

Publishers answer moms' and dads' calls for an increasing variety of child-rearing titles.

Parenting Grows Up

BY GWENDA BOND

Many experts speculated that the U.S. might be beginning a new baby boom in 2007 when the National Center for Health Statistics announced the most births ever in a single year—more than 4.3 million. That figure squeaked past the number of births in 1957, the previous record holder. But unlike that earlier period, the uptick in births wasn't due to some women having more children each, but to an increase in the number of women having babies across many demographics.

The recession may have stifled that "baby boomlet," with decreases in the birth rate for the past two years attributed to the down economy.

But the parenting and child care publishing category is still booming, with new books for the ever-diversifying range of parents and parenting needs. From the tried and true basics to offerings geared for just about any specialty audience imaginable, the number of titles submitted to *PW* for this look at the category dwarfed those received last year.

"Parenting has evolved from the time of Dr. Spock, from the general 'take good care of your kids' to 'take good care of your kids and respect and address their special needs, whether they be emotional, disciplinary, or health related,'" says Brenda Knight, associate publisher of Cleis Press/Viva Editions, which is about to publish *Help! My Baby Came Without Instructions* by neonatal intensive care unit veteran Blythe Lipman.

What's no longer working, Knight adds, "is the general, one-size-fits-all parenting."

Publishers are working to meet the many and varied needs of parents for all kinds of kids, creating a category rich with competing titles that parents 20 or 30 years ago—and certainly in 1957—wouldn't have dreamed of finding at the bookstore.

Learning Across the Spectrum

One of the category's largest growth areas reflects the increasing number of children who have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), be it "classic" autism, the typically milder Asperger's syndrome, or a related diagnosis. In mid-December, the Centers for Disease Con-

trol and Prevention released a study showing that an average of one in 110 children in the U.S. now has an ASD, equaling approximately 36,500 eventual diagnoses out of the four million children born each year. NBC's new TV adaptation of the classic movie *Parenthood* has even updated the unnamed condition of one of the major child characters to Asperger's syndrome, which figured prominently in the show's pilot a few weeks ago.

All of this adds up to a bigger-than-ever wave of interest in the topic heading into April's Autism Awareness Month, which will see a host of new titles aimed at parents of children with ASDs. Little, Brown has high hopes for its latest addition to the Sears Parenting Library from Dr. Robert Sears (aka Dr. Bob), whose bestselling *The Vaccine Book* quickly became the category staple on that topic. *The*

Autism Book: What Every Parent Needs to Know About Early Detection, Treatment, Recovery, and Prevention (Apr.) provides the same comprehensive, practical approach designed to aid parents in navigating the issues surrounding a child's ASD diagnosis and treatment.

Tracy Behar, the LB executive editor who oversees the Sears line, says, "Parents of kids with autism are turning more and more to books for help, reassurance, and

hope. There's so much confusing information out there, from mainstream therapies to biomedical treatments, and Dr. Bob felt the need to clarify the information, spell out what has been proven scientifically and what has not, and give parents the tools they need."

Other new entries focused on providing advice from medical experts include Bantam's *Making Sense of Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Create the Brightest Future for*



Getting Real

Memoirs frequently revisit childhood, often to unveil outrageously terrible parenting and its aftereffects—especially when celebrity is involved. But a new crop of memoirs and parenting guides reveals the journey of parenthood instead.

Fans of *Project Runway* will undoubtedly remember season three finalist New Yorker Laura Bennett, better known for her chic, classic designs than as the mother of six. Her book *Didn't I Feed You Yesterday?* (Ballantine) finds her dispensing motherly advice in the irreverent style followers would expect. Meanwhile, Simon & Schuster has three high-profile memoirs on the way: standup comedian Jay Mohr's *No Wonder My Parents Drank*, about raising his son; former TV show creator and producer Chuck Barris's *Della*, a memoir about his daughter, who died of an accidental overdose at age 36; and Ben and Quinn Bradlee's *Life's Work*, a collaborative memoir by father and son. S&S senior editor Kerri Kolen notes that memoir is a natural fit for parents, whether celebrities or not: "People are never so revealing as when they are writing about their children."

Little, Brown offers a fascinating collaborative memoir, *Three Wishes* by Carey Goldberg, Beth Jones, and Pamela Ferdinand, which describes what happened when the three single friends, journalists in their 40s, decided to stop waiting to become mothers. One orders eight vials of donor sperm, but then starts a relationship and gets pregnant, so she passes the vials on to the next friend, who then repeats the process, and again a third time.

"I think the narrative/memoir approach to parenting books is a great way to tell a more complicated and honest story," says LB executive editor Judith Clain, who predicts that *Three Wishes* will speak to women in their 30s and 40s who are realizing they have many paths open to them when it comes to motherhood. "And I think we always want to read other people's stories because sometimes it gives us the courage or inspiration to keep going forward."

Harper editor Gail Winston, who edited Laura Brodie's memoir, *Love in a Time of Homeschooling* (Apr.), echoes the sentiment, saying that she believes readers will find even more personal stories like these going forward. "The standard by-the-book approach is less attractive now," she says. "Narrative and storytelling are where parenting books are headed."
—G.B.



