr. John Medina showed us how our brains really work—and why we ought to redesign our workplaces and schools. Now, in *Brain Rules for Baby*, he shares what the latest science says about how to raise smart and happy children from zero to five. This book is destined to revolutionize parenting. Just one of the surprises: The best way to get your children into the college of their choice? Teach them impulse control.

Brain Rules for Baby bridges the gap between what scientists know and what parents practice. Through fascinating and funny stories, Medina, a developmental molecular biologist and dad, unravels how a child's brain develops – and what you can do to optimize it.

You will view your children—and how to raise them—in a whole new light. You'll learn:

Where nature ends and nurture begins

Why men should do more household chores

What you do when emotions run hot affects how your baby turns out, because babies need to feel safe above all

TV is harmful for children under 2

Your child's ability to relate to others predicts her future math performance

Smart and happy are inseparable. Pursuing your child's intellectual success at the expense of his happiness achieves neither

Praising effort is better than praising intelligence

The best predictor of academic performance is not

IQ. It's self-control

What you do right now—before pregnancy, during pregnancy, and through the first five years—will affect your children for the rest of their lives. *Brain Rules for Baby* is an indispensable guide.

Brain Rules for Baby (Updated and Expanded): How to Raise a Smart and Happy Child from Zero to Five Details

Date : Published April 22nd 2014 by Pear Press (first published September 21st 2010)

ISBN : 9780983263388

Author : John Medina

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Parenting, Nonfiction, Psychology, Science, Education

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From Reader Review Brain Rules for Baby (Updated and Expanded): How to Raise a Smart and Happy Child from Zero to Five for online ebook

Orvokki says

Jedna z najlepších kníh o výchove, aká sa ku mne dostala, sú Pravidla mozku dít?te. Napísal ju vývojový molekulárny biológ Dr. John Medina a celú výchovu berie z poh?adu mozgu. ?o o ?om vieme, ?o naopak nevieme, aké sú výskumy, ktoré naopak nedopadli, aké by stáli za vykonanie, no je to prakticky nemožné.

Do výchovy totiž vstupuje mnoho ?alších faktorov, ako sú sociálny status, kultúra, prostredie, rodina, zdravotný stav, vz?ahy v rodine, vzdelávanie. A do toho všetkého ur?ité pravidlá mozgu, ktoré je ale pomerne náro?ne preskúma?.

John Medina preto nedáva konkrétny návod. Je nemožné poveda?, ?o vedie k tomu, ako vychova? úspešné a š?astné die?a. Na rovinu to priznáva. Iba ukazuje vlastné skúsenosti (je otcom dvoch detí) a mnohé výskumy, na ktoré pri svojej praxi narazil.

Výskumy, ktoré nazna?ujú, že pri držaní sa ur?itých pravidiel, je ove?a vyššia pravdepodobnos?, že die?a bude také, aké si prajeme. Š?astné, múdre, spokojné, ?estné a empatické.

Viac na orvokki.sk.

Justin says

One of the more overwhelming aspects of impending parenthood, I've discovered, is the infinite amount of advice people would like to give you. Searching for a book on pregnancy and parenting leads one to vast, candy-colored landscapes of literature, with each book insistently tugging in a different direction. It's nearly impossible to separate fact from opinion, largely because most parenting "facts" boil down to opinions, anyway. This book caught my eye because it offers parenting advice within a framework I find particularly interesting: brain development, neuroscience, and quirky scientific studies.

Which isn't to say that this is dry, boring nonfiction. This is definitely science for the layperson, and it's fascinating. I wasn't really in the market for a parenting book until I flipped through this one and browsed through a couple of Medina's interesting summaries of studies on baby brains, and the accompanying anecdotes from his own experience.

This book offers a mountain of interesting facts and extremely useful advice, but Medina takes great care to warn readers about taking parenting advice with a grain of salt. He writes up front that the data coming back from this sort of science is dangerously seductive, and that it's all too easy for parents to jump to the wrong conclusions and freak themselves out because "that's what the scientists say." The esoteric factor that makes neuroscience so interesting tends to complicate things for frustrated, sleep-deprived parents that just want someone to tell them what to do. Ultimately, for all of the information this book gives, Medina's advice for creating a smart, happy baby boils down to simple stuff we should be doing anyway: love your spouse, and love your kid.

His full disclosure regarding the ambiguity of the data is comforting, considering how he can't quite keep a

few of his own biases out of the mix, including a definite grudge against video games and television. But, hey, everyone's got an opinion on parenting, right?

I don't usually go in for this kind of book, but I will definitely recommend this to anyone who is expecting or has young children.

Susanne says

By far the best book on parenting that I've read. Medina screens all of his content through a "grumpy scientist" filter, which means that if it hasn't been proven, he doesn't include it – or he notes that the information is still being studied. Therefore, I trust what this book has to say; it is not 276 pages of anecdotal advice based on personal experience or hearsay. More importantly, it squares with my understanding of how to raise children. The pleasant surprise for me is that the very hard work that I've been doing for the past four years will, in the end, provide my sons with happy and healthy childhoods. Some key points from the book are:

- 1) Praise effort over achievement; perseverance leads to well-adjusted, smart children
 - 2) Turn the TV off before the age of two, closely monitor content after that.
 - 3) Ban video games, texting, etc. while children are young
 - 4) Emotion coach; label your feelings, help your children label theirs; empathize
 - 5) See things from your child's point of view on a regular basis
-

Lisa Nelson says

First, in full disclosure my kids helped out in the viral video for this book. You can check it out here:

<http://brainrules.net/brain-rules-for...>

That being said, I'm not getting anything besides a free book that I picked up on the set for writing this review. This is a well written, reader friendly parenting book that every parent should own.

This is a book that I will be keeping and referring back to often. The author gives tons of practical tips throughout and then sums everything up at the end of each chapter and at the end of the book for easy future reference, thank you!

I met the author on the set for the filming and what a lucky chance meeting that was for me. The author talked to me about one of the main concepts discussed in the book, meeting your child with empathy. I talked to my sister about this and we really started making a conscious effort to be more empathetic with our kids. What happened was really beautiful. My sister had a situation come up where her son was heartbroken about being left out of a sleepover. Instead of saying "too bad you'll be okay," she said, "I'm so sorry you are feeling sad," and then she went on to tell him about a similar story that happened to her when she was little. It was music to my ears. I tried it a couple of times with examples the author used like when kids whine for a glass of water tell them "I wish I could give you a huge glass right now." I was skeptical, but when my daughter fell apart after a bracelet broke I responded by saying, "I'm so sorry your bracelet broke, if I could right now I would get you a new bracelet." Immediately she stopped crying and smiled. I was shocked. I followed up by saying, "No, I'd get you 5, no 10 bracelets," then laughter. I never had to get her a new bracelet, that was not the point. She just wanted to be heard and understood. This truly feels like the right thing to do. Even if you

just read these chapters it will give you such a wonderful guide. So many times as a parent it is difficult for me to figure out what to do. This felt as close to how God would want me to parent that I can only hope that I can continue to keep it up. Even better this is all backed by scientific research.

Another chapter included a lot about how a happy marriage creates a happy baby. This seems so obvious, but it was interesting to read all the research that backed this one up. A big thanks to my Mom and Dad for loving each other so much during those formative years!

Other topics that I really enjoyed were: praising effort, not achievement, talking a lot with your kids about their emotions, more on the Tools of the Mind preschool, and the chapters on raising a moral child were amazing. It seems like the topic of raising moral kids doesn't get as much attention as it should.

If you have read, Nurture Shock you will notice a couple of similarities with this book including the praise chapter, and the Tools of the Mind sections. This book for me was so much more helpful on a practical level, and again is all backed by science.

Since I am right in the middle of breast-feeding baby #4 the section on nursing was just the boost I needed. One of my favorite quotes, "If America knew what breast milk can do for the brains of its youngest citizens, lactating mothers across the nation would be enshrined, not embarrassed." Another big thank you!

I could go on and on, but this review is already too long! Go grab this book, you won't be disappointed.

Akzcookin says

I was 20 when I gave birth to my son. How I wish this book (and the research it is based upon) had existed then. I cared for my son as best I could, but I was ignorant in so many ways.

But, being a grandma is giving me a second chance to be a better caregiver. I learned something on virtually every page.

Face time not screen time, providing a structured and safe, but not stifling play environment and being empathetic to teach and encourage empathy are the stand-out lessons that I'm already implementing for my 5-month-old grandson.

Read it and recommend it to everyone you know. You will be doing a great service to the world. (By encouraging a parenting style that can help raise great citizens.)

Abigail says

This book should be required reading for anyone who's expecting or has a child under age 5. Plain and simple, this is the best collection of parenting advice I can imagine, because it's completely research-based. You don't worry that it's just a bunch of tips from parents who had easy babies and so anything happened to work, because Medina's a brain scientist, not just some parent. He's also a brain scientist who actually uses what he knows about the brain to make the book interesting and easy to read, complete with summary cheat

sheets at the end for the sleep-deprived audience who's likely to want to read it.

He starts out with pregnancy. What can a pregnant mom do that, statistically speaking, will actually help her child. Throw out the "preggophones" and the Baby Mozart, but do take folic acid and Omega-3 supplements. My favorite brain rule? Stressed mom = stressed baby, with the prescription for moms of, "Get more pedicures."