"absolutely an expert, her mission is to unlock that expertise in parents."

Viking released last year's *Growing Up on the Spectrum* in paperback last month. Written by Lynn Kern Koegel, of the Koegel Autism Research Center, and Claire LaZebnik, whose son has autism, the book focuses on challenges unique to families with teens on the autism spectrum, providing guidance on such topics as friendship, romantic relationships, schooling, and life after college, among other everyday concerns.

Since ASDs are four to five times more likely to occur in boys than in girls, many fathers may appreciate former NFL quarterback and broadcaster Rodney Peete's *Not My Boy! A Father, a Son, and One Family's Journey with Autism* (Hyperion, Mar.), a memoir about the difficulty he faced in coming to terms with his son's diagnosis. The book explores Peete and his wife Holly's inspirational transition from scared parents to outspoken advocates, as well as including many stories from other dads about their experiences. Hyperion plans a major promotion push, and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to autism charities.

In addition to the proliferation of autism-focused books, there are a number of broader titles encompassing both ASD and other special needs, including emotional and cognitive disabilities. Last month, Penguin's Riverhead imprint released *We've Got Issues* by Judith Warner, prominent *New York Times* contributing columnist and author of the bestselling examination of motherhood, *Perfect Madness*. Warner's latest explores the medical pitfalls and other issues that families must grapple with when children are diagnosed with ASDs, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety disorders, and more.

A Three Rivers title coming in August will no doubt reflect a sentiment many parents of special needs children are likely to identify with—*Shut Up About Your Perfect Kid* by Gina Gallagher and Patricia Konjoian. Originally self-published, the Three Rivers edition has been fully revised and expanded, and publisher Philip Patrick hopes the press "will be taking this

Your Child with the Best Treatment Options (Mar.) by Dr. James Coplan and the first volume in Skyhorse Publishing's new annual series, *Cutting-Edge Therapies for Autism 2010–2011*.

Parental perspective is also well represented in the new crop of autism books, something NAL executive editor Tracy Bernstein says is part of a shift in the category, drawing a comparison to recent changes in health books. The move she observes is "from an emphasis on experts

dictating the right way to do things toward empowering readers—in this case parents—to do what they feel is best." As a prime example, she points to NAL's forthcoming *The Everyday Advocate: Standing Up for Your Autistic Child* (Apr.) by Areva Martin, an individual rights attorney and parent of an autistic child. A well-known autism advocate, Martin walks parents through the real-world minefields of advocating for the rights of their autistic children. Bernstein says that while Martin is

important book to an even bigger audience." Also looking at a broad range of special needs is Simon & Schuster's *Different Learners: Identifying, Preventing, and Treating Your Child's Learning Problems* (Apr.) by educational psychology expert Jane M. Healy, which packages the latest scientific research to help parents deal with a variety of disorders and diagnoses as early as possible.

For parents who want to get an early handle on the unique learning style of their kids or jump-start intellectual development, there are many new titles to choose from. Coming from Da Capo in July and August, respectively, are J. Richard Gentry's *Raising Confident Readers: How to Teach Your Child to Read and Write, from Baby to Age 7* and Dr. Stanley Greenspan's *The Learning Tree: Overcoming Learning Disabilities from the Ground Up*. In *Amazing Minds: The Science of Nurturing Your Child's Developing Mind with Games, Activities, and More* (Berkley, July), authors

Jan Faull and Jennifer McLean Oliver give parents research-backed techniques to encourage a child's natural development while having fun together.

Revisiting the Basics

Even as the market for books designed to aid parents in raising children with special needs continues to expand, many publishers agree they are also seeing a renewed focus on parenting basics. These core titles cover parents' questions from pregnancy through every stage of childhood on a number of topics—updated to reflect the latest research and trends, of course.

Where pregnancy is concerned, the



change is toward more rather than less, according to Penny Warren, managing editor of DK's pregnancy and parenting list. "We notice that it's almost impossible these days to publish a title that's too detailed," she says, the direct result of the proliferation of Web sites offering anonymity and candor. This year, DK has two books centered on pregnancy: *I'm Pregnant!* by Lesley Regan and *BabyCenter Pregnancy*, alongside

the more general *BabyCenter Baby*. (DK's BabyCenter books are written by editors affiliated with the popular Web site of the same name.) Warren believes those titles will "tap into the needs of a generation that has come to expect no-holds-barred answers to everything."

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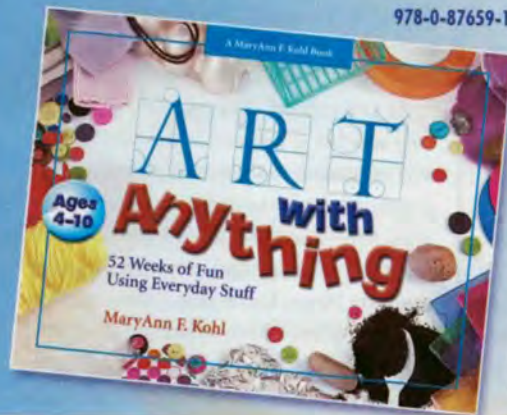
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This month Workman offers a fourth edition of the evergreen classic *What to Expect When You're Expecting* in a new Spanish-language translation, *Qué Puedes Esperar Cuando Estás Esperando*, aimed at the increasing number of Hispanic-American and Latina expectant moms. And next month Wiley will release Leah Douglas's *The Gourmet Pregnancy*, filled with recipes to create a "nourishing, delicious, worry-free pregnancy."