Next he talks about marriage -- specifically, techniques you can practice while pregnant that will help ease the transition to sleeplessness and being completely at the beck and call of a screaming infant. (He also acknowledges that more and more babies are being born into different kinds of families, but since most of the research has been done on that case, that's the advice he gives out. :)) Since 80% of couples report a drop in marital satisfaction after the birth of the first baby, and 70% of issues are unresolvable, the most important thing couples can do is learn to empathize.

Finally, most of the book is the kind of parenting advice that we all want to know but may forget in the craziness of trying to get baby to PLEASE just sleep for THREE hours that's all I want is that too much to ask?! You won't find anything in here about what kind of diapers to buy or how to get your baby to sleep (sorry). You will find tons of research on what kind of parenting produces kids who are happy, well-adjusted, and maximizing their intellectual potential. Turns out that while there are lots of practical suggestions, in essence they boil down to teaching your kids emotional competence (yes, even to make them smart). Turn off the TV before age 2. Practice empathy and emotional coaching. Encourage imaginative play. Some stuff that seems obvious and some research that boggles the mind.

I plan to give this book to every expectant parent I know.

(Note: I was in the position to read both the hardback and Kindle version, and I was quite disappointed with the latter. I would say in the Kindle version, fully 30% of closing quotation marks were missing, along with numerous other typos that weren't present in the printed version. I admit to ignorance as to how Kindle versions are produced, but I'm surprised that they differed so drastically.)

Adam Floridia says

Once others find out that you're having a baby, you can expect to be bombarded with the same question ad nauseum: "Are you excited?" Stupid question really (assuming you were trying to conceive in the first place). However, my standard, and most honest answer was "I'm excited to be excited" since there's really no immediate change and it certainly doesn't sink in right away.

As corny as it may sound, after reading this book my answer will now be "Yes, I am excited." The author does a wonderful job (for the most part) of establishing just the right tone: neither condescending and pretentiously academic, nor too kitschy and dumbed down. Backed in neuro science and numerous professional studies, his advice is logical and tested. Even the obvious stuff, like "pay attention to your kid" didn't just make me write "No shit" in the margins because the actual science behind it is explained.

The latter half of the book, though, did get more and more "touchy feely." Apparently teaching empathy is one of the most important things to do, so I guess the mawkish shift was to be expected. Also, the author just has a really strange need to include irrelevant descriptive details about the scientists whose experiments he describes: "a crusty, wild haired old philosopher" (99) or "a handsome polymath" (135). Finally, there are times when explaining neuroscience via kitchen metaphor work well...there are also times it does not and the two paragraph aside about Bobby Flay ("has red hair and a New York accent" [199]) are completely

unnecessary.

Overall, though, reading this book made me excited to be a soon-to-be-dad!

Candace says

4.5 stars. A book written by a brain scientist describing indicators of your child's happiness and what you can do about. A lot of Medina's advice for baby and parents is about empathy.

Sondos Shapsogh says

This book is so rich and full of information that anyone can benefit from. I didn't want it to finish. Very simple to follow and understand for someone who's not very familiar with neurotechnology. I understand that raising a child is much more complex than some data in a two dimensional book, but you'd still want to know the key elements that actually matter. It makes me want to buy copies of this and give it to anyone I know who's considering having kids. Lol

Latifa Alabdalahab says

I love love this book, its funny and informative. The best thing about it that its scientific but you actually enjoy listening to it. The author is brilliant and the writing is fantastic.

Melissa says

John Medina writes about babies & their brains in an easily accessible style, full of folksy anecdotes about his wife & sons. This makes it hard to talk smack about his book but I think I'm going to regardless.

I guess it's not his fault that most of the people who read this type of book & actually have children are so apt to be dismayed by the arbitrary ways they have failed their kids, but he certainly provides a lot of unsubstantiated ammunition. For example, near the beginning of the book, he quotes a study "yet to be replicated" that purports that mothers who had more severe morning sickness went on to have children with higher IQs. How many women read this & felt cheated if their vomiting wasn't "severe" enough? Are they all damned to slow-witted children? Or his study that shows that if you speak to your child at a rate of 2,100 words per hour, he'll have a higher IQ as well? Are parents now gripping their heads and moaning, "I only talked to Junior at a rate of 2,000 words per hour! Now he'll never get into Harvard!"

What I find distasteful about books of this nature is the sense they give that you are failing all the time at raising your child. Don't do this, absolutely do that - or else! You don't calmly empathize with your angry toddler & gently guide them through their emotional turmoil every time they get mad? For shame, Mommy, for shame. I subscribe to my own school of parenting - no one is perfect. I love my kid & he knows it & although I might have had minimal vomiting in the first trimester & might not use every crisis as a teachable moment, aren't I doing okay anyway? I suppose the real issue is why I keep reading books like this & letting

them make me so defensive.