Once the new baby or babies are delivered, parents often have a whole new barrage of questions, and there's no shortage of new books designed to answer them. "The critical first days, weeks, and even months in a child's life continue to be of particular concern to new and expecting parents," says Da Capo executive editor Katie McHugh.

Da Capo's Lifelong imprint has two books aimed at those initial stages, Dr. Glade Curtis and Judith Schuler's *Your Baby's First Year Week by Week, Third Edition* (Feb.) and Dr. Jennifer Gunter's *The Premie Primer*, coming in June. DK expects big things with the return of child-centered parenting guru Penelope Leach, with a new book, *The Essential First Year*. Leach's *Your Baby & Child*, which sold more than three million copies in the 1970s, has never gone out of print. Her new book builds on those early concepts, now backed up with even more extensive research, and offers an encouraging message for working parents. Another big push is coming from Sterling, with the fall release of *SuperBaby: 12 Ways to Give Your Child a Head Start in the First 3 Years*, in which Jenn Berman, TV and radio personality Dr. Jenn, provides tips for improving development early on.

But perhaps the biggest postpregnancy book of the season is Ballantine's newly revised and updated edition of the classic *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* by the La

Leche League. Since the last update to the title six years ago, major changes have created more questions for breastfeeding moms, says Marnie Cochran, executive editor at Ballantine, even as the science has solidified its importance. She cites increases in C-sections and multiple births, improved pump technology that can be overwhelming for new mothers to choose from, and women juggling the return to the workplace and nursing.

"Much like a La Leche League meeting itself, the new book will now meet the urgent needs of women of all ages who choose to breastfeed, and for however long they choose to try to keep doing it," says Cochran.

Continuing good nutrition for children as they grow up is a high-profile issue for many parents nowadays, especially given the recent launch of Michelle Obama's childhood obesity

initiative, Let's Move. Another release from Sterling's Great Expectations line, *Best Food for Your Baby & Toddler* looks at everything from setting up the pantry to whether to buy

organic. St. Martin's hopes that *Baby Love: Healthy, Easy, Delicious Meals for Your Baby and Toddler* (Aug.) from D.C. power couple Norah O'Donnell and chef Geoff Tracy will connect with parents on the go by offering healthy, easy, nutrient-rich recipes in a budget-conscious way. As essential as eating right is sleeping well; two forthcoming titles tackle that always-hot topic—Sandy and Marcie Jones's *Great Expectations: Baby Sleep Guide* (Sterling, Feb.) and Shari Mezrahi's *The Baby Sleeps Tonight* (Sourcebooks, Apr.).

Another topic of parental concern, childhood illness, is addressed in a July Rowman & Littlefield title, *How Your Child Heals: An Inside Look at Common Childhood Ailments* by Dr. Christopher Johnson. According to the

publisher, the book "does not simply explain; it demonstrates, using vivid narrative techniques so readers can better visualize the processes being described." Coming next month is *The Sound of Hope: Recognizing, Coping with, and Treating Your Child's Auditory Processing Disorder* by veteran speech-language pathologist Lois Kam Heymann; "the bottom line," according to Ballantine, is that "learning how to listen in our noisy, complicated world is the key to a happy and engaged child."

Even among more general parenting titles, publishers are finding room to embrace today's many different parenting styles. Out next month from Chronicle is *Handy Dad: 25 Awesome Projects for Dads and Kids* by HGTV host and extreme sports athlete Todd Davis. Also along "awesome" lines is *Geek Dad: Awesomely Geeky Projects and Activities for Dads and Kids to Share* (May) by Ken Denmead, writer of *Wired's* popular blog of the same name. According to Gotham/Avery editorial director Megan Newman, "This is for the new dad whose nostalgia is not for his old Flexible Flyer or Little League mitt, but who instead wants to share with his kids the geeky things that informed his childhood: video games, *Star Wars*, and anything electronic."

The publisher turns to the timely topic of working moms with *Balance Is a Crock, Sleep Is for the Weak: An Indispensable Guide to Surviving Working Motherhood* (Apr.). Marketing executives Amy Eschliman and Leigh Oshirak present a clear-eyed, "bitterly funny" look at balancing motherhood and the corporate life. Gotham/Avery is releasing both books as trade paperback originals, designed to appeal to a younger, price-sensitive demographic.

As parenthood continues to evolve, the only sure bet is that publishers will have to stay responsive to the ever-changing demographics in order to compete with other—often free—sources of advice. Despite competition from social networking and mommy blogs, Leslie Iura, associate publisher of Wiley's Jossey-Bass imprint, says, "Books can prevail if they offer a higher level of authority and if the information is practical and accessibly packaged." ■