Rebecca says

Medina is simple, direct, and interesting as an author. He does a nice job at splicing up research from a variety of fields and areas for the lay reader, such as myself. (Although, the academic in me would have liked the research better cited with a bibliography at the back of the book.)

It seemed to me that a lot of the research he refers to is not new and has been cited in *Blink*, *Nurture Shock*, *Drive* and other recent, popular, non-fiction books. Despite this, I didn't mind revisiting it in this new light. As a result, I left the text thinking more deeply about my behavior as a parent and a person. The importance of empathy as a human trait and empathy as an expressed behavior resonated with me. There is something truly magical when talking with a person who has the capacity to understand and relate to you with altruism.

Medina is successful at providing insight into neuroscience that is salient to human development. My trust was won, in part by the author's early discussion on associative versus causal data. This clearly put into light the level of caution that must be exercised when using data (especially qualitative research) to back a thesis with resounding certainty. Further, he is realistic about the challenges of meeting every need of a child. He does not give excuses for poor parenting, but he does show compassion for the inevitable limits every parent faces. This level of realism provides a space for Medina to interject a little humor and humanity into his writing.

On a more critical note, it seemed at times like the author's agenda was splintered. On the one hand, he points to claims of children uttering complete sentences at 10 months of age when exposed to focused techniques (insert skeptical, eye twitching, forehead wrinkle here) and then turns around in further chapters telling the reader not to compare his/her child to others.

I found myself wondering, "If my job is to give my child the space he needs to develop without comparative pressure, what is the purpose of giving extreme examples of extraordinary baby development?" It seemed that some of the qualitative reports were given only to serve the very purpose the author later attempts to steer the reader away from, comparing your child's development to others.

I imagine that most parents who pick up this book are a bit like me, very concerned about the role they are playing in their child's development. I wonder how many other readers share my reaction when the author tells the story of his 9 month old saying the word "octopus". I found myself wondering if I am even worthy of changing my son's diaper. "My god", I thought to myself, "My son is 15 months and has yet to utter a multi-syllabic word! Oh, the HORROR!"

If indeed, Medina's purpose was to spare the hyper-vigilant parent from meaningless comparisons, he could have taken out some of his more extreme examples of rare, but extraordinary linguistic and behavioral development. (Perhaps I am being just a tad bit over sensitive here.) But these moments did not seem relevant to the claim that turning off the T.V. or making eye contact with your child is important. Despite these complaints and the few, "I am not qualified to parent. My son is doomed." moments, the book reflected many of my own philosophies.

I see myself returning to the text and his website: www.brainrules.net/brain-rules-for-baby as a resource. It's good to have a sober reminder as a parent to stay strong in a world where cable T.V., video games and armchair parenting are so seductive after a long day of work and a few sleepless nights.

Courtney says

This book had a lot of useful information, quite a bit of which has been included in other books I've read but I still found it an interesting read.

Bullet point ideas/thoughts that are completely disjointed because that's all I have in me right now:

*Praise effort more than intelligence

*Think about how to best help friends with a new baby-it's too easy to become isolated, which when you combine with severe sleep deprivation and total exhaustion, is not healthy

*Talk talk talk to the baby

*Integrate more music in our kids' lives-how do people afford piano/guitar/other music lessons?

*I want to read John Gottman's Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child and find a biography on Roosevelt to read as well

*Remember to use rationale with explicit commands-we're pretty good at this but not all the time

Zach Gray says

5 stars for the sheer amount of information I came away with. I've never made so many notes in a book before. Medina is a developmental molecular biologist who navigates the research on the brain and behavioral development of children. The big themes of the book boil down to paying attention to your kid's emotions and responding with empathy.

Abbey says

This was a good read. Essentially there is very little correlation between the standard IQ test and a person's success and happiness in life. Medina suggests other things that are actually linked to success. One of the biggest seems to be emotional IQ. I found his book to be very thoughtful but also practical. I love reading about research but I love it more when I know how to use it! My biggest takeaway is that people who can label their emotions are better at dealing with life and therefore happier and more successful people. For example, my 7 year old just had his tonsils out. He threw a fit and cried about taking his medicine. Because I had just read this book I asked him to label how he was feeling in one sentence and I helped him. We decided it was, "I am scared to take my medicine because it might hurt my throat." He immediately calmed down once he had a label for his emotions. Then we talked about the benefit of taking the medicine versus the 2 seconds that it might hurt. We never had a problem with the medicine again all week. It was a great tool. Of course there was much much more to the book (understanding verbal communication, learning nonverbal cues, learning self control, having empathy for others and running toward emotions).

